

Second Part Of Manchester Book Appears

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Weisberg Defends Secret

Warren Report Critic Praises Agents

By LEE BAYLIN

Staff Writer

HYATTSTOWN — An author and critic of the Warren Commission attacked writer William Manchester Monday for Manchester's treatment of the Secret Service in his book "Death of a President" which is currently being serialized in Look magazine.

Harold Weisberg, who has repeatedly attacked the Warren Commission and government agencies for their investigation of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, came to the defense of Secret Service agents after Manchester claimed that the secret service agents in Kennedy's car could have saved his life if they had acted faster.

Weisberg is the author of Whitewash and Whitewash II, both published privately. His

first book, Whitewash, has been reprinted in paperback by Dell and also been published in Italy.

The statement by Manchester appeared in the issue of Look magazine released on the newsstands today.

Weisberg said Manchester's attack was directed mainly toward Secret Service Agent Roy H. Kellerman.

Kellerman, Weisberg said, could not have acted fast enough to protect the President in the six seconds which the Warren Commission said transpired from the first to the last shot fired.

Kellerman was sitting in the front right seat of the Presidential car, Weisberg said, and was separated from the President by a one and one half foot high steel bar used to support the president when he stood in the car and Governor

John Connelly, who was sitting in a jump seat in front of the President.

"It would have been beyond his (Kellerman's) physical capacity to get over these obstructions and behind the president to protect him from shots from the rear in the short time between the first to last shots," Weisberg said.

Weisberg praised Kellerman for his dedication.

"He was the man in charge. He stayed with the body until it got to the White House in Dallas, he did what had to be done," Weisberg said.

Weisberg also praised the other Secret Service agents assigned to the Presidential motorcade during the assassination.

"Clinton Hill, the agent assigned to guard Mrs. Kennedy,

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Service In Dallas

JFK Could Have Been Saved: Author

NEW YORK (AP) William Manchester, author of the controversial book, "The Death of a President," makes it crystal clear that he believes Lee Harvey Oswald — without accomplices — assassinated President John F. Kennedy.

... "Oswald built his sniper's perch of boxes in the southeast corner, from which the President would be seen approaching ...," Manchester wrote.

The Warren Commission also found that Oswald acted alone.

Its massive report, however, is challenged in numerous recent books which attempt to show that Oswald was part of a conspiracy. And for many persons, the assassination remains one of the greatest and darkest mysteries of all time.

In the second installment of Look magazine's serialization of Manchester's book, due Tues-

day on news stands, the author wrote:

— Kennedy may have had a premonition of impending tragedy. He pictured for his wife how an assassin could have killed him in Fort Worth on the night before he met death in Dallas, Nov. 22, 1963.

— The author suggests that if the Secret Service agents in Kennedy's car had reacted more promptly after the first shot, his life might have been saved.

— President Johnson and Kenneth O'Donnell, special aide to Kennedy, disagree completely in their recollection of the circumstances through which Johnson boarded the presidential airplane, before being sworn in, instead of taking his vice presidential aircraft.

— Kennedy issued an emphatic order to get Sen. Ralph

Yarborough of Texas into the same car with Johnson during the Fort Worth motorcade. The purpose of Kennedy's trip to Texas in 1963, the author wrote previously, was to patch up a political feud involving Yarborough, Johnson and Gov. John B. Connally Jr.

— Mrs. Kennedy wanted the transparent "bubble top" raised on the presidential car to avoid having her hair wind-blown. Had this been done, it might have contributed significantly to saving her husband's life.

The second Look installment carries Manchester's narrative from the dawn of Nov. 22 in Fort Worth, through the details of the shooting and the effort to save Kennedy's life in Parkland Hospital up to the point where Johnson and his party are preparing to leave the hospital

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MANCHESTER

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for Love Field and the return flight to Washington.

The author points a finger square at Oswald, and Oswald alone, as the assassin.

Manchester's reconstruction of Oswald's movements during the morning are "based solely on circumstantial evidence," he writes.

He gives this account:

The flooring in a room on the sixth story of the Texas School Book Depository Building was being repaired. Boxes and cartons had been piled in one half of the room.

Manchester pictures Oswald arranging them in and around the window in such a way as to conceal him from a direct view and to provide a foundation on which he could place and aim his rifle.

Toward noon, the other employees went downstairs to eat lunch and to see the President as he passed. Oswald remained upstairs.

Manchester notes that a number of writers imply that Oswald had accomplices. In some books challenging the Warren Report, it is suggested that the bullets that struck Kennedy came from a spot his car was approaching, not from the book building, which it had just passed. Hence, that Kennedy was caught in a cross-fire.

"The issue is resolved by the X-rays and photographs which were taken from every conceivable angle during the autopsy on the President's body," Manchester wrote.

He says he did not see this material but that he interviewed three persons "with special qualifications" who examined it before it was put under seal.

