

OSWALD and the FBI Harold Feldman

The Warren Commission should, if possible, tell us how President Kennedy was killed, who killed him, and why. But beyond that, it must tell us if the FBI or any other government intelligence agency was in any way connected with the alleged assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald. At this moment, the possibility of such associations in the young man's life is intolerably a subject for speculation.

On the day after the assassination, the Dallas Chief of Police complained on television that the FBI had interviewed Oswald about a week earlier and had failed to inform the Dallas authorities of this fact — something the bureau would normally do after making contact with a suspicious Red. Drew Pearson also reported this but added, "In Washington, the FBI denied that they had interrogated Oswald recently."

However, Michael Paine, who with his wife helped take care of Mrs. Oswald and the two children, "claimed that FBI agents had visited Oswald more than one time after he returned to Dallas from a trip to Mexico City." Oswald returned to Dallas from Mexico on October 3, 1963. This report also is contradicted by another:

The FBI picked up the trail again in Dallas after Oswald's return there on Oct. 3. He was not interviewed, but agents checked twice with Mrs. Ruth Paine, who told them that Oswald had gone to work on Oct. 16 in the Texas State School Book Depository. (The New York Times, 12/10/63.)

The Minority of One (January, 1964) tells us:

William M. Kline, chief of the U.S. Customs Bureau investigative services in Laredo, Texas, stated on November 25 that Oswald's movements were watched at the request of "a federal agency at Washington." (New York Post, November 25.) Eugene Pugh, U.S. agent in charge of the Customs office on the American side of the bridge at Laredo, Texas, said that Oswald had been

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checked by American immigration officials on entering and leaving Mexico. Mr. Pugh admitted to the New York Herald Tribune that this was "not the usual" procedure. He said Americans were not required to check in with immigration when crossing the border, "but U.S. immigration has a folder on Oswald's trip."

One thing is clear: the FBI was in fairly constant touch with Oswald's activities. How far these contacts went is indicated in "the revelation that the Federal Bureau of Investigation tried to recruit Oswald as an undercover informant in Castro groups two months before Mr. Kennedy's death." This report, which appeared in a *Philadelphia Inquirer* dispatch from Dallas December 8, went on:

The FBI attempt to recruit Oswald as an informant, an informed law enforcement source said, was made in September, just after he had moved to Dallas from New Orleans.

Oswald's mother said an "agent named Hosty" came to the Irving house and talked to the young man at length in his car.

An FBI agent named Joseph Hosty handles investigations of subversives for the Dallas field office.

The source said he did not know if the FBI succeeded in hiring Oswald, and the federal agency would not discuss the matter.

On January 1, Lonnie Hudkins of the Houston Post, published a story under the headline: "Oswald Rumored as Informant for U.S." Hudkins found that Oswald did know agent Hosty. He had Hosty's home phone, office phone and car license number — this on the authority of William Alexander, assistant to Henry Wade, Dallas District Attorney. Alexander had attended the grilling of Oswald on November 22 and 23. Hudkins notes that if the FBI had Oswald under surveillance, the watch could not have been too close or they would have known about the rifle and other matters; but, as a sheriff deputy put it, "you just wouldn't think to check out one of your own stoolies." Hudkins quotes Wade, himself a former FBI agent, as saying: "It may be true, but I don't think it will ever be made public if it is."

What the public hears of the

FBI's part in the Oswald case is usually a report that such and such a witness or authority has been asked, or ordered, to keep his mouth shut. Thus, Dr. J. J. Humes of the Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., the man who conducted the autopsy on the President, seemed to be the best authority on the exact angle of entry of the two bullets, but Dr. Humes had been forbidden to talk. A thirty-four-year-old machinist named Malcolm Howard Price said he had looked through the telescopic sight of Oswald's rifle on a rifle range in suburban Dallas — but "Mr. Price declined to answer further questions because, he said, the FBI had asked him not to talk. The FBI here [Dallas] denied this." (*The New York Times*, December 10.) On December 6, the *Times* had observed:

Most private citizens who had cooperated with newsmen reporting the crime have refused to give further help after being interviewed by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Dallas city and county police withdrew their help the same way. One high officer said he wished he could answer questions "because it would save us a lot of work."

The Western Union office in Dallas handled frequent messages for Lee Oswald, but inquiries there brought the reply that "any details or comment would have to come from Washington headquarters of the Federal Bureau of Investigation."

It is in the light of this official coyness that we must consider the possible connection of Oswald with the attempted shooting of General Walker. Oswald's widow is said to have declared that he boasted of shooting at that doughy warrior. In view of her prolonged seclusion from the public, and even from relatives, under government supervision, we must infer that any statement alleged to be hers at this time is a deliberate "leak." It is interesting that a similar "leak" at the beginning of the case — that a rifle which Mrs. Oswald knew her husband had kept in a garage was missing on the morning of the assassination — proved to be false. The FBI is also reported to have found a document in Oswald's hand-