NATIONAL
ENQUIRER

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Harold Weisberg
Route 8
Frederick, Maryland 21701

Dear Mr. Weisberg:

Enclosed are a couple of photographs and a copy of the story we did on Senator Russell's view of the assassination which I am sorry to say did not make the paper. I had to wait until Simon Lewis returned from Australia to get this copy. I hope that it meets your needs.

Bill Dick passed on word that you felt you were due an additional payment for your work on this story. I agree. I have put through an additional payment on Bill's recommendation. I know that you worked hard on this story and am sorry that it didn't turn out as we planned. You have been very cooperative and I hope that good relationship between the ENQUIRER and you will continue. I understand Bill will be talking with you by telephone when he has an opportunity.

With best wishes,

E. G. Martin

E. G. Martin
Assistant Editor

EGM:sw

Enclosures

JFK assassination

Weisberg 1 simon lewis

Certain evidence was withheld from members of the Warren Com ission, which investigated the assassination of President ~~the~~ John F Kennedy.

And on occasion misleading evidence was deliberately fed to the commission.

This was the firm conviction of the late Senator Richard Russell, Democrat ~~xxxx~~ from Georgia and commission member~~x~~, but his fears went to the grave with him when he died in January 1971 at the age of 73, says Harold Weisberg, former Senate investigator, author and long-time critic of the Warren report, in an astonishing exclusive interview with the Enquirer.

Says Weisberg: "When I finally got the transcripts of the executive sessions of the committee that had been top secret, and which were declassified in February 1968, I decided to get in touch with Senator Russell, who I knew had misgivings which were not contained in the report.

"I wrote to the Senator's office, and his legislative assistant Mr Charles Campbell called me in response.

"Originally all of his end was by phone because I think the senator was worried I was trying to booby-trap him. He wanted to able to ~~xxx~~ preserve deniability.

(more)

"But towards the end he was writing me directly, he was not even using his assistant, because he saw I wasn't about to abuse his trust.

"I was able to give Campbell certain information, and I was called into the senator's office, to talk to Campbell further, I thought.

"I did not expect to see the senator, but Campbell took me in and introduced me. Senator Russell was walking over to the floor (of the Senate) and asked me if I'd care to walk with him.

"And as we walked we talked. Russell was satisfied there ~~xxxxxxxx~~ was a conspiracy; satisfied that he and the other members had been conned on the ballistics evidence; satisfied that the agencies - he didn't mention names but it was pretty clear to me that he meant CIA and FBI - had not told the commission what they knew about Oswald.

"I think it's probable that the senator thought there was a Red conspiracy - a view I disagree with, because in my opinion the real Oswald belief was decidedly anti-Communist.

"But in any event Russell was satisfied that on at least those three points he had been had.

"At an early stage he was dubious about the value of Marina Oswald's testimony on just about anything, and he was quoted as saying that. He was convinced that the commission were never told the truth about the Oswalds' life together in Russia.

"Nor did he ever accept the "single bullet" theory - the commission's contention that the same bullet hit President Kennedy and Governor John Connally.

"The senator formly objected to the commission's categorical statement that there had been no conspiracy to assassinate President Kennedy.

"He said it gave the impression that 'no other xxxxxx living person had any knowledge' of Oswald's plan. He wanted the report to go no further than saying Oswald fired the x shots that killed President Kennedy and wounded Governor Connally.

"Russell raised these objections at a special executive session on September 18, when the report was xready to go to the printers and the page proofs were only a week away from being on Lyndon Johnson's desk.

xxx "The reason the session was called was because Russell and possibly a couple of the other commission members were not in agreement with certain parts of the report, and they wanted to thrash that out.

"Chief Justice Warren was determined he was going to have a unanimous report, so rather than allowing Russell to have an aterisk, and then down at the bottom of the page 'Senator Russell dissents as follows...', a disclaimer sentence was inserted at Russell's insistence.

"It said: 'because of the difficulty of proving negatives to a certainty the possibility of others being involved with either Oswald or Ruby cannot be established categorically, but if there is any such evidence it has been beyond the reach of all the investigative agencies and resources of the United States and has not come to the attention of this commission'.

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"But even here," says Weisberg, "Russell was conned. The disclaimer was only inserted in a later chapter. It was not put into Chapter 1, , which also served as the commission's press release. So the stories that appeared in papers round the world had no mention of Russell's fears.

"Some years after that executive session I was able to give the senator information that really shocked him.

"A transcript of every meeting of the commission was taken by a reporter. With the exception of the first two meetings, whose minutes were taken by a reporter from the U.S. attorney's office, every meeting was attened by the reporting firm of Ward and Paul, who delivered the minutes the following day.

"But not that last meeting on September 18. When the records of the payments to Ward and Paul became declassified in February 1968 I got copies, and there was no payment to a court reporter that day.

"There was not even a court reporter there that day. But the members of the commission did not know that. They thought a transcript was being made for the future. So they recorded their objections at the meeting. They wanted to preserve their own reputations and their own integrity.

"But instead of the minutes of that meeting being taken down by a reporter and issued the next day, a document purporting to be minutes of the meeting, was sent out to the commission members on November 5, almost six weeks after the report was published, from general counsel Lee Rankin's office.

(more)

"The document was not the minutes of the meeting. At best it was a synopsis of part of the meeting - whom to give leather bound copies of the report to, a winding up of the business affairs of the commission, and things like that. There was no mention of any objections being made.

"I brought this to Senator Russell's attention, and as I said before, he was very shocked. But still he had a hope. He said that perhaps the national archives did have the original transcript and were not letting me see it.

"I got in touch with the archives and they told me that the document I had - the one that had been sent from the general counsel's office - was the only minute of the meeting.

"Then Russell realised that the record he had left for posterity, the record of what his beliefs were, had been destroyed.

"He would never have taled about this in public. It was too big a scandal, and he was too dedicated to government. Government insiders never want scandals exposed. They will rant and rave about them privately, but they will be totally silent in public.

"When the senator finally accepted that what I was telling him was the truth, he was absolutely shaken, he could not believe it.

"I would say the political significance of there being no transcript of that meeting when it was known that the members were going to record their objections for history and posterity was much more persuasive to a politician like Russell than all the facts I could have put in his hand.

(more)

"I cannot imagine any documentary proof I could have given him that could have meant as much to a man who had spent his lifetime in politics.

"Certainly it is my belief that this revelation changed the senator.

"I gave him the information in June of 1968. The following October the Associated Press reported that the communication lines between President Lyndon Johnson and Senator Russell, one of the president's oldest friends and advisers, had been broken.

"The news service said it had been more than three months since the two men had had a difference of opinion over a matter that Russell did not even discuss with his friends.

"I think the significant things is that while Russell did not break his friendship with Johnson after he was appointed to the commission much against his wishes, the close association between the two men which went back almost 20 years to Johnson's freshman senator days was ruptured very soon after Russell discovered that he had been duped".

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add weisberg.

Weisberg is the author of Whitewash, Whitewash II, Photographic Whitewash and Oswald in New Orleans. He is working on a book tentatively called Agent Oswald. He lives in Frederick, Maryland.