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UNITED STATES GOVER MENT Memorandum 7/2/64 DATE Mr. Trotter LEE HARVEY OSWALD, AKA; * BJECT: ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, 11/22/63, DALLAS, TEXAS On April 2, 1934, I gave testimony before the President's Commission regarding latent fingerprint and latent palm print identifications effected in the captioned case. The President's Commission furnished the Bureau a transcript of this testimony. The testimony has been reviewed and transcription errors have been corrected. On July 2, 1964, I personally contacted Mr. Howard Willens, who is on the General Counsel's staff, and page by page pointed out the corrections. Mr. Willens advised that the corrections would be made and brought to the attention of Staff Member Melvin Eisenberg, who conducted the interrogation at the hearing. For information purposes there is attached a Xerox copy of the transcript of the testimony showing the corrections. ACTION: * For information. 62-109060 Enc. 1 - Mr. Belmont JUL 6 1964 1 - Mr. De Loach 1 - Mr. Rosen (James R. Malley) 1 - Mr. Sullivan (R. E. Lenihan) 1 - Bifile (62-109090) 1 - Busile (105-82555) SOVIET SECTION SFL:bc

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ON THE

ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY

Report of Proceedings

Held at

Washington, D.C.

Thursday, April 2, 1964

PAGES 4667-4824

(Including 4676-A, 4711-A, and 4762-A)

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WARD & PAUL

OFFICIAL REPORTERS
917 G STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20001

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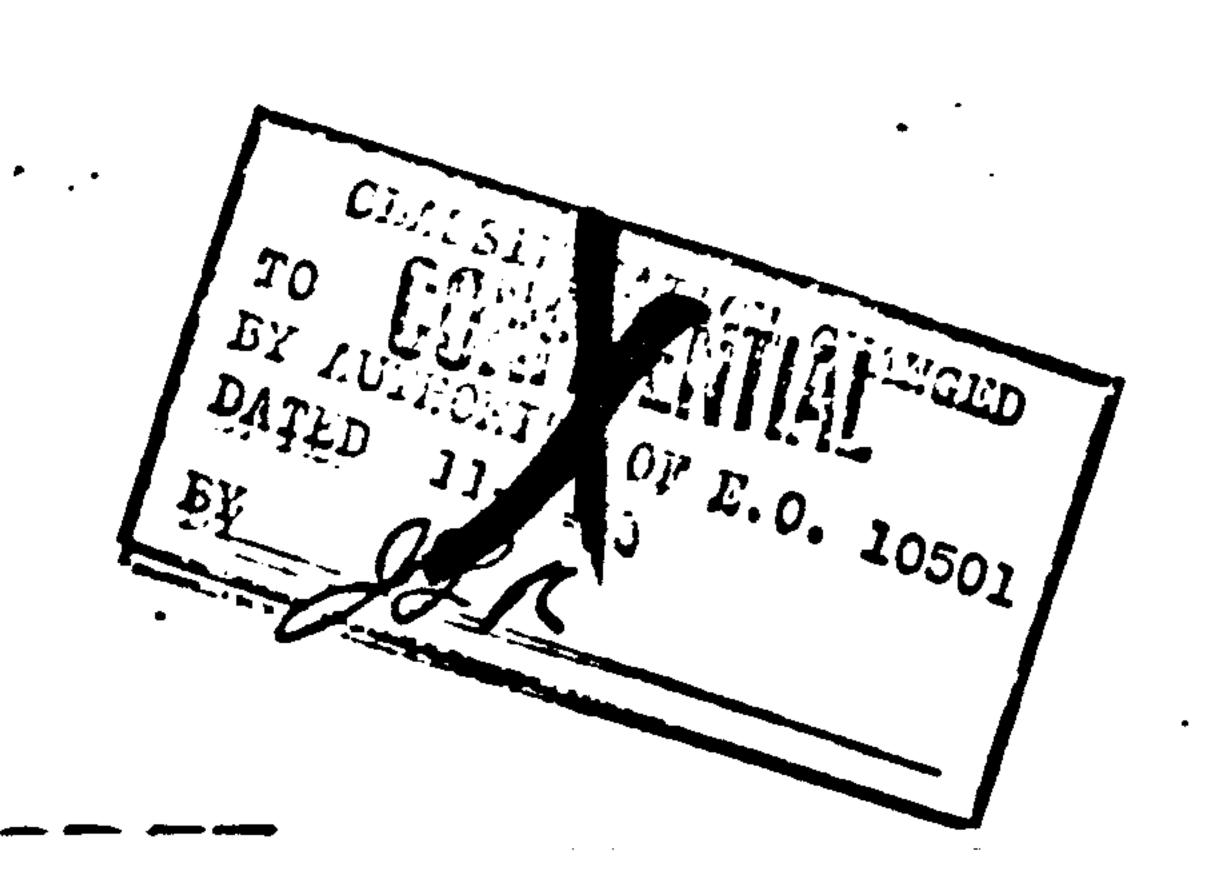
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Washington, D.C.

Thursday, April 2, 1964

The President's Commission met, pursuant to recess, at 9:00 a.m. in The Hearing Room, Fourth Floor 200 Maryland Avenue, Northeast, Washington, D.C., Chief Justice Earl Warren, presiding PRESENT:

Chief Justice Earl Warren, Chairman
Representative Hale Boggs, Member
Representative Gerald R. Ford, Member
Mr. Alien Dulles, Member

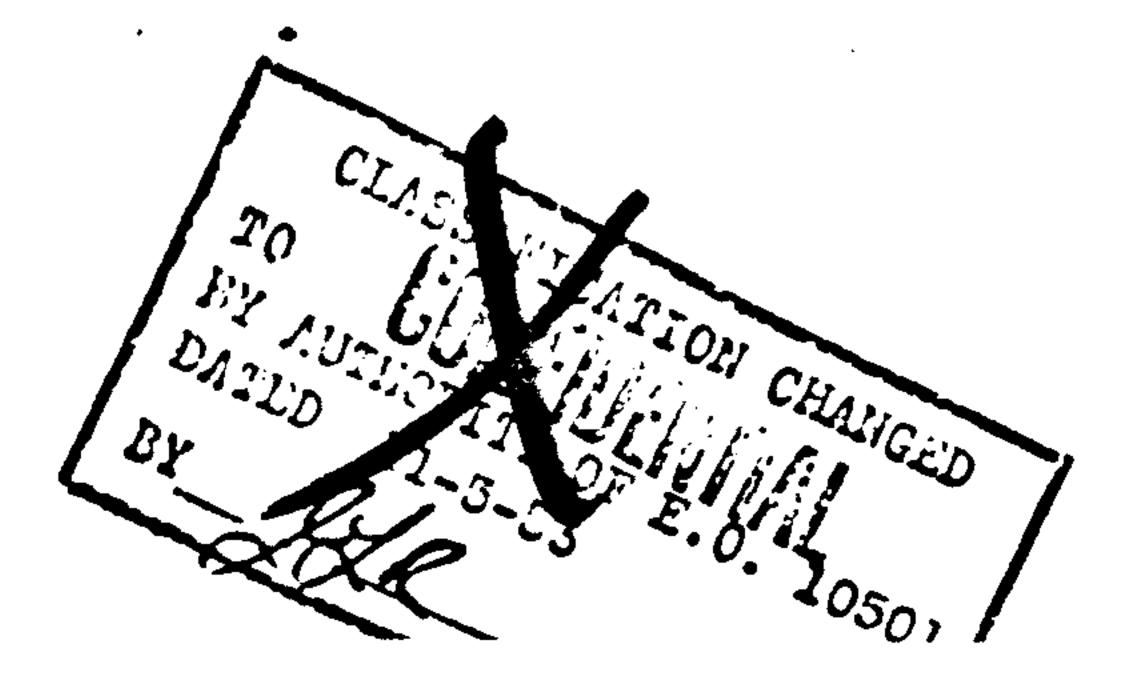
Melvin Eisenberg, Staff

Morman Redlich, Special Assistant to General Counsel

Samuel Stern, Staff

Charles Murray, Observer

Charles Muyne, Observer





PROCEEDINGS

The Chairman. The Commission will be in order.

