

'Hunt' letter still a mystery

SEP 26 1978

By EARLE GOLZ

The House Assassinations Committee Monday could not dispel the mystery surrounding a letter purportedly written by Lee Harvey Oswald to a "Mr. Hunt" two weeks before the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Committee handwriting experts testified they had doubts the letter was written by Oswald but could not state it was a forgery.

THE LETTER'S existence was disclosed Feb. 6, 1977, by *The News*, which commissioned three handwriting experts to examine it. Copies of the letter first were sent to three assassination researchers in early August 1975 by an unidentified source in Mexico City.

The News' experts concluded it was "the authentic writing of Lee Harvey Oswald and was written by

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him" after comparing the script with specimens of known writing by Oswald contained in the Warren Commission Report.

Joseph P. McNally of New York City, speaking for the committee's panel of three handwriting experts, testified Monday the writing in the Hunt letter was "more precise" than Oswald's earlier script and Oswald's signature differed. The 'e' in 'Harvey' was not apparent and the 'a' was barely visible, McNally noted.

The letter, dated Nov. 8, 1963, was addressed to "Dear Mr. Hunt."

The letter stated: "I would like information concerning (sic) 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."

Although the Warren Commission apparently didn't know of the letter, Oswald's wife, Marina, testified before the commission in 1964 that her husband had found a job opening about Nov. 8, 1963, involving "more interesting work . . . relating to photography." Oswald at the time was working in the Texas School Book Depository, from which he is alleged to have shot the president.

FBI agent James P. Hosty Jr. has said Oswald also left a threatening note for Hosty at the Dallas FBI office between Nov. 6 and 8, 1963. The note, which Hosty said he destroyed hours after Oswald was killed by Jack Ruby, supposedly was Oswald's angry response to a Hosty check one week earlier with Marina Oswald on her husband's whereabouts.

ONE OF THE private researchers, Howard Roffman, stated last year that a detailed study of the script and the possible events connected to the letter led him to believe it is a "fake."

Some federal agents also have speculated that the Hunt letter may have been a plant to try to discredit Dallas oil tycoon Nelson Bunker Hunt, who was indicted with his brother, Herbert, by a federal grand jury in the famed Hunt wiretap coverup case. The indictments were returned Aug. 21, 1975, only days after copies of the three Hunt letters arrived in the mail.