

Hoover wanted to make a friendly gesture to the Kennedys in return, and I have always believed that I owed my job as assistant director to this and to the fact that I was an Irish Democrat from Massachusetts. Of course, the Kennedys didn't know me from Adam, but was the best Hoover could come up with. Nonetheless, the director ever disguised his true feelings for Jack Kennedy or for his brothers when he was among his close FBI aides.

Hoover was always gathering damaging material on Jack Kennedy, which the president, with his active social life, seemed more than willing to provide. We never put any technical surveillance on JFK, but whatever came up was automatically funnelled directly to Hoover. I was sure he was saving everything he had on Kennedy, and on Martin Luther King, Jr., too, until he could unload it all and destroy them both. He kept this kind of explosive material in his personal files, which filled four rooms on the fifth floor of headquarters.

Kennedy was aware that Hoover was an enemy, of course, and he kept his distance. He never asked Hoover for any gossip or any favors. If he heard that Hoover was leaking anti-Kennedy stories, JFK would call the director right away and ask him to put the statement on the record. Hoover always did, but somehow, between Kennedy's phone call and Hoover's official statement, the director's remarks softened considerably. Kennedy couldn't stop Hoover from talking behind his back, but he could do something about Hoover's public statements, and he did. Kennedy would also call Hoover over to the White House two or three times just to remind him who was boss. Kennedy didn't say it that bluntly, but Hoover got the message.

I shouldn't have been surprised then at Hoover's cold-blooded attitude when Kennedy was murdered, but it was unsettling nonetheless.

We got going on the case right away. Officially, the Criminal Division was in charge of the investigation, but there wasn't too much to investigate after Lee Harvey Oswald, the only suspect, was killed. On the other hand, over at my shop we had to untangle Oswald's myriad subversive connections. Were the Soviets behind it? Were the Cubans behind it? Was anyone behind it? It grew into a gigantic intelligence operation with over twenty-eight hundred agents work-

ing on the case.

Oswald had spent a lot of time in Mexico, so our Mexican office played an important part in the investigation. We also had agents in Canada, Central America, England, and Italy tracking down leads. We even got a note from a man in France who said he had six letters written by Oswald which would solve the case. He offered to sell us the letters for ten thousand dollars, but he turned out to be a well-known European con man who didn't have any such letters. He was later arrested and prosecuted by the French police.

We didn't have much on Oswald in our files prior to the assassination. We knew that he had lived in Russia and that he'd come back with a Russian wife, which was unusual for a couple of reasons. First of all, we never found out just why the Russians allowed Marina to leave the Soviet Union at a time when they were not permitting any Russians to come out. Second, she was a woman of extraordinary intelligence, much smarter than Oswald. Oswald had tried to commit suicide while he was in Russia by slashing his wrists, and we developed evidence that the Soviets looked on him as a nut, a nuisance, and were anxious to get him out of the country. This information was not firm, but was reported to us from a number of sources. There were so many other more subversive characters in our files with worse records than Oswald's and we had so little on Oswald that his case was considered a "Pending Inactive" case. Lee Harvey Oswald was really a cipher, a nobody to the FBI. After the assassination, of course, he became our most important subject.

But even after we zeroed in on Oswald, there were huge gaps in the case, gaps we never did close. For example, we never found out what went on between Oswald and the Cubans in Mexico.

Although his Russian connection had alerted us to Oswald in the first place, the bureau really couldn't keep him under surveillance merely because he had been to Russia and married a Russian wife. I can imagine the reaction of the Civil Liberties Union if we had—"Can't American citizens go to Russia without being hounded by the FBI?" Oswald wasn't a criminal, just a nut, and the FBI doesn't have the facilities to keep tabs on nuts.

I always tended to doubt that Oswald was a Russian or a Cuban agent because of his unsuccessful attempt on the life of General