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June 3, 1964

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Honorable J. Lee Rankin
General Counsel
President's Commission on the
Assassination of President Kennedy
200 Maryland Avenue, N. E.
Washington, D. C. 20002

Dear Lee:

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Yesterday at a conference in Houston between General Carr, Leon Jaworski and me, we reviewed the investigation and, in particular, discussed whether or not other witnesses should be called. One of the results was that the three of us concurred that the following witnesses would be helpful:

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Former Mayor and Mrs. Earle Cabell -- Mayor Cabell, as you will recall, was the Mayor at the time of the unfortunate incidents in November and is a highly respected citizen and business leader of Dallas. Mayor and Mrs. Cabell were riding in the motorcade in a car just behind the Vice-President at the time of the assassination. As their car was rounding the corner going to Elm Street, they first heard a shot and, by the time they had reached the corner and were turning on Elm Street, the other two shots rang out. Both were positive that the shots came from the Depository Building. In fact, Mrs. Cabell looked up about the time of the last shot and saw something protruding from the fifth floor window.

In addition, Mayor Cabell is very familiar with the various groups in the city, including the extremes, and has given great leadership to the City of Dallas. He is likewise most familiar with the operation of the City Hall, the chain of command and the unfortunate incidents that happened at the City Hall.

City Manager Elgin Crull, who has direct administrative control of all operating departments, including the Chief of Police and Chief of Detectives -- He went to the City Jail immediately after he had been

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informed that Oswald had been arrested and before Chief Curry returned from the hospital after the President's death. One of the points he made at the evening meeting of the three Commissioners, Senator Cooper and Messrs. McCloy and Dulles, was that as soon as he arrived in the jail corridor the news media people were stringing cables, setting up cameras and were in "general possession." They had their own technicians connecting their equipment in the electrical outlets, fuses were being blown, and the technicians were even "bridging" the blown fuses. There was a large crowd and they continued to come. His summary was that if there had been an effort to dispossess the news media, it would have caused a mild revolution and that he saw no alternative except to let them remain, although he did not approve of what they had done. Furthermore, he kept in close touch with the events as they unfolded and particularly the activities of Chief Curry and Chief Fritz and their respective lieutenants. Mr. Crull was an officer in the Air Force in the late war and has been City Manager for many years since he was released from service.

Mr. H. Louis Nichols, former President of the Dallas Bar Association, was contacted by me on Saturday afternoon before the assassination of Oswald and pursuant to many complaints from prominent lawyers from the North and East that "Oswald should be provided counsel." I first talked with Henry Wade and he said, in substance, that "he was going to recommend to the Court that the President of the Dallas Bar Association and the President of the Dallas Criminal Bar Association be appointed as counsel for Oswald by the Court as and when he was indicted, if he did not have a lawyer." The indictment was expected on the following Monday morning.

Mr. Nichols went to the cell of Oswald, accompanied by Chief Curry, late that Saturday afternoon where he had a private interview with Oswald. His general impressions were: "Oswald was reclining on his bunk when I entered, he seemed rather calm and unexcited, very sure of himself, and when the question of counsel was suggested Oswald replied, 'I want John Abt of New York and, if I cannot get him, counsel from the Civil Liberties Union of which I am a member.'" Mr. Nichols had advised

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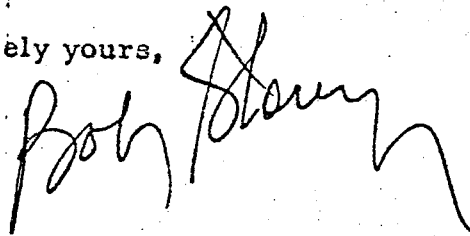
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him that his purpose in calling upon him was that the Dallas Bar Association was ready to provide counsel if he had none and needed counsel. He seemed to appreciate Mr. Nichol's offer of counsel and replied, in substance, "If I should request you to assign counsel, I would want one who believed as much as possible in my (hesitating) innocence." There were other details which I shall not recite but the result was that, when he came out of Oswald's cell, the news media asked him for his statement which he gave over a national TV hookup. One of the prominent lawyers who had called me from Harvard University Law School, when I reported back to him in about an hour, said in effect, "I have just seen and heard the fine statement of the President of the Dallas Bar and I am completely satisfied."

Senator Cooper and Messrs. McCloy and Dulles, who heard the informal discussions on the evening of the dinner, will tell you their impressions of Mayor Cabell and City Manager Crull.

I will see you early next week and discuss this matter further if you so desire.

Sincerely yours,



RGS:al

cc: General Waggoner Carr
Mr. Leon Jaworski