Reviews file

July, 1994 issue it was speculated that some early "information" about Oswald's FPCC connection, attributed to a memo from one Bernard Weisman, may in fact have come from staff of the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee. (S.I.S.S.) Some additional indirect evidence for this possibility is contained in documents recently received from Paul Hoch. The same FBI officials Wannall and Sullivan, who were sender and recipient, respectively, of the Nov. 26 memo concerning "Weisman" (correction: the retyping of this memo referred to an 11/22/63 memo from Weisman, this should have been 11/23/63), played similar roles for a memo on Nov. 29, FBI #105–82555–209, in which Edward A. Butler, an official of the Information Council of the Americas (INCA) is reported by Wannall as having testified before S.I.S.S. in executive session on 11/24/63. Although an S.I.S.S. meeting with Butler on the Sunday following the assassination is suspicious enough, the plot further thickens with an item from Hoch which is a partial transcript of the INCA record, "Lee Harvey Oswald Speaks." On that record, Senator Thomas J. Dodd, says:

> *"I asked Ed Butler to come to Washington to testify before the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee a few hours after President Kennedy's assassination, at a time when Oswald was still alive. Ed Butler brought this recording with him. What we heard convinced us that Oswald's commitment to Communism, and the pathological hatred of his own country festered by this commitment, had played an important part in making him into an assassin. This important and historical record completely demolishes the widespread notion that Oswald was a simple crackpot who acted without any understandable motivation."*

(Actually it does not seem that Butler needed to "come to Washington" to regale S.I.S.S. with his "truth tapes" about Oswald. Later in the same broadcast, Congressman Hale Boggs, the soon–to–be Warren Commissioner, describes how he sat with Butler in his D.C. office "just a few hours after" the assassination and listened to the same tapes, which he called "a most significant historical document" that was a factor in his deciding to serve on the commission). That the S.I.S.S. was soliciting such material "a few hours" after the assassination is indicative of a very early red–baiting operation by the committee.

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CASE OPEN: A REVIEW

by

David M. Keck

It was back in 1975, with Post Mortem, that we last saw a copyrighted book by Harold Weisberg. Before that, he wrote five other exhaustively detailed and documented works that he had to have self published. Though he has not published a book in the nearly twenty years since, Weisberg has hardly been inactive. He has graciously allowed numerous writers and researchers into his rural Maryland home to browse through his dozens of file drawers of government documents, including the likes of Robert Groden, Harry Livingstone, and many others. One of those others was Gerald Posner, author of the highly publicized Case Closed, published by Random House (1993). It was primarily Posner's production that drew Weisberg out into published writing again.

Case Open is a 178–page oversized trade paperback published by Carroll & Graf and Richard Gallen. It has two prefaces, an author's note and a conclusion, but no index and only one footnote at the bottom of the page (and none at the end). In a typed note in the front of my copy, Weisberg explains "This is about 20 to 25% of Case Open as I wrote it. Most was eliminated in the belief that this selection from it is more than powerful enough to make the case against Gerald Posner et al. and because a smaller book...can reach more people."

It is somewhat ironic that one of Weisberg's publishers is Carroll & Graf, the same publisher of Livingstone's Killing the Truth (1993). Weisberg has been quite critical of Livingstone's work and conclusions, and Livingstone was quite critical of Weisberg in that book. The lack of index in Case Open is consistent with the meager index (four pages) in the otherwise lengthy (752 pages) Killing the Truth.

As the title suggests, Case Open deals primarily with a response to the published work on the Kennedy assassination by Posner in Case Closed. But Case Open is much more than that. Through the prefaces, the text, and the conclusion, this book reveals much about the author (Weisberg) himself and how he got involved in assassination research. He shares his background as a U.S. Senate investigator and editor, World War II veteran, OSS employee, farmer, and author (p. viii–x). Weisberg was also one of the first to successfully utilize the Freedom of Information Act and was instrumental in convincing Congress to amend it in 1974 (p. xii).

