UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

HAROLD WEISBERG,

Plaintiff,

V

Civil Action No. 75-1448

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINIS-TRATION,

Defendant

MAR 22 1976

STIPULATION TO DEFENDANT'S MOTION FOR AN EXTENSION OF TIME TO RESPOND TO MOTION TO COMPEL ANSWERS TO INTERROGATORIES

Defendant has moved for an extension of fourteen days of the time within which to respond to plaintiff's motion to compel answers to interrogatories. In support of this motion defendant states that "plaintiff has made numerous allegations which purport to call into question the credibility of defendant in answering plaintiff's interrogatories" and asks additional time in order to research these allegations and "file a proper response by way of affidavit."

Plaintiff agrees that he has challenged the credibility of Dr. Rhoads' answers to his interrogatories and that the defendant's attorney should be granted the time needed to investigate this. Accordingly, plaintiff hereby stipulates to the extension of time sought by the defendant.

In order that the investigation of the United States Attorney for the District of Columbia into Dr. Rhoads' credibility not miscarry, plaintiff wishes to direct attention to the discrepancy between Dr. Rhoads' sworn statements in plaintiff's Freedom of In-

formation lawsuits and his testimony before the House Subcommittee on Government Information and Individual Rights of the Committee on Government Operations.

As the attorney for the defendant should recall, in Weisberg
v. General Services Administration, Civil Action No. 2052-73, in
which plaintiff sued for disclosure of the January 27, 1964, Warren
Commission executive session transcript, Dr. Rhoads answered plaintiff's second interrogatory as follows:

2. The transcript was originally classified under the provisions of Executive Order 10501, as amended (3 CFR, 1949-1953 Comp.) It is presently classified under the provisions of Executive Order 11652.

Dr. Rhoads' swore that this answer was made "upon his personal knowledge and belief". [See attached Exhibit H, which contains both the questions and the answers to plaintiff's first set of interrogatories in Civil Action 2052-73]

However, in his November 11, 1975, testimony before the House Subcommittee on Government Information and Individual Rights, Dr. Rhoads testified that he had "assumed" that the January 27 transcript had been classified under the authority of Executive Order 10501. [See pp. 71 and 80 of hearing transcript, attached hereto as part of Exhibit I] As Mr. Steven Garfinkel, Counsel, Office of the General Counsel of the General Services Administration put it at that same hearing:

It also appears from the record that the President, and of course, his advisers, were the perpetrators of an oversight in that they never made a specific amendment to Executive Order 10501, which was in effect at that time, to include the Warren Commission among those agencies that had original classifying authority. [Hearing transcript, p. 69, a copy of which is attached hereto as part of Exhibit I]

In short, Dr. Rhoads, according to his own testimony, simply "assumed" what he swore he personally knew was true, and what he

swore to be true turns out to have had no basis in fact whatso-

Plaintiff also wishes to call attention to the testimony of Mr. David Belin, formerly Assistant Counsel to the Warren Commission, at the November 11, 1975, hearing before the House Subcommittee on Government Information and Individual Rights. There Mr. Belin testified that nearly everything the Warren Commission had was marked "Top Secret", even though "most of the matters before the Commission really had nothing to do with what you would ordinarily think of as Top Secret information"; that he did not know of any independent classifying authority that the Warren Commission had; that the court reporting firm of Ward & Paul marked the Warren Commission transcripts "Top Secret" but that he did not know upon what authority they did so; and that "It was a standard joke within the members of the staff that we were having access to documents that were marked Top Secret at a time when none of us had security clearances." [See pp. 5-9 of the hearing transcript, copies of which are attached hereto as part of Exhibit I]

Finally, plaintiff notes that defendant's motion for an extension of time speaks of filing an affidavit on this question of Dr. Rhoads' credibility. Plaintiff welcomes such an affidavit. However, plaintiff also notes that on February 27, 1975, he filed a request for the production of documents which asked, among other things, for a copy of the November 5, 1975, affidavit of Mr. Charles A. Briggs, Chief of Services Staff, Directorate of Operations, Central Intelligence Agency, which is referred to in the answer to plaintiff's interrogatory No. 25. Although this affidavit is presumably relevant to this case and is presumably not classified, plaintiff has not yet been provided a copy of it. Plaintiff would appreciate a copy of it at the government's earliest possible convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

