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Panel seeks document on Oswald note to FBI

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WASHINGTON—House subcommittee members investigating the 1963 destruction of Lee Harvey Oswald's threatening letter to the FBI began collecting additional information today that could lead to more hearings in the controversial incident.

The various documents from FBI files were requested by the House Judiciary Committee's subcommittee on civil and constitutional rights after it heard an FBI official testify Tuesday that the note allegedly was destroyed on orders from the agent-in-charge of the Dallas FBI office.

The subcommittee suggested these files could be "better evidence" of events that resulted in destruction of the letter. FBI Deputy Associate Director James B. Adams testified for more than two hours Tuesday on the results of the bureau's internal investigation into the destruction.

After Adams' testimony, which quoted conflicting accounts from agents involved in the case, the subcommittee adjourned so it could gather more evidence, study it in executive session and determine if more public hearings are warranted.

Among items the panel is seeking are:

- All FBI files concerning disciplinary proceedings against bureau personnel.

- Tapes and notes on interviews conducted by FBI agents with Oswald before President John F. Kennedy was assassinated on Nov. 22, 1963.

- Material concerning Jack Ruby, Oswald's slayer, and his involvement in a 1939 labor union killing in Chicago.

- And all information the FBI relayed to the Justice Department for its consideration of possible court action against bureau personnel involved in destruction of the Oswald letter.

Subcommittee counsel Alan A. Parker said the materials would be studied and previewed in executive session to protect the rights of the individuals involved.

He also said the subcommittee might call as possible witnesses J. Gordon Shanklin, special agent-in-charge of the Dallas FBI office at the time of the assassination; James P. Hosty Jr., the agent for whom the threatening letter was delivered by Oswald; Ken Howe, Hosty's supervisor at the time, and William Walter, a former FBI code clerk who claims he received an FBI teletype warning about a possible attempt on Kennedy's life in Dallas.

Parker said it probably would be mid-November before the hearings could resume because of the time needed to study the documents and because of prior commitments by the subcommittee members.

During his testimony Tuesday, Adams dealt with allegations that both Oswald and Ruby were paid informants of the FBI, saying the allegations were

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"The Dallas Times Herald"
Dallas, Texas

Page FRONT

Date: 10-22-75
Edition: _____
Author: _____
Editor: Kenneth P. Johnson
Title: _____

Character: _____
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Classification: _____
Submitting Office: Dallas
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File
62-109060

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not true, although both men had been contacted occasionally by the FBI.

In his testimony concerning Walter's claim of receiving a teletype warning of the assassination attempt, Adams said, "I just don't believe it happened." He explained that an internal probe into the former code clerk's claims revealed inconsistencies.

The whole area of concentration by Adams in his 21-page statement dealt primarily with matters reported in The Times Herald in the past three months.

The committee got considerable help from Mark Lane, the Warren Commission critic, and several of his cohorts who sat in close-up, reserved seats. On several occasions Lane or his associates took materials, questions and documents to the congressmen, from which they posed their questions.

Rep. Robert F. Drinan, D-Mass., asked perhaps the most compelling and important questions of Adams. Drinan wanted to know what motives the FBI personnel must have had in destroying the threatening note in Dallas two hours after Oswald's death.

Adams, in answer to a previous question, had said that the only indication of motive the investigation

a mistake. I think we are embarrassed in we make a mistake ... I'm embarrassed over this incident, that people failed to carry out their responsibilities in this regard. But there isn't any order that you must do nothing to embarrass the bureau, you must conceal facts to not embarrass the bureau. I just think that frequently it comes to a person's mind that, 'I hate to embarrass the bureau by my actions.' I think that's what happened."

Drinan: "Am I right that you are suggesting that is the only possible motivation?"

Adams: "No sir, I am not."

Drinan: "... Unless you have some other motivations to offer, then we have to conclude that it's the rule of the FBI drilling into the agents, 'Never embarrass the bureau' that caused this unfortunate violation of the rule."

Adams: "I think that would be a most unfair assumption and I think ... I just can't agree with it and I can't see the basis for it."

Drinan: "Now, it seems to me the burden is on you, sir, to suggest some other possible motivation."

Adams: "I don't feel the burden is on me to do that. I could speculate. I

ards, the receptionist would not record the note when she received it. She delivered it to the agent. He would normally include it in a communication or he would send it to the chief clerk's office where it would be serialized into a file. I wish we could arrive at a motivation.

"I wish we could completely answer satisfactorily what the note said, who ordered its destruction. We have a conflict in sworn statements in this regard. All that we were able to do was conduct a thorough investigation and we're never satisfied when we don't get all the answers. But as you know, this isn't always possible."

Rep. Herman Badillo, D-N.Y., was concerned that J. Edgar Hoover or somebody else high in the FBI hierarchy might have known of the note and ordered a coverup in the matter, as a New York Times story reported a few days ago.

Adams had stated that he and Clarence M. Kelley, director of the FBI, had never heard of the note until this past summer. I

had turned up was the statement of agent Hosty (he man for whom Oswald left the note and the man who admitted tearing it up) that he destroyed it to save "embarrassment to the bureau and embarrassment to him personally ... and protection of the bureau."

"I think the key question here," said Drinan, "is the motives behind the destruction of the note and you skirt all around that and you state whatever thoughts and fears may have motivated a concealment of Oswald ... and the concealment and subsequent destruction of the note are unknown."

Drinan: "Well the agent-in-charge ... the agent rather ... said that he did this to avoid embarrassment to the bureau. What kind of rules do you give to these people to avoid embarrassment of the bureau? What embarrassment could have come to the bureau?"

Adams: "Well, we don't give 'em any."

Drinan: "Why do you feel that way then?"

Adams: "We at the bureau have respect and love for the organization. I don't think you have to have official promulgated rules saying that we should all be embarrassed if we make

could say, one, he's indicated personal embarrassment. He had received the note, and admittedly had received the note from Oswald. He says it did not contain any threat. If that's true then it would have been no embarrassment perhaps in the fact that Oswald had visited the office afterwards. If the note did contain a threat, on the other hand, and he failed to take appropriate action, that would be a motive for destroying it ..."

Drinan: "Mr. Adams, if the embarrassment had come about in the irregularity of the receipt of that letter ... I assume that whenever a letter is received that it's recorded somehow. And we have no record that this was, in fact, recorded with the date that it was received and the person ... could that have been the reason for the destruction? He didn't want to bring this out, that rules had been violated?"

Adams: "No, I don't think that the note would have necessarily been recorded until such time as he took action on it and included it in the official files of the FBI. In other