

THE POINTER



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GI Toll

The following casualty figures for Indochina are based on U.S. government statistics. They are lower than U.S. casualties reported by the liberation forces. Figures are from Jan. 1, 1961 to Nov. 20, 1971. Figures in parenthesis are for the week Nov. 13 to Nov. 20. Killed: 45,604 (5); "Non-combat" deaths: 9,947 (13); Wounded: 302,205 (4); Missing, captured: 1,617.

Menominee

Weisberg Interview

Christmas Trees

Weisberg On King Assassination

Special Interview

The Symposium on Assassinations, sponsored by Student Senate and UAB, concluded Monday evening with a presentation by special investigator for James Earl Ray, Mr. Harold Weisberg. The former OSS intelligence and political analyst directed a two-hour discussion in the Wright Lounge on the fallacies and legal complexities in the case against the man charged with the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Weisberg is the author of *Frame-up*, a recent book on the King assassination, and has also written three volumes entitled *Whitewash*, which deal with the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

The following interview is a summary of the lecture material presented by Mr. Weisberg on Monday.

Pointer: Mr. Weisberg, what is the present situation in the trial of James Earl Ray, and if you could, would you give us some general background on the trial.

Weisberg: There is no trial. The situation is that Ray is trying to get a trial. There never has been a trial. And to encapsulate it, I don't think the state of Tennessee is breaking its back to keep him from having a public trial, because it enjoys the fullest confidence in what is called evidence against him. If they had a case against him, they'd be anxious to have it over with.

Pointer: In your opinion, if the James Earl Ray theory is false, what were some of the possible reasons for the assassination of Martin Luther King?

Weisberg: Well, the most obvious purpose served was to remove the most popular Black leader at a time he had begun to radicalize; at a time he had become what, to him, was a very militant leader for peace; at a time he had begun to demand re-ordering of domestic society. I feel that those who committed the assassination had this objective in mind.

Pointer: Do you see any direct connection between the slayings of the Kennedys, Malcolm X, and that of Martin Luther King?

Weisberg: No, not a direct connection, but a philosophical one. They all served the same purpose, all give the same answer to the lawyer's question, "Cui bono?" or, "who profited?"

Pointer: If it would be possible to prove the Warren Commission Report wrong to the general public, what would you see as the next significant step of action in pursuing the assassination question?

Weisberg: A true, free, entirely open and entirely public investigation with as close a duplication as possible of the adversary system of justice, with adversaries trying their best to break each other down. This is the traditional American concept of establishing legal fact. I don't believe there should be a presentation of only one side. I think the second side should be pursued with equal vigor and the same facilities. I don't think that without something like that there can ever be an accepted explanation.

Pointer: In your lecture, you referred to plea bargaining in the court system. Do you think that this particular method of settling cases is significantly undercutting the entire legal process?

Weisberg: It goes further than that. It makes it impossible for many poor defendants to ever have a fair shake in court. Let me give you an example. They pick up a guy who is charged with robbing a news stand of ten dollars, and they may or may not have a case against him, so they add five or six other charges that don't exist. His lawyer, who serves without pay if the defendant is poor, visualizes all he has to go through in court. He has to defend against all these charges and he has to find witnesses, so they make a deal. The prosecution will drop the five spurious charges they've added and the guy will plead guilty, whether or not he is guilty, to having

robbed the news stand of ten bucks. The prosecution gets a conviction. And it's become a traditional, an accepted form today to just heap spurious charges on a defendant just so the case won't go to trial.



Harold Weisberg

Pointer: Can you suggest any means by which the public could pressure the government into opening the National Archives to divulge all the restricted information on the JFK assassination?

Weisberg: It's not that simple. First of all, if there were really hot stuff still suppressed in the Archives, I don't think that in most cases the average person is in a position to understand what it means. I could cite elements of evidence to you, and I think that most of you are more sophisticated than the average American, that would have no meaning to you. It takes a certain amount of detailed knowledge to extract the meaning that evidence has. I don't think the solution lies at all in the Archives. First of all, there's too much there that shouldn't be released. I don't think the Archives has the most important suppressed evidence. The Archives has what the Warren Commission had, and I don't think the Warren Commission has the most important evidence...I'll give you one example. The FBI never gave the Warren Commission its spectrographic analyses, and the Warren Commission was accommodating and never asked for it. By means of spectrography, certain things can be done and certain things cannot. One of the things that can be done is to prove that fragments of bullet did not come from the same bullet. That's negative evidence. But if it could be proved that the fragments from the President's head, for example, came from two different bullets, there would be considerable embarrassment to the official authorities. So there's no spectrographic analysis that's available. Spectrography cannot prove that, to the exclusion of all other bullets, fragments had a single source; but it can prove that the fragments could have come from a single source. I believe that not making this available, not giving it to the Warren Commission, and the Warren Commission not asking for it, is a guilty sign. I think if the spectrography proved the official mythology, it would have been on the front newspaper. The only reason it's suppressed is because it doesn't. That's why I'm suing for it. But the Warren Commission never had it, so opening the National Archives wouldn't make it available to the people. The Archives have become an oversimplification.

