

LBJ hushes his TV comment on Warren Report

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WASHINGTON—The final scheduled installment of a Columbia Broadcasting System interview with former President Lyndon B. Johnson omits, at Mr. Johnson's request, a comment questioning some of the Warren Commission's findings on John F. Kennedy's assassination.

Mr. Johnson requested the deletion, made in the interview to be televised at 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Chicago time, on the ground of national security.

Richard S. Salant, president of CBS News, which bought the right to film the interviews for a reported \$300,000, confirmed that deletions had been made and said the interview will include this message some 30 seconds into the program:

"Certain material has been deleted from this broadcast at President Johnson's request, made on the ground of national security."

Reported Not Satisfied

Salant and other CBS executives declined to confirm or deny that the deletions were comments concerning the Warren Commission report.

Sources close to CBS said Mr. Johnson, asked by interviewer Walter Cronkite for his opinion of the commission findings, replied that he has never been "absolutely" satisfied with the report.

In particular, Mr. Johnson expressed doubts about the "motivations and connections" of the assassin suspect Lee Harvey Oswald, the sources said. The reference was apparently to the Oswald's attempted defection to the Soviet Union and claimed relationship with the Communist Party.

Mr. Johnson and his liaison with CBS, Tom Johnson, could not be reached for comment at the LBJ Ranch Monday.

Dispute inside CBS

The interview, the third in the series, was filmed last September and October at the LBJ Ranch by a CBS crew from New York. However, it was not until three weeks ago that Mr. Johnson made the request.

The request touched off dispute within CBS. Although he declined to comment, Salant was

reportedly unhappy with the decision to accede to Mr. Johnson's request.

CBS News executives say such requests when made by Presidents or former Presidents have been honored only when they were made immediately after or within a day of the filming and only when the material to be deleted clearly pertained to "military information."

According to Salant, the CBS contract with Mr. Johnson did not give him the rights of censorship or review. But Burton Benjamin, executive producer of the interview series, called "LBJ," said, "The written agreement permits him (Mr. Johnson) to delete for national security."

Cronkite could not be reached for comment.

A "tease" episode at the end of the second show in the series, telecast on Feb. 6, shows Mr. Johnson telling Cronkite: "Getting back to the Texas trip, I say much was written about that trip to Texas, Walter, and from my personal knowledge most of what's been written was wrong. And I think most of it was deliberate."

No comments on report

Although declining to give the substance of the deletions, Benjamin said in response to questions that the final version does not contain comments about the Warren findings.

The version that will be shown Saturday does include, the CBS press office said, discussions by Mr. Johnson of his personal relationship with President Kennedy, how he chose former Chief Justice Earl Warren to head the assassination commission, Kennedy's last words to his vice president before the fatal motorcade in Dallas, Mr. Johnson's recollection of the motorcade and of the "turmoil" during which the shots were fired, his first decision and the orders he gave after assuming the Presidency, his initial reaction on hearing that Kennedy had died at the Dallas Hospital, and his relations with the Kennedy family.