

(Willens, although technically his employee, was part of the deliberate blackmailing of Bobby Kennedy, who was then the Attorney General. I devote an entire chapter to this in a completed book I lack the funds to publish, POST MORTEM. It deals with the autopsy and with evidence relevant to it and this official whitewashing. In June 1964 Willens drafted the letters in which this Commission actually sought to blame Bobby if its Report would be criticized or found unacceptable. The alternative - the blackmail - was that the Commission would call Bobby as a witness and bleed him a little more. Bobby was a witness to nothing except the lunch he was having at his Hickory Hill home when his older brother was killed. The other end of the operation, that inside the Department of Justice, involved the trusted Nicholas deB. Katzenbach who, as Bobby's adviser and Deputy Attorney General, sat still for this unhidden threat, this blackmail.)

Comparing Willens' account of what Warren said with that of Melvin Eisenberg gives but an indication of what it would require a book to develop in full:

MEMORANDUM

February 17, 1964

TO: Files

FROM: Melvin A. Eisenberg

SUBJECT: First Staff Conference (January 20, 1964)

On January 20, 1964, Chief Justice Warren met with the staff.

After brief introductions, the Chief Justice discussed the circumstances under which he had accepted the chairmanship of the Commission.

When the position had first been offered to him he declined it, on the principle that Supreme Court Justices should not take this kind of role. His associate justices concurred in this decision.

At this point, however, President Johnson called him. The President stated that rumors of the most exaggerated kind were circulating in this country and overseas. Some rumors went as far as attributing the assassination to a faction within the Government wishing to see the Presidency assumed by President Johnson. Others, if not quenched, could conceivably lead the country into a war which could cost 40 million lives. No one could refuse to do something which might help to prevent such a possibility. The President convinced him that this was an occasion on which actual conditions had to override general principles.

The Chief Justice then discussed the role of the Commission. He placed emphasis on the importance of quenching rumors, and precluding future speculation such as that which has surrounded the death of Lincoln. He emphasized that the Commission had to determine the truth, whatever that might be.

MEMORANDUM

From: [unclear]

Re: [unclear]

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EXCERPT FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION TRANSCRIPT OF 12/5/63

CHAIRMAN: Yes.

SEN. RUSSELL: May I ask something?

CHAIRMAN: Yes.

SEN. RUSSELL: General, I see occasionally in the press articles that purport to have come from the F.B.I. as to bits of evidence and things of that kind. How much of their findings does the F.B.I. propose to release to the press before we present the findings of this Commission?

MR. KATZENBACH: Well Senator, I know the story to which you are referring - -

SEN. RUSSELL: It's been in the papers.

MR. KATZENBACH: Yes. And I know that the Director and Mr. Belmont, who is the man in charge of this particular investigation, are utterly furious at the information that got into the press. I talked with both of them on this subject. They say they are confident it could not have come from the F.B.I., and I say with candor to this committee I can't think of anybody else it could have come from, because I don't know of anybody else that knew that information and some agent somewhere along the line, it seems to me, may very well have done it; or a clever reporter, as you are familiar, can put together a, b, and c, so it did not have to come from one source.

MR. DULLES: What reporter was that?

REP. BOGGS. Sterling Green.

MR. KATZENBACH: Yes. He is an AP reporter. He is a good reporter, he has covered the bureau a long time. And all I can say is that as far as the Department of Justice is concerned and as far as the Director is concerned, that story generated enough heat within the Federal Bureau of Investigation that I doubt that another such story will appear because it is a real peril I think in even

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This is page 8 of the Commission's first Executive Session, held 12/5/63. Before Hoover relayed his "definitive" report he leaked it to the press to box the Commission in. Here, in deepest secrecy, Deputy Attorney General Katzenbach admits that only Hoover could have been the leaker.

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