

Books in the News

Was Warren Report a whitewash?

By W. EMERSON WILSON

The Warren Commission Report, instead of proving Lee Harvey Oswald guilty of President Kennedy's assassination, has actually shown he alone could not have committed the crime.

This charge is made in a new book by Harold Weisberg of near Hyattstown, Md., entitled "Whitewash: The Report on the Warren Report" (208 pages, privately printed, \$4.95). Weisberg was a reporter on The Morning News in the early 1930s who later became a Senate investigator. His personal investigations during the early days of World War II were widely credited with laying the foundation for the taking over of enemy property and foreign-funds controls.

This book is based on an intensive study of the 27 volumes in the Warren Commission Report. Weisberg charges the "main, if not exclusive effort of the commission" was to validate the FBI report on the crime and not itself to make a report on it.

"In finding Oswald guilty," Weisberg writes, "it (the commission) has found those who assassinated him 'innocent'." He does not claim to know who actually is guilty but feels that the investigation should be reopened in order to find out.

He also objects strenuously to the decision of the commission to seal their files, which contain more information than that given in the report, for 75 years.

The report consisted of 26 volumes of testimony, charts, reports, police logs, etc., from which the one-volume summary was made. Weisberg claims many of the conclusions arrived at in this summary are fallacious on the grounds of the evidence contained in the other 26 volumes.

Many witnesses told of four shots being fired, and many believed at least some of these shots came from in front of the car. He asks why the report on the autopsy on the President was suppressed, why the testimony of pathologists that the bullet found could not have caused the injuries was also suppressed, and why that bullet was cleaned before being received by the FBI laboratories.

The proof that the spent shells found on the sixth floor of the Depository Building could not have come from the rifle attributed to Oswald is also disregarded, Weisberg says.

He also points to the many discrepancies in the reports of Oswald's movements after the shooting when he traced an irregular course by bus and taxi to his room. This trip would take more time than actually lapsed, Weisberg believes. He also casts doubt on Oswald shooting of Patrolman Tippitt, pointing out

that witnesses say Tippitt and the man believed to be Oswald chatted peacefully before Tippitt was shot. He also doubts that Tippitt had received enough information and description to identify Oswald as the assassin on the basis of the police logs printed in the report. Then why should it take Oswald a half hour to walk to the theater after the shooting, when the theater was only five or six blocks away and he had covered so much territory in such a short time before that?

Weisberg believes that Oswald was actually an anti-Communist, and quotes evidence to that effect received by the commission. Oswald may actually have considered himself a secret agent. Why did the Marine Corps approve his being granted a passport to Russia before he was discharged from the corps, when that discharge was for the specific purpose of caring for his mother?

Marina Oswald lied in order to get her passport into the United States, the evidence shows, and Weisberg claims she repeatedly lied to the commission later as shown by the different stories she told at different times.

The report blames the press indirectly for the murder of Oswald since it caused confusion, but Weisberg insists the murder was entirely due to police negligence. If too many reporters were present the police could have excluded them and used the "pool" system of reporting, he explains.

He also believes the commission did not delve deep enough to find whether Ruby was actually permitted to enter the police station by some policeman.

There are detailed analyses of the significance of the various photographs taken of the assassination and of the different exhibits, such as the gun in which Weisberg questions the findings of the commission.

He also goes into considerable detail about a "false Oswald" reportedly seen by witnesses in places where Oswald could not have been. The commission dismissed these reports as mere imaginings of witnesses, but Weisberg give them some credence.

The book is detailed and sometimes involved, but has won praise from such distinguished correspondents as Alain Clement of the Paris Le Monde and Stephen Barber of the London Daily Telegraph.

Weisberg devotes one chapter to the history of the book in which he reports that it has been read and praised by many publishers who nevertheless declined to publish it. Eventually, he decided to do so himself.