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Weisberg clearly states the intent of his book in the Author's Note. In it, he accuses Posner of attempting to "diminish my work and question my character" (p. xv). He calls Posner's work "inaccurate, distorted...and grossly in error." Further, these inaccuracies to Weisberg were deliberate on Posner's part, an opinion he asserts when he says Posner "knowingly misrepresents what he knows to be the truth." Pretty strong stuff about the man who so impressed U.S. News & World Report that it devoted a cover and a major portions of an issue to his work, and the Book–of–the–Month Club that it made his book a major selection.

Weisberg digs right in with his first chapter. He cites all the pre–publication hype that the book received, then asks how Posner could have done in excess of 200 interviews, criss–cross the country to see people and places, review ten million words of the Warren Commission, digest all of Weisberg's and other records, and write about it in "not much more than a single year (p. 2)"

One of the major criticisms early in Case Open of Posner by Weisberg, and that continues through the book, is that Posner leads the reader to believe that the work by Failure Analysis, an engineering firm in Silicon Valley, California, that did investigative work for the American Bar Association on the assassination, did the work for Posner. Weisberg says "...Posner does not say that this elaborate and costly work was done for him. However, his writing is carefully designed to give the impression that it was done for him (p. 7)" (my emphasis) Weisberg points out that Posner never said who it was done for. By leaving out work done in the defense of Oswald by Failure Analysis, Posner leaves the impression that Failure Analysis concluded what the Warren Commission did: that Oswald was the lone assassin. In a telephone conversation with me on October 11, 1993, Dr. Roger McCarthy, President of Failure Analysis, said "We gave it our best and couldn't close the case." He added, "We would have loved to have solved it." McCarthy also acknowledged in that conversation with me that he felt Posner had "consciously attempted to create that image (that the work was done for him)." (parentheses added)

Weisberg goes on to criticize Posner for his conclusions drawn from "enhanced" Zapruder film copy, and accepting essentially the same conclusions about the case as Jim Moore (Conspiracy of One), even though Posner had Weisberg's responses in writing to Moore's work (p. 17). Posner wrote extensively about Yuri Nosenko, the much–discussed defector who reportedly has claimed that Oswald was not a Soviet agent. Weisberg is clear about how he thinks Posner got to interview the CIA–protected Nosenko when he writes "Nosenko agreed to the interview because the CIA told him to grant it and the CIA would do that only if it was absolutely certain of Posner and what his book would say (p. 19)." Even with interviewing Nosenko, Posner quoted him as saying things opposite from what Nosenko was already on record as saying at earlier times. Weisberg concludes on this topic by saying "...At the very least, the CIA made Posner's book possible (p. 23)."

Weisberg also attacks Posner's footnoting throughout the book. An example is his lengthy section on Posner's writing about Rosemary Willis, the daughter of Phil Willis, who took several still photographs of the assassination. Rosemary was the girl who is seen turning around on the Zapruder film, which Posner claimed proved his timing sequence theory. Weisberg points out that in Posner's footnote about the event, he has no source note; just a comment (p. 28).

There is a rather lengthy explanation by Weisberg of how Posner, in Weisberg's view, took information from an adolescent, David Lui, who wrote as part of a school project an article about Rosemary Willis, attributed only part of what he took from Lui, leaving the reader once again to believe that Posner came up with "original" research (p. 28).

Weisberg attacks Posner for Posner's characterization of researcher Sylvia Meagher, now deceased, as a "committed leftist" (p. 32). Meagher is one of the few researchers who Weisberg agrees with and and whose work he respects. Weisberg criticizes Posner's description of Meagher's work as "biased" as hypocritical (p. 33). By entering into this area, Weisberg highlights what many researchers and others have observed over the years: that what you believe about the John Kennedy assassination is often strongly influenced by your political persuasion.

True to his past writing and comments about assassinology, Weisberg is critical in Case Open of those with whom he agrees on other issues. In Chapter Five, he dissects the ABA "trial" and the role of Failure Analysis in researching for both sides in the presentation. This book is worth the $11.95 price if for no other reason than giving the background about that trial and the results, which Posner conveniently never mentions (a 7–5 "hung jury"). Weisberg points out what McCarthy confirmed to me, and that Cyril Wecht had originally told me, that Posner did not get permission from Failure Analysis to use their information, he asked Dr. Robert Piziali, Vice–President of a subsidiary of Failure Analysis (p. 71).

