

3 who's letter
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March 12, 1964

BY COURIER SERVICE

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

Dear Mr. Rankin:

Reference is made to your letter dated February 21, 1964, concerning a request of Congressman Gerald R. Ford for you to ascertain the circumstances under which the photograph of Lee Harvey Oswald carrying the rifle and wearing the pistol was released to the press.

Enclosed for your assistance are two copies of a self-explanatory communication from our Dallas Office dated March 3, 1964. In addition to the information contained in this communication, the following is submitted:

On February 25, 1964, Mrs. Martha Bucknell, Office Manager, Washington Bureau of "Life" magazine, advised her magazine had purchased the above photograph from Mrs. Marina Oswald through her former agent, James Herbert Martin. Mrs. Bucknell advised in confidence her New York headquarters are concerned by the publication of this photograph by other news media and that "Life" is contemplating suit against those publications. She requested this matter not be given publicity outside the President's Commission. Mrs. Bucknell could furnish no information as to how other publications obtained similar photographs.

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Section 97
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IN U.S. MAIL SERVICE

Mr. Jerry O'Leary, Jr., of the "Washington Evening Star," stated he was in Dallas on the night of November 22, 1963. He believes officers from the Dallas Sheriff's Office and Dallas Police Department, while searching the residence of Mrs. Ruth Paine of Irving, Texas, obtained several photographs, one of

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(15) SEE NOTE PAGE THREE.

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which was the photograph in question. Mr. O'Leary indicated he had seen a copy of the photograph appearing on the cover of the February 21, 1964, issue of "Life" in the hands of a local Dallas police officer either on the night of November 22, 1963, or the morning of November 23, 1963. Mr. O'Leary stated he confidentially learned "Life" paid Marina Oswald, through her agent, \$5,000 for the photograph. He also believes a Detroit paper obtained this photograph in the same way, by purchase from James Herbert Martin.

The March 2, 1964, issue of "Newsweek" on page 80 contains an article captioned "A Big Sale," which describes the apparent purchase of this photograph by "Life" and "The Detroit Free Press." The information contained in this article is substantially the same as indicated above with the exception this article indicates that attorneys for "Life" and Marina Oswald were contemplating legal action against "The Detroit Free Press."

From the information available, it would appear numerous unaccounted for copies of this photograph were readily available in Dallas, Texas, shortly after the assassination of President Kennedy. It also would appear this photograph, as well as other photographs relating to Lee Harvey Oswald, was made available for sale through representatives of Mrs. Marina Oswald.

Inasmuch as Mr. Martin has been questioned by you concerning this particular photograph, no reinterview of him concerning this matter is contemplated by this Bureau. Your request to have Mr. Ken Murray of "The Detroit Free Press" interviewed, as contained in your letter dated March 6, 1964, is receiving appropriate attention. When the results of this interview and any other necessary investigation are received, you will be notified.

Sincerely yours,

J. Edgar Hoover

Enclosures (2)

Honorable J. Lee Rankin

NOTE:

Mr. Rankin, President's Commission, by letter 2/21/64, stated that Representative Gerald R. Ford (R. - Michigan) had requested Rankin to obtain above information. Inquiries by Dallas would indicate the most logical source for the wide dissemination was the Dallas Police Department who admittedly made numerous copies and made no effort to control their dissemination. "Life" magazine has apparently paid \$5,000 to Marina Oswald's former manager or attorney; however, Marina Oswald stated as late as 2/27/64 she has seen no money nor did she authorize such a sale. Inasmuch as Mr. Martin has been questioned by the Commission concerning this particular photograph, no reinterview of him concerning this matter is contemplated by this Bureau. Rankin's request contained in letter dated 3/6/64 to have Mr. Ken Murray of "The Detroit Free Press" interviewed is receiving appropriate attention. When results of this interview and other investigation necessary is received, Mr. Rankin will be notified. It is felt the above answers the Commission's request. No further action being taken. The Commission's letter dated 3/6/64 is being handled separately in an expeditious manner.

For further information see C. D. DeLoach to Mr. Mohr memo, dated 2/25/64, captioned, "Assassination of the President, Photograph of Lee Harvey Oswald with Rifle and Revolver, "Life" Magazine 2/21/64," REW:saj.