
As Member of Warren Commission, Then-Congressman Ford Edited Out Information Linking Oswald to FBI

President Gerald Ford played a key role in hushing the truth about the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

For his book, "Portrait of an Assassin," Ford faked damaging material to disprove connections of accused assassin Lee Harvey Oswald and the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Central Intelligence Agency.

Working from a transcript of a "Top Secret" closed door session of the Warren Commission, Ford, a member of the panel, "edited" out controversial material that discussed links between Oswald and the intelligence community.

This would never have been known had not government lawyers lost their decade-long battle to block declassification of the Jan. 27, 1964, session. Author-researcher Harold Weisberg, after years of courtroom maneuvering, finally gained access to the document in the National Archives. He analyzes his findings in his new book, "Whitewash IV, JFK Assassination Transcript."

He also charges that a senator on the Warren Commission disagreed with its lone-assassin theory, but documents were faked to show the decision of the seven commission members as being unanimous.

Weisberg also reveals in his fourth book challenging the commission findings that:

COMMISSION MEMBERS expressed considerable reservations about pursuing an investigation of reports accused assassin Lee Harvey Oswald was an intelligence agent or informer. They obviously were afraid FBI director J. Edgar Hoover might get angry at them.

Former CIA director Allen Dulles, a member of the commission, said it would be impossible for an intelligence agent to disprove Oswald was an informer. Dulles said in effect Oswald could have been a CIA informer without him knowing about it.

This is revealed in a "Top Secret" transcript of a Jan. 27, 1964, commission executive session. Weisberg went to federal court under the "Freedom of Information Act" to win its declassification.

A decade later, in confirmation hearings on his nomination as Vice President to succeed Spiro Agnew, Ford would deny

that he placed in his book any material except what was contained in the 26 volumes of Warren Commission material the government sold to the public.

But it took Weisberg years of legal maneuvering, assisted by Washington attorney Jim Lesar, before the National Archives would declassify and surrender the transcript President Ford quoted from in his book published in 1965.

WEISBERG, AN indefatigable investigator, used all of his skills as an investigative reporter, former Senate investigator and onetime OSS man, in his 10-year effort to prove a conspiracy in the shooting of Kennedy on the streets of Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963. (The OSS stands for Office of Strategic Services, which was the World War II forerunner of the CIA.)

In "Whitewash IV," Weisberg discloses for the first time the relationship he had with Sen. Richard Bissell Russell, the late Georgia Democrat and conservative leader who served on the Warren Commission.

Weisberg learned from private sources that Russell had disagreed with the basic conclusions of the commission's report. The author said he obtained "irrefutable proof" that the record of Russell's objections had been destroyed. He wrote the senator and began a series of meetings with him.

Weisberg writes that Russell "was satisfied there had been a conspiracy, that no one man could have done the known shooting and that 'we have not been told the truth about Oswald by the federal agencies.'"

"He was shaken by the proof that he had been imposed upon and history perverted," Weisberg said. "He asked me to conduct a further investigation to prove

whether or not there still existed a transcript of the executive session Russell had forced on Sept. 18, 1964, just before publication of the Warren Report, which went to press less than a week later and then was in page proof."

AFTER WEISBERG gave Russell proof a transcript of the meeting didn't exist, that the commission had destroyed records of the senator's disbelief, Russell resigned his chairmanship of the Military Affairs Committee, divesting himself of "oversight" responsibilities over the CIA.

Only short daily press notices referred to the severed friendship of Russell to President Lyndon B. Johnson, who succeeded Kennedy and appointed Russell to the commission.

"What did not appear is that to his dying day Russell, the most conservative of the commissioners, continued to urge me to disprove the report he had been tricked into agreeing to sign."

According to Weisberg, Russell had told Chief Justice Earl Warren:

"Just put a little footnote in there at the bottom of the page saying 'Senator Russell dissents.'"

Warren declined, insisting all seven members sign the report. A change was agreed on to entice Russell to sign, Weisberg said. "...but the specific language and the thrust of the Report remained unchanged. It says exactly what Russell would not agree to, what Russell did not believe about the shooting and the wounds."

THE MAIN POINT Russell objected to about the report was its contention that Lee Harvey Oswald fired shots that killed President Kennedy and wounded Gov. John Connally.

The declassified transcript of the Jan. 27, 1964, executive session, opens with commission general counsel J. Lee Rankin explaining he had received a call from the then Texas attorney general who "was quite excited." Carr said he had received information that "the FBI had an undercover agent who was Oswald..."