Weisberg continues through the book to pick apart each of Posner's major contentions about the "evidence" in the case and how it points to Oswald as lone assassin. For example,

Weisberg criticizes Posner for ignoring what Weisberg wrote in Whitewash concerning "proof" that Oswald carried the rifle into the book depository (Weisberg claims no such thing is proven) (p. 101). Weisberg continues in that chapter (VII) by discounting Posner's proof and conclusions regarding the rifle itself, its alleged "packaging" and where it was found.

There is a liberal sprinkling of quotes from the Warren Commission, and, as is Weisberg's custom, from his previous books on the issues that Posner raises. Throughout Weisberg contends that if Posner had read what he says he read, of Weisberg's books and the Warren Commission, that he could not conclude what he has concluded. In that way, Case Open is a continuation of his other works and should be read with them.

Case Open is consistent with themes in Weisberg's work over the past thirty years. The first is that, despite great temptation that there must be for someone of Weisberg's stature on this subject (a temptation most others have not resisted, to their financial pleasure), Weisberg has consistently refused to speculate on who actually was behind the murder of the President. Secondly, as follows from the first theme, Weisberg is meticulous in his documentation and insists on it from others in the field, including especially Posner. Third, Weisberg has consistently stated to me that he doubts that the case will be solved because "the trail is cold," but that the evidence closest to the event is the best. Thus, Weisberg has consistently used the Warren Commission testimony to disprove its own conclusions about the murder.

This book is a valuable addition to the body of writing on this subject. Weisberg did not write it for profit, as he did not have a written contract with Carroll & Graf for its publication, and had no formal agreement on what he should be paid. It is valuable because it confirms that Weisberg's work of nearly thirty years ago is still solid. It is valuable because he has taken the time to actually read and analyze Posner's references and finds them clearly deceiving and inaccurate, something that was not apparently done by Random House or U.S. News.

And that is not all. Being prepared for publication now by Carroll & Graf is Weisberg's Never Again, tentatively due out in September of this year. It will primarily deal with JAMA's involvement in this case and will, I believe hint, by asking a question, at Weisberg's thinking about who may be behind the assassination. In addition, Carroll & Graf has published a welcome volume for beginners on the subject entitled Selections From Whitewash (1994), co-published with Richard Gallen. It is a condensation of his previous works on the Kennedy assassination, and a handy reference. Martin Luther King: The Assassination, a republication of the title Frame-Up (Outerbridge & Dienstfrey, 1971), is also now available by Carroll & Graf, although the original Frame-Up, in hardbound, is available by writing to Weisberg, and is better quality.

For the 81-year-old Weisberg, the publication of these works must be rewarding. Not because any financial gain he may receive, which is unknown and undependable, but because, as he stated to me in his home in March of this year, "Writing is what I like to do." He has, for the record, responded to the recent literature on the assassination, and set the record straight. Weisberg has kept the debate on this subject on a straight course with integrity, a useful commodity to all of us.

❧

CASE OPEN:A CRITICAL REVIEW

by

Tom DeVries

Case Open: The Omissions, Distortions and Falsifications of Case Open by Harold Weisberg (New York: Carroll & Graf, 1994), 178 pages. In Case Open, the widely respected and unofficial dean of JFK assassination researchers, Harold Weisberg, provides a strident near knock-out punch rebuttal to Gerald Posner and his book Case Closed. Fortunately, the 178 page Case Open is only part of a longer manuscript which will be available to researchers in the near future at an archives of Hood College, in Frederick, Maryland. Unfortunately, because of major readability problems, Case Open will be more interesting to researchers than to the general public and the media.[1]

For those able to overlook poor writing and the apparent bureaucratic and financial problems of poor editing and publishing which I'll address later in this review, Case Open does have a lot of meat on its small skeleton. First let's look at the main topics and themes of Case Open.

Weisberg states that Posner's book is made possible only by the claim that Rosemary Willis is reacting to gunfire at around Z-162. Weisberg implies but does not argue that there was not a shot fired around that time. Rather, he simply attacks Posner's use of sources, particularly his citation of David Lui writing in a 1979 edition of The Dallas Times Herald which

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irritates him for several reasons. Posner implies that the observation of Rosemary Willis' alleged reaction to gunfire was only made possible by recent computer enhancements of the Zapruder film. The transparency of this lie becomes evident by the footnote which gives Lui credit for that observation in 1979. But Weisberg demeans Lui, apparently for being only 15 years old at the time he made the observation.

