

7:00 a.m., NBC Radio News: (Paraphrase) The FBI released 40,000 pages; the material released today contains "no startling new revelations."

1:00 p.m., AP on KKHI Radio News: (mention of a Hoover memo 20 days after the assassination, indicating that he was convinced LHO did it but that he was considering the possibility that someone else was also involved.)

1:00 p.m., ABC Radio News:...The FBI releases many of its formerly secret files on the Kennedy assassination [today]. It could take days [!!!] for reporters to go over everything carefully, but correspondent Charles Gibson has some initial impressions from Washington:

(Gibson) The sheer weight of the material defies quick analysis. 40,000 pages of raw documents have been released, most of it internal FBI communications, tracking down countless leads on the Kennedy assassination, on Lee Harvey Oswald, and on Jack Ruby. Included are memos from then-FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover to his staff, indicating he had concluded early on that Oswald was the assassin, but expressing concerns that a conspiracy might have been involved, particularly involving Oswald's Cuban connections. (Charles Gibson, ABC News, Washington)

2:00 p.m., ABC Radio News: ... just 4 hours after President Kennedy was killed, [sic] former FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover was convinced that Lee Harvey Oswald was the assassin, but Hoover was also concerned about the possibility of a conspiracy, perhaps with Cuban overtones.

2:00 p.m., CBS News: The FBI today released 40,000 pages of raw documents from its files on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. There appeared to be nothing to contradict the Warren Commission Report that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone, but the files did show that while then-FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover quickly concluded Oswald was the killer, both Hoover and the head of the Secret Service saw possibilities of a conspiracy.

3:00 p.m., ABC Radio News: ... 40000 pages of its heretofore secret files on the Kennedy assassination. There does not appear to be anything startlingly new; correspondent Vic Ratner reports from Washington: (Ratner) The FBI files reveal that hundreds of men were pressed into service; every tip and lead checked out, even obvious crank letters, such as the one from a woman who found out about a conspiracy by mental telepathy, were followed up. By November 26th, four days after the President was shot, an FBI official noted, 'We can submit convincing evidence that Oswald was the man.' But Director Hoover wrote back, insisting that all allegations of a conspiracy be investigated. (Vic Ratner, ABC News, Washington.)

4:00 p.m.: nothing, I think.

5:00 p.m., ABC Radio News: ... 1963 murder of President Kennedy contain the thoughts of the then-FBI Director, including the mention of a suspect. [Sic.] Details from Vic Ratner in Washington: (Rather) Within a month after the Kennedy assassination, FBI Director Hoover wrote that he was convinced that Lee Harvey Oswald was the killer, but Hoover said he was greatly concerned whether Oswald was involved in a conspiracy, and he argued against any public statements that no-one else was involved. The newly released files show the FBI never found any solid evidence linking Oswald with his killer, Jack Ruby. There were lots of allegations that the two men had been seen together in Ruby's nightclub, but they generally turned out to be unfounded. (Vic Ratner, ABC News, Washington)

5:00 p.m., CBS News: [Among the 40,000 pages on] the assassination of President Kennedy released today by the FBI, the sad details of doctors' frantic efforts to keep Kennedy alive when he arrived at Dallas' Parkland Memorial Hospital. Kennedy's heart was beating, but there was no sign of pulse or blood pressure. Doctors performed a tracheotomy and gave him blood transfusions. He was hooked up to a respirator, given pure oxygen, closed chest massage, but two hours [sic] after the President arrived, the doctors said there was an electrical silence of his heart; John F. Kennedy was dead. (Stephanie Shelton. CBS News.)

6:30 p.m., CBS TV:

(CRONKITE)

files release. McM - suspicions of conspiracy, but no hard facts to contradict WC. McM: Some media paid; rest in this closely-guarded room; files range from pre-ass'n on LHO thru LHO's capture, death, and WC.

JEH told RFK, 2 hours after ass'n, that LHO did it.

