

A copy of this FBI memo was sent to the Secret Service on 11/23/63, and released by the SS to Mark Lane in March 1977. Insofar as comparison is possible, it is consistent with the FBI memo which was sent to LBJ on 11/23, according to the Schweiker Report. (Page 32)

Just about everyone seems to feel there is something important about this memo, and I agree, but I'm not confident just what its major significance is.

One major constraint in the analysis of the detailed contents is that I would be inclined to explain away any single omission, error, or other peculiarity as the result of the haste with which this memo was evidently put together. For a critique of the developing FBI position on the evidence, and its relation to the Warren Report, I think that the undated memo shown to Ambassador Mann in Mexico within about a week of the assassination is more important. (CD 1084A; see my draft notes of 3/13/76 on CD 1084.)

Someone certainly should do an analysis of SS 105 to see what is included and what is omitted, in terms of what was known on November 23. It is possible that this will turn up some major new insight which cannot be explained away as the product of haste, but I would be surprised.

Things certainly can be said about this memo in terms of suppression. Until the Schweiker Report came out, I didn't know that the FBI had been summarizing the case for LBJ as early as 11/23 (although that is no surprise). I have no reason to believe that the Warren Commission ever saw this memo. Although what the SR says about this memo is accurate as far as it goes, it certainly doesn't go very far; this confirms my feeling that the Schweiker-Hart Subcommittee must have accumulated a lot of important evidence, some of which they do not seem to have been prepared to analyze in full, and all of which is still withheld. Finally, it may be that the Secret Service released this item by accident (or, deliberately, with the intent of embarrassing some other agency); I would be very surprised if the CIA were to allow the release of the material about Mexico with no deletions. (There is an unconfirmed report that the SS is not distributing this memo now.)

The political message of this memo, intended and/or perceived, may be the real story. The message of CD 1084 was relatively clear - Oswald, a Commie, did it alone. (The emphasis on the Cuban connections of the FPCC was quite clearly toned down in CD 1, the "public" summary report.) (See my earlier memo.) The message of this memo is less clear. There is no explicit reference to the possibility of a conspiracy. As of November 23, there is no way that can be justified, in this kind of internal memo which was presumably designed to give LBJ the true story, and not just what he could have read in the papers. It's very difficult, but important, to try to see this memo in the context of November 23 - when Oswald was alive, the facts were still falling into place, and nobody knew what the Warren Commission would conclude nine months later. (That is, although this memo is interesting as a precursor of the Warren Report, it shouldn't be viewed exclusively in that light.) So, why is the FBI playing this kind of game within 36 hours of the assassination?

Despite the focus on Oswald, aspects of this memo, if read carefully, tend to overemphasize certain conspiratorial possibilities. For example, Oswald's "contact" (by letter) with the Soviet Embassy in 1962 is promoted to a "visit" here. Most prominently, the paragraph on pp. 4-5 dealing with Oswald's visit to the Soviet Embassy in Mexico, if read literally, says that an impostor was using Oswald's name in this contact - a clearly conspiratorial act.

Incidentally, from that paragraph alone one can suggest that the FBI was playing down the conspiratorial significance of that contact by arguing that it wasn't in fact Oswald - suggesting that it could have been an innocent coincidence involving another Lee Oswald. However, in the next paragraph, the FBI presents other evidence that the contact was indeed made by Lee Harvey Oswald (or someone who had appropriated his identity.)

I should explain how I disagree with Sprague and Lane on the significance of this Mexico paragraph (on the tape played in Dallas). The fact that a tape was played is interesting, as is the fact that we didn't know that before. But I don't think this memo tells us anything we didn't already know about what actually happened in Mexico in October 1963. I base that conclusion on the confusion of sources which

has always surrounded this matter. The situation is compounded by the fact that the CIA had more than one tape involving Oswald (or someone they thought was, or ~~x~~ might have been, Oswald). In particular, I don't think one can conclude, as Sprague apparently did, that there is a flat contradiction between this memo and a CIA claim that one of its Oswald tapes was routinely erased before the assassination. Also, because of the questionable accuracy of this memo, any such contradiction can't be considered proof that the CIA was lying on this point. (The CIA certainly has been covering up lots on the Mexico mystery man story, as I have discussed elsewhere, but that's beside the point here.)

I would certainly like more information about this memo - who wrote it; when it was completed (There is an illegible time stamp on the back of the first page); whether the identical memo, or a slightly revised one, went to LBJ, etc. (It might be worth checking the LBJ library to see if his copy has any interesting marginal comments.) Also, I would like to see any other similar early memos. ~~XE~~ (I've asked for the Gale memo of 12/10/63, quoted at length in the Schweiker Report, but of course haven't gotten any of it.)

I haven't checked to see when the following information was known to the FBI, but here are some of the more striking omissions from SS 105: (Lifton pointed out some

No mention of the Zapruder film. (of these to me.)

No mention of Connally.

No medical evidence on Kennedy.

None of the widespread contrary evidence on Oswald's location at the time of the assassination, the source of the shots, etc.

No mention of the post-assassination FBI interviews of Oswald.

(By the way, this memo should be checked against CD 5, which contains most of the early ~~xpx~~ reports. Many of the sources of information should be identifiable; however, much may have been picked up from inter-office teletype messages, which might account ~~xxxx~~ for the relatively large numbers of apparent ~~x~~ typos and similar errors.)

Here are a few of the most striking passages in SS 105:

The TSBD "has been identified as the building from which the fatal shots were fired at the President." (Page 1) On 11/23 they knew this?!

"Oswald was observed on the fifth floor of the building ... at approximately 11:50 a.m. ... Oswald was again observed inside the building shortly after the shooting but could not be found thereafter." (Page 1)

P.O. Box 2915, to which the rifle was sent; "was rented by Mrs. Lee H. Oswald, believed to be the mother of suspect." (Page 2) Where did that come from?

"Oswald, at the time of his arrest, had in his possession a Selective Service card in the name of Alex Hidell." (Page 2.) Cf. Meagher, Ch. 6; "We have not received the accounting which was due - a complete and convincing explanation of why the Dallas police and other agencies acted for at least 24 hours as though there were no Hidell card and no Hidell." (P. 198)

In contrast with CD 1084, the discussion of Oswald's left-wing contacts is remarkably restrained and incomplete.

Obviously, these notes are very hasty, and shouldn't be taken as final.