Author challenges death theory

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"Huey didn't break the law, Huey used the law. How do you put a label like 'a dictator' on a man who wants to let people go out and vote?"

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By TIM TALLEY
Advocate staff writer

In 1977, Ed Reed, a public relations consultant and political analyst, was asked to help prepare for an anniversary celebration. The client was the Capitol House Hotel, and the celebration was to mark the 50th anniversary in 1985 of the death of former Louisiana governor and U.S. Sen. Huey P. Long, who was a frequent resident of the hotel and maintained a suite there when it was called the Heidelberg.

"I started to go ahead and do the research," Reed said. "Everyplace I went, I ran into Huey Long. I didn't start out to right a book."

But, nine years later, Reed published a 250-page book, "Requiem for a Kingfish," which analyzes the mysterious circumstances surrounding Long's death and the possible motives of his purported assassin, Dr. Carl Austin Weiss.

Reed's research led him to some well-documented conclusions about how and why Long was shot.

"I was interested in power for power's sake," Reed said. "Huey Long died 56 years ago, but his remains still dominate the entrance to Louisiana's Capitol just as his legacy continues to influence its politics."

"He's a prisoner forever. He'll never get away from Baton Rouge," Reed said.