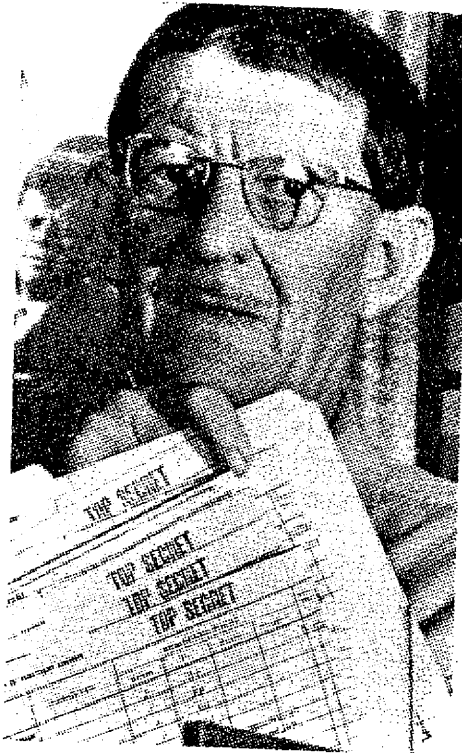
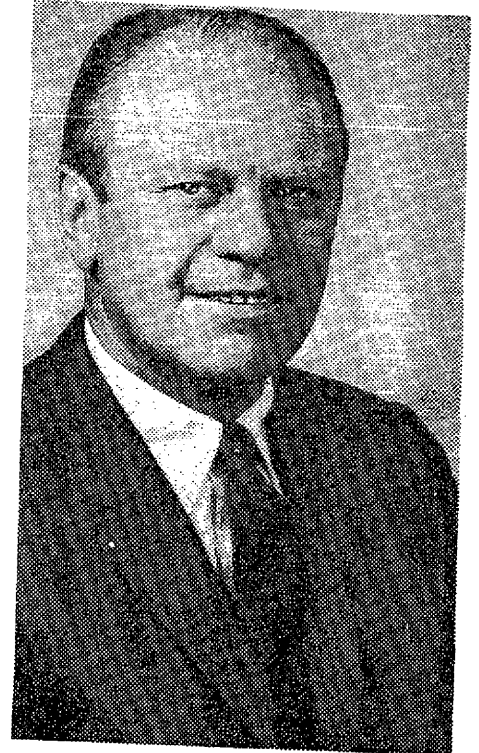
This was apparently based on never-confirmed reports sweeping Dallas at the time that Oswald was FBI informant No. 179 and had been employed by the FBI at \$200 per month from September of 1962 until the assassination 14 months later.

After the briefing by Rankin on the reports Oswald was an intelligence agent, Rankin suggested he should personally confront Hoover and ask for proof the reports were not true.

Then Rep. Hale Boggs, a commission member who died in an Alaskan airplane crash in 1972, asked: "What other alternatives are there?"

COMMISSION MEMBERS then

PRESIDENT FORD ... As a congressman and member of the Warren Commission, he played key role in hushing up vital information about JFK's assassination. Working from a transcript of a 'top secret' closed door session of the commission, Rep. Ford 'edited' out controversial material that linked Oswald with the FBI.



HAROLD WEISBERG ... After years of courtroom maneuvering, he gained access to the document then-Rep. Ford had 'doctored' in the National Archives. In addition, Weisberg said that a senator on the Warren Commission disagreed with its lone-assassin theory, but documents were faked to show the decision of the commission was unanimous.

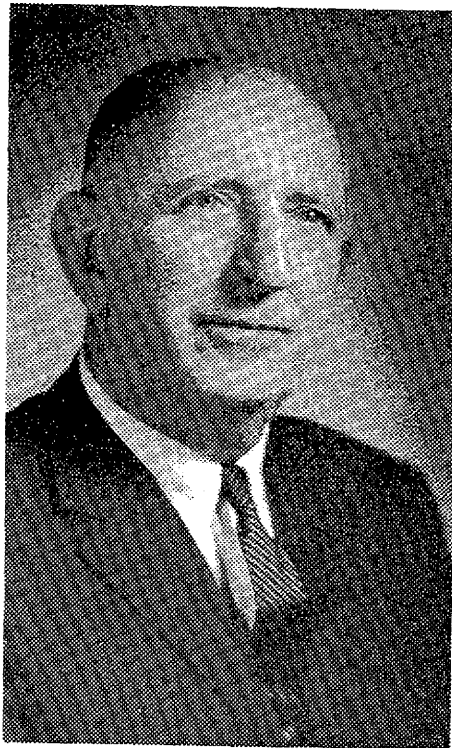
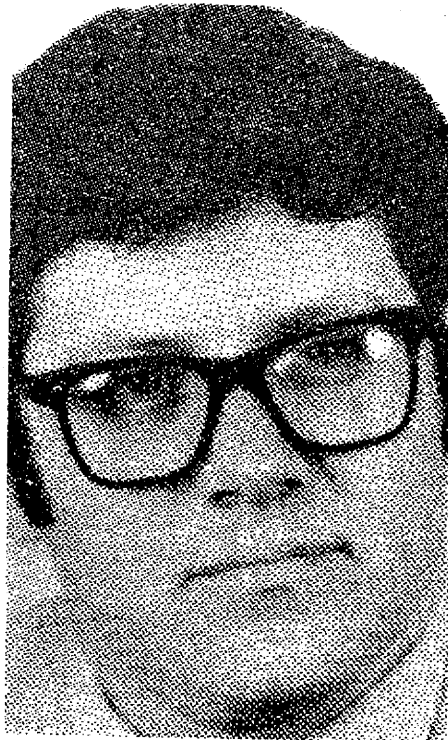
discussed interviewing Lonnie Hudkins, a Houston newspaper reporter who wrote a story speculating Oswald might be an intelligence agent; a Dallas deputy sheriff Hudkins attributed as source of the information, and Dallas FBI agent James Hosty.