No files withheld, many deleted.

FBI checked out many leads which seemed worthless. One that Hoffa financed it. Source got info from God in Philadelphia. FBI told WC man needed doctors care. Leads came in from all over; FBI checked them out; including conspiracy theories involving Cuba.

Likely that ass'n buffs will find leads to pursue in this half-ton. But (sic) so far, no new info to put to rest the many lingering controversies. [Right on.]

[[Start; The FBI today released half of its...]]

[Preceded by]

6 p.m., CBS Radio:

[14 years after] the ass'n, etc., because of FOIA, FBI has opened its records.

McM: JEH convinced, from beginning, LHO acted alone. Call to RFK. But handwritten letters got JEH worrying about poss. conspiracy.

Nothing withheld, but much deleted, including many with CIA info.

FBI followed many worthless leads; including one man who heard god in Phila.

So far, reporters have found no new info to put to rest the many controversies that began in Dallas 15 years ago, but [?] in 1/2 a ton, ass'n buffs will eventually find new leads to pursue. (Sign-off)

The two versions of the close suggest, offhand, a conflict between what McM wanted to say and editorial policy. Did they object to 'new leads'? Hard to tell; ask McManus?

7 p.m., ABC TV, first item: [Good copy of Z film included with graphics]

... suspected conspiracy. (Bob Clark) [[Plug at first]]

(Smith) "Today the FBI threw open the first half" of its files. All day, reporters searching. Bob Clark: 19 14 years, nobody has proved LHO had help, but conspiracy theories abound. Today, first revealed that JEH shared, at least to the point of thinking someone in Cuba may have been involved. WC concluded, LHO alone, no evidence of Cuba-Russian involvement. JEH also thought LHO was the lone killer, at the start. one p.:said LHO in nut, pro-Castro crowd. But 20 days after ass'n, JEH disturbed by ltrs re his job, good letters, bringing back to the chief. JEH said, couldn't prove if chief was Castro; no FBI intell. operation in Cuba. The theory that Castro know of plot to kill JFK isn't new, "one former CIA chief has even [!] wondered privately whether the Kennedy ass'n might have been an act of vengeance on Castro's part"... No proof of any of this in the docs today; they show they FBI followed up 1000's of worthless leads. No new light on why Ruby shot LHO, or on Ruby's suspected underworld connections. But the revelations of Hoover's doubts "seem likely to add fuel to the conspiracy theories that have sold millions of books since the 1963 assassination." Hoover's boss was JFK, who, "according to friends" always suspected it was a right-wing conspiracy. But, like JEH, he "was never able to prove his suspicions." (Sign-off)

7 p.m., NBC TV: Teaser, around 7:04, Brinkley in the studio, surrounded by stacks of documents.] "These 40,001 pages released today by the FBI are part of] the FBI files. They show, inter alia, that JEH wondered if LHO was part of a conspiracy. None was ever proved. A detailed report on what is in this "tremendous pile of papers" on Segment 3.

(Later) "Again, this small mountain of paper" is what the FBI released. We've spent the entire day on this. First, Tom Petit recalls the events of 11/22. (pett) (Wrapup with slides: trip, motorcade, Z313, LHO arrested for

killing a "cop and Pres. Kennedy." LHO, former defector. LBJ sworn in. LHO maintained his innocence to reporters. JFK funeral; Ruby shoots LHO, and kills getting the full truth. Ruby - sleazy nite-club operator, avenging. Died in 1967. LBJ appointed WC. ~~xxxxx~~ No investigators other than FBI. Found no meaningful evidence of conspiracy, no evidence of USSR-Cuban involvement. 40,000 pp. released, "until the ~~xx~~ news media won a FOI action? (???) Stern & Rowan and other, working all day.