In 1979 Rosemary Willis told a reporter that it took her "maybe one tenth of a second" to react to the first shot. Weisberg attempts to discredit this, claiming that a ten year old (her age at the time of the assassination) has no concept of one tenth of a second. He also shows that Posner uses Conspiracy of One author Jim Moore as a secondary source when he should have used the Warren Commission volumes. Throughout this section Weisberg expertly exposes Posner's glaring omissions from the 26 volumes he was supposed to have mastered.

Although Weisberg's critique of Posner's source work throughout Case Open is important and valid, this Rosemary Willis business is the weakest of his major points. His statements regarding Lui sound petty. And Weisberg never attempts to explain why he does not believe a shot was fired as early as Z-162. The HSCA placed a shot between Z-157-161.[2] Robert Groden makes a good case for a shot at that time,[3] and researcher Martin Shackelford states that, based on Warren Commission testimony of witnesses seeing a shot hit the pavement at that time, there seems to be little doubt of a shot fired at Z-161.[4]

But a shot at around Z-161 does not make the single bullet theory any more plausible. Weisberg adequately refutes it without having to demean "little Lui." His attempt to discredit Rosemary Willis' 1979 statement also seems petty in that she was 26 at that time and was obviously recalling her reaction as instantaneous. Overshadowing this however, Weisberg points out that Posner omitted the fact that Rosemary's older (and presumably more alert) sister, Linda Kay Willis, testified to the Warren Commission that the second shot, not the first shot, missed.[5]

Posner claims that the first shot is the missed shot that hit the curbstone and then James Tague. Weisberg has filled many file cabinet drawers with documents gained through the Freedom Of Information Act (FOIA) which expose the patching of the Tague curbstone. He does an excellent job showing how Posner suppresses the official evidence while citing his own interviews of Tague in order to maintain his case. A patched curbstone means conspiracy.

Weisberg points to Posner's extreme double standard in maintaining that a tree branch ripped the jacket off the Tague bullet whereas the magic bullet, (both, according to Posner, fired from Oswald's alleged gun, the 6.5 Mannlicher-Carcano) remained virtually pristine after destroying 10 cm. of Governor Connally's 5th rib and traversing his right distal radius. Weisberg asserts that Posner had unacknowledged help with researching a deliberately dishonest book. He discusses the time necessary for the fastest of humans to read, write, research, travel and conduct interviews, and also to re-index the Warren Commission's 26 volumes of hearings and exhibits, which Posner claims he did. He argues convincingly that the only way Posner was able to locate and interview Russian defector Yuri Nosenko was with the assistance and cooperation of the CIA. My personal suspicion is that the CIA encouraged or even initiated the interviews. Posner suppresses Nosenko's earlier statements and testimony disclosed by the CIA wherein he states that Oswald was a poor shot and that the KGB considered him to be a sleeper agent. Instead, he again uses only his own interviews of Nosenko who has been hidden away by and at the mercy of the CIA since 1964.

Case Closed struck me also as a book that no individual, let alone a relative new-comer to the JFK assassination field, could have researched and written by himself in the time he had, even with the help of his wife, whom he acknowledges as his partner.[6] Footnoted dates given for 95% of his many interviews occur during a four month period in early 1992 when he needed to be researching and writing. I was especially suspicious of Posner's statement in his "Acknowledgments" section thanking "many people and organizations (some of whom preferred not to be named)."[7]

Posner's consistent suppression of pertinent information, facts, and documents is the strongest theme in Case Open. Although Case Closed alleges to search for the truth, it is obviously written from the point of view of a prosecuting attorney arguing to convict Lee Harvey Oswald as the lone assassin. Weisberg continually hammers home the point that Posner was aware of and had access to documents, files, information, and books which absolutely refute his own cited interviews and scores of points he attempts to make in Case Closed. In doing this Posner consistently ignores his own favorite dictum that "testimony closer to the event must be given greater weight than changes or additions made years later...." [8]