Pointer: How do you view the national news media generally, and in particular in regard to the coverage of the political assassinations of the last decade?

Weisberg: I think the coverage of the King assassination by the average, everyday working reporter was excellent. Having said that, I think I've said everything good I can say about any element of the media in any of the political assassinations. Some of the most eloquent editorials appeared in the major Eastern press at the time that everyone was horrified about what happened to Ray. This means also that the whole King thing was

swept under the rug. The saltiest tears were those of the New York Times editorial page, and they were salty until they were dry, which was about the time the type was dry. That's when the New York Times forgot about it. As a matter of fact, when my book came out, which rather praised the Times for that editorial and for some of the reporting, the New York Times didn't entrust its reporter Martin Waldren, who covered the trial and who's a competent reporter, to review the book. Nor could they trust Peter Kihns, who's done most of their writing on political assassinations. There were any number of other competent book reviewers to review the book. They reached all the way across the country to Stanford University and they found one John Kaplan. Mr. Kaplan became a member of the staff of the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice, and that's where Ray was really framed. He then became a federal prosecutor, and he then became an apologist for the Warren Commission. And at the time he, if you'll excuse the expression, "reviewed" my book for the Sunday Times, he was simultaneously involved in writing an anti-Angela Davis piece of propaganda for the United States Information Agency. I've given you this long explanation to put intent in perspective. There are 200 million people in the country. I don't think it's an accident that John Kaplan, a sycophant on political assassinations and an almost official apologist, was selected to do an axe job on *Frame-Up*. It killed the book.

Pointer: Do you see any hope for the American university as an institution for radical change?

Weisberg: Sure, as long as they've got students like the present generation of students is turning out to be. But if it's up to anybody else, hell no. Look, I'm not trying to cotton up to you, I mean it.

Pointer: What books in general would you recommend for young people today?

Weisberg: First of all, I'd have to confess a lack of competence to answer parts on that question. The intensity with which I have followed my own work has not let me be familiar with the best of modern writing for the past eight years. I think there is a tendency to forget about some books I think are classics. I think it's become impossible to teach literature and to cover the field well. There's too much been written. But I'm not a Caulfield fan. I think, for example, that a lot more good can be found in Ecclesiastes than in Salinger. I think Orwell is still not fully appreciated prophet. I think 1984 is one of the great works of all time, and we are really in a 1984 period in the United States today. I think that in terms of understanding the Kennedy administration it is kind of difficult because the people who wrote about it recorded it well, but interpreted poorly. Schlesinger, for example, didn't begin to understand what he was saying in *A Thousand Days*. So I have to be really talking about my life at your period in your life, and I don't think it's right for my generation to do that. I think your generation ought to find what it likes, what it finds relevant, what it thinks addresses its problems and gives it understanding. I don't think you ought to pay a damn bit of attention to what my generation says. That's really extreme. I don't really mean that. What I really mean is a modification of that. I think you ought to listen to us, but I think you ought to make up your own minds. And when I said I don't think you ought to pay a damn bit of attention to us what I really mean is that if you disagree with us, you do what you think. I do think, from experiences in the past, some of which were a little bit more intense than others, that yours really is the best generation this country has ever turned out. You've got your share of finks, you've got your share of cop-outs and whores; but percentage-wise, you're better than we were.

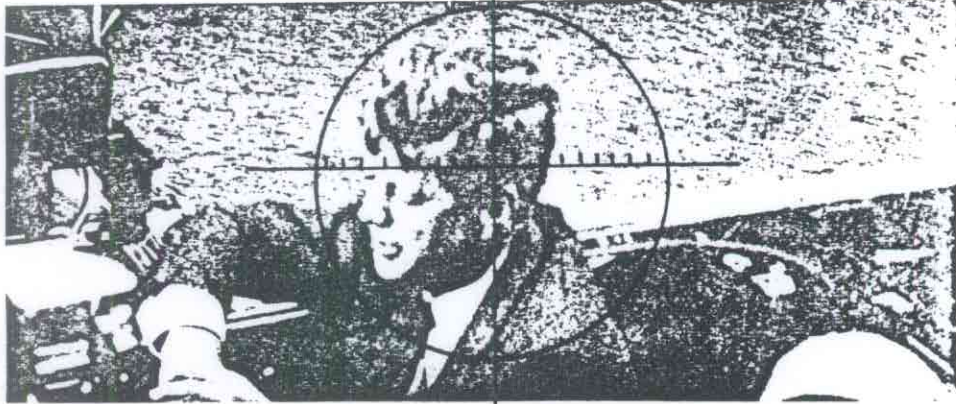
Editor's Note: Students wishing to order Mr. Weisberg's book may write to him at the following address:

Mr. Harold Weisberg
Route 8
Frederick, Maryland 21701

Each volume of *Whitewash* is \$5.00; *Frame-up* is \$10.50 per copy. Mailing costs are extra.

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