

PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION  
ON THE  
ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY

200 Maryland Ave. NE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20002

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JAN 22 1964

Mr. J. Edgar Hoover  
Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Department of Justice  
Washington, D. C. 20530

Dear Mr. Hoover:

I have your letters of January 10th, 14th and 15th concerning the request of District Attorney Wade of Dallas County, Texas, and Mr. Joe Tonahill and his associates in the defense of Jack L. Ruby for release to them for their respective uses of information concerning the assassination of President Kennedy and the subsequent killing of Lee H. Oswald, his alleged assassin. The same request has been made to the Commission through me by Mr. Tonahill. For your information, I am enclosing a copy of my letter to him.

The Commission, of course, is not a prosecuting agency. It is not the custodian of any originals. The copies of documents in its possession have come to it through the cooperation of the various federal, state and local agencies as authorized by Executive Order 11130. It considers itself only as a trustee of this information for the specific purposes enumerated in that Executive Order by the President.

While the work of the Commission would be greatly handicapped if the information contained in the summaries and work reports submitted to it by the agencies should become common knowledge before its work is completed, it does not have the authority nor the desire to limit the normal powers or responsibilities of any agency of government federal, state or local, in relation to the prosecution or defense of any criminal case.

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The Commission has, therefore, authorized me to advise you and the other federal agencies that it will not respond favorably to such requests, and that it will not urge you or them to make any deviation from your own judgment of what is required of your agency by law.

Sincerely,

*J. Lee Rankin*

J. Lee Rankin  
General Counsel