"None of them knew the other two, but all three gave identical accounts of what they had seen in the photographs and X-rays," Manchester wrote. Evidence is "overwhelming," Manchester says, that the first bullet struck Kennedy in the lower neck, passed through it, bruising his lung, and then struck Gov. Connally, who was seated in front of the President.

Last Nov. 1, the Justice Department announced that the Kennedy family had turned over to the National Archives 65 photographs and X-rays taken during the autopsy. They will not be examined by non-official persons for many years, under con-

ditions laid down by the Kennedys.

Parallel with his version of Oswald's action on the day of the assassination, Manchester relates the events in Fort Worth.

Kennedy awakened to discover rain was falling. This first raised the question of using the "bubble top" for the Dallas motorcade. Manchester says Mrs. Kennedy "wistfully" said, "Oh, I want the bubble top." Later, the weather in Dallas cleared.

It would not have stopped the bullets, but it might have deflected them. Further, the shattering plastic would have left no doubt that the car was under fire.

Instead, witnesses including the Secret Service agents and policemen, testified the first shot sounded to them like a "fire cracker" or a "motorcycle backfire."

That morning in Fort Worth, through some macabre circumstance, Kennedy said it would have easily been possible for someone to assassinate him the night before.

"You know, last night would have been a hell of a night to assassinate a President," Manchester quotes him as saying to his wife.

He mentioned the rain, the darkness, the jostling crowd. He asked her to imagine a man with a pistol in a brief case. He crooked his thumb twice, simulating the action of the trigger. Then Kennedy pantomimed the assassin returning the pistol to the brief case and melting into the crowd.

"He said it casually and she took it lightly," Manchester wrote.

The book describes in vivid detail the scenes when Kennedy was shot and the reactions of those in his car.

Mrs. Kennedy went into deep shock and did not remember that she had crawled out of the seat onto the trunk of the car. It was accelerating powerfully and she might have been killed but for the fact that Clint Hill, a Secret Service agent, had jumped on a rear foot rest and grabbed her hand.

She was crying, "My God, they've killed Jack, they've killed my husband. Jack, Jack!"

Several times, she cried, "Jack, Jack, I love you."

Connally, the narrative says, thought he was dying. His wife tried to convince him that he would be all right.

Manchester implies that the

Secret Service agents in the front seat of Kennedy's car reacted too slowly.

"They were in a position to take evasive action after the first shot," he wrote, "But for five terrible seconds, they were immobilized."

In the Warren Commission hearings, William R. Greer, the agent driving the presidential car, and agent Roy H. Kellerman said that the car began accelerating at about the same instant when they heard the second shot.

The first pierced Kennedy's neck, nicked his necktie, and

the Warren Commission reported, then struck Gov. Connally.

The second tore away a huge section of the President's skull. The agents in the front seat of the car testified that they were spattered with blood and fragments of bone.

Racing toward Parkland Hospital, Mrs. Kennedy cradled her husband's head against her breast while his blood drenched the seat and the floor of the car.

When the car reached the hospital it appeared that she did not want anyone else to see the ghastly condition of his head and continued to hold him.

Agent Hill removed his coat and covered the President's head. Then he was placed on a stretcher and wheeled into the hospital.

Manchester wrote that he believed Kennedy already had died. He said anyone else would have been described by the hospital as DOA — "dead on arrival."

Meanwhile, in the fear that the terrible events might have been the result of a conspiracy, Secret Service agents rushed the vice president and Mrs. Johnson into the hospital, took them into a room, and drew the shades.

In Washington, too, the thought of a conspiracy occurred when persons there heard the awful news.

Manchester reported that little Caroline Kennedy was being taken to another home to play with a friend. The White House agent guarding her, hearing the news on the radio in the car he was driving, decided to return her to the White House immediately.

The car was unmarked. Manchester says that another driver, recognizing Caroline, began following the White House car. He may have thought she had been kidnapped.

The White House agent, fearful of a plot, sped up and a wild race took place, both cars weaving through the traffic.

WEISBERG

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may have saved her life." Weisberg said.

"Hill was standing on the running board of the Presidential followup car when the first shot was fired. He ran to the presidential car, jumped on, almost falling off, got Mrs. Kennedy back into the car. He did his best to protect her and her husband," Weisberg said.

"Rufus Youngblood, guarding the then vice president Lyndon Johnson, threw himself on Johnson, offering his own life to save the vice president," he said.

"Youngblood did not have the obstructions between himself and Johnson that Kellerman had to get to Kennedy."

Weisberg said Kellerman had great presence of mind. He stayed with the president's body through the autopsy while he was undergoing great personal suffering and agony.

"Although I have criticized the government. I will not criticize those whose job it was to protect the President," Weisberg said. "For they are heroes — one who criticizes them is ignorant, vicious or both."
