

ONE 88-0191

# The Richmond Company

## DEPARTMENT STORE

1 FRONT AVE. SOUTH

PRESTONSBURG, KENTUCKY

FRED COTTRELL  
MANAGER

Serving Kentucky Since 1889

March 2, 1967

Office of Mr. J. Edgar Hoover  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Washington, D. C.

Gentlemen:

I was taking infantry basic training at Ft. McClellan, Ala., in March 1943. I was called to an office one morning. I was asked to observe the behavior of the other recruits. If any talk of un-American activities occurred, I was to report this weekly to a Post Office Box in Anniston, Ala. I was required to make a weekly report even if there was nothing to report. I was asked to use my judgement. If someone said "to h--- with Roosevelt" and it appeared he was only blowing off steam, I was not to consider this an un-American act. However, if a person did something to influence other soldiers, or obtain secret information, I was to report this.

A short while before President Kennedy was killed, a salesman called on our store. He was a nice looking, well dressed young man from New Orleans representing the Wembley tie company. I don't think I purchased anything from him that trip. At that time, Mr. Robert Kennedy's name was appearing in the news with trouble in the South. I asked the salesman what the people of New Orleans thought of Robert Kennedy. He reported, "He better not come to New Orleans...they would kill him!"

"What do you mean." I asked.

"They would shoot him." He answered.

I then asked, "What do they think of the President?"

"They would kill (or shoot) him too." was his answer.

He was pleasant during our talk, but I felt he was firm with his answers given above. After the death of the President, I thought at once of the neckwear salesman. I asked a lawyer friend if I should report this conversation to your office. I was advised the man probably did not have information of value and that could cause him a lot of trouble.

PROG.  
MR.

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ICE

Ray

I do not know what is now going on in New Orleans. However, the news has caused me to change my mind. I had classed the salesman as a person that "was blowing off steam" as the army sergeant advised me years ago. It is possible that this man did know something that he had picked up in his home city.

I have since forgotten his name. I have invoices as follows from that company:

salesman	date	name of company
FELDST	11-7-61	WEMBLEY INC. NEW ORLEANS, LA 70150
GIBBS	5-30-63	WEMBLEY
GOUTIER	5-4-64	WEMBLEY
JACKSON	2-18-65	WEMBLEY

You can see that they change men quite often. I am not sure any of the above was the one I talked with. I am sure he called a short while before the time of the shooting.

I was asked to do this type work by a sergeant that had graduated from Washington & Lee U. He told me it was a form of Secret Service. I never took part in this after leaving Fort McClellan in the Spring of 1943 and going to North Africa to join the 168th Infantry of the 34 Division. My number was 13179829.

Very truly yours,

Fred R. Cottrell

