

FBI Is Still Baffled By Assassin Oswald's Mexico Links

By PAUL SCOTT

Six years after the assassination of President Kennedy, the FBI is still seeking to unravel a number of mysteries involving the activities of Lee Harvey Oswald.

Probably the most baffling of these mysteries, still under investigation, is the last letter Lee Harvey Oswald is believed to have written before the Dallas tragedy.

INTERCEPTED AND read by the FBI before it arrived at its destination, the Oswald letter was mailed to the Soviet Embassy here on November 12, 1963—or 10 days before the assassination.

In his request for a Soviet visa, Oswald made reference to the unannounced recall of an official in the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City whom he had dealt with during his visit there two months before the assassination. The highly significant reference was as follows:

"Of course the Soviet Embassy was not at fault, they were, as I say unprepared, the Cuban consul was guilty of a gross breach of regulations, I am glad he has since been replaced."

THE UNANSWERED question still baffling the FBI is: How did Oswald learn about this official's unannounced recall?

According to the FBI's investigation, there was absolutely no way Oswald could have obtained this information during his September visit to Mexico City, since the secret recall order from Havana was not transmitted until after he had returned to Dallas.

Even then there was no publicity and only a handful of persons know about the recall, one FBI report states. This report along with several others pertaining to Oswald's trip to Mexico City have never been released. The reports are among the documents ordered sealed by the Warren Commission following its investigation of the assassinations of Kennedy and Oswald.

CIA FINDINGS—During its investigation, the Warren Commission spent considerable time trying to check out the letter and its content.

One inquiry directed to the CIA to determine where Oswald might have obtained the unannounced information about the official's recall produced negative results.

The CIA's memorandum to the commission, now declassified and on file in the National Archives, states:

"We surmise that the

reference in Oswald's 9 November letter to a man who has since been replaced must refer to Cuban Consul Eusebio Azque, who left Mexico for Cuba on permanent transfer on 18 November, 1963, four days before the assassination.

"Azque was scheduled to leave in October but did not leave until 18 November. We do not know who might have told Oswald that Azque was to be replaced."

IN ITS INVESTIGATION of the letter, the FBI inquiry

ascertained that CIA and KGB operators in Mexico City learned of the official's recall at approximately the same time and only a week before Oswald wrote his letter.

While the FBI investigation has been unable to resolve the mystery, it has narrowed the sources of where Oswald could have obtained the information. These sources are:

(1) An informant in the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City who contacted Oswald after he returned to the U.S.; (2) the

Central Intelligence Agency; or (3) the KGB, the Soviet Secret police.

OTHER DETAILS—The Warren Commission's inquiry into the Oswald letter, most details of which were buried in the 26 volumes of testimony, revealed that Mrs. Ruth Paine on whose typewriter the final

draft was made, and Marina Oswald, wife of the alleged assassin, knew of the letter and its contents before it was mailed.

Significantly, Mrs. Paine testified Oswald typed the letter while spending the November 9 weekend at her residence with his his wife. After observing the letter when Oswald was not around, Mrs. Paine said she copied it.

The commission's record shows she turned the copy over to the FBI on November 23, the day after the assassination.

A CHECK OF declassified FBI reports on file in the National Archives shows that the agency started its investigation immediately on intercepting Oswald's letter after it was mailed in Irving, Texas, on November 12.

One report reveals that the FBI agents involved in the intercept copied the text of the

letter and put it in Oswald's Washington file with a note that one paragraph verified earlier information on Oswald's Mexico City visit.

The FBI report pointed out that Oswald's mention of "Comrade Kostin" in the letter confirmed a CIA report that he had met with Valeriy Vladimirovich Kostikov, a member of the consular staff of the Soviet embassy, and one of the top KGB officers in the Western Hemisphere.

But the FBI report did not answer the question of how and when Oswald learned that Cuban Consul Eusebio Azque, was recalled.

SEVERAL GOVERNMENT investigators believe if this mystery could be solved that it would go a long way toward determining whether Oswald had any accomplices.

President Nixon has the authority to make public the documents that the Warren Commission decided to keep secret after its investigation of the Kennedy assassination.

That's the private report that Attorney General John Mitchell has sent to the White House after studying the Johnson Administration's handling of the storing of the commission's files in the National Archives.