

assertion was true and not a case of a back-peddling Rankin trying to soft-soap his FBI accusers. Rankin had assigned assistant counsel Howard Willens of the Justice Department, Katzenbach's man on the Committee, to tone down Stern's August draft of Chapter 8.³⁵

That same day the FBI thumped the Commission again. Rankin and Willens had requested that the FBI find space for all the exhibits being held by the Commission at its temporary, and soon to be vacated, offices at the Veteran's of Foreign Wars Building. FBIHQ had no intention of coming to Rankin's rescue. Instead, Seat of Government notified Rankin that it had its own problem with storage space and awaited his instructions on when the Commission could relieve the FBI of the more than 1000 JFK assassination exhibits currently in the bureau's custody. Hoover, who enjoyed pulling the nose of his perceived enemies as much as any one, must have relished the opportunity for this little spiteful reprisal, considering that one of the exhibits was the mammoth FBI model of the assassination. The Commission was now stuck with trying to find a home for the 480 square foot three-dimensional scale model of the FBI's rendition of the assassination at Dealey Plaza. The FBI version of the shooting that the Commission unilaterally rendered inoperative when it was forced to adopt the "single-bullet" theory to account for the missed shot.³⁶

On the eve of the release of the Warren Report the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) invited the FBI to join with the Commission to produce a 30-minute film for foreign audiences. The underlining purpose of the project was to demonstrate how the Commission had the full support of all the law enforcement agencies in its investigation into the JFK assassination. USIA officials suggested a few scenarios using a handful of

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Note:

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the FBI "CA" on W.C. in
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FBI agents testifying before the Commission and shots of the FBI Laboratory's firearms identification section to underscore the message that the Commission had the full support of America's premiere law enforcement agency. Rankin was quick to give his approval for FBI cooperation with the film. DeLoach, Sullivan, Belmont, and Rosen all saw the advantage of getting the FBI story out to foreign viewers. For Hoover's executive officers this was a quick and cost-free opportunity to project a positive image of the FBI at a time of a wrenching national crisis. A draft of the Warren Report reached FBIHQ while the USIA proposal was circulating throughout the upper reaches of the Hoover bureaucracy. When the director learned what was in the Report's Chapter 8 he killed any FBI support for the project. "I want no participation with this," he told his assistant directors, "or any other Warren Commission project. We have been castigated by the Commission." DeLoach had to respond to USIA officials "heavy responsibilities" prevented the FBI from cooperating with the project.³⁷

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