

New York Times, Salisbury and the quest for evidence of a JFK assassination conspiracy
HW 11/15/73

In phone conversation with Martin Waldron yesterday I raised the question of the Times' second seeking for proof of conspiracy. It has this background:

There came a time when I took the ms of Whitewash to Tom Wicker in 1965. It took him some time but he did read it, he did react favorably, he did ask and get my permission to send it to Salisbury, and I happened to be in his office later just when Salisbury returned the ms to him, with a favorable comment and more. Wicker had wanted him to read it and seemed to have the notion that Salisbury would be in a position to help me. He was then a managing editor. The letter, which Wicker read to me, just as he opened the package, was that while there seemed to be nothing Salisbury could do then the Times would, of course, have a considerable news interest in the book if and when I got it published. (Jumping ahead, the factor that finally led me to decide on private publication was Wicker's advice that I do it whereas at the outset he had counselled strongly against this.)

Because of this, when I did bring it out, I gave the Times a total of 13 free copies. After that I made them pay. One copy was given to Fred Graham to review. What he told me privately bears no relationship to what he ultimately included in a single graf when he lumped that, much later, in a review of Espetink's book. The Times gave it NO attention as news or anything else.

In asking if he might send the ms to Salisbury, Wicker told me that it was in accord with Salisbury's view as of the time of the assassination, that there had been a conspiracy, and that he had devoted all he could get of the "not inconsiderable" facilities of the Times to this end.

When I mentioned this to Waldron, when we were talking about the problems of the national desks, he laughed. He was part of it. And every time he got close to something he would get a call giving him a different assignment often remote from Dallas. The clear import is that this Times investigation was designed to not be an investigation and to make it seem that a real and intensive one had produced no evidence of conspiracy.

With this as a beginning point, it is possible to give an entirely different interpretation to the Times' re-investigation, which followed upon and I have always felt was triggered by my lending Salisbury the ms of Whitewash II, which contains a sufficient index to what I had used of what I have obtained from the Archives. More, it indicated that I by then had to have had much more.

I had at least one meeting with the entire crew assigned to it, except for Corry, who I never met and from whom I never heard, even indirectly. Except for Kihss, I found the collective and the individual attitude toward the project to be quite negative. But I never believed that Salisbury was other than honest in this. From Waldron there is the clear contrary expression of opinion, complete with ironic laugh.

And from this I could and do postulate that the real purpose of this re-investigation was to negate the contents of WWII. This could explain the Times attitude toward me and my work. They never even acknowledge the appearance of any of the WHITEWASH series, all of which reached the book-review department with which I had many phone and letter contacts. And the grim attack on Frame-Up by a partisan and a man who had made himself my enemy.

There is another mystery I here note. Hoover did make pre-publication "response" to part of the content of WWII that I have never aired. This was before the printer had any copy. There were copies in the hands of the friend who was acting as an agent, one copy. One at Dell. One at Metromedia's Channel 5 in NYC. One at the Saturday Evening post (Mike Mooney). and the only other one I did not have was at the Times, where I handed it to Salisbury. Aside from this, only Maggie Field and Bill O'Connell has a copy. Question: where did Hoover get it?