

# Weisberg's JFK assassination theory cites government fakery

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(Tom Tiede, columnist for Newspaper Enterprise Association, delves into the contention of Harold Weisberg of Shookstown concerning the murder of President John F. Kennedy and what Weisberg has called in a number of books, a government "whitewash").

By TOM TIEDE

WASHINGTON (NEA) — Who did kill John F. Kennedy? According to ideas recently popularized to excess, it was Lyndon Johnson, or Richard Nixon, or J. Edgar Hoover, or Allan Dulles, or all of the above. Occasionally someone goes so far as to suggest it was a looney named Lee Harvey Oswald.

Nobody knows for certain, and the trouble is that with the simplistic speculation getting in the way no one may ever know.

Once the obsessions of people who came out only at night, assassination theories have become so widely and ridiculously available that the end result may be, according to one Harold Weisberg, "to inure everyone to deaden the public's sensitivities, to destroy the chances of getting Americans really interested in finding the truth."

Weisberg should know about the psychology of zany theorizing. He theorized a few zanies himself. As perhaps the first American to be forever absorbed by the JFK murder — he says he has not slept soundly for 14 years — he has written seven published books, all entitled "Whitewash," in which he has advanced the notion that Oswald could not have killed Kennedy because "his rifle could not have been the murder weapon." Weisberg is nothing if self-assured: Oswald's weapon did not do it, repeat not, n-o-t, period.

For all his stringent convictions concerning a matter disgracefully confused by stringent convictions, Weisberg is perhaps as authoritative as anyone concerning the assassination. Certainly he is one of the most thorough of the civilian investigators. The college lecture circuit that appears to have softened the brain of Mark Lane, is not for him. Weisberg does not write merely for titillation as do many of the phonies who've grown wealthy on mushy prose. "The field is full of ripoff artists," says Weisberg.

It should be inserted here that there are those in the assassination investigation culture who feel Weisberg is less than perfect also. But this is understandable in a movement where almost everyone hates almost everyone. Each theorist believes himself to be genuine and all others to be illegitimate. Notably excluded from this generality, perhaps, are Sylvia Megher, now more or less retired after publishing her authoritative "Accessory After the Fact," and Howard Roffman, a 22-year-old law student who is one of the youngest of the assassination "experts" and whose reputation is fairly solid.

But back to Weisberg. He's 62, a one-time newsman and retired poultry farmer, now suffering from phlebitis and frustrations in Frederick. He sees little good resulting from the current popularity of anti-establishment assassination theories. "The trouble is everybody keeps trying to address the question: who killed JFK? We'll never know that, maybe we never can know it. What we should be concentrating on is the absolute destruction of the Warren Commission Report." Why was it faked, Weisberg wonders, and why did our

institutions cover it up? What is the real import of the matter.

Johnson knew about the fraud, Weisberg says. So did Gerald Ford, who was a member of the commission, and in fact enlarged on the fakery, according to Weisberg, by deleting all anti-government material from his own book on the findings. When one brings in other institutional complicities, such as that of the police, Weisberg says the implications are grave: "If a President can be killed in broad daylight, the wrong man arrested for it and a fake investigation held to cover up the truth, well then we have to ask ourselves if any President is ever safe, and in fact if any of us are ever safe."

Rhetoric aside, Weisberg speaks here of the true hurt of 1963. Kennedy's killer is a secondary issue; the relationship of the government to the people is the sting that endures. Major officials betrayed their trust, authorities in democratic institutions polluted themselves with lies and evasions. And still the people wait for the truth. Why? asks Harold Weisberg. It is a vital question.