

WDS:mfd:13 Mar 64  
MEMORANDUM

March 13, 1964

TO: Arlen Specter  
FROM: W. David Slawson  
SUBJECT: Taking Testimony of Doctors

The Commission is of course interested in establishing the authenticity or the lack of authenticity of Lee Harvey Oswald's story of what his life was like in the Soviet Union. The CIA is rendering the primary assistance to the Commission on this aspect of the investigation, but the CIA has asked the Federal Bureau of Investigation to give it some help in certain respects. In particular, reference is made to a letter from J. Edgar Hoover to J. Lee Rankin, dated February 26, 1964, a copy of which has been attached to this memorandum, in which Mr. Hoover discusses the question of whether the Bureau will exhume Oswald's body in order to examine the alleged scar on his left wrist, as requested by the CIA.

The CIA is interested in the scar on Oswald's left wrist because one of the crucial points in Oswald's experiences in the Soviet Union was an alleged suicide attempt by him when he is supposed to have deeply slashed his left wrist, so much so that had he not been found a few minutes later by his Russian tourist guide he would supposedly have died. It is this suicide which is supposed to have convinced the Russians of his sincerity and caused them to change their minds about letting him enter the Soviet Union. It is therefore, a crucial occurrence. It is also interesting to note that this suicide is supposed to have occurred about ten days before Oswald first appeared at the American Embassy in Moscow. Therefore, if the suicide incident is a fabrication, the time supposedly spent by Oswald in recovering from the suicide in a Moscow hospital could have been spent by him in Russian Secret Police custody being coached, brain-washed, etc., for his appearance at the American Embassy.

The FBI is reluctant to exhume Oswald's body as requested by the CIA. I would be reluctant to force the FBI's hand on this point, unless there was very good reason for doing this. As I see it, there would be very good reason to do so only if medical examination of Oswald's body, in its present state of decay, could establish something materially more definite than the mere fact that he does have a scar on his left wrist, which, after all, we have by now pretty good

cc: Mr. Rankin's Chron File  
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evidence from other sources. In particular, I have in mind that medical examination might be able to establish not only that there is a scar but that the scar represents what was once a deep wound of the kind which could cause sudden death by bleeding.

Could you try to find out whether medical examination could establish something like this, when you interrogate the doctors? This whole aspect of Oswald's life and especially our attempt to authenticate it are highly secret at this point. Your questioning should therefore be as circumspect as possible. If this is not practical, then at least the doctors should be cautioned not to repeat anything whatever about this line of questioning.

Enclosure