Mr. Latona, the purpose of today's hearing is to take your testimony and that of Arthur Mandella. Mr. Mandella is a finger-print expert from the New York City Police Department. We are asking both of you to give technical information for the Commission.

Will you raise your right hand and be sworn?

Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. Latona. I do.

The Chairman. You may be seated. Mr. Eisenberg will conduct the examination.

TESTIMONY OF SEBASTIAN F. LATONA

Mr. Eisenberg. Mr. Latona, could you state your full name and give us your position?

Mr. Latona. My full name is Sebastian Francis Latona. I am the supervisor of the Latent Fingerprint Section of the Identification Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Mr Eisenberg. What is your education, Mr. Latona?

Mr. Latona. I attended Columbus University School of Law, where I received degrees of LLB, LLM, MPL.

.. Mr. Eisenberg. And could you briefly outline your qualifications as a fingerprint expert?

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Mr. Latona. Well, I have been with the federal Bureau of ...
Investigation for a little more than 32 years. I started in the
Identification Division as a student fingerprint classifier, and
since that time I have worked myself up into where I am now
Supervisor of the Latent Fingerprint Section.

Mr. Eisenberg. Could you approximate the number of fingerprint examinations you have made?

Mr. Latona. Frankly, no. There have been so many in that time that I would not be able to give even a good guess.

Mr. Eisenberg. Would the figure run in the thousands or hundreds?

Mr. Latona. So far as comparisons are concerned, in the millions.

Mr. Eisenberg. Have you testified in court?

Mr. Latona. I have testified in Federal courts, State courts, commissioners' hearings, military courts, and at deportation proceedings.

Mr. Elsenberg. Mr. Chief Justice, I ask that this witness be admitted as an expert.

The Chairman. The witness is qualified.

Mr. Eisenberg. Mr. Latona, could you briefly outline for us the theory of fingerprint identification?

Mr. Latona. The principle of fingerprint identification is based on the fact primarily that the ridge formations that appear Soles on the hands and on the souls of the feet actually are created

approximately two to three months before birth, on the unborn child, and they remain constant in the same position in which they are formed until the person is dead and the body is consumed by decomposition.

Secondly, the fact that no two people, or no two fingers of the same person, has the same arrangement of these ridge formations, either on the fingers, the palms or the soxis and toes of the feet. Plus the fact that during the lifetime of a person this ridge formation does not change, it remains constant -- from the time it is formed until actual destruction, either caused by voluntary, involuntary means, or upon the death of the body and decomposition.

Mr. Eisenberg. Mr. Latona, do you have any personal experience indicating the uniqueness of fingerprints?

Mr. Laton Yes, I do. My experience is based primarily upon the work which I have actually done in connection with my work with the FBI. I have had the experience of working on one case in particular in which millions of comparisons were actually and literally made with a small portion of a fingerprint which was left on a piece of evidence in connection with this particular case, which was a kidnapping case.

This fragmentary latent print which we developed consisted of approximately seven to eight points. Most fingerprints will have in them an average roughly of from eight to about one hundred and twenty-five.

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Wow, this fragmentary latent print was compared with literally millions of single impressions for the purpose of trying to effect an identification. And we were unable, over a lengthy period while we were making these millions of comparisons, not being able to identify these few fragmentary points.

Now, The important thing is simply this; that on the basis of that fragmentary print, it was not possible to determine even the type of pattern that the impression was. Accordingly, we had to compare it with all types of fingerprint patterns of which there are really four basic types -- the arch, tented arch, loop and whorl. And we are still making comparisons in that case, and we have not been able to identify these few points.

Now, that means simply this -- that the theory that we are going on an assumption, that people do not have the same fingerprints -- and we find it not necessary to compare, say for example, a loop pattern with a whorl pattern, and as there is a possibility that it is contended by some of these so-called authorities that maybe the points that you find in a loop may be found in the same arrangement in a whorl, is not true. I think that that case, a practical case we have actually worked on, disproves that theory so strongly in my mind that I am convinced that no two people can possibly have the same fingerprints.

Mr. Eisenberg. That is, you had a print with seven points, and these same seven points appeared in none of the millions --Mr. Latona. Of the millions that we actually compared over a



period -- well, since 1937. You may recall the case. It was the Mattaon kidnapping case out in Tacona, Washington. That is really the only major cases the FBI has falled to solve P.

Mr. Elsenberg. Are palm prints as unique as fingerprints? Mr. Latona. Yes, palm prints are. They are not as useful for purposes of setting up a file in order to conduct searches for the simple reason that there are not as many variations of patterns occurring with any frequency in the palms as occur on the tips of the fingers. That is primarily why the finger tips are used -- because you have ten digits, and there is a possibility of finding variations of the four basic pattern types which can be additionally subdivided by utilizing certain focal points which occur in those particular matterns, which enable us to actually subdivide our files into millions of groups. Accordingly, when you make a search in the fingerprint file, it can be reduced actually to a matter of minutes, whereas to attempt to set up a palm print of the fungular file.

file to the extent of the size we have in the FBI would be a practical impossibility, much less a waste of time.

The Chairman. Approximately how many fingerprints do you have these days.

of approximately 67 million people, and they are subdivided in this fashion. We have two main files. We have the criminal files and we have what are referred to as civil files.

As the names imply, in the criminal files are the fingerprints

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of criminals, people who have had a prior criminal record or who fingerprints have been received in connection with an investigat: or interrogation for the commission of a crime. In that file we have approximately 15 million sets of fingerprint cards, representing approximately 15 million people.

In our civil files, in which are filed the fingerprints of the various types of applicants, service personnel and the like, we have approximately 62-1/2 million sets of fingerprint records.

Mr. Elsenberg. Returning to palm prints, then, as I understand your testimony, they are not as good as fingerprints for purposes of classification, but they are equally as good for purposes of identification.

Mr. Latona For purposes of identification, I feel that the identifications effected are just as absolute as are those of fingerprints.

Mr. Eisenberg. Are experts unanimous in this opinion, Mr. Latona?

Mr. Latona. As far as I know, yes.

Mr. Eisenberg. Now, Mr. Latona, I hand to you an object whi I will describe for the record as being apparently a brown, home-made type of paper bag, and which I will also describe for the record as having been found on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository building near the window, the eastern-most window on the south face of that floor.

I ask you whether you are familiar with this paper bag?