JAMES H. LESAR 1231 Fourth Street, S. W. Washington, D. C. 20024

Attorney for Plaintiff

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that I have this 22-ud day of March, 1976, mailed a copy of the foregoing Stipulation to Defendant's Motion for an Extension of Time to Mr. Michael J. Ryan, Esq., Assistant United States Attorney, Room 3421, United States Courthouse, Washington, D. C. 20001.

James H. Lesar

EXHIBIT H

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA. NOV 29 1973

3778 T.

HAROLD WEISBERG,

Plaintiff

CIVIL ACTION NO. 2052-73

UNITED STATES GENERAL SERVICES
ADMINISTRATION,

Defendant

PLAINTIFF'S INTERROGATORIES

Under Rule 33 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Plaintiff addresses the following interrogatories to the Defendant:

- 1. Is there any Executive Order which specifically requires the transcript of the January 27, 1964, Warren Commission Executive Session to be kept secret in the interest of the national defense or foreign policy?
- 2. What is the number of any Executive Order cited in response to Plaintiff's interrogatory No. 1?
- 3. On what date was any Executive Order cited in response to Plaintiff's interrogatory No. 1 published in the Federal Register?
- 4. Has any Attorney General of the United States ever made a determination that it is not in the national interest to disclose the transcript of any Warren Commission Executive Session or the report of any interview or scientific test made by or for the Federal Bureau of Investigation during its investigation into the assassination of President John F. Kennedy?
- 5. If the answer to Plaintiff's interrogatory No. 4 is yes, when and by whom was this determination made?

- 6. Is the January 27 transcript being withheld from research on the grounds that it is part of an investigatory file compiled for law enforcement purposes?
- 7. If the answer to Plaintiff's interrogatory No. 6 is yes, what is the specific law enforcement purpose for which the January 27 transcript is being withheld?
- 8. Have any court proceedings been initiated relevant to any law enforcement purpose cited in response to Plaintiff's interrogatory No. 7?
- 9. If the answer to Plaintiff's interrogatory No. 8 is yes, what are the titles of these court cases and in what courts were they initiated?
- 10. Are any future court proceedings contemplated with respect to any law enforcement purpose cited in response to Plaintiff's interrogatory No. 7?
- 11. With respect to any court proceedings cited in response to Plaintiff's interrogatories No. 8 and No. 10, what harm or prejudice would the government suffer if the January 27 transcript were to be disclosed to Plaintiff Weisberg?
- 12. Has the disclosure of parts of the January 27 transcript by Representative Gerald Ford harmed the government in any of the court proceedings cited in response to Plaintiff's interrogatory No. 8?
- 13. Has the disclosure of parts of the January 27 transcript by Representative Gerald Ford prejudiced any future court proceedings cited in response to Plaintiff's interrogatory No. 10?
- 14. If Representative Gerald Ford's disclosure of parts of the January 27 transcript has harmed the government in any law enforcement proceeding cited in response to Plaintiff's interrogatories No. 8 or No. 10, what is the nature of that harm?

- 15. Has the Department of Justice or the General Services Administration recommended that any action be taken against Representative Gerald Ford for publicly disclosing parts of the January 27, 1964, transcript stated by the General Services Administration to be classified?
- 16. Has the Department of Justice or the General Services Administration communicated to the Senate Rules Committee or any other congressional committee the fact that Representative Gerald Ford publicly disclosed parts of the purportedly classified January 27 transcript?
- 17. Has the Department of Justice or the General Services Administration recommended that any action be taken against Representative Gerald Ford for testifying that he did not reveal any classified information in his book <u>Portrait of the Assassin</u>?
- 18. Was the January 27 transcript ever given to any law enforcement officer of the State of Texas, including:
 - a) Dallas County District Attorney Henry Wade?
 - b) Texas Attorney General Waggoner Carr?
- c) Special Assistant to the Texas Attorney General Leon Jaworski?
- 19. Was the January 27 transcript ever given to any court or law enforcement agency in the State of Texas?
- 20. Was the January 27 transcript ever given to any federal agency, including, but not limited to, the following:
 - a) The Central Intelligence Agency?
 - b) The Federal Bureau of Investigation?
 - c) The Office of Naval Intelligence?
 - d) The Defense Intelligence Agency?
 - e) The National Security Agency?

