

Hyattstown, Md. 20734
July 7, 1966

Editor, The Evening Standard
47 Shoe Lane
London E.C. 4
England,

Dear Sir,

Your June 29 Story on the Pandora's Box of the Warren Commission is interesting and no mean journalistic achievement, for you were able to do it without reference to Pandora! As of the time of the writing of your story, none of the books mentioned in it had yet reached its publication date. The one book that had been published, my WHITEWASH: THE REPORT ON THE WARREN REPORT, the book that had caused all the belated interest in this subject and the book that launched Inquest to the total surprise of its unprepared and unexpecting publisher, is the one you found it possible to avoid.

While disappointing, this is not at all surprising, for you did not invent that, either. Nonetheless, in a private printing, WHITEWASH is doing surprisingly well, selling at a brisk pace, and attracting considerable international press interest, including both radio and television. It is not only the first book on this subject, it is also, at least as of now, the only definitive one, and therein lies its problem. Publishers, it seems, prefer milk toast to meat.

WHITEWASH is restricted entirely to the official testimony and exhibits of the Warren Commission itself, and with that alone destroys each of the Commission's major conclusions. It shows, with documentation, the avoidance, ^{distortion,} misrepresentation, manufacture and even the total and irreplaceable destruction of the best evidence. It reproduces some of the most sensational for the first time, such as the alteration of the most basic photographic evidence (with the original and doctored photographs of the shot President side by side), the certification of the chief autopsy doctor that he actually burned (in the recreation room of his home - how ghoulish can you get!) the first draft of the President's autopsy, and excerpts of the oldest version showing the changes were substantive, not editorial, and

including his written acknowledgement that the Dallas doctors, in fact, did note that the President was also shot from the front!

Would your readers like to see the original FBI report in which, while setting the Commission's direction for it and reporting as fully as he allegedly could, the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation accounted for all three bullets allegedly fired at the President in total without accounting for two of which he knew? It is, for the first time, reproduced on page 195 of WHITEWASH.

Your correspondent's fascination with the "subtlety" of the "question of a conspiracy" some time in the future - but on which Mr. Manchester has already reached his conclusion "no evidence of a formal plot to kill the President", is particularly interesting for a number of reasons: it is indubitably wrong, from the Commission's own evidence, and it is just now arrived at ("After suspending judgement on the identity of the assassin for 12 months he is now convinced that Lee Harvey Oswald did indeed shoot President Kennedy in Dallas"), amounting to but a subsidized buttressing of the official account, to be accompanied with a dainty wrist-slap for those who fabricated it.

Mr. Manchester's is, indeed, a "monkish labor", as reflected in a comparison between your interview with him and one recounted in the New York Times of May 9, 1965: "The Commission concentrated on identification of the assassin and the question of conspiracy and met its mandate superbly." What else did Mr. Manchester do in the year between these remarkably similar statements? In 1965 he also said, "Actually, Oswald is a minor figure in the story."

I submit, with all respect, that it is time for the end of the creation of heroes and the searching for goats and time for a full, public and dispassionate airing of facts. This is what WHITEWASH seeks and sought, to the degree possible, to do. It was completed in mid-February 1965, first published several months thereafter, and remains today a work to which subsequent publication has added nothing of substance.

If not a monkish labor, it was at least a great one, for it is supported by a third of a million words of typed notes alone, and it is produced without subsidy of any kind, direct or indirect (what nonsense it is to talk of Manchester as having gotten no money from the Kennedys when he has their sponsorship and had exclusive access to material even today denied others) at a cost that denies it the possibility of financial profit, and by a man who has no ax to grind save the steel of truth.

Should the Manchester work ever appear in anything like the form you describe, I heartily endorse your prediction " that it will create a sensation on publication". May I add also a scandal of unimaginable magnitude? For the Kennedy family to sponsor, no matter how innocently, another effort at stuffing this awful dose down the now-rebelling throat, will be a terrible disgrace, to the memory of the late President, to the national honor, and to themselves, especially the former attorney general who, regardless of how human and understandable the reasons were that impelled him to divorce himself from it, was nonetheless the chief of the Department of Justice that provided the actual investigation and made this monstrosity possible.

Sincerely yours,

Harold Weisberg