Mr. Latona. Yes, I am. This is a piece of brown wrapping paper that we have referred to as a brown paper bag, which was referred to me for purposes of processing for latent prints.

Mr. Elsenberg. And you examined that for latent prints?
Mr. Latona. Yes, I did.

Mr. Lisenberg. Mr. Chairman, may I have this admitted into evidence as Commission Exhibit 626?

The Chairman. It may be admitted.

(The item referred to was marked Commission Exhibit 626 for identification and received in evidence.)

Mr. Eisenberg. Mr. Latona, do your notes show when you received this paper bag?

Mr. Latona. I received this paper bag on the morning of November 23, 1963.

Mr. Elsenberg. And when did you conduct your examination?

Mr. Latona. I conducted my examination on that same day.

Mr. Risenberg. When you had received it, could you tell whether any previous examination had been conducted on it?

Mr. Latona. When I received this exhibit, 626, the brown wrapper, it had been treated with black dusting powder, black fingerprint powder. There was nothing visible in the way of any latent prints on there at that particular time.

Mr. Elsenberg. Were you informed whether any fingerprints had been developed by means of the fingerprint powder?

Mr. Latona. No. I determined that by simply examining the

wrapper at that particular time.

Fir. Eisenberg. Could you briefly describe the powder process?

Mr. Latona. The powdering process is merely the utilizing of a fingerprint powder which is applied to any particular surface for purposes of developing any latent prints which may be on such a surface.

Now, we use powder in the FBI only on objects which have a hard, smooth, non-absorbent finish, such as glass, tile, various types of highly-polished metals and the like.

In the FBI we do not use powder on paper, cardboard, unfinished wood, or various types of cloth. The reason is that the materials are absorbent. Accordingly, when any finger which has on it perspiration or sweat comes in contact with an absorbent material, the print starts to become absorbed into the surface. Accordingly, when an effort is made to develop latent prints by the use of a powder, if the surface is dry, the powder will not adhere.

On the other hand, where the surface is a hard and smooth object, with a non-absorbent material, the perspiration or sweat which may have some oil in it 'at that time may remain there as moisture. Accordingly, when the dry powder is brushed across it, the moisture in the print will retain the powder giving an outline of the impression itself.

These powders come in various colors. We utilize a black and

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a gray. The black powder is used on objects which are white or light to give a resulting contrast of a black print on a white background. We use the gray powder on objects which are black or dark in order to give you a resulting contrast of a white print on a dark or black background.

Mr. Eisenberg. Now, Mr. Latona, how did you proceed to conduct your examination for fingerprints on this object?

Mr. Latona. Well, an effort was made to remove as much of the powder as possible. And then this was subjected to what is known as the lodine fuming method, which simply means flowing lodine fumes, which are developed by what is known as an lodine fuming gun -- it is a very simple affair, in which there are a couple of tubes attached to each other, having in one of them lodine crystals. And by simply blowing through one end, you get lodine fumes.

The iodine fumes are brought in as close contact to the surface as possible. And if there are any prints which contain certain fatty material or proteins material, the iodine fumes simply discolor it to a sort of brownish color. And of course such prints as are developed are photographed for record purposes.

That was done in this case here, but no latent prints were developed.

The next step then was to try an additional method, by chemicals. This was subsequently process by a three per cent solution of silver nitrate. The processing with silver nitrate resulted in

developing two latent prints. One is what we call a latent palm print, and the other is what we call a latent fingerprint.

Mr. Eisenberg. Can you briefly explain the action of the silver nitrate?

Mr. Latona. Silver nitrate solution in itself is colorless, and it reacts with the sodium chloride, which is ordinary salt which is found in the perspiration or sweat which is excluded by the sweat pores.

This material covers the fingers. When it touches a surface such as an absorbent material, like rapor, it leaves an outline on the paper.

When this salt material, which is left by the fingers on the paper, is immersed in the silver nitrate solution, there is a combining, an immediate combining of -- the elements themselves will break down, and they recombine into silver chloride and sodium nitrate. We know that silver is sensitive to light. So that material, after it has been treated with the silver nitrate solution, is placed under a strong light. We utilize a carbon arc lamp, which has considerable ultraviolet light in it. And it will immediately start to discolor the specimen. Whereever there is any salt material, it will discolor it much more so than the rest of the object and show exactly where the latent prints have been developed. And It is simply a reaction of the silver ni-frate with the sodium chloride.

That is all it is.



Mr. Eisenberg. Do you frequently find that the silver nitrate develops a print in a paper object which the iodine fumir cannot develop?

Mr. Latona. Yes, I would say that is true, considerably so. We have more success with silver nitrate than we do with the iodifumes.

The reason we use both is because of the fact that this material which is exuded by the fingers may fall into one of two main types -- protein material and salt material. The iodine fumes will develop protein material. Silver nitrate will develop the salt material.

The reason we use both is because we do not know what was in the subject's fingers or hands or feet. Accordingly, to insure complete coverage, we use both methods. And we use them in that sequence. The iodine first, then the silver nitrate. The iodine is used first because the iodine simply causes a temporary physica change. It will discolor, and then the fumes, upon being left in the open air, will disappear, and then the color will dissolve. Silver nitrate, on the other hand, causes a chemical change and it will permanently affect the change. So if we were to use the silver nitrate process first, then we could not use the iodine fumes. On occasion we have developed fingerprints and palmprints rith iodine fumes which filed to develop with the silver nitrate and vice versa.

Mr. Elsenberg. Now, Mr. Latona, looking at that bag I see

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that almost all of it is an extremely dark brown color, except that there are patches of a lighter brown, a manila paper brown. Could you explain why there are these two colors on the bag?

Mr. Latona. Yes. The dark portions of the paperbag are where the silver nitrate has taken effect. And the light portion of the bag are where we did not process the bag at that time, because additional examinations were to be made, and we did not wish the object to lose its identity as to what it may have been used for. Certain chemical tests were to be made after we finished with it. And we felt that the small section that was left in itself would not interfere with the general over-all examination of the bag itself.

Mr. Eisenberg. That is, the small section of light brown corresponds to the color which the bag had when you received it?

Mr. Latona. That is the natural color of the wrapper at the time we received it.

Mr. Eisenberg. And the remaining color is caused by the silver nitrate process?

Mr. Latona. That is correct.

Mr. Elsenberg. Does paper normally take this dark brown color when treated by silver nitrate?

Mr. Latona. Yes, 1t does. It will get darker, too, as time goes on and 1t is affected by light.

Mr. Eisenberg. Mr. Latona, does the silver nitrate process permanently fix the print into the paper?



Mr. Latona. Permanent in the sense that the print by itself will not disappear. Now, it can be removed, or the stains could be removed chemically by the placing of the object into a two per cent solution of mecuric nitrate, which will remove the stains and in addition will remove the prints. But the prints by themselves, if nothing is done to it, will simply continue to grow darker and eventually the whole specimen will lose its complete identity.

The Chairman. May I ask a question here?

So I understand from that that this particular document that you are looking at, or this bag, will continue to get darker as time goes on?

Im. Latona. Yes, it will.

The Chairman. From this date?

Er. Latona. That's right.

Mr. Elsenberg. Returning to the prints themselves, you stated I believe that you found a palmprint and a fingerprint on this paper bag?

Mr. Latona. That is correct.

Mr. Eisenberg. Did you find any other prints?