Weisberg graciously hosted Posner and his wife for three days during his research for Case Closed, and gave him unlimited access to his files. Unbelievably, Posner asked him virtually no questions. Yet Posner apparently knew how to

ingratiate himself to Weisberg because he told him that the purpose of his book was to expose fraudulent assassination theories. Of course many people know that Weisberg has often been less than patient with those who would "speculate" about any number of things regarding the assassination. But my suspicion is that Posner was coached by someone who suggested a way to gain Weisberg's good graces. (Please excuse further speculation, but maybe the CIA?) It's a well-known fact that the CIA and FBI have kept files on some of the more prominent JFK assassination researchers and witnesses.[9]

For the most part, Case Open does not deal with the first half of Case Closed which attempts to impugn the character of Lee Harvey Oswald. (There is a brief section dealing with Posner's distortion of the Warren Commission testimony of Renatus Hartogs, a New York psychologist who tested Oswald when he was 13 years old.) Posner's character assassination of Oswald is based mainly on three dubious sources: FBI Reports—(J. Edgar Hoover had an unprofessional early bias for Oswald as lone assassin),[10]—Warren Commission Testimony (dubious because of dry runs, leading questions, no defense counsel, selective calling of witnesses, and Posner's extremely selective use of their testimony)—and Marina and Lee, Priscilla Johnson McMillan's biography of the Oswalds which is full of pop psychoanalysis.[11]

Weisberg cannot be unaware of the many additional distortions in this part of the book. His self-admitted limitations of time, health, and energy more likely explain this omission. Hopefully Weisberg will treat this section of the book in depth in the longer manuscript being prepared for the Hood College archives.

Of Case Open's major themes, the most space (pp. 57-100) deals with Posner's deliberate deception in implying that the Failure Analysis Associates'(FAA) work was done for Gerald Posner. In doing this Posner suppresses numerous suspicious facts relating to the American Bar Association's use of the FAA work that would have cast doubt on the lone assassin theory. For example: FAA also did work for Oswald's defense; the coordinators of the prosecution and defense were decided by a coin flip; and the extremely limited two day trial was strictly an exercise for educating attorneys in uses of modern technology and produced a 7/5 split—acquittal for Oswald.

Although Weisberg criticizes FAA for allowing Posner to get away with his distortions and suppressions, and further blames the media for praising his work, it is clear that FAA also was not happy about what Posner and the media did. Weisberg indicates this by quoting several letters from FAA employees, and also by citing FAA's Roger McCarthy's angry reaction to Posner quoted by Dr. Cyril Wecht.

Another major theme woven into Weisberg's analysis of all Posner's deceptions in Case Open is that of the "Sieg Heil" major media (p.67), which scrambled to heap praise on Case Closed and refused to evaluate it as the big lie which it obviously is.[12] Weisberg refuses to speculate on their motives for distorting the truth, preferring instead to lambast them with sarcastic and satirical condemnation.

Despite agreeing with virtually all the major points and themes of Case Open, I was disappointed with the book. Weisberg's inimitable and sometimes awkward writing style is much more problematic in Case Open than in his earlier works. In fact, by quoting his first book Whitewash extensively, he provides the reader with a juxtaposition of clear and concise writing to the sometimes extremely strained syntax of Case Open. Intelligent readers who happen to be unfamiliar with Weisberg and the myriad nuances of the Kennedy assassination will likely find the text confusing and frustrating. Most will probably fail to appreciate the irony that good research is sometimes represented by poor writing and editing. I remarked to several other researchers that it seemed Case Open was dictated and copied without editing. Run-on and incomplete sentences abound, and poor comma usage often obscures the flow and meaning of important passages. I phoned a friend and fellow JFK assassination researcher who has maintained friendly correspondence with Harold Weisberg for years.[13] He had recently spoken with him and told me, "You're half right. It was half written and half dictated." Reading Case Open a second time, it was easy to tell which sections were which.

81-year-old Weisberg refers to the fact that he is handicapped by poor health and a lack of mobility, and has great difficulty accessing his own basement files. Case Open provides no footnotes nor index.[14] At the time of writing Case Open Weisberg was also working on another new JFK assassination book, Never Again, due for publication soon.

