

Alleged Oswald letter checked for its authenticity by FBI agents

By EARL GOLZ

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A letter purportedly written by Lee Harvey Oswald asking a "Mr. Hunt" for information concerning my position" two weeks before the assassination of President John F. Kennedy is being checked for its authenticity by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

FBI agents said they had no knowledge of the letter until several days ago when they acquired a copy that had been delivered to a former aide of the late H. L. Hunt, Dallas billionaire oilman.

The script of the cryptic note, written and signed under the date of Nov. 8, 1963, closely resembles the style of Oswald's handwriting as reproduced in the Warren Report.

The letter, in its entirety, read:

"Dear Mr. Hunt,
"I would like information concerning my position.

"I am asking only for information. I am suggesting that we discuss the matter fully before any steps are taken by me or anyone else."

IT WAS SIGNED "Thank you, Lee Harvey Oswald."

An unidentified source of the letter asserted he "gave" FBI Director Clarence Kelley a copy in late 1974, but FBI agents told The News this week they have no record of such a delivery.

Two of the federal agents questioned this reporter extensively after learning that the copy of the letter had passed through his hands before reaching the former Hunt aide.

The contention that Kelley was given a copy was made in an unsigned cover letter typewritten in Spanish and mailed in August, 1975, from Mexico City to Penn Jones Jr. of Midlothian, Texas.

Jones, a retired newspaper editor, has been a longtime critic of the Warren Commission's conclusion that Oswald acted alone in assassinating Kennedy in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963. Translated, the anonymous sender told Jones in his cover letter:

"To my understanding it (Oswald letter) could have brought out the circumstances to the assassination of President Kennedy.

"SINCE MR. KELLEY hasn't responded to that letter, I've got the right to believe something bad might happen to me, and that is why I see myself obligated to keep myself away for a short time.

"Convinced of the importance of that letter mentioned and knowing that you (Jones) have been doing some investigation independently of the assassination, I'm sending you a copy of the same letter."

Jones said he replied in writing to the return address on the envelope, which was "P.S. Insurgentes Sur No. 309, Mexico, D.F., Mexico."

"All I did was answer the letter and got no reply," Jones said. "I never did hear from him again. Of course, it did not come back to me so apparently it was delivered to somebody."

A spokesman for the U.S. Department of Justice said he hadn't known of the letter, but would "check with the FBI and get back to you."

"THERE IS NO REOPENING of the investigation of the Kennedy assassination," the spokesman said. "If this (letter) came up, I suppose they (FBI) just to run it down."

Later FBI official Tom Harrington in Washington, D.C., called to say "no comment" when asked whether his agency had reactivated an ongoing investigation of the Kennedy slaying.

Robert Tanenbaum, deputy chief counsel for the congressional committee to investigate the assassinations of Kennedy and the Rev. Martin Luther

King, said the committee has never seen a copy of the alleged Oswald letter and didn't know the FBI was probing its authenticity.

Tanenbaum said he had heard a report that former U.S. Atty. Gen. Edward Levi had asked the FBI to conduct investigations into the Kennedy as well as King case "once he found out this (congressional) committee was established."

H. L. Hunt, who died in 1974, had repeatedly denied any knowledge of Oswald or the assassination.

However, Hunt had assigned a member of his staff to conduct a private investigation of the Kennedy slaying. The ongoing probe in part monitored government investigations, including the Warren Commission's, and continued through the inquiry directed in the late 1960s by New Orleans Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison.

Marina recalled his interest in a new job

The widow of accused assassin Lee Harvey Oswald testified in 1964 her husband had found a job opening that would provide "more interesting work" at about the time he purportedly wrote a letter to a "Mr. Hunt" on Nov. 8, 1963, asking for "information concerning my position."

Mrs. Oswald was being questioned by J. Lee Rankin, general counsel for the Warren Commission, when she testified about Oswald's interest in a new job.

At the time, he was working in the Texas School Book Depository Building from where the Warren Commission alleged he fired the shots that killed President John F. Kennedy two weeks later on Nov. 22, 1963.

The testimony on Feb. 4, 1964, was as follows:

Rankin: Did your husband come back (to Irving) from Dallas on Nov. 8?

MRS. OSWALD: I don't remember.

Rankin: Do you know whether he came back on Saturday (Nov. 9) of that week?

Mrs. Oswald: I remember that there was one weekend when he didn't come on a Friday, but said that he would come on a Saturday. And he said that that was because he wanted to visit another place—supposedly there was another job open, more interesting work.

Rankin: Did he say where this other job was that he thought was more interesting?

Mrs. Oswald: He said that this was also based upon an ad in a newspaper,

and that it was connected—that it was related to photography. And he went there in the morning and then—on a Saturday—and then came to us, still during the morning.

Rankin did not pursue this line of questioning any further to try to determine the type of job opening in which Oswald had become interested.

THE JOB OPENING of Nov. 8-9, 1963, came up again during Warren Commission testimony one month later when assistant counsel Albert E. Jenner Jr. was quizzing Mrs. Ruth Paine. Mrs. Oswald, estranged from her husband, was living in Mrs. Paine's home in Irving.

Jenner asked if Nov. 8 and 9 were the dates that Oswald "called from Dallas and said to Marina that he would not be in that Friday afternoon because he was going to do some job hunting the next morning, and that he would come the next day?"

Mrs. Paine replied that she couldn't "recall any discussion, nor did I have any idea that there had been any occasion when he had to look for a different job."

Mrs. Paine's typewriter was used by Oswald on Nov. 9 to write a letter from himself and his wife to the Russian Embassy in Washington.

He told of his trip about one month earlier to Mexico City, where he had contacted the Soviet Embassy in an unsuccessful attempt to travel to Havana, Cuba. He also asked about his application for a visa to return to the Soviet Union.

—EARL GOLZ