Mr. Latona. No, no other prints what we term of value in the sense that I felt that they could be identified or that a conclusion could be reached that they were not identical with the fingerprints or palmprints of some other person.

Mr. Eisenberg. Did you attempt to identify the palmprint and

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fingerprint?

Mr. Latona. The ones that I developed, yes.

Mr. Eisenberg. Were you able to identify these prints?

Mr. Latona. I -- the ones I developed, I did 1dent1fy.

Mr. Eisenberg. Whose prints did you find them to be?

Mr. Latona. They were identified as a fingerprint and a palmprint of Lee Harvey Oswald.

Mr. Eisenberg. Now, Mr. Latona, what known sample of Lee Harvey Oswald's prints, finger and palm, did you use in making this identification?

Mr. Latona. The known samples I used were the ones forwarded by our office at Dallas, the Dallas Office.

Mr. Eisenberg. Do you have those with you?

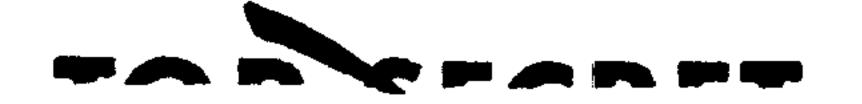
Mr. Latona. I do.

Mr. Eisenberg. Mr. Latona, you have handed me three cards, one of which appears to be a standard fingerprint card, and the other two of which appear to be prints of the palms of an individual. All these cards are marked "Lee Harvey Oswald."

Are these the cards which you received from your Dallas Office as you just described as being the prints of Lee Harvey Oswald?

Mr. Latona. They are.

Mr. Eisenberg. Mr. Chairman, I would like these admitted into evidence as 627, 628 and 629. I would like the standard fingerprint card, ten-print card, admitted as 627.





The Chairman. It will be admitted.

(The 1tem referred to was marked Commission Exhibit 627 for identification and received in evidence.)

Mr. Eisenberg. I would like the card which is -- which appear to be the left palm admitted as 628.

The Chairman. It will be admitted.

(The item referred to was marked Commission Exhibit 628 for Identification and received in evidence.)

Mr. Eisenberg. I would like the card which is the right palm admitted as 629.

The Chairman. That may be admitted.

(The item referred to was marked Commission Exhibit 629 for identification and received in evidence.)

Mr. Latona. May I ask a question, please? Would it be possible to accept copies instead of the originals?

The Chairman. They are identical?

Mr. Latona. These are true and faithful reproductions of the originals which Mr. Eisenberg has.

The Chairman. The originals, then, may be withdrawn, and the copies substituted for them.

Mr. Eisenberg. Shall I mark those 627, 628 and 629 in the same manner as the originals?

The Chairman. Exactly.

Mr. Eisonberg. Mr. Latona, do you know how the known samples we have just marked 627, 628 and 629 were obtained?



Mr. Latona. How they were obtained?

Mr. Elsenberg. Yes. Can you tell the process used in obtaining them?

Mr. Latona. You mean in recording the impressions?

Mr. Eisenberg. Yes, sir.

Mr. Latona. Fingerprints are recorded by the use of a printer's ink, heavy black ink, which is first placed on a smooth surface, such as glass or metal, and it is rolled out in a smooth, even film. Then the subject's fingers are brought in contact with the plate by a rolling process, rolling the finger from one complete side to the other complete side, in order to coat the finger with an even film of this heavy ink.

Then the finger is brought in contact with a standard fingerprint card and the finger again is rolled from one complete side
to the opposite side in order to record in complete detail all of
the ridge formation which occurs on the tip of the finger, or the
first joint, which is under the nail.

Mr. Eisenberg. Did you receive a second submission of known prints?

im. Latona. Yes, we did.

Mr. Eisenberg. When did you receive those?

Mr. Latona. Those were received in the Identification Division on November 29, 1963.

Mr. Eisenberg. Did this include two palms, or was this simply --





Mr. Latona. No, it did not. It was simply a fingerprint card.

Mr. Eisenberg. Do you know why the second submission was made?

Mr. Latona. The second submission was made, I believe, in order to advise us formally that the subject, Lee Harvey Oswald, had been killed, and it has the notation on the back that he was shot and killed 11-24-63 which being transferred in custody.

Mr. Eisenberg. And did you examine that second submission? Mr. Latona. Yes, I did.

Mr. Elsenberg. And is it in all respects identical to the first?

Mr. Latona. The fingerprints appearing on this card are exactly the same as those that appear on the card which you have previously referred to as Commission Exhibit 627.

Mr. Elsenberg. Mr. Latona, do you have a copy of the second submission?

Mr. Latona. No, I do not.

Mr. Eisenberg. I wonder whether you could supply one to us at a later date.

Mr. Letona. Yes, I could. If you feel it necessary, you can take this one.

Mr. Eisenberg. Well, it is up to you. We will accept a copy.

The Chairman. If yourish, you may substitute a copy for it leter.

Mr. Iatona. All right.

The Charman. And then you may wandraw it.

Mr. Elsenberg. May I mark that as 630, with the understanding that it can be substituted for by a copy?

The Chairman. Yes.

Exhibit 626?

(The item referred to was marked Commission Exhibit 630 for identification and received in evidence.)

(At this point, Representative Ford entered the hearing room Mr. Eisenberg. Mr. Latona, could youtell us what portion of the palm of Lee Harvey Oswald was reproduced on the paper bag,

Mr. Latona. The portion of the palm which was identified wa of the right palm, and it is a portion which is sometimes referred to as the heel. It would be the area which is near the wrist on the little-finger side. I have a photograph here which has a rough drawing on it showing the approximate area which was identified.

The Chairman. Which hand did you say?

Mr. Latona. The right hand.

Mr. Eisenberg. That little finger, is that sometimes called the ulnar side?

Im. Latona. The ulnar side, yes, sir.

Mr. Eisenberg. Is this a true photograph made by you?

Mr. Latona. This is a true photograph of one of the exhibit: you have received.

Mr. Eisenberg. That is to say, the exhibit showing the right



palm print, which is marked 629?

Mr. Latona. That's correct.

Mr. Elsenberg. Fr. Chairman, may I have this photograph admitted into evidence as 631?

The Chairman. It may be admitted.

(The item referred to was marked Commission Exhibit 631 for identification and received in evidence.)

Mr. Eisenberg. Do you have another photograph there?

lir. Latona. I have here a photograph which is a slight enlargement of the latent palm print developed on the back. It has a red circle drawn around it showing the palmprint which was developed.

Mr. Elechberg. Is that a true photograph made by you?

Mr. Latona. This is. It is approximately a time and a half enlargement of the palmprint which I developed on the paper bag.

Mr. Eisenberg. May I have that admitted, Mr. Chairman, as 632?

The Chairman. It may be admitted by that number.

(The item referred to was marked Commission Exhibit 632 for identification and received in evidence.)

Mr. Eisenberg. Having reference to the paper bag, Exhibit 626, Mr. Latona, could you show us where on that bag this portion of the palm, the ulnar portion of the palm, of Lee Harvey Oswald was found?

Mr. Latona. This little red arrow which I have placed on the

paper bag shows the palm print as it was developed on the wrapper.

The Chairman. Is it visible to the naked eye?