Stern: Biggest surprise: FBI did not reach a judgment quickly, ~~JEH~~ as we have come to believe. 2 wks after, JEH said he believed it was LHO, but great concern if he was alone - have letters from Cuba, marksmanship, etc. [[Pedro Charles - see our anthology, pp. 360,363.] Also, report LHO paid \$7000 by Castro agent. FBI investigation: letters a hoax. No conspirators found. JEH ~~u~~ urged JD to hold off flat statements. Nothing we've seen so far to contradict LHO acting alone.

Rowan: One of most important questions: foreign involvement~~xxx~~. FBI got some tips. Spanish intell. had evidence that Castro did it. Anti-Castro journalish with story LHO met with Cuban ambassador in Mexico city; FBI said that was highly embellished. But the invistogators were on notice to look for a ~~Cuban~~ Cuban connection; that's important, because the WC has been criticized (and the FBI) for not knowing of the plots against Castro. Which may have caused retaliation. No proof in any docs that Castro was involved.

Stern: LHO-Ruby connection? Almost 100 folders on that - perhaps 5 cases. 100's of leads, but nothing to cont~~rad~~ict WC findings - they didn't know each other, Ruby killed LHO in "genuine anguish"

~~Rowan~~ Rowan: Also: CIA involvement, if any. One disturbing document: Watson quoted LBJ as saying there was a plot, and, "quote, the President felt that the CIA had something to do about [sic] this plot." Doesn't spell out LBJ's suspicions. FBI never suspected CIA, but they didn't have the ~~u~~ full picture. CIA cooperation promised, but FBI not told of anti-Castro activities. FBI tried to follow every lead, but where the trail stops short is when it starts to lead to foreign elements. Mny deletions; only have read; more to come, "so we don't have a final answer for you tonight." (Sign-off)

9 p. m., ABD Radio ... JEH was convinced LHO did it, but wondered if LHO had help from conspirators in Cuba.

12/8/77  
7 a.m., CBS TV - [Teaser] FBI has opened it's files, but they don't answer all the questions. [More below]

7 a.m., NBC TV, [Teaser] Docs released yesterday; Carl will have details, [Some idle chatter about how much there is, etc.]

7 a.m., CBS News ... 2 weeks later, JEH concerned about a possible conspiracy.

McManus: By far, most of the 40,000 pp. refer to info that has long been public. Heavy censorship shows the FBI ~~xxx~~ believes it has secrets worth keeping. Riveting ~~xx~~ glimpses of JEH, directing the efforts, authorizing reinforcements; defending FBI against ~~xxxxxxx~~ charge ~~xx~~ of failure in not notifying the SS; calling RFK shortly saying LHO was almost certainly the killer; later worrying about a conspiracy involving pro-Castros. By Dec., JEH had seen letters from Cuba to LHO, re marksmanship, etc. "The reports indicated the letters, and the concern they brought, were never sent on to~~x~~ the WC." JEH said he told LBJ that LHO did it, but whether he was alone gave him great concern. 40K more documents [sic] to be ~~xx~~ released early in the new year. "So far, the ~~xx~~ once secret record does not contradict the WC findings, but the documents also confirm that the FBI did not tell the Comm. all that it suspected in the murder of Pres. K." (Sign-off)

[Cf. what McManus said the previous evening!!!!]

These files provide picture of ~~xxxx~~ the "relentless, painstaking, and thorough" FBI investigation. Agents documented theories from psychics, etc., wrote reports on stuff like Marina's visit to ~~u~~ her dentist. (Couple of loonies discussed - one relayed to various people.) Woman's husband's family mean as rattlesnaked~~x~~. The wildest tips were carefully checked; those that did not pan out were labeled dead ends and files away. The ass'n files are tge subject of Rod McLeish's commentary.

Abiding irony: we recall JFK's death more than life. Obviously, stunning drama. 5 administrations ago. Huge batch will refeed our obsession. Compulsion. Half-fearing, half-wishing; demons; perhaps subconsciously looking for ~~more~~ more. After that, things started to go bad - riots, etc., "and finally real conspiracies in high visible places." Healing didn't begin until RMN left. If we can find a demon under the bed, we won't have to think thru all the complexities of why things went bad. Simple explanations are easier - make history somebody else's fault.

