

- 1 - Mr. Belmont
- 1 - Mr. Rosen
- 1 - Mr. Sullivan
- 1 - Mr. Malley

April 2, 1964

By Courier Service

Honorable J. Lee Rankin
 General Counsel
 The President's Commission
 200 Maryland Avenue, Northeast
 Washington, D. C.

Handwritten: John J. [unclear]

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Dear Mr. Rankin:

In accordance with the request on March 30, 1964, of Mr. Melvin Eisenberg, paraffin tests were conducted with the assassination rifle, C14, by the FBI Laboratory.

The paraffin test consists of pouring warm paraffin over the hand or cheek, peeling the paraffin cast off and testing the inner surface of the paraffin for the presence of any gunpowder residues. The reagents used in this test, however, are not specific for only gunpowder residues and will react positively with most oxidizing agents. Oxidizing agents that will react are also present in such common substances as fertilizer, urine, tobacco and others, as well as gunpowder residues. In prior experiments conducted by the FBI Laboratory, it has been found that the paraffin test is unreliable as to whether a person recently fired a weapon, since in some instances, positive reactions were obtained on casts from the hands of persons who had not fired weapons and no reactions were obtained on casts from the hands of persons who had fired weapons.

BY COURIER SVC.
65 APR 1964

COMM-FBI

Before conducting the tests with the assassination rifle, control paraffin tests of the right ~~cheek~~ and both hands were conducted on a Laboratory examiner who had thoroughly washed his face and hands and who had not recently fired a weapon. The paraffin casts were then treated with diphonylbenzidine, a sensitive reagent for the detection of most oxidizing agents. Numerous positive reactions were noted on the casts of both hands.

- Tolson
- Belmont
- Mohr
- Casper
- Callahan
- Conrad
- DeLoach
- Evans
- Gale
- Rosen
- Sullivan
- Tavel
- Trotter
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- Holmes
- Gandy

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NOTE: The above results and limitations of the examinations set forth in memorandum Jevons to Conrad 3/31/64. Above request made orally.

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Honorable J. Leo Rankin

and no reactions were noted on the cheek cast. It is pointed out that warm paraffin can remove the foreign matter that is present on the skin or in the pores.

The assassination rifle was then rapid-fired three times by the same man on which the control tests were made. Paraffin casts of the examiner's right cheek and both hands were then prepared. These paraffin casts were also treated with diphenylbenzidine and there were no reactions.

Sincerely yours,

J. Edgar Hoover