Mr. Latona. Yes, it is. I think you can see it with the use of this hand magnifier.

Mr. Eisenberg. Mr. Lutona, could you mark that arrow A, the arrow you have just referred to on Exhibit 626 pointing to the portion of the palmprint of Lee Harvey Oswald?

The Chairman. What is the number of the exhibit that it is on?

Mr. Eisenberg. That is 626.

Mr. Latona. May I -- I tell you I am going to furnish you a copy of this, but I cannot make a copy unless I have it.

Mr. Eisenberg. !e can lend it to you for that purpose.

The Chairman. You may have it to make the copy.

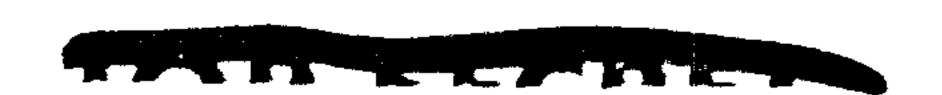
Mr. Latona. And I will send you the copy. Thank you.

Ifr. Eisenberg. Now, I believe you said you also found a fingerprint of Lee Harvey Oswald on this paper bag, 626.

Mr. Latona. Yes, I did.

Mr. Elsenberg. Can you tell us what finger and what portion of the finger of Lee Harvey Oswald you identified that print as being?

Mr. Latona. The fingerprint which was developed on the paper bag was identified as the right -- as the left index finger-print of Lee Harvey Oswald. I also have a slight enlargement of it, if you care to see it.





Mr: Elsenberg. You are showing us a true photograph of the actual fingerprint?

Mr. Latona. As it appeared on the bag, slightly enlarged.

Mr. Elsenberg. May I have that admitted as 633, Mr. Chairman The Chairman. It may be admitted.

(The item referred to was marked Commission Exhibit 633 for identification and received in evidence.)

Mr. Eisenberg. You are holding another photograph, Mr. Intona?

Mr. Latona. I have here a photograph of the fingerprint card, of the one which I just took back, and it is actually a true reproduction of the front of the card. That was Exhibit 630.

This one here is a true reproduction of the front of Exhibit 630.

Mr. Eisenberg. And have you circled on that, the photograph which you are holding, the left index finger?

Mr. Latona. That's right.

Mr. Eisenberg. And would you show that to the Chief Justice?
That is a true reproduction, Mr. Latona?

Mr. Iatona. Yes, 1t is.

Mr. Eisenberg. I would like that admitted as 634.

The Chairman. It may be admitted.

(The item referred to was marked Commission Exhibit 634 ... for identification and received in evidence.)

Mr. Latona. Could that take the place of this?

Mr. Elsenberg. I think our exhibits would be confused.

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Mr. Latona. Very well.

Mr. Eisenberg. Now, what portion of the left index finger was that, Mr. Latona?

Mr. Latona. That is the area which is to the left, or vather to the right of the index finger.

Mr. Elsenberg. On which join't?

Mr. Latona. On the first joint, which is under the nail.

Mr. Eisenberg. Is that known as the distal phalanx?

Mr. Latona. That's right.

Mr. Eisenberg. So it is the right side of the distal phalanx of the left index finger?

Mr. Latona. That is correct. Now, that would be looking at an impression made by the finger. If you were to look at the finger, you would raise the finger up and it would be on the opposite side, which would be on the left side of the distal phalanx.

Mr. Eisenberg. Now, when we were talking before about the palm print, and you said that it was on the right side -- you said it was on the ulnar portion of the palm.

Mr. Latona. That 1s correct.

Mr. Elsenberg. And that is looking at the palm itself.

Mr. Latona. Looking at the palm itself.

Mr. Eisenberg. Now, I would rather --

Mr. Latona. That would still be the ulnar side when you look at the print.

Mr. Eisenberg. Why don't we use ulnar and radial then when

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we refer to portions of fingerprints, ulnar referring to the little finger side, and radial to the thumb side? So referring to the left index fingerprint now, that would correspond to the ulnar side of the left index finger of Lee Harvey Oswald.

Mr. Latona. That is correct.

The Chairman. Congressman Ford, I'm going to leave now to attend a session of the Court -- if you will preside in my absence.

Mr. Dulles will be here in a few moments, and if you are obliged to leave for your work in the Congress, he will preside until I return.

(At this point, Mr. Dulles entered the hearing room and the Chairman left the hearing room.)

Mr. Eisenberg. Mr. Latona, could you show us where on the paper bag, Exhibit 626, this left index finger was developed by you?

Mr. Latona. The left index fingerprint was developed in the area which is indicated by this small red arrow.

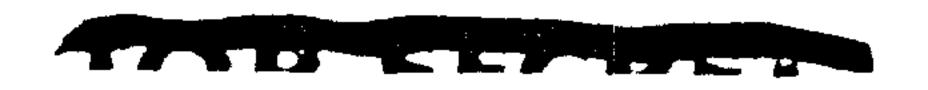
Ifr. Eisenberg. Could you put a B on that arrow towhich you are pointing?

Mr. Latona, did you make comparisonn charts of the Imown and latent or the inked and latent palmprints of Lee Harvey Oswald which you have been referring to as found on this paper bag, 626?

Mr. Latona. Yes, I did.

Mr. Eisenberg. Could you --

Mr. Dulles. Shouldn't you change that question a little bit?





I don't think you should say Lee Harvey Oswald at this point.

Mr. Eisenberg. He has identified the print as being that. of Lee Harvey Oswald.

Mr. Dulles. Excuse me.

Fir. Eisenberg. W. Latona, could you show us that chart and discuss with us some of the similar characteristics which you found in the inked and latent print which led you to the conclusion that they were identical?

Mr. Latona. Yes. I have here what are referred to as two charted enlargements. One of the enlargements, which is marked "Inked Left Index Fingerprint, Lee Harvey Oswald", is approximate—ly a ten-time enlargement of the fingerprint, which appears on Exhibit 634. The enlargement, which is marked "Latent Finger—print on Brown Homemade Paper Container" is approximately a ten-time enlargement of the latent fingerprint which was developed on the brown wrapping spaper indicated by the red arrow B.

Mr. Eisenberg. And that also corresponds to the photograph you gave us, which is now Exhibit 633.

Mr. Latona. That's correct.

Rep. Ford. And the arrow B is on Exhibit 626.

Mr. Latona. That's correct.

Now, in making a comparison of prints to determine whether or not they were made by the same finger, an examination is made first of all of the latent print.

An examination is made to see if there are in the latent

print any points of characteristics which are unique to the person making the determination. In other words, in looking at the lateni print, for example, this point, which is marked 1, is a ridge. The black lines are what we term ridges. They were made by the ridge formations on the fingers. That is, when the finger came in contact with the brown paper bag, it left an outline in these black lines on the brown paper bag.

Now, in looking at the latent print, in the enlargements you notice there is one black line that appears to go upward and stop at the point which has been indicated as point number 1.

Mr.Eisenberg. Mr. Latona, may I interrupt you there for a second.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce this chart, this comparison chart, as an exhibit.

Rep. Ford. It may be admitted.

Mr. Elsenberg. That will be 634.

(The item referred to was marked Commission Exhibit 634 for identification and was received in evidence.)

