

Oswaldology, as it were

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The Oswald Code

Alan Jules Weberman

New York: Independent Research Associates, 2014, 300 pps.
Illustrations, notes, index, \$17.00 (amazon)

Alan Jules Weberman or, more familiarly, A J Weberman, is widely known as a garbologist, Dylanologist, and as the author of a book on the JFK assassination.¹

The main title page has a photograph captioned in caps THE AUTHOR SUMMER 1963 HITCHING TO THE YUCATAN. Just why this photo is positioned so prominently here and its significance are unexplained. Could it be that the author wanted to prove he was actually about in the year that JFK was assassinated, and therefore qualified to write about it? (This is along the lines of Ned Polsky declaring that many writers consider themselves sociologists merely because they are members of society.)

Weberman explains in the opening chapter that studying Oswald's address book 'confirmed my belief that Oswald was adept at steganography and hid information in it.' He continues by saying that whereas cryptography is making information unreadable by third parties, steganography is the practice of *hiding* [italics supplied] information, and he should have added the qualifier *in plain sight*. Or, to put it another and better way, as the inestimable David Kahn has written: 'The methods of steganography conceal the very existence of the message.'²

So, whereas official investigations have paid only a cursory interest to Oswald's address book, Weberman will venture forth where angels and dupes fear to tread.

¹ See my 'Inside Lee Harvey Oswald's address book' in this issue.

² David Kahn, *The Codebreakers: The Story of Secret Writing* (New York: MacMillan Publishing, 1967) p. xiii. Still, after all these years, the best book on the subject.

The author jumps about like a pimp with dog shit on his shoes. We have this document, then that document, this illustration, then that illustration, and one hopes they will be tied together and their importance explained. But it never comes. Then Gerry Patrick Hemming appears on the stage, described by Weberman as a 'fascinating dude', who confided in him all sorts of Big Secrets; but Weberman doesn't realise he is being toyed with.

Oswald worked for a time in Dallas at Jaggars-Chiles-Stoval, a firm that undertook classified security typesetting for the US government. The address of the company together with their phone number is in the address book and underneath Oswald has written *micro dots*. Well, big deal. So what? Weberman comments:

'An FBI document dated October 2, 1964, revealed that the Bureau examined photographs of Oswald in the USSR and his Russian books for microdots, but found none. Among Oswald's possessions the Dallas Police Department discovered a pair of Russian binoculars. The binoculars could be reversed to blow an image down.'

So, not good honest US binoculars, but sneaky Russian ones. This claim is absurd, as anyone can easily demonstrate whether with Russian or other binoculars. The optics are just not capable of achieving this.

There are many reproductions of pages from the address book with Weberman seeing things that are just not there. To take one example, Frank Fiorini Sturgis, one of the Watergate burglars and a familiar face to the JFK critical community, features prominently. Weberman has this:

'The name FIORINI appeared twice in Oswald's address book disguised as two words. One was "orinis" the other was "Russ for Forin". As you can see letters "i-n" were written in a different ink.'

Pretty conclusive proof, eh? This is up there with Ignatius Donnelly and his Great Cryptogram.³

³ Ignatius Donnelly, *The Great Cryptogram: Francis Bacon's Cipher In The So-Called Shakespeare Plays* (1881). The title is self-explanatory. Could well have served as an inspiration to Weberman.

We are not finished with Sturgis yet. There is a photograph of him in his pyjamas and dressing gown holding a saucer and cup of tea sitting on a sofa next to his matronly-looking mother who has one hand on his shoulder while the other points an accusatory finger at him. It's captioned, again caps throughout, FRANK'S MOM BAWLS HIM OUT FOR KILLING KENNEDY. Anywhere else I would assume this was a lame attempt at humour, but here I suspect it is meant to be taken seriously.

Weberman presents further photos of Sturgis and claims he was one of the Three Tramps arrested on 22 November in Dealey Plaza. One of the others was Howard Hunt. The third was David LeMar Christ. Who he? You'll find his name in Oswald's address book, but disguised of course.

It was only a matter of time before the name of James Jesus Angleton appeared. Weberman writes, 'Angleton's name was cleverly encrypted in Oswald's address book, disguised as "Plug for Radio".'

Plug for Radio? This is on page 86. The thought of wading through 200 more pages of the book was too much to contemplate. The *non sequiturs*, the irrelevancies, the tortured decrypting, the Zen-like illogic, and so on were doing my head in big time. Enough already!