

(NY ONLY)

(PMS-PMS)

HYATTSTOWN, MD., JAN. 24 (AP)--HAROLD WEISBERG, A FREQUENT CRITIC OF THE WARREN COMMISSION, TOOK EXCEPTION TODAY TO WILLIAM MANCHESTER'S TREATMENT OF THE SECRET SERVICE IN HIS BOOK, "THE DEATH OF A PRESIDENT."

BOOK, WHICH REACHED THE NEWSTANDS TODAY, MANCHESTER SUGGESTED THAT SECRET SERVICE AGENTS MIGHT HAVE PREVENTED THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY IF THEY HAD REACTED FASTER AFTER THE FIRST SHOT.

WEISBERG CONTENDED SECRET SERVICE AGENT ROY H. KELLERMAN, RIDING IN THE RIGHT FRONT SEAT OF THE PRESIDENTIAL CAR IN DALLAS, COULD NOT HAVE ACTED QUICKLY ENOUGH TO OFFER PROTECTION IN THE SIX SECONDS WHICH THE COMMISSION SAID TRANSPIRED BETWEEN THE FIRST AND LAST SHOTS.

KELLERMAN WAS SEPARATED FROM KENNEDY, WEISBERG SAID, BY A 1 1/2 FOOT HIGH STEEL BAR AND GOV. JOHN CONNOLLY OF TEXAS, WHO WAS SITTING IN FRONT OF KENNEDY.

"IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BEYOND HIS (KELLERMAN'S) PHYSICAL CAPACITY TO GET OVER THESE OBSTRUCTIONS AND BEHIND THE PRESIDENT TO PROTECT HIM FROM SHOTS FROM THE REAR," WEISBERG SAID.

WEISBERG ALSO PRAISED OTHER SECRET SERVICE AGENTS ASSIGNED TO THE PRESIDENTIAL MOTORCADE.

"CLINTON HILL, THE AGENT ASSIGNED TO GUARD MRS. KENNEDY. MAY HAVE SAVED HER LIFE," HE SAID. "HILL WAS STANDING ON THE RUNNING BOARD OF THE PRESIDENTIAL FOLLOWUP CAR WHEN THE FIRST SHOT WAS FIRED. HE RAN TO THE PRESIDENTIAL CAR, JUMPED ON, ALMOST FALLING OFF, AND DID HIS BEST TO PROTECT MRS. KENNEDY AND HER HUSBAND.

"RUFUS YOUNGBLOOD, GUARDING THE THEN VICE PRESIDENT LYNDON JOHNSON, THREW HIMSELF ON JOHNSON, OFFERING HIS OWN LIFE TO SAVE THE VICE PRESIDENT. BUT YOUNGBLOOD DID NOT HAVE THE OBSTRUCTIONS BETWEEN HIMSELF AND JOHNSON THAT KELLERMAN HAD BETWEEN HIMSELF AND KENNEDY."

WEISBERG HAS REPEATEDLY ATTACKED THE WARREN COMMISSION AND OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES FOR THEIR INVESTIGATION OF THE ASSASSINATION, AND HAS WRITTEN BOOKS ENTITLED, "WHITEWASH" AND "WHITEWASH II."

"ALTHOUGH I HAVE CRITICIZED THE GOVERNMENT," HE SAID, "I WILL NOT CRITICIZE THOSE WHOSE JOB IT WAS TO PROTECT THE PRESIDENT, FOR THEY ARE HEROES. ANYONE WHO CRITICIZES THEM IS IGNORANT, VICIOUS, OR BOTH.

OB148AED !!