In. Latona. Looking further we notice --

If. Dulles. Could I just ask a question about this? This is referring to Exhibit 634. I want to make sure what line we are talking about. You are talking about a black line that goes up as though two rivers came together there, and here is the point where this line stops.

Mr. Latona. That's correct.

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Mr. Dulles. Number 1. This is the latent?

Mr. Latona. This is the imprint. This is the print on the bag.

Hr. Dulles. Yes.

Mr. Latona. The contrast here is not as good as it is here.

Mr. Dulles. This goes up here, and these two lines come in there, so there is the point where your black line stops?

Mr. Latona. Right at the end of the red line which is marked l.

Fir. Dulles. Thank you.

Mr. Latona. Now, looking further we find this point that has been indicated as number 3. And number 3 is located --

Er. Dulles. Why do you skip 2?

Mr. Latona. I am going to come to that.

Mr. Dulles. I see.

Mr. Latona. I am going to tie these three in. Point number 3 is above and to the left one ridge removed from -- one black line -- there is number 3. Now looking further, we can look over to the right, or rather to the left, and we notice that one ridge removed from number 3 are two ridges that come together and give you a point which has been indicated as number 2.

Mr.Elsenberg. Is that what you might call a bifurcation? Fir. Latona. That is referred to, generally speaking, as a bifurcation.

Mr. Eisenberg. That is number 2.



Mr. Latona. And number 1 is what is referred to as a ridge end.

Now, keeping these three points in mind, and the relationship they have to each other, if this print here, the inked print, were made by the same finger which left the print on the brown paper bag, we should be able to find those three points in the same of proximate area, having the same relationship to each other.

Now, at this point we have not made a determination of any kind as to whether they are, or are not identifical.

Examining the inked fingerprint, bearing in mind the general formation of this print that we see here, the latent print, we would examine the inked print and that would direct us to this approximate area here. And looking, we find sure enough there is point number 1 -- or rather there is a point which appears to be the same as point number 1 here. Bearing in mind how we located points number 2 and 3, we would then check the inked print further and say to curselves. "If this print were made the same, there should be a point number 2 in exactly the same relationship to mumber 1 as there was in this latent print."

He look over here -- one, two, three, four -- there is point number 2.

in. Eisenberg. That point, or that count that you are making is of ridges between the first and second point?

over here one, two, three, four. And bearing in mind again how

point number 3 bears a relationship to point number 2, we should .

find point number 3 in the same relative position in the inked

print that it occurs in the latent print.

Counting over again -- one -- we find a point which could be considered number 3.

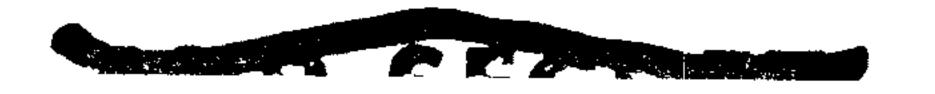
Now, at this time we have coordinated three points. We have tied three points together. On that basis, by themselves, we would not give a definite determination. Accordingly, we would pursue a further examination to determine, are there, other characteristics which occur.

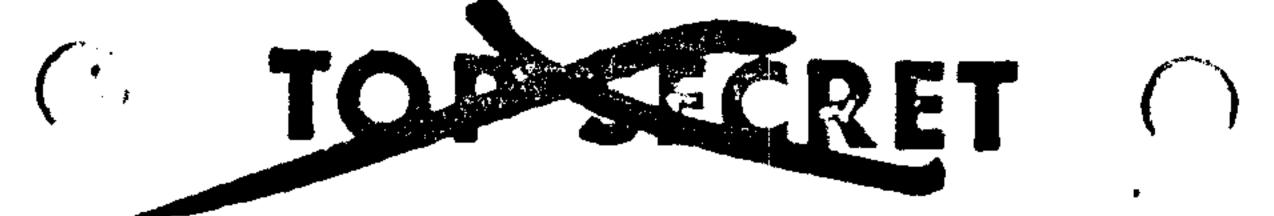
Iir. Dulles. How many times is that magnified?

Mr. Lationa. This is magnified approximately ten times.

Then we would pick up point number 5. We notice point number 5 is again one of those bifurcations which occurs above and slightly to the left of point number 3. We also notice that it envelops point number 1 -- as we go down further, slightly to the right of point number 5, we notice that bifurcation envelopes point number 1. So we would look around for such a characteristic in the latent print.

If the same finger made those two prints, we have to find point 5. And looking over here we find such a formation, we look at it, and sure enough it envelopes point number 1 -- exactly the came relationship to each other appears in the latent print, and in the inked print. It has the same relationship to point number 3 that occurs in the latent print as occurs in the inked print.





Then we would pick up point number 4 -- 1, 2, 3, 4.

Mr. Elsenberg. Again you are counting ridges?

Mr. Latona. Counting ridges again, from point number 5 -
1, 2, 3, 4. There is a so-called ridge-end, which occurs above, above and almost slightly to the left of point number 5, point number 5 enveloping number 1. Point number 5.

Im. Dulles. Is 5 a ridge-end?

Mr. Latona. 5 is what we term a joining, forking, or bifur-cation.

These two come together at point 5. Over here, together at point 5.

Im.Dulles. Is that where the two ridges come together there and encase it?

Mr. Latona. Yes, sir. From point number 5 we pick up point number 7, which is another one of those so-called bifurcations.

1,2, 3, 4.

Mr. Eisenberg. Again a ridge count.

Mr. Latona. Ridge counting from 5 to 6. That is in the latent print. We must find the same situation in the inked print.

Counting from point number 5 the ridges which intervene, 1, 2, 3, and then we count 4, the point itself. There is the bifurcation right here.

Fir. Eisenberg. Fir. Latona, in making these ridge counts, do you also pay attention to the so-called, let's say, geographical relation, the spacial relation of the two points?

Mr. Laton... Very definitely.

Now, it does not always follow that the so-called geographical position will coincide exactly the same. That would be caused because of variations in the pressure used when the print was made. For example, when you make a print on a fingerprint card -- when the inked print was made, the print was made for the specific purpose of recording all of the ridge details. When the print was left on the paper bag, it was an incidental impression. The person was not trying to leave a print. In fact, he probably did not even know he left one. So the pressure which is left, or the position of the finger when it made the print will be a little different. Accordingly the geographical area of the points themselves will not always coincide. But they will be in the general position the same.

Mr. Eisenberg. Mr. Latona, without going into detail, there are some apparent dissimilarities on the two sides of that chart. Can you explain why there should be apparent dissimilarities?

IF. Latona. The dissimilarities as such are caused by the type of material on which the print was left, because of the pressure, because of the amount of material which is on the finger when it left the print. They would not always be exactly the came. Here again there appears a material difference in the sense there is a difference in coloration. This is because of the fact that the contrast in the latent print is not as sharp as it is in the inked impression, which is a definite black on white, whereas





here we have a more or less a brown on a lighted brown.

Mr. Eisenberg. Now, Mr. Latona, when you find an apparent dissimilarity between an inked and a latent print, how do you know that it is caused by absorption of the surface upon which the latent print is placed, or by failure of the finger to exude material, rather than by the fact that you have a different finger-print.

Mr. Latona. That is simply by sheer experience.

Mr. Elsenberg. Would you say, therefore, that the identification of a fingerprint is a task which calls for an expert interpretation as opposed to a simple point-by-point laying out which a layman could do?

lir. Latona. Very definitely so, yes.