After leaving a phone message with a secretary, I wrote to Kent Carroll of Carroll & Graf Publishing asking him to enlighten me on the interaction between writer, editor, and publisher for Case Open. I informed him that I intended to review Case Open for The Fourth Decade and address the writing/editing problems with the book. Receiving no response, I called Carroll & Graf and was told to FAX a copy of the letter to a John Mooney, which I did, and I then followed up with another call, again failing to get past the secretary. Both letters and all phone calls requested a response, by letter or collect call. After six weeks, three phone calls, two letters,

and about $10 phone, postage, and FAX fees, I believe it is safe to say that Carroll & Graf does not want to respond to my concerns.

I have disseminated many articles refuting Case Closed to friends and acquaintances, some of whom were unfortunately fooled by either Case Closed or the media's portrayal of Posner's deceptions. However, I hesitate recommending Case Open to these same people for one simple reason. Regardless of the fact that Weisberg is one of the most knowledgeable people in JFK assassination research, a field where credibility is necessarily called into question, the writing/editing is so poor that the novice researcher/student would have good reason to doubt the book's credibility.

For example, referring to official records regarding a burglary of James Tague's home in which only his May 1964 film of the damaged curbstone was taken, there is the following sentence. "He was not, as in records officials never expected to be public they sought to deprecate him as 'a used car salesman.'"(p.148) Meaning, I suppose: "Although officials sought to deprecate him as just 'a used car salesman' (in records they never expected to be public), he was actually very successful as an auto fleet salesman." Similar problems on dozens of pages make for very unfriendly reading and often confuse the meaning of important statements.[15]

Harrison Livingstone's two most recent books, High Treason 2, and Killing the Truth, both published by Carroll & Graf, have many of the same syntactical problems as Case Open.[16] Besides poor writing, there can be only two possible reasons for such irresponsible publishing: poor editing, or no editing at all. In Case Open, the latter seems more likely to be the case. I have to wonder if Weisberg would have submitted his manuscript and audio tapes if he had known they would not be edited properly. It appears that the book was rushed into print although the reason for this is not clear. Several eight-hour days by a good copy editor could have made the text very readable.

In his excellent review of Livingstone's Killing the Truth in the October-November 1993 issue of The Investigator, James Folliard criticizes Carroll & Graf for poor copy editing but goes on to state that "Authors, of course, are ultimately responsible for what gets printed under their names."[17] Although this is true, provided they are given the opportunity to see the final copy, I have to lay the blame for the syntactical problems in Case Open at least partially, if not mainly, with Carroll & Graf.[18]

Publisher quality is commonly the standard by which books are measured, particularly in the academic community. Solid assassination research stands to gain respect in America's high schools and universities as younger teachers and professors replace old guard establishment types. A major goal of assassination research should be to make inroads to the academic community. Secondary education could be a key to getting young people interested in assassination research. Perhaps if the academic community takes it seriously, the major media might then begin to take notice of the cogent arguments espoused by many Warren Commsion critics.

Weisberg complains that no "major publisher has brought out a single truthful, responsible book that is critical of the government's record when the president was killed, when as is inevitable, we had an American coup d' etat." (p. 176) He also rails against the major media because of their total failure to tell the assassination story honestly and effectively. Both these points are true and valid. But the major media need to be challenged by the academic community. Poor writing, editing, and publishing can only hurt the reputation of good assassination research, which Harold Weisberg represents.

Harold Weisberg has probably done more for serious research on the JFK assassination than any other single individual. He has assiduously stuck to conclusions drawn only from the "OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS." His books and many FOIA lawsuits demonstrate his indefatigable spirit. He has successfully amassed vast amounts of official documents, supplying researchers with more than enough ammo to prove that there is no untainted evidence to convict Oswald of the Kennedy and Tippit murders, and to prove that our government has engaged in an on-going cover-up of the JFK assassination conspiracy. He has also been extremely generous in helping others.

