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Warren Panel Discussed Report That Oswald Was an FBI Undercover Agent

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Warren Commission discussed a report that Lee Harvey Oswald had worked as an FBI undercover agent for more than a year before the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, according to a recently declassified commission transcript.

Members of the commission, including the late Chief Justice Earl Warren and President Ford, who was then a Michigan congressman, discussed the report at a closed session Jan. 22, 1964.

The transcript remained classified as top secret for 11 years until released to Harold Weisberg, an author who had filed suit for its release under the Freedom of Information Act. Weisberg has written many books and articles criticizing the Warren Commission's investigation and its conclusion that Oswald, acting alone, had shot and killed Kennedy in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963.

A copy of the transcript was obtained by the Associated Press.

At the start of the meeting, J. Lee Rankin, general counsel of the commission, said he had been told by Waggoner Carr, then Texas attorney general, that "the word had come out . . . that Oswald was acting as an FBI undercover agent and that they had the information of his badge which was given as No. 179, and that he was being paid \$200 a month from September of 1962 up through the time of the assassination."

Rankin said he had talked to Henry Wade, Dallas district attorney, who told him the source of the report was a member of the press.

"There is a denial of this in one of these FBI records, as you know," interjected the late Rep. Hale Boggs (D-La.), another commission member.

"It is something that would be very difficult to prove out," Rankin answered. "There was events in connection with this that are curious, in that they might make it possible to check some of it out in time. I assume that the FBI records would never show it and if it is true, and of

course we don't know, but we thought you should have the information."

Later, Rankin commented that he and Warren had discussed the report and "we said if that was true and it ever came out and could be established, then you would have people think that there was a conspiracy to accomplish this assassination, that nothing the commission did, or anybody, could dissipate."

"You are so right," Boggs said.

"Oh, terrible," said the late Allen Dulles, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency and a member of the Warren Commission.

Dulles questioned why the FBI would hire Oswald as an undercover agent.

"What was the ostensible mission?" he asked. "I mean, when they hire someone they hire somebody for a purpose . . . Was it to penetrate the Fair Play for Cuba Committee? That is the only thing I can think of where they might have used this man . . . You wouldn't pick up a fellow like this to do an agent's job."

"He (Oswald) was playing ball, writing letters to both the elements of the Communist parties," Ford said. "I mean, he was playing ball with the Trotskyites and with the others. This was a strange circumstance to me."

"But the FBI get people right inside, you know," Dulles commented. "They don't need a person like this on the outside. The only place where he did anything at all was with the Fair Play for Cuba Committee."

Later, they discussed their ~~face that~~ the FBI was trying to maneuver them into endorsing the FBI probe and described how the FBI probably wanted the commission investigation handled.

One unidentified speaker said, "They (the FBI) would like to have us fold up and quit."

"They found the man," Rankin said. "There is nothing more to do. The commission supports their conclusions and we can go on home and that is the end of it."

Dulles agreed that the FBI was

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trying to take credit for having solved the case, then, with the discussion about to end, he said, "I think this record ought to be destroyed. Do you think we need a record of this?"
 "I would hope that none of these records are circulated to anybody."
 Boggs added.

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J. Lee Rankin

photos



Lee Harvey Oswald