Mr. Eisenberg. How much training does it take before you can make an identification?

Mr.Latona. Well, I cannot tell you exactly how much in terms of time, insofar as what constitutes an expert. I can simply tell you what we require of our people before they would be considered experts.

Im. Bisenberg. Yes, could you do that?

Mr. Latona. We require our people before they would be -Mr. Dulles. This is the FBI?

Mr. Latona. Yes, this is the FBI. It would be ten years of practical work in connection with the classifying and searching and verifying of regular fingerprint cards which bear all ten

prints. Those prints would be scarched through our main fingerprint files. That means that that person would have to scrve
at least ten years doing that. Of course, he would have to progress from the mere scarching operation to the operation of being
what we call Unit Supervisor, which would check -- which would
be actually the checking of the work of subordinates who do that
work. He would be responsible for seeing that the fingerprints
are properly searched, properly classified.

Mr. Eisenberg. And how long will he work in the Latent Fingerprint Section?

Mr. Latona. He would have to take an adaptability test, which would take three or four days, to determine, first of all, do we feel he has the qualifications for the job. Then if he passed the adaptability test, he would receive a minimum of one year's personal training in the Latent Fingerprint Section, which means that he would have to serve at least eleven years in fingerprint work constantly, day in and day out, eight hours a day in fingerprint work, before we would consider him as a finger-print expert for purposes of testifying in a court of law.

Mr. Eisenberg. So that when you show us this chart, this is actually, or I should say, is this actually a demonstration which we could make an identification?

If. Latona. That's right. The purpose is simply a hope on by part that by my explanation you may have some idea as to how a comparison is made, rather than for me to prove it to me through



these charts, because unquestionably there are certain points that you will not see which to me are apparent.

Mr. Eisenberg. Now, Mr. Latona --

Mr. Duller. May I ask a question? Is this ridge formation, sort of two ridges coming together, is that one of the most distinctive things you look for? I note on these charts, Exhibit 634, the various examples you have given us have been of one type so far.

Mr. Latona. Two.

Mr. Dulles. I did not get the two. I get the two ridges coming together with sort of the ending of a valley.

You were saying there were two distinctive things. I have only caught so far one distinctive thing -- that is the two riages coming together in a kind of valley with no exit.

Mr. Latona. Two that come together, like a fork. And the other one was the one that just ends by itself -- does not join.

Mr. Eisenberg. Which is an interrupted ridge?

Mr. Dulles. I do not get the distinction.

Mr. Elsenberg. Is that an interrupted ridge you just describcd?

Mr. Latona. What we call an ending ridge.

Mr. Elsenberg. Off the record.

(Discussion off the record.)

Im. Eisenberg. Back on the record.

Mr. Latona, could you prepare a diagram which would show some

of the characteristics in broad outline which we have been discussing and have those labeled, and could you submit that diagram to us at a future date?

Im. Latona. Yes, I could.

Mr. Elsenberg. We will append it to your testimony, so that your testimony may be more easily followed by the reader -- with the permission of the Chairman.

Rep. Ford. It will be prepared and submitted and included 1 the record.

Mr. Latona. Well, if you could give me your indulgence, I could do it right here as fast as I did it on the board.

Rep. Ford. Off the record.

(Discussion off the record.)

Rep. Ford. Pack on the record.

Mr. Dulles. These, I understand, are of the particular distinguishing points, the points that you would look for to determine whether the latent print --

Wr. Latona. Not so much the looking of the points, as to find points having a relationship to each other. It is the relation that is the important thing, not the point itself. In other words, all of us would have to a certain extent these points

Mr. Dulles. They have to be in the same relation to each other.

Mr. Latona. That is correct. For example, on the illustration I have here --

Mr. Eisenberg. This is an illustration on the blackboard.

Mr. Latona. The more fact that this is an ending ridge and bifurcation and another ending ridge and a dot in themselves mean nothing. This is a type of pattern which is referred to as a loop, which is very common. Those comprise approximately 65 per cent of pattern types. It has four ridge counts, for example. You can find hundreds of thousands and millions of four-count loops. But you would not find but one loop having an arrangement of these characteristics in the relation that they have. For example, the enclosure is related to this ending ridge. This ending ridge is related by one ridge removed from the dot. This bifurcation is next to the so-called core which is formed by a rod, the ending ridge.

The points themselves are common. The most common type of points are the ending ridge and the bifurcation. Those are the two points we have covered so far.

Mr. Elsenberg. Mr. Latona, I see that you have marked nine characteristics on your chart. Are these all the characteristics which you were able to find --

If. Latona. On this particular chart, yes. They were the only ones that bore -- actually, there is still one more characteristic -- there could have been ten.

In. Elsenberg. Now, is there any minimum number of points that has to be found in order to make an identification, in your opinion?

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Mr. Ialona. No, in my opinion, there are no number of point which are a requirement. Now, there is a general belief among lots of fingerprint people that a certain number of points are required. It is my opinion that this is an erroneous assumption that they have taken, because of the fact that here in the United States a person that qualifies in court as an expert has the right merely to voice an opinion as to whether two prints were made by the same finger or not made. There are no requirements, there is no standard by which a person can say that a certain number of points are required — primarily because of the fact that there is such a wide variance in the experience of men who qualify as fingerprint experts.

Mr. Eisenberg. Mr. Lawona, you said that not all experts an in agreement on this subject. Is there any substantial body of expert opinion that holds to a minimum number of points, let's say, twelve?

Mr. Latona. In the United States, to my knowledge, I know a no group or body that subscribe to a particular number. Now, quite frequently some of these departments will maintain a standar for themselves, by virtue of the fact that they will say, "Deforate we will make an identification, we must find a minimum of 12 points of similarity."

I am quite certain that the reason for that is simply to avoid the possibility of making an erroneous identification. Not why they have picked 12 -- I believe that that 12 point business

French fingerprint examiner by the name of Edmond Locard back in 1917, I think -- there was a publication to the effect that in his opinion where there were 12 points of similarity, there was no chance of making an erroneous identification. If there were less than 12, he voiced the conclusion that the chances would increase as to finding duplicate prints.

Now, today we in the FBI do not subscribe to that theory at all. We simply say this: We have confidence in our experts to the extent that regardless of the number of points, if the expert who has been assigned to the case for purposes of making the examination gives an opinion, we will not question the number of points. We have testified — I personally have testified in court to as few as seven points of similarity.

Mr. Dulles. But you would not on two, would you?

If . Latona. No, sir, because I know that two points, even though they would not be duplicate points, would be arranged in such a fashion that it might possibly give me the impression that here are two points which appear to be the same even though they are not.

Mr. Dulles. But it is somewhere between two and seven -- somewhere in that range?

Mr. Latona. That is right. Where that is, I do not know.

And I would not say whether I would testify to six, would I testify to five, would I refuse to testify to four.

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Mr. Dul-s. You say you would -- c. would you?

Mr. Latona. I don't know. That's a question I could not answer. I would have to see each case individually before I could render a conclusion.

Now, going outside of the United States, we have been approached —— I mean the FBI —— have been approached by other foreign experts in an attempt to set a world-wide standard of 16 characteristics, a minimum of 16 as opposed to 12, which is generally referred to by people in this country here. New of course we would not subscribe to that at all. And I think ——

Fir. Dulles. That would be 16 on the fingerprint of the same finger?