21. To what "recent developments in the state of the law"
was Mr. Richard Q. Vawter, Director of Information, General Services
Administration, referring in his February 8, 1972, letter (See
Complaint, Exhibit D) to Mr. Harold Weisberg?

Please note that under Rule 33 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure you are required to serve upon the undersigned, within 30 days after service of this notice, your answers in writing and under oath to the above interrogatories.

JAMES HIRAM LESAR
Attorney for Plaintiff
1231 Fourth Street, S. W.
Washington, D. C. 20024

DATED: November 29, 1973

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that I have this 29th day of November, 1973, served copies of the foregoing interrogatories upon the attorneys for the Defendant, the General Services Administration, by mailing them to the Attorney General for the United States, Mr. Robert Bork, U. S. Department of Justice, Washington, D. C., and Mr. Michael Ryan, Assistant United States Attorney for the District of Columbia, Civil Division, United States Courthouse, 3rd and Constitution, N. W., Washington, D. C. 20001.

JAMES HIRAM LESAR

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

HAROLD WEISBERG,		.)				
Plaintiff	2)				
v.)	CIVII	L ACTIO	ON NO.	2052-73
UNITED STATES GENERAL SERVI	ICES	5)				
ADMINISTRATION,)				
Defendant	*.)	* *			W _H

ANSWERS TO INTERROGATORIES

JAMES B. RHOADS, Archivist of the United States, having been first duly sworn, under oath, deposes and says that it is upon his personal knowledge and belief that he gives the following information in answer to interrogatories propounded by plaintiff:

- 1. Yes
- 2. The transcript was originally classified under the provisions of Executive Order 10501, as amended (3CFR, 1949-1953 Comp.) It is presently classified under the provisions of Executive Order 11652.
 - 3. 37 F.R. 5209, March 10, 1972.
- 4. Defendant objects to this interrogatory on the grounds that it is not relevant to the subject matter involved in the instant action, and divulgence of the information sought would be contrary to the jurisdictional requisites set forth at 5 USC 552.
 - 5. Not applicable (N/A) in light of previous answer.
- 6. The transcript is withheld as falling within certain exemptions from mandatory disclosure cited at 5 U.S.C. 552(b) (1970).
- 7. The Warren Commission was established under Executive Order and recognized by statute to investigate the assassinations of President Kennedy and Lee Harvey Oswald.

- 8. The defendant is not aware of any such proceedings.
- 9. Not applicable (N/A) in light of previous answer.
- 10. The defendant is not aware of any contemplated future proceedings in this respect.
 - II. N/A
 - 12. N/A
 - 13. N/A
 - 14. N/A
- 15. Defendant objects to this interrogatory on the grounds that it is not relevant to the subject matter involved in the instant action. The General Services Administration has made no such recommendation.
- 16. Defendant objects to this interrogatory on the grounds that it is not relevant to the subject matter involved in the instant action. The General Services Administration has made no such recommendation.
- 17. Defendant objects to this interrogatory on the grounds that it is not relevant to the subject matter involved in the instant action. The General Services Administration has made no such recommendation.
 - 18. No.
 - 19. No.
- 20. The only Federal agencies which have examined a copy of the transcript other than the defendant General Services Administration are the Gentral Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.
- 21. Mr. Vawter's comment to "recent developments in the state of the law" in his letter of February 8, 1972, merely refers to an examination of newly issued judicial decisions on the Freedom of Information Act and the anticipated issuance of Executive Order 11652.

