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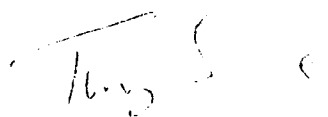
April 24 1979

Dear Harold Weisberg,

I heard from Paul Hoch the other day, enclosing a zerox of the Deslatte purchase form, which I have myself been chasing for months. Since my formal request to the FBI has been in for a while, I expect it will finally arrive. However, since you obtained the one I now have, I would not like to include it in my book without contacting you first.

Would you drop me a note saying you have no objection? Should I credit you in some way?

Yours sincerely,



Anthony Summers

No objection at all. If you want to credit me, any formulation that suits you will be fine.

Sorry you wasted time. I fear it was month after I had the copies made before I could find time to go over them and select the copies I sent Paul. Most of the copies were for other purposes.

The name "Moore" can also be a bit provocative if you have time for any further chasing. It may interest you to know that immediately after Jones Harris fed the New York Times a distorted account of records he represented had been suppressed when they had not been, having to do with an FBI concern over Oswald's passport getting into the wrong hands, Channel 5 in Washington asked me if I would appear with Harris and Howard Willens on the Panorama show. Harris and Willens both tried to make it appear (falsely) that Warren personally had suppressed and withheld even from the staff indications of an Oswald imposter. Anticipating some such deal I had the original Deslatte report in my pocket -

I'd published it in 1967 - and I asked Willens why he as DJ liaison had not gotten the rest of the records. He never answered. The producer told me after the show that it had taken a decade to

get Willens out of his shell and now he was back in it forever.

# Books of The Times

By Christopher Lehmann-Haupt

**GODDESS: The Secret Lives of Marilyn Monroe.** By Anthony Summers. 415 pages. Illustrated. Macmillan, \$18.95.

**ANTHONY SUMMERS**, a veteran journalist formerly with the BBC and now living in Ireland, has a habit of taking worn-out subjects and making them seem fresh and alive again. He did it in his first book, "The File on the Tsar," about the disappearance of the last Russian imperial family. He did it again in "Conspiracy," an account of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and its investigation that appeared nearly 17 years after the event. And now he has done it again, most effectively of all, in "Goddess: The Secret Lives of Marilyn Monroe," a biography of the film star that focuses its harshest light on the circumstances surrounding her death by apparent suicide on Aug. 4, 1962.

Listed in Mr. Summers's own bibliography are nearly 40 titles on Marilyn Monroe, some of them solid enough — Mr. Summers considers "the best work to date" to be Maurice Zolotor's "Marilyn Monroe" (1960) — many of them pretty far out. In a way, "Goddess" is the farthest of them all. If we accept Mr. Summers's most sensational conclusions, then yes, Robert F. Kennedy was involved with Monroe's death. According to the author's reconstruction, the then Attorney General was present at the scene some time during that

night, making certain that evidence of her sexual involvement with both him and his brother, the President of the United States, was removed.

He was gravely concerned, Mr. Summers speculates, because Monroe's associations had revealed her involvement with the Kennedys to such enemies of theirs as the gangster Sam Giancana and the teamster leader James R. Hoffa. To obscure the Monroe-Kennedy connection, the author concludes, it was even necessary, humbly, to enlist the aid of the F.B.I.'s J. Edgar Hoover, whose agency saw to it that certain evidence never came to light.

Are we to take these conclusions seriously? From a single reading, one cannot swear that Mr. Summers hasn't done it all with mirrors, so to speak. The power of his evidence is cumulative, obviously enough, and it's possible that the exposure of hidden weaknesses in his case may turn his reconstruction to dust.

But his case is singularly impressive. He has worked exhaustively, interviewing some 600 people, excepting of course Monroe's two best-known husbands, Joe DiMaggio, who refuses to discuss the subject with any writer, and Arthur Miller, who is saving whatever he has to say for his autobiography.

Mr. Summers has turned up many new witnesses, among them the widow of a key figure in the case who says that she and her husband learned of Monroe's death at least



Anthony Summers

three and a half hours before the police were informed, and people connected with an ambulance company who offer evidence that Monroe was taken to a hospital that night. This would indicate, Mr. Summers believes, that she either died en route or in an emergency room, and then was returned to her bedroom for the police to discover.

What is particularly impressive is Mr. Summers's objective approach to people connected with the case who for one reason or another have been dismissed as part of a jural fringe on the subject of Monroe. Many of these people turned out to be credible, not least among them one Robert Slatzer, whose claim to have been briefly married to the actress Mr. Summers managed to substantiate.

Finally, there is the extraordinary welter of detail that the book puts together, ranging from a seemingly preposterous account — but attested to by a solid witness — of how Robert Kennedy once disguised himself and visited a nude beach with Marilyn and friend, to a pathetic description of how, to give Monroe the confidence to sing "Happy Birthday" to President Kennedy at a 1962 Madison Square Garden fund-raiser, a friend read aloud to her the children's story "The Little Engine That Could."

But whether the case that Mr. Summers makes proves ultimately valid, it makes for extraordinary reading. Instead of bludgeoning the reader with his theories, he lures one on, and the drama of his presentation is nearly as great as what it finally reveals.

There are occasional lapses. Of Monroe's hero worship of Abraham Lincoln, Mr. Summers writes: "It was her first love affair with a President of the United States." Although it is probably necessary for him to self-advertise, one cringes a little each of the several times he records a phrase like "obtained exclusively for this book." And when he gets around to examining the theory that Monroe was murdered, he seems to have it both ways, first enticing us with its possible truth and then concluding that he doesn't believe it.

Yet "Goddess" is a remarkable performance. Inexplicable mysteries remain, another reporter as skilled as Mr. Summers might tip the balance of evidence another way. But that rebuttal will now have to be written. The ghost of Marilyn Monroe cries out in these pages as poignantly as in any book yet written about her. Who will put her spirit to rest?