Whitewash

To the Editor:

In his review of Harold Weisberg's "Frame-Up," John Kaplan quotes the author on a tangential subject . . . the treatment of Weisberg's previous book ("Whitewash") in The Washington Post:

"I know," said Weisberg, "that its book reviewer was ordered not to review 'Whitewash' after he had read it and decided on a favorable review."

I was the Post's book reviewer when "Whitewash" (about the Warren Commission's investigation of the Kennedy assassination) was published. The above-quoted sentence—which contains four falsehoods—goes a long way toward explaining why Weisberg's serial revelations and zealous certitudes have been so skeptically received by serious men.

(1) I did not decide on a "favorable review" of "Whitewash," (2) I did not plan *any* review of "Whitewash" because (3) I never read more than a few pages of the thing. Thus, (4) I was never "ordered not to review it." In fact, during the five years I worked for The Post, I was never "ordered not to review" any book.

It is tiresome to have to remind Mr. Weisberg in print of what I told him in person—when he hand-delivered "Whitewash" to my office, during the season when conspiracy-hobbyists were in full cry. . . . I decided, in agreement with my editors, to leave the consideration of books about the Kennedy assassination to reviewers better qualified to judge their merits. I disqualified myself because I am ignorant of the fine points of criminal law (as ignorant as is Mr. Weisberg, in your reviewer's opinion of him).

There were many commentators willing and able to attend such books—either in The Post's daily columns or in its Sunday book supplement. My editors were as pleased to slip me off the hook as I was pleased to be off it.

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