Weisberg's work has of course never been properly recognized by the government or major media, and has been inexcusably ignored by some researchers. This may at least partially explain why his writing is rich with sarcasm directed not only at government agencies, the media, and those supporting their conclusions, but also occasionally at fellow Warren-Commission critics. For example, those who believe it is OK to speculate about certain "mysterious deaths," or possible assassination roles for three hobos [19] or the umbrella man, or who the gunmen or plotters were, etc., run the risk of incurring his wrath. He has been strident with criticisms of many like Jim Garrison, Oliver Stone, Mark Lane, and Jim Marrs. It irritates him that some who are convinced of a conspiracy will speculate about potentially unprovable things. But Case Open is refreshing in that it generally spews venom at real enemies such as Posner, Jim Moore, and the major

media.

But in one short paragraph, Weisberg harshly condems Jim Marr's book Crossfire as "incredible trash." (p84) Oliver Stone's JFK also suffered at the hands of Weisberg when he sent a pirated first draft script to George Lardner of the Washington Post.

However, these two sources share with Weisberg what I believe he shows to be the most important premise of all JFK assassination research: That there is no untainted evidence to convict Lee Harvey Oswald. To wit, that Oswald was innocent of killing JFK and was framed.

The responsibility for the apparent impossibility of solving the JFK assassination clearly rests with the custodians of the evidence, the U.S. Government, and the conveyors of official mythologies like Posner, Moore, David Belin, Michael Baden, and Robert Blakey. Fellow Warren Commission critics who happen to know far less than Weisberg about the case and tend to engage in speculation are not real enemies even when they do have the clout of Oliver Stone, Jim Garrison, or Mark Lane.

I am concerned that by attacking the wrong people, Harold Weisberg has contributed to an unhealthy divisiveness in the JFK assassination research community. And by allowing Carroll & Graf to publish unedited material, he is unfortunately and unnecessarily jeopardizing the well-earned respect due him. This is not to say that many whom Weisberg has criticized have not made the mistakes he has accused them of. But academics are likely confused and put off by the poor quality of some conspiracy books. And many new-comers in this field are likely confused by the existing divisiveness among the critics. Many have been inspired, stimulated, and learned much from the likes of Stone, Garrison, Lane, and Marrs, as well as from Weisberg.

For example, Stone's JFK has served as a catalyst for releasing millions of pages of files which John Newman (a man whom Weisberg respects even though he was consultant to Stone and played a cameo in JFK) is presently researching for what will hopefully be an important book on Oswald.

The JFK assassination research community needs to ask itself an important question. "Is poor publishing actually hurting the cause of solid assassination research and scholarship by alienating the academic community and the major media?" My letter to Kent Carroll thanked Carroll & Graf for having the courage to publish controversial JFK assassination books that major publishers will not. It also asked him why basic copy editing seems to be a problem for Carroll & Graf. Since I have not received a response I can only speculate and hope for forthcoming information. Any JFK assassination researcher/writer publishing with Carroll & Graf could advance the noble cause simply by hiring a good editor.

Notes

1. It is ironic that regarding his full manuscript Weisberg states that "This book shortens that lengthy indictment to make it more accessible to more people." p. 171.

2. HSCA Final Report, p. 47.

3. Robert Groden presentation given at Symposium on Political Assassinations, Chicago, Ill. April 2-4, 1993.

4. Phone call, 6-15-94.

5. 7H 498-9.

6. Gerald Posner, Case Closed, (Random House, 1993), pp. 505-6. Also, Posner by his own admission was a newcomer to serious assassination research in 1991.

7. Posner, Case Closed, p. 501.

8. Posner, Case Closed, p. 235. On page 26 of Case Open, Weisberg makes the important point that "'Testimony'" is what is sworn- under oath and is therefore subject to prosecution if it is perjurious." Posner inexcusably ignores the important distinction between "testimony" and "statements." I was disappointed that a recent article in the May 1994 issue of The Fourth Decade titled "We Are All Consumers Of Testimony" by James R. Folliard and Dennis Ford, also failed to make this important distinction.

9. See, for example, Mark Lane's A Citizen's Dissent, passim (Dell, 1975). Also, in Sudbury Ontario in August 1993, Jean Hill told me of how she had many pages of FBI documents on her released under the FOIA.

10. This attitude quickly filtered down to the agents who often intimidated witnesses. For example, a pair of FBI agents told assassination witness Richard Carr, "If you didn't see Lee Harvey Oswald up in the School Book Depository, you didn't witness it."(Marrs, Crossfire, p.318)

11. For an excellent account of the dubious nature of this source see Peter Whitmey's three part series on McMillan in the following issues of The Third Decade: May, 1991; Nov., 1991; and May, 1993.