7:15 a.m., 12/8/77; NBC (Today)

.. they've been going thru the 40K documents... [Teaser]

A lot of reporters today have bloodshot eyes. 40,000 pp. released. Stern with a couple of colleagues who are experts. Stern: introduces Kantor and Gemberling. G had never seen the HQ file. First, evaluation of FBI performance. Kantor: these documents support ~~that~~ the initial FBI reports, and the WC's final conclusions. Very extensive; ~~it~~ nothing all that new to those who know. CS: Did the FBI do a good job? SK: Thorough; ... Every stone unturned or not. CS: Conspiracy buffs were calling me last nite. Will this settle anything? RG: Won't changed buffs' views; may give them new theories. CS: I suspect those theories prosper because Ruby killed Oswald, among other things. SK: In support of what is in the FBI files, don't think Ruby knew Oswald. CS: He wasn't sent to eliminate him. SK: Don't know about that. Conceivable that a conspiracy developed over the weekend. CS: Was he acting out of genuine anguish? Or set out to eliminate him? SK: I saw him; know he was anguished. However, capable of being cool and calculating; lots of experience with the underworld. CS: ~~R~~ The FBI knew a lot about LHO pre-11/22. How it is possible that he was free to do it? RG: He had committed no crime; even today there in concern that the FBI will infringe on someone's rights. No acts of violence; nothing to indicate he ~~is~~ was a potential ass'n. CS: Walker. RG: Solved during the JFK inv'n. Perhaps most important document: Dec. 12 memo w/ JEH's concern that LHO had not acted alone. There was followup on that - letters ~~is~~ mailed post-ass'n ~~to~~ to LHO, supposedly [sic] from Havana; meeting with the chief; etc. Whatever happened to all of that? "That was not referred to the WC" [Silence] Seth? SK: I don't know why not referred. The WC didn't see lots of FBI-CIA stuff. But JEH realized as early as 12/5 that it ~~was~~ could have been a hoax. CS: "There is such a memo in the files. ~~Bmb?~~" Apparently the WC didn't mention it to the WR; "and probably it wasn't furnished to them," which indicates that it was proved to ~~be~~ be a hoax, of no significance, ~~and~~ as were a lot of things. WR could not have contained all the negative results. CS: The number of false leads ~~is~~ dazzles you - not necessarily malicious, altho in this case it could have been an anti-Castro group; they ~~were~~ were all followed out. There will be 40K more; quickly, will ~~that~~ tell us anything new? SK: Hard to say; will ~~require~~ require deep study, but I doubt that there will be anything to overturn the WC's final conclusion. CS: Thanks. Brokaw: Thanks, we fully expect that no ~~w~~ matter what the files contain there will be new theories that will grow out of them in one form or another.

7:39 a.m., ABC-TV: they reveal that JEH had questions. Bob Clark: -book have been ~~written~~ written, selling millions of copies; many spinning fanciful conspiracy theories. The 40000 pp. aren't likely to be a best seller, at \$4000, but one interesting revelations: JEH shared some of these suspicions. First regarded LHO as a nut, alone; but he grew suspicious when several [sic] letter to LHO from Cuba were discovered, referring to the Chief, etc. The WC, "which examined at least some of the letters," concluded there was no ~~meaningful~~ meaningful evidence of a conspiracy, an no evidence of USSR-Cuban involvement. JEH said he couldn't prove if the chief was Castro. Since CIA plots came out 2 years ago [!!], there has been speculation that JFK ass'n was Castro retaliation. [[Does Jack Anderson remember 1967?]] Reporters ~~poring~~ poring [[pore: to read carefully and attentively!]] over the raw reports could find no proof of this, nor any revelations of why Ruby did it.