Mr. Latona. That's right.

Mr. Dulles. Obviously, if you have two fingers that would alter the number -- if you had three on one and two on the other, would you consider that five?

Mr. Latona. We would.

Now, whether the foreign emperts would not, I don't know. In other words, if we were to go along with this European theory of 16 points, we would not testify to this being an identification. That is really what it would amount to. Yet to me, in my mind, there is no question that these prints here —

Mr. Bisenberg. Unich is what exhibit?

Mr. Latona. The enlargements in Exhibit 634 -- are simply reproductions of the left index fingerprint of Lee Harvey Oswald.

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Rep. Ford. There is no doubt in your mind about that?

Mr. Litona. Absolutely none at all. The fact that there are only the nine points charted — and I feel this way, it is purely a matter of experience. They simply do not have the experience that we have in the FBI. The FBI has the world's largest practical fingerprint file. We receive on an average of 23,000 to 25,000 cards a day which are processed within a three-day period.

Mr. Dulles. In a three-day pericd?

Mr. Latona. In a three-day period.

Mr. Dulles. And by processed do you mean they are filed according to certain characteristics?

Mr. Latona. They are. At first they are recorded as having been received from a particular agency, as to the number that we have received, as to the type of the card. Then they are checked to see if the impressions which are on the fingerprint card are complete and legible, that they are placed in their proper sequence, that they are properly classified.

Then they are checked through our files to see if the person has or has not a prior criminal record. Then a reply is prepared and forwarded to the contributor. That is done in a three-day period.

Mr. Dulles. How old is the art, roughly?

Mr. Latona. Insofar as this country is concerned, I would say back to 1903 when the first fingerprint file for purposes of

classification and filling was set up in this country in New York,

Mr. Dulles. Did it start in France?

Mr. Latona. No. Really, I darecay the English were probably as early as any, or even down in South America -- you have in Argentina the setting up of fingerprint files as early as 1891. For a long time we never recognized the fact that Argentina had a fingerprint file. I think it is primarily because all of the work on fingerprinting were written in Spanish, and it was just a question of finding somebody to take the time and effort to translate it into English.

The French are credited with the so-called Bertillon system, which is a measurement of the bone structure of the body. Alphone Bertillon was a French ---

Mr. Dalles. Didn't Pertillon go into fingerprints later?

Mr. Latona. Very reluctantly. He was very reluctant to
accept it. He was a sort of dichard. He felt that his method,
the measurement of certain bones of the body, would not change
after a person reached the adult stage. But we know that that is
not true. There is a change -- because of age, disease,
dissipation. A person that was once six feet two may, because of
the fact he is getting older, hump down a little more and instead
of being six feet two he might be five feet eleven. Certain
bone structures over the years make certain changes -- plus the
fact that his system was not a good system in that certain allowances had to be fide because of the way that people were measured.

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Schetimes one operator might measure the bones of the arm, for example, too tight, and another too loose. And they used the measurement, which in terms of their measuring might sometimes mean that the same person would not measure the same bone the same twice.

We have the celebrated case here which we refer to as the Will West case, here in the United States, in which a man was centenced to the penitentiary in Leavenworth. He was a colored man by the name of Will West. The operator there, going through the mechanics of taking the various measurements and his photograph, said, "I see you are back here again." The man said, "No, this is the first time I have been to Leavenworth." The operator was certain he had measured and photographed this man before. He went to check his records and he came up with a prior record which disclosed a Will West who had practically the same Bertillon measurements as the man currently being examined.

He said, "Isn't time you?" And he showed him a picture. He looked at the picture and recognized the picture as being one of himself. He said, "Yes, that is me, but I have never been here before."

They checked the records and found still there in the penitentiary was another Will West who looked almost exactly like a twin. But they were not even related. Their features were the same, their measurements were the same, but then their fingerprints were completely different.

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If they made that error that one time, how many other times could the same error have been made? And accordingly, we here in the United States, around 1903 -- the Bertillon method was slowly put out of use. It became obsolete.

Bertillon, before he died, conceded that fingerprints was a good means of identification, and he very reluctantly conceded that the two systems, his method and fingerprints together, would be an absolute means of identification.

We completely did away with the Bertillon system. In fact, the FBI never used it. We started our fingerprint work years after all that had been resolved, back in 1924.

On July 1, 1624, that is actually when the FBI went into the fingerprint business.

Mr. Dulles. Thank you very much. I found that very interesting.

Rep. Ford. Go ahead, Mr. Eisenberg.

Mr. Eisenberg. Mr Latona, did you also prepare a chart showing a comparison of the latent and known left index fingerprint of Lee Marvey Oswald found on the paper bag, Exhibit 626?

Mr. Letona. The left index finger. That is the one we just discussed.

Mr. Eisenberg. I'm sorry -- the right palmprint.

Mr. Ictona. Right.

If. Eisenberg. And before we go any further, I should state for the record that the exhibit we have been referring to as 626

was earlier introduced as 142, and it is 142.

Mr. Dulles. Off the record.

(Discussion off the record.)

Mr. Dulles. Eack on the record.

Mr. Elsenberg. Also, before we get to the palmprint --

Mr. Dulles. Just a moment. It seems to me it would be well to have for the files of the Commission copies of the earlier fingerprints of Lee Harvey Oswald that were taken, and the time that they were taken.

Mr. Elsenberg. I agree, sir.

Mr. Latona --

Mr. Latona. Do I understand you are asking --

Mr. Eisenberg. I will develop this on the record.

Mr. Latona, you had earlier submitted to us, and we had marked as an exhibit, copies of fingerprint cards and two paluprint cards which were made up by the Dallas Police and forwarded to you, received by you from your Dallas Office; is that correct?

Mr. Istona. Yes, gir.

In. Eisenberg. Now, in addition, did the Federal Bureau of Investigation have in its files prints of Lee Harvey Osmald which it had received at some earlier date, prior to November 22nd?

in. Letona. Yes, sir. I believe there is a Marine Corps print.

Im. Eleenberg. Would these prints have been taken by the FBI?

Im. Latona. No, they would not.

Mr. Eisenberg. They were taken by --

Mr. Latona. The regular service.

Mr. Eisenberg. And forwarded to the FBI?

Mr. Latena. That's right.

Mr. Eisenberg. Did you compare the ten finger card which you received from the Dallas Office to the FBI and compare it with the Marine fingerprint card?

Er. Latona. Yes, sir.

Mr. Elsenberg. Were they identical?

Mr. Latona. They were the same.

Mr. Eisenberg. Were polluprints taken by the Karines?

Er. Latena. No, not to my knowledge.

Mr. Elsenberg. Could you submit to us a copy of the tenprint card which you received from the Marine Corps?

Mr. Latena. Yes, I could.

Mr. Eisenberg. With the Chairman's permission, that will be appended as an exhibit to Mr. Latona's testimony.

Rep. Ford. Do you wish to identify it by a number at this time?

Mr. Eisenberg. Yes. If we could give it a number in advance of receiving it, I would like to give it the number 635.

Rep. Ford. It will be admitted.

(The item to be furnished will be marked Commission Exhibit 635 for identification and received in evidence.)