12. Weisberg makes a notable exception: Patricia Holt of The San Francisco Chronicle who criticized Posner. p.57-9.

13. This researcher asked not to be named.

14. There are many places footnotes are needed in Case Open. Several examples are: Regarding the discussion of Carolyn Arnold's statements contained in FBI documents on page 87; and for the following statement on page 93: "The

truth is that when Oswald did the firing, as again the official evidence shows, he was so lousy a shot his mates doctored his score...."

15. Some examples of awkward, incomplete, and run-on sentences can be found on the following pages: 2, 3, 11, 18, 22, 46, 65, 66, 71, 74, 81, 85, 94, 99, 101, 126, 136, 140, 150, and 171. In addition to this there are numerous typos and confusing statements such as this one from page 93. "Before the bolt action could be operated at all that rifle had to be *removed* to prevent the eye from being put out by the bolt as it is withdrawn because of the scope." [italics in original]

16. See Monte Evan's excellent review of High Treason 2 in the September 1992 issue of The Third Decade, and James Folliard's excellent review of Killing the Truth in the October-November 1993 issue of The Investigator.

17. Folliard, James. "Battered, Bruised, But Still Alive - A Review Of Harrison Livingstone's Killing the Truth: Deceit and Deception in the JFK Case," p.6.

18. In August of 1993 I presented a paper at the Laurentian University in Sudbury Ontario. The paper was published by the committee without any editing or suggestions. Despite my requests, I was not allowed to see the galley proofs. I was shocked to find that for the published product they had used a scanner which produced a version very unfaithful to the copy I had given them. I counted 194 errors which were not my fault, evidently caused by the failure of the scanner to read type by a probably somewhat faint printer ribbon at a university computer center. The publisher had not edited or proof read my work, either before or after publication.

19. Weisberg has often said that the hobos were nothing more than "winos" (Cassette tape of KGO radio program with Noah Griffen, Robert Ranftel, and Jay Davis, 1984, also, phone call to Weisberg in July 1991). However, since he cannot name these men and has produced no records which show that any one of them had been drinking wine or another alcoholic beverage either that day or had a history of such behavior, I find it wildly speculative for Weisberg to make such a statement. The irony is that he evidently makes this statement (often in a very derisive tone) in order to refute speculation by others.

THE THIRD ALTERNATIVE: A REVIEW

by

Ulric Shannon

"It's an exasperating book."

So says Vince Palamara about his self–published opus on the Secret Service angle of the Kennedy assassination, titled *The Third Alternative—Survivor's Guilt: The Secret Service and the JFK Murder.*

The book's convoluted title is the first hint that its writing took Palamara through many twists and turns. Palamara's work in the past few years had been pregnant with suspicions that the Secret Service had been actively involved in the assassination, and his book project at first reflected that.

But if *The Third Alternative* began as a compendium of the classic suspicions about the Secret Service (the tight turn on Elm Street, driver Bill Greer's actions) and a straight The–Bodyguards–Did–It scenario, Palamara's conversations with some twenty former agents tempered that somewhat: "I started from scratch when I interviewed these guys—I had to write a whole new book," he told me.

The final product that emerges is a sort of hybrid theory: that certain agents in the White House detail were involved in downscaling the protection for the President in Dallas for motives not necessarily related to any assassination plot.

Palamara begins with the Secret Service's input in planning and arranging security for the Texas trip, which, he writes, was replete with peculiarities and departures from written procedure.

He wonders why three separate checks of the Protective Research Section's files during the planning stages of the trip showed not a single threat to Kennedy's life in the entire state of Texas, which agent Roy Kellerman termed "unusual". (p.11)

Palamara suggests that the entire Dallas trip was rife with culpably poor security arrangements, starting with the decision to hold the ill–fated luncheon at the Trade Mart, which the Secret Service conceded was the site presenting the most inherent security risks. [1]

When Gerald Behn, Special Agent In Charge of the White House Detail, was shown photographs of the catwalks overlooking the lunch site at the Trade Mart, he reportedly commented, "We'll never go there." Yet Forrest Sorrels told the

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