JAMES B. RHOADS
Archivist of the United States

Subscribed and sworn to me before this 10 day of Anuary, 1974

My Commission expires the 31 day of Award, 1974

1

§

6

3

9

11

14

Si

13

10 17

22 10

ZJ

2.I 22

29 / 24

2:3

STATEMENT OF MR. DAVID M. BELIN, ATTORNEY, FORMER ASSISTANT COUNSEL, MARRIM COMMISSION, AND FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ROCKEFILLER COMMISSION ON DOWNSTIC ACTIVITIES, CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Ms. Abzug. Let us see if we can have some questions answered which have been raised.

How would you characterize the use of classification markings of Warren Commission documents? Was it over-extensive?

Mr. Belin. Almost everything that we had on the Warren Commission was market Top Secret.

I would have to say that it was over-extensive to the extent that most of the matters before the Commission really had nothing to do with what you would ordinarily think of as Top Secret information.

When I took the testimeny of Johnny Calvin Brever of Texas, who told how he heard police sirens coming down the street and saw a man duck in a shore store after the shooting of Officer Tippett, he became suspicious of the man because when the police sirens ebbed away, Brever saw the man leave and then Brever followed him into the Texas Theater and the man turned out to be Oswald; the fact that that was classified as Top Secret was really, so far as I was concerned, not a proper use of classification.

I think perhaps the reason it was classified Top Secret was that they did not want things to leak out of the Warren

Commission hearing rooms.

б

£3.

E3

But basically all of the testimony we took of witnesses to the events in Dallas had the stemp of Top Secret on them.

Ms. Absug. Are you aware as to whether the Varren Communication was given any authority by the President in an Executive Order to originally classify the documents?

Mr. Belin. I do not purport to be a classification expert, but to the best of my knowledge I knew or no such independent classifying authority that the Warren Commission had.

Mo. Abzug. In other words, as far as you know, the markings of Top Secret on Executive Session transcripts of the Warren Commission and of its Staff Memos, for example, were really for a mixture of purposes?

Mr. Belin. To the best of my knowledge I know of no other reason other than the administrative purposes, because I know of no independent classification authority, although there might be some indirect authority and I do not purport to be an expert at that. I know that on many memoranda I prepared myself, I did not put anything of a classification nature on it.

Ms. Aboug. Assuming that nobody had the authority, that is, to classify the Commission's documents, what is your view as to whether they - let me say this. Do you think they had been properly withheld or do you think they should be

3

R

5

B

3

3

0 10

25

32

13

34

15

FO

57

63

19

20

21

22

23

withheld under some other concept?

Mr. Belin. I will exclude those Commission documents which were prepared out of classified information that was received, let us say, from the CIA because it is my understanding that when you receive information from a classified document, that theoretically that memorandum that you prepared, which quotes from the classified source, must remain classified

But I must candidly state to you that there has been an over-classification, I believe, of Warren Commission documents in general.

The one that stands out most in my mind, and that has caused the most widespread public concern, related to the autopsy photographs and x-rays of President Kennedy.

Ms. Abzug. This is a very interesting question. Would you say it was a question of Ward and Paul marking the transcripts Top Secret?

Mr. Belin. I think that Ward and Paul did mark every. transcript Top Secret and upon what authority I do not know.

Ms. Abzug. You do not know?

Mr. Belin. No, I do not know what authority they had, if any.

Ms. Abzug. I am trying to get at, as to how it came about. Do you think it was an administrative device?

Mr. Belin. I do not know whother they did it of their own solition or whether they were directed to by the General

0.00 2:5

Counsel, Lee Rankin. All I can tell you is that every transcript, including every witness whom we interrogated, was marked or stamped Top Secret.

Ma. Absug. Let me ask this then. What was generally the swaff's attitude noward the so-called classification markings?

Mr. Belin. The general attitude of the staff was this. I do not want to use the word 'ridiculous', but we thought that it was over-classification, to say the least. In fact, it was so classified that even though our building was under a 24-hour a day security guard, we were directed to put all of these transcripts in safes at night, and they were marked Top Secret when they really were not Top Secret.