Hosty's name, address, telephone number and license number of his auto were found in Oswald's notebook after his arrest in the Kennedy death probe.

But in a report furnished by the Warren Commission, the Hosty listing in Oswald's notebook had been omitted.

During the Jan. 27 meeting, con-
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JIM LESAR ... An attorney, he worked hand-in-hand with Weisberg to declassify the 'top secret' transcript which Weisberg said Ford 'edited.' The information Weisberg and Lesar uncovered is contained in the former's latest book, 'White-wash IV, JFK Assassination Transcript. which contains other commission coverups.



LATE SEN. RUSSELL ... He was the lone member of the seven-man Warren Commission to express doubts about the lone-assassin theory. Weisberg says he obtained 'irrefutable proof' that the record of Russell's objections had been destroyed. Russell was 'satisfied' there had been a conspiracy to kill Kennedy.

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siderable discussion is given to the role of a U.S. intelligence agency in whether a person was an intelligence agent.

"If Oswald never had assassinated the President or at least been charged with assassinating the President and had been in the employ of the FBI and somebody had gone to the FBI they would have denied he was an agent," Senator Russell said.

Dulles, the ex-CIA chief, replied: "Oh, yes."

"They would be the first to deny it. Your agents would have done the same thing," said Russell.

"Exactly," Dulles replied.

Later during the meeting banker John J. McCloy, a commission member, said he had received inquiries about the Oswald-agent report and asked, "What is there to this story?"

"This is a terribly hard thing to disprove, you know," Dulles replied. "How do you disprove a fellow was not your agent? How do you disprove it?"

"You could disprove it, couldn't you?" asked Rep. Boggs.

"No," Dulles said.

"I know, ask questions about something --"

"I never knew how to disprove it."

"So I will ask you," said Boggs. "Did you have agents about whom you had no record whatsoever?"

"The record might not be on paper," Dulles replied. "But on paper would have hieroglyphics that only two people knew what they meant, and nobody outside of the agency would know and you could say this meant the agent and somebody else could say it meant another agent."

Commission members then discussed U-2 pilot Gary Powers, shot down in a spy plane over Russia. Dulles explained that Powers had a signed contract with the CIA.

REP. BOGGS: "Let's say Powers did not have a signed contract but he was recruited by someone in CIA. The man who recruited him would know, wouldn't he?"

Dulles: "Yes, but he wouldn't tell."

Warren: "Would he tell it under oath?"

Dulles: "I wouldn't think he would tell it under oath, no."

Warren: "Why?"

Dulles: "He ought not tell it under oath. Maybe not tell it to his own government, but wouldn't tell it any other way?"

Answering a question from McCloy, Dulles said a CIA operative might not tell the truth to his own Chief.

"What you do," said Boggs, "is you make out a problem if this be true, make our problem utterly impossible because you say this rumor can't be dissipated under any circumstances."

"I don't think it can," Dulles replied, "unless you believe Mr. Hoover, and so forth and so on, which probably most of the people will."

THE COMMISSION did, after receiving letters from Hoover outlining the FBI's various contacts with Oswald since Oswald's return from Russia. Hoover denied in the communications Oswald had ever been employed by the FBI.

Leon Jaworski, to become special Watergate prosecutor during the Richard Nixon Administration scandals, was an aide to Texas Attorney General Carr after the assassination.

The Warren Commission assigned Jaworski to check out the Hudkins report

in the Houston Post about the rumors Oswald was an FBI informer.

Jaworski, less than four months after the January executive session, wrote Rankin that Hudkins was no longer with the newspaper. Nothing that the commission had the FBI statements on the matter, as well as statements from Oswald's mother, "...I am wondering if it is really worth your effort to follow up on Hudkins."

It obviously wasn't worth the commission's efforts.

Commission members expressed fear of officially interrogating Hudkins and others about the claim Oswald was a secret government agent for fear publicity about the official action would add fuel to "doubting Thomases" around the world.

SO THE PEOPLE were to accept or disbelieve the word of J. Edgar Hoover given in a note to Rankin the day of the Jan. 27 secret meeting:

"Lee Harvey Oswald was never used by this Bureau in an informant capacity. He was never paid any sums of money for furnishing information and he most certainly never was an informant of the FBI."