

If its investigation is to succeed, not only must the staff of the Select Committee on Assassinations be reasonably unassailable from unwarranted criticism, so too, must be its Chairman. Unfortunately, if Congressman Gonzalez is made Chairman, the probe can be stopped in mid-air, at almost any point, by anyone who wishes to stop it, and by blatant use of warranted criticism of its vulnerable Chairman. In fact, of all 435 members, Henry Gonzalez is probably the most vulnerable. His vulnerability exists in at least two crucial areas: (1) he secreted vital evidence in the JFK murder from the FBI and the Warren Commission, and (2) prior to establishment of the Select Committee, he publicly allied himself with some of the "pure out" critics of the Warren Report.

1) Vital evidence

Although Congressman Gonzalez has had legal training, at Parkland Hospital he took possession of the clothing of Governor Connally who was riding with JFK and was wounded in the firing in Dealey Plaza. He told neither the FBI nor the Warren Commission of his possession of these garments; ultimately he gave them to Mrs. Connally, a non-lawyer, who had them laundered.

The clothes were of crucial forensic importance because the Warren Commission's "lone-assassin" and "single bullet" theories rested entirely on the proposition that a single bullet from the lone assassin's gun transited President Kennedy's neck and then

transited the Governor's chest and wrist. Spectrographic analysis and neutron activation tests upon both sets of clothings could have gone a long way in proving or disproving the theories. Unfortunately, one set of clothing was being withheld from scrutiny.

2) Long before establishment of the Select Committee, Congressman Gonzalez allied himself with what can best be described as the "fringe element" among the critics, those whose extremism made any reinvestigation very difficult.

One of those with whom he was publicly associated was A. J. Weberman who published a book entitled "Coup d'Etat in America". In this book, Weberman places the blame for the JFK assassination on the shoulders of non other than E. Howard HUNT. Gonzalez wrote the Introduction to the book. Some clippings relating to Weberman, as well as a long memorandum on the whole subject of Gonzalez's vulnerability is attached.

MEMORANDUM BY HAROLD WEISBERG

The one Member of the House whose chairmanship of the Select Committee on Assassinations is most likely to embarrass the House and abort the investigation is Henry Gonzalez. The one who is more likely to be damaged personally and politically than any other also is Henry Gonzalez.

I have nothing personal or political against Congressman Gonzalez. I have never met or spoken with him and from what I know about him he is of the same wing of the Democratic party as I am. This memorandum is based solely on his record on this subject.

Nor is it that I am in any way opposed to a Congressional investigation of the political assassinations that, in my view, have nullified a system of society and turned the world around. My first book, Whitewash, concluded in February 1965 that the expected job had not been done, and it must be done entirely in public and preferably by the Congress. The dozen years since then have buttressed this belief. It is because I do want the Congressional investigation to succeed, not to be distracted or diverted, not to be compromised, not to waste itself in impossible defense of its chairman, that I make this statement.

Congressman Gonzalez bears a heavy responsibility for the lingering doubts -- it could even be said for their existence -- about the JFK assassination.

The Congressman was in the motorcade. He is a lawyer, whether or not he practices law. He accepted possession of the most basic evidence, Governor Connally's clothing, and then did nothing with it for months. He did not offer it to the FBI, the Secret Service or the Warren Commission. Months later he gave it to Mrs. Connally, with no advice or injunctions. She then had it laundered and with that washed away all the evidence it held.

The FBI knew the Governor's clothing was prime evidence. It also did nothing to obtain that clothing and establish the evidence it held. This gives it ample motive for inspiring attacks on Mr. Gonzalez and, were he to be chairman, on the investigating committee. The FBI's self-interest requires no less.

J. Edgar Hoover, not the Warren Commission, invented the lone assassin theory. It therefore is a major element in the committee's investigation.

Nothing is more basic in this theory than the presumption that a single bullet transited the bodies of both victims, inflicting seven non-fatal injuries. In this conjectured career, it supposedly made holes in the clothing of both victims. In Governor Connally's clothing this means his jacket, shirt, undershirts and trousers.

These could have been subjected to precise scientific testing, spectroscopy, then more than half a century old, and neutron-activation analysis, relatively new. That these tests

were not performed, that the Governor's clothing was not available for other scientific examination, is entirely due to Congressman Gonzalez's negligence. His negligence commenced at Parkland Hospital that day, when he accepted the Governor's clothing when it was evidence in a crime, as he should have known from his law training and as, I believe, the average person would have assumed. He did not instruct the hospital personnel to give this evidence to the FBI or the Secret Service, he did not do this himself, and he thereafter let it languish in his own closet even after appointment of the Warren Commission.

In no way does it relieve Congressman Gonzalez from the responsibilities of his negligence to allege that the Commission and the executive agencies had the responsibility for seeking out this evidence. Because of his silence and his inaction, the official investigators can fairly claim to have had no knowledge of its whereabouts.

Aside from the capability of the scientific testing, other and readily-apparent evidence was denied all investigation by Congressman Gonzalez. The most obvious is simple optical examination. This would disclose the direction of the bullet or bullets if the examination had been made promptly by the police, local and federal, who were at the hospital. Representative Gonzalez did not see to this -- he made it impossible. This is a hasty simplification, but on this basis alone Congressman Gonzalez can be blamed for all the unresolved questions, all the uncertainties, all the national suffering in the wake of the JFK assassination. He can be ridiculed, and, with him, the Congress

can be made a laughing stock. There are those who have the interest and the capability.

Can a man so oblivious to evidence of the crime of which he was a witness be trusted to investigate it? Can he be expected to be impartial when he has this record with which to live? Ought he not recuse himself? These are only some of the questions that can and, I believe, certainly will be raised.

* * * * *

In the light of his subsequent career, well known to those who are really going to be on trial in any real investigation, he is at once even more vulnerable. He has aligned himself with a weird assortment of paranoids and irresponsibles. One such is A. J. Weberman, self-described as a garbologist. According to Weberman and his associates, E. Howard Hunt killed JFK. Rather than being deterred by this irresponsibility, Congressman Gonzalez was so attracted to it that a year later he wrote a foreword to Weberman's book called "Coup d'Etat in America."

Hunt has filed suit against Weberman and his publisher. Once he is out of jail and not concerned about including a Member of Congress, the inclusion of Mr. Gonzalez as a defendant might be expected.

Whether or not Hunt takes this course, the least this association with irresponsibility does is raise substantial questions about Mr. Gonzalez's judgment, responsibility and detachment.

The most obvious of the many apparent questions is did he make any inquiry about either Weberman or his defamations before lending himself to Weberman's endeavors.

The least one might reasonably expect of a chairman of a Congressional investigating committee is an inquiry prior to associating himself with one who to the knowledge of his staff had this previous record.

The most perfunctory inquiry would have disclosed that "Hunt", according to an assortment of nuts, has been everyone from the west-coast representative of the right extremist Rev. Carl McIntyre to Lyndon Johnson's alleged farm manager.

If the above is what I recall on short notice, what I can retrieve from my files, can you begin to imagine what the FBI and the CIA and others have? Can you conceive what this can do to any serious investigation, one that of necessity is of these agencies? I shudder to think of what this also can mean to the Congress. It will be an object of international ridicule, of newspaper cartoons, of nightclub humor.