8:03 a.m., NBC TV: 40000 pp released; They show "that the FBI followed up every lead it could find, but they did not provide any evidence to contradict the finding of the WC that LHO had acted alone." (Brinkley??)

ABC-TV; ~~8~~ Good Morning America; 12/8/77, 8:15 a.m.

16 min. after. Yesterday FBI released 40K pp. Bob Katz and Carl Oglesby of the AIB, with Steve Bell in Washington.

Mr. K; JEH thought LHO did it but wondered about the  ~~Cuban~~ Cubans. Do you read that? BK: It's in the documents, but that's not evidence that they did, some sort of FBI attempt to filter out the idea that if it was a conspiracy, it was Cubans.

SB(?): You say the  ~~KFBI~~ was behind it, but they got letters which they later put down as a hoax. Hardly an FBI  ~~zzzzzzzz~~ conspiracy.

BK: They did let this story filter out; I'm commenting on the news coverage, which has been on the Cuban connection.

DH: Mr. O, anything new in the 40K pp.?

CO: I was astounded by what we've seen so far, just a small part. More than I expected. Astounding that the media has chorused, nothing new. Lots.

: Specifically, what?

CO: I was fascinated by a document disclosing that Army Intelligence had somebody connected with the Dallas Police surveilling what apparently was the ass'n group - no single assassin - in  ~~a~~ Dealey Plaza, 2 days before the ass'n, sighting in a rifle against some cardboard silhouette targets in an old car. You read it, and drop your teeth: Army Intell. & the DPD are watching somebody getting ready to shoot someone in Dealey Plaza. 2 days pre-ass'n? We know Army told FBI; otherwise the DPD apparently wouldn't have told the FBI. A lot of little nuggets like that. E.g., new evidence  ~~against~~ against the single-bullet theory; evidence of the surgeons turning over apparently large bullet fragments from CD 399.

SB: In fact, your reading is totally contrary to everyone else's.

CO: From everyone else in the media,  ~~which~~ which is a difference; you can't get into this just one day a week. Complicated issue.

DH: Mr. O: you think there was a conspiracy, based on what you've  ~~read~~ read?

CO: Exactly, and the way the press has approached it indicates a lot of people are coming this way; people who used to say the lone assassin did it have now been beaten back, to saying the conspiracy people can't prove there was one-

SB: Isn't that the key? You have to come up with proof first. CO: Yes.

: Does  ~~this~~ this new evidence point anywhere in particular?

BK: No, but it is the FBI's evidence; so there is no way it would contradict the WR; they were the investigative agency.

SB: Are you  ~~saying~~ saying they covered up, Mr. Katz? [Very hostile tone.]

BK: They're clearly  ~~still~~ still withholding stuff. The FBI may have played a coverup role.

DH: Couldn't part of that just be blunders? BK: Sure.

CO: How could JEH have known so fast that LHO did it? Call to RFK...

DH?: Wasn't all the raw evidence there pointing to -- CO: Inv'n hadn't even begun.

BK: 2 hours after ass'n, JEH was assuring high gov't officials that LHO did it alone; highly premature; shows predisposition to make it as simple as possible.

SB: Briefly, what  ~~should~~ should happen next?

BK: We've a non-profit orgn with a newsletter (waved); we'll go thru it scholarlyly, perhaps turn it over to HSC. DH: Thanks all.

8:33 a.m., ABC TV news: ... from the  ~~hobo~~ hobo who  ~~wrote~~ wrote LHO's name in a railroad car, to Ruby's cigarette butts, the new files "contain 1000's of details but no startling new evidence about the murder." JEH first thought LHO a lone nut, but then for a time shared suspicions of a conspiracy.

[I have all of the above on tape except for 12/7, 7 a.m., NBC Radio; 1 p.m., AP/KKHI; 3 p.m., ABC Radio. (The last of these was taped and erased.)]