

Author Of 'Whitewash'

Kennedy Autopsy Data Access Urged

By A. W. Geiselman, Jr.

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The author of a book criticizing the Warren Commission said today that serious scholars on the topic of the Kennedy assassination should be permitted to study X-rays and photographs of the late President's autopsy.

Harold Weisberg, author of "Whitewash," said that, otherwise, the announcement Tuesday that the Kennedy family had released the X-rays, negatives and transparencies to the National Archives is meaningless.

He described the announcement as an effort by a Government under pressure "to give the impression it has nothing to hide while it is hiding things."

In D.C. To Protest

He said he has gone to the National Archives in Washington to protest the decision to limit for five years access to the X-rays and photographs to official Government investigative bodies except with specific approval of the Kennedy family.

Mr. Weisberg's comments followed the announcement by the Justice Department that the autopsy data was being released to the custody of the Government by the Kennedy family at the Government's request.

The Government spokesman admitted that the recent publication of books raising questions about the commission's findings "had something to do" with the request.

Even after the five-year period, the spokesman said, access to the X-rays and photographs will be considerably limited and that critics of the commission findings



HAROLD WEISBERG

probably would not qualify as persons to be granted such access.

He said, however, that it would be possible for these critics to designate qualified pathologists to study the data after this period.

Designate Pathologists

Mr. Weisberg's publication is among a number of recent books and magazine articles questioning the commission's finding that Lee Harvey Oswald was solely responsible for President Kennedy's death. Mr. Weisberg, 53, a former newspaper

man and United States Senate investigator, lives on a farm in Hyattstown in Montgomery county. He said he began his book immediately after the assassination.

"The transfer of the X-rays and photographs is meaningless because of the conditions surrounding them," Mr. Weisberg said today. "The Government from the very beginning had access to the evidence in the pictures and has not used them."

Access Needed, He Says

"What is needed now is access to the X-rays and photographs of the autopsy by those infinitely familiar with the evidence, not beginning five years hence with access by uninformed pathologists who know nothing about the case."

The X-rays and photographs in themselves can add little to the knowledge of the case except to confirm testimony of doctors at the commission hearings, he said. But, he said, in the hands of persons such as himself and others with intricate knowledge of the assassination such data can be placed in their proper context and "be quite valuable."

A look at the X-rays and photographs, Mr. Weisberg said, might clear up what he described as "the unresolved conflict of testimony" of pathologists appearing before the commission as to the entrance point of the first of two bullets hitting the President.

Point Of Entrance

He pointed out that a chart apparently made at the time of autopsy showed the first bullet hit the President in the back. Yet, he noted, doctors also presented the

commission with an artist's drawing showing that the bullet entered the neck.

The point of entrance is important, Mr. Weisberg said, because it could, when compared with what some experts believe was the exit hole just at the knot of the President's tie, indicate the height from which the gun shooting the bullet was fired.

The lower the entrance wound in the President's body the less likely was the possibility that the same bullet also hit Texas Gov. John B. Connally, Mr. Weisberg said.

He pointed out that the slug which hit the Governor apparently was moving at a downward angle, hitting him in the back, exiting through the chest, passing through his wrist and striking his thigh.

Major Questions

The matter of how many bullets were fired at the presidential car has been a major question raised by Mr. Weisberg and the other authors.

The commission stated that it had been persuaded by the evidence that the same bullet which first hit President Kennedy also hit Governor Connally. This would conform with the commission's finding that Oswald alone did the shooting from the sixth floor of the Texas Book Depository.

If the two officials were hit by separate bullets there would have had to be two assassins because with the type of rifle used by Oswald he could not have sniped off two shots in so short a span, Mr. Weisberg and others have claimed.

Mr. Weisberg said that so far as he knows the X-rays and photographs of the autopsy were never formally presented to the commission and are not part of its record.