I am excluding the transcripts related to CIA matters or that have you. I am talking about the general transcripts of the area in which I was involved. I was one of the two lawyers in Area 2 which was involved in analysis of all the evidence to determine who killed President Kennedy and Officer Tippett.

Ms. Abzug. Do you have any recollection of Mr. J. Lee Rankin, the Counsel, claiming the Commission had authority to classify its cun imformation?

Mr. Belin. I do not remember a conversation with General Countel Lee Renkin. I do not think any of us really raised any issue at the time.

(

17

2

3

3

6

7

e

9

:0

33

12

13

14

15

15

13

:9

20

21

22

23

21

3

3

3

5

7

3

3

50

33

\$2

3

75

13

27

10

39

28

22

23

Ms. Abzug. Did you have any difficulty getting informaracit

Mr. Belin. None.

Ms. Abzug. Did any of the staff people have any difficult ty getting information?

Mr. Belin. Not to the best of my recollection.

Ms. Abzug. Did they require security clearance, that is, staff mombers?

Mr. Belin. All of us had to go through a security. clearance. That perhaps relates to an earlier question you asked. It was a standard joke within the members of the staff that we were having access to documents that were marked Top Secret at a time when none of us had security clearances. Even after some of us had security clearances, there were one or two that took a month, or two, or more to get security clearances. It was an inside joke about the fact that what would the Warren Commission do if one of the members of the staff had not gotten the security clearance by the time the Werron Commission had completed its investigation, and you would have all of these hundreds of secret documents.

It would have been embarrassing to a lot of people.

I believe eventually all staff people were cleared.

Ms. Absug. As Executive Director of the Rockefeller Commission, de you recall any specific provisions which authorized that Commission to classify documents?

20

:5

1

Pr 15

5. T

9

SO

22 22

14

13

17 13

:6

20 21

19

23 23

25

and the recommendations resulting from the study were approved

They called for immediate review of the material withheld by the originating agencies. The purpose was disclosure of as much of the material as possible. A key provision of the guidelines prepared by the Department of Justice held that originating agencies should review their classified and unclassified withheld material 5 years and 10 years after the initial review, and thereafter every 10 years.

The Attorney General dispatched the first review letters to agencies in 1965, and the National Archives in 1970 sent out similar letters seeking review of withhell-material.

The regular 5-year reviews continue. The National Archives wrote last July to the various agencies involved, asking them to examine their withheld documents again with a view to disclosure.

The reviews of 1935 and 1970 were not the only ones made to speed disclosure. When the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy went out of existence, the status of previously undisclosed internal records and correspondence of the Commission was uncertain.

With the essent of the Department of Justice, the National Archives in 1967-68 servened this material and opened most of it. However, some occasspondence between the agencies and the Commission and other records relating to the agencies remained

closed.

The National Archives, therefore, went back again to the agencies in 1972-73 for a further review of this type of record. On the latter occasion the agencies were reminded that Executive Order 11652 had been issued in the interim, with provisions for declassifying or downgrading any classified documents among those withheld.

More recently, in our letters to agencies relating to the 1975 review, we have asked them to keep in mind the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, as amended in 1974, and Executive Order 11552 when making their determinations as to what now can be opened in the material which is still withheld.

As the result of the various reviews under the Department of Justice guidelines, additional material in the Warren Commission records has been disclosed by originating agencies since that first general review in 1965. Moreover, researchers now have recourse to mandatory review procedures of the Freedom of Information Act and Executive Order 11652, both of which have been effective in opening other withheld materials in the Warren Commission records. They provide workable means for researchers to challenge mondisclosure of material which they believe should be opened.

I thank the Committee again for this opportunity to discuss the policies and practices of the National Archives with

6

3

8

4

5

9 10

\$2

S

ES

FS

17

19

20

21

22

2.3 2:5

Ą

5

3

7

3

9

11

13 14

15

(

15 17

35 25

2D 21

2:3

23

Can you put this in some order for this simple mind?

Sometimes I have to spend weeks getting a document that is marked Classified, and I have to put it in my safe and change the combination and so on. I am so concerned about maintaining classified secrets of this nation.

