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By Ken Feil — The Washington Post

Harold Weisberg studies photographs.

... Searching for Truth

By Bill Peterson

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Over in his lonely, Walden-like place on Old Receiver Road in Fredrick, Md., Harold Weisberg, publisher, has just issued another book in the JFK assassination written by Harold Weisberg, author, based on 12 years research by Harold Weisberg, investigator.

The book, "Post Mortem," is a rip-roaring effort, if judged solely by its inside cover.

It proclaims: "An unprecedented investigation by unprecedented means with unprecedented results — history's seamiest secrets."

The theme is continued on the cover. "Here for the first time ever ... JFK assassination evidence suppressed for 12 years, the actual documents and pictures! ... The end of the coverup — official lies exposed Never such an investigation — never such evidence! By the one man the FBI certified in court knows more about the JFK assassination than anyone in the FBI."

But if it is like five of the six other books Weisberg, a former champion chicken farmer, has written on the

See WEISBERG, E2

Weisberg: Searching For the Truth

WEISBERG, From E1

assassination, it will barely pay for the paper it was printed on.

For despite the hyperbole and the fact that probably no other individual has spent more time investigating the Kennedy assassination, fame and fortune have passed Harold Weisberg by.

Often working 18-hour days for months at a time when the rest of the nation had seemingly forgotten about the whole thing, Weisberg has tirelessly pursued his one-man crusade.

"I heard the first UPI bulletin of what happened in Dallas while I was gathering eggs in my hen house," he recalls as he relaxes at midday in an easy chair in his living room, a glass of red wine in one hand. "From that time on, I was glued."

It has often been a lonely and unrewarding experience. Weisberg, a former newsman and Senate investigator, and his wife Lillian, have lived on a near-poverty-level income, largely supported by her earnings as a part-time accountant. Sometimes he has worried that history "might judge me a goddam fool or Don Quixote."

And ever since 1965 when he was unable to find a publisher for his first book "Whitewash: The Report on the Warren Report" (he claims commercial publishers thought the subject too hot to handle and feared government reprisals), he and his wife have had to run a family publishing house to see the results of his investigations in print. ("I had to invent the underground book to reopen the investigation of the most controversial subject in American history," he says.)

The Weisbergs edit the books, set the type, supervise their printing, and distribute them by mail.

They look like few other books. Bound paperback style, they are printed by a process which simply photographs typed manuscript pages. As a result, they look like they were printed on a photostat machine.

Written in a choppy style, they read like something somewhere between a legal

brief and a rambling personal essay and are filled with page after page of court transcripts, pictures and other documents.

Bernard Fensterwald Jr., a former Senate aide and founder of the Committee to Investigate Assassinations, calls Weisberg "the ablest researcher" among assassination buffs and says he has "demonstrated more clearly than anyone else that the Warren Commission simply didn't do its job."

But Fensterwald, who as attorney for James Earl Ray worked with Weisberg on the investigation of the Martin Luther King Jr. assassination, says the Fredrick investigator has failed to attract as much attention as other authors because "he refuses to embellish anything."

Weisberg, for instance, refuses to speculate on who killed Kennedy. He simply disputes the conclusion of the Warren Commission that Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone, shot Kennedy from a sixth floor window of the Texas School Book Depository.

But Weisberg has another serious problem attracting attention, says Fensterwald, now a Washington attorney. "He makes his living as a professional writer, but despite his brilliance at research, he's a poor writer . . . His books are very difficult to read."

Just what kind of a man is Weisberg?

"Very strong willed, very opinionated, very stubborn, very dedicated—he hasn't done anything else for 12 years—and very intolerant of people who he doesn't feel are qualified to speak or write on the subject," says Fensterwald. "He's not a nut. He's a very responsible researcher."

Weisberg, 62, lives in ranch house in a small woods outside of Fredrick. It is a quiet, isolated place where he says the fish in his pond are so tame they follow him when he walks along the banks and the "skunks smile at me through the window at 3 a.m." The living room and almost every other room in the house is cluttered with boxes of unsold books and his files.

(The Weisbergs say they gave up poultry farming 10 years ago after low flying military aircraft made their flocks neurotic. Their farming career is best remembered for their "Geese for Peace" project in which flocks of geese were sent abroad under the auspices of the Peace Corps, a project which Weisberg has said was "the first good publici-

ty break" for the Peace Corps.)

After almost a decade of silence, Weisberg says he feels a "groundswell" of interest in reopening the Kennedy investigation. Student groups pressing for a new investigation have sprung up around the nation. Television documentaries have been aired. Magazine articles and books written. Speeches made. Even Congress is showing a new concern.

Weisberg welcomes the display of interest, but holds most of the new criticism of the Warren Commission in low regard. "Every nut, every self-seeker who ever come down the pike is trying to cash in on the assassination," he says. "My view is that today there is almost no responsible work being done on the investigation."

Weisberg is particularly critical of Mark Lane, author of the best selling book "Rush to Judgment" and a popular speaker on the campus lecture circuit. "He's a ripoff artist and has been ever since he got rich on his first book," he declares.

But while Lane mesmerizes campus audiences across the country, Weisberg goes unnoticed, except by a few. One of them is Floyd W. Lamore Jr., coordinator of the University of Maryland SIIKA (Students to Investigate the Investigation of the Kennedy Assassination) chapter.

"It's a shame he's gone unrecognized so long. This is the man who has all the evidence. He has devastated the Warren Commission," says Lamore, who has read almost every word ever written on the assassination.

Students at Maryland admire Weisberg's persistence says Lamore. "You can look at his work. He doesn't theorize. He just gives you facts and lets you draw your own conclusions."

Weisberg feels his books have a sort of reverse appeal. "They say here is a man who doesn't give a damn about what other people think. Here's a guy willing to put his head on the block for what he believes in."

He acknowledges faults in his writing style. He maintains that all of his works are published as "rough drafts" because he doesn't have time to edit and rewrite, and thus has had to sacrifice "literary respectability." "All I wanted to do," he says, "is to get my stuff on paper and establish a printed record."