

(PLH #80; #62-109060-1716, Belmont to Tolson, 12/3/63 (sic)) Reporting on a conversation with DAG Katzenbach on the morning of 12/4. "Katzenbach said that he had been talking to Chief Justice Warren, and Warren had indicated to him that the chief counsel for the President's commission will be Warren Olney. Katzenbach thought that this would be most undesirable. Katzenbach said that, as we probably know, Chief Justice Warren thinks that Olney can do no wrong, and he (the Chief Justice) had made the point that Olney is conversant with the FBI's procedures and thus would be operating in a familiar field. Katzenbach said if we have any ideas as to how Olney can be blocked as chief counsel, he would like to have them. I told him that, as far as I was concerned, Olney was an undesirable choice, and if we had any thoughts we would get them to him."

Hoover's handwritten comment on the first part of this paragraph: "Horrible."

5 Dec 63: Warren Commission meets in executive session, 10:00 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., with Katzenbach present to 11:22 a.m. (This is the first WC meeting.) After Katzenbach left, Warren suggested Olney as chief counsel. There was considerable discussion. (The transcript, with Olney's name deleted, was released in 1975; I was able to identify Olney. (See separate notes of 4/26/75.)) Ford suggested Olney was too close to Warren; McCloy expressed reluctance to simply accepting the first name suggested, and mentioned others. Warren spoke very favorably of Olney. Warren, McCloy, Dulles, and Ford were named as a committee to consider the matter.

On the night of 12/5, Katzenbach called Belmont to comment on the FBI Report, CD 1. He also "said that if Warren Olney is appointed as counsel for the Presidential commission, Katzenbach is going to try to get an attorney from the Criminal Division in with the commission, so that he will know what is going on." (Belmont addendum of 12/6 to memo of 12/5 from Evans to Belmont; FBI #62-109060-1673; PLH #10.) [Most of this memo deals with information given by Katzenbach to Evans concerning the WC meeting of 12/5, including the fact that the meeting had not gotten around to a discussion of the appointment of the chief counsel or the staff.]

At 1:30 p.m. on December 6, Katzenbach called Belmont. "He said in some manner the appointment of Olney had been blocked" and that Rankin was being considered. He asked for an opinion on Rankin; Belmont said that a name check was already being done at AAG Miller's request. (PLH #12; FBI #62-109060-1623; Belmont to Tolson, 12/6/63.)

The Warren Commission met from 3:00 p.m. to 4:15 on December 6. (PLH #K.21) Warren said that the committee had met at 8:30 a.m., and that McCloy, Dulles, and Ford all "had some reservations" about Olney; Warren withdrew the suggestion. There was discussion of Rankin and others. (Pp. 3-4.) Later, Warren suggested bringing Olney in under Rankin (with whom he had worked.) McCloy suggested that Rankin have his own choice. The bulk of McCloy's response to Warren, apparently dealing with Olney, is withheld from the transcript. (P. 20-21)

At noon on 12/7, Katzenbach called "REW," apparently an assistant to DeLoach, and met with him. "He advised that he believed that Warren Olney had definitely been 'dumped.' He stated that he gave the 'go ahead' on Lee Rankin late last night. He added that an approach would be made to Rankin immediately." (PLH #13; FBI # 62-109060-162?; DeLoach memo to Mohr, 12/7/63.)