But suddenly I found out that in this whole maze of the Archives there are documents which a stenotypist decided were Top Secret. One day the Commission Counsel says "do not bether to make it Top Secret. Let us make it Confidential."

Then I find there are a series of documents out there running around in the libraries. However, we cannot get to them in the Archives because they are marked Classified by some unknown handwriting on the wall.

Fr. Garfinkel. I think if we examine every document of the Commission which remains Classified, or has been classified at some time in the past, we will discover that the original classifier was either an agency which spacifically had the authority to classify the records, or was the Commission itself.

We will find that it was never the Archives on its own authority.

What happened, apparently, is that the Warren Commission naturally assumed, because it was handling a great deal of security alababiled information, that it had the authority to mark these documents as security classified.

- 5 EXX - 5 MA

.

It also appears from the record that the President, and of course, his advisers, were the perpetrators of an oversight in that they never made a specific amendment to Executive Order 10501, which was in effect at that time, to include the Warren Commission among those agencies that had original classifying authority.

The Cormission assumed it had that authority, and acted under that assumption. We have an afficavit of its General Counsel that the Commission had that authority, and that, pursuant to that authority as delegated to him by the Commissioners, he instructed the reporters of the Commission transcripts and other Commission documents to mark documents as classified.

We also had indirect evidence that it was the assumption of the President that the Commission had that authority; although we do not have a specific elendment to Executive Order 10501, we have a letter from President Johnson to Chief Justice Marren in his capacity as chairman of the Commission, stating that the Commission was waived from a particular provision of the Executive Order.

We can assume that the President --

Ms. Abeng. The Commission was what?

Mr. Garfirkel. These were waived from a particular provision of the Executive Order. I can be more specific.

When the Commission's report came out, many of the

G 7

4

5

S 9

10

7 3

12 53

343

15 :5

17

23 19

20

29

22

23

8

23

E,

5 6

S

7

10

13

15 16

83

43

19

20

21

23

23

Ms. Abzug. Congressman Gerald Ford, as opposed to President Gerald Ford, published this book called "Portrait of the Assassin" in 1965. He quoted in it extensively from the January 27th transcript.

For nine years after Mr. Ford had published parts of 1t, the Archives continue to suppress the entire transcript on the grounds that it had been classified Top Secret pursuant to Executive Order 10501.

How did that happen?

Dr. Rhoads. I think we were not aware until fairly recently of the fact that there was not a completely regularized grant of authority to the Werren Commission to classify. We assumed they had the authority, and for a number of years proceeded on that basis.

Ms. Abzug. I find that fascinating.

We are entrusting to the Archives our whole history.

This is important to know about. This is part of knowledge.

We are almost in a situation where we have to have an archaeological expedition to discover the writings on the walls.

I find this remarkable that you do not know anything, or you did not know for how many years?

Mr. Johnson. Mine years.

Ms. Abzug. Nine years.

You did not know for nine years by what authority, if any authority, the documents of the Warren Commission were

2

4 5

6

වු

3

10

12 12

32

15 15

27

19

29 21

22

23

28 25 to that effect.

When did you find that out?
 Mr. Johnson. When the Weissberg case came up.

Ms. Abeug. That was three years ago.

You continue to testify, and just this year you released that transcript. You are in a bad habit. We all know what happens. You get a habit, it is hard to kick it. But the point is you have got to get out of this habit.

This Committee is dealing with this issue because, frankly, we have got to deal with this craziness which has been going on in this Government for so long. We classify so much we do not know the difference between secret and not secret any more.

That stenotypist incident grabs me. For that stenotypist to classify the notes --

Dr. Rhoads. The stenotypist did not classify the notes.

Ms. Abzug. It is my way of making the point. We do not know anything about it. There was no authority. There really was no person who had the right. It is a paranoia.

Dr. Rhoads. Under Executive Order 10501 there was a great deal of looseness. There was a great deal of over-classification, there was a great deal of improper classification, there was no central control over it. I agree with you, it was a bad a chaptic situation.

With the Order 11652 I do not claim that we have come into

-04-65