

Weisberg pores over new data on

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Harold Weisberg's passion to learn the truth about the assassination of John F. Kennedy burns faster and hotter than the pine boughs he tossed Wednesday into his airtight wood stove.

Bough after bough were tossed into the orange flames, warming Weisberg's wood-paneled Receiver Road living room, while the bespectacled 71-year-old outlined for a reporter his allegations against the U.S. government.

For more than 11 years, Weisberg has been manic in his quest to get his hands on documents long-suppressed, he says, by the FBI; documents that he believes prove that Lee Harvey Oswald was not alone when he shot President Kennedy Nov. 22, 1963.

Each day, there is more to learn about the crime, and every day new information—through court battles and research—comes filtering in.

Weisberg received new information in January, after yet another court battle, about Oswald and the Warren Commission, the seven-man presidential committee assigned by Lyndon B. Johnson to investigate the assassination.

(See Jack Anderson's Washington Merry-go-round on Page A-6)

Weisberg contends that a large-scale coverup amounted to the government's whitewashing of the historical event. Uncovering the truth, he says, has been his life's work.

Weisberg has leveled many allegations against the FBI, Secret

Service, and the justice system, but he is quick to note that he has not fought to create a "whodunnit" story, but has fought the system which stifles information, seemingly at will, because, by law, access to the files is granted to all Americans.

His life's work is a search, he says, "for the truth."

It has been a journey slowed by miles of red tape, and has involved as many as 50 court appearance days, and so many hours

Commentary

of work that Weisberg cannot estimate them. But even though the odds have been stacked against him since the beginning, Weisberg has been rewarded with results.

He has authored six books on the subject of the Kennedy assassination, and has penned another on the shooting death of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. All of them are investigative reports; all of them self-published.

While Weisberg has not been rewarded in the monetary sense, his are deeper satisfactions: he is considered a major force behind the Freedom of Information Act, his books and inquiries have opened the doors of closed government information for many others, and one of his books became a best-selling work of nonfiction.

When Weisberg broke "Whitewash," the first of a four-part series on the Kennedy assassination, it sold as many as 300 to 500

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JFK assassination

copies a day in some stores, Weisberg recollected.

"Whitewash," like the rest of Weisberg's books, was self-published, he said, because publishers were hesitant to publish a book on the volatile subject because of its stance against the government's handling of the case.

"All the editors raved about my first book, and there were always policy decisions against it," he said, his voice showing no anger.

Weisberg has devoted his life to the Kennedy story partly because he was simply able to.

"You see, I have a reporting background. I've been an investigative reporter. I was a senate investigator. I was an intelligence analyst in World War II, so I had a different background than most people. But in addition to that, I had no deadlines to meet. I could sit and think, and reporters on the story couldn't," he said.

In all, he has collected 60 file drawers of information on the two assassinations.

Now in his later years, Weisberg, still as sharp as two tacks, will sit in his writing room and bang on his manual typewriter and look out the many large windows. He will see the pond below the house surrounded by pines, and he will look at the mallards who paddle around in his built-in swimming pool.

And perhaps he will walk, despite circulatory problems, across his property, past his 1965 Plymouth Valiant with the faded blue bumpersticker: WHO KILLED JFK? And he will dream of a time when Americans are truly free.

And he will fight.