

February 10, 1964

See O'Connell
file copy in
Protection of
President

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. RANKIN

FROM: Mr. Stern

In the course of analyzing the materials already available to the Commission, which bear upon the questions of the effectiveness of the Secret Service's Protective Research Section in its preventative intelligence operations, and the adequacy of liaison arrangements between the Secret Service and other federal intelligence agencies, it has become apparent that the record, as presently constituted, is significantly incomplete. A great deal of additional information must be obtained from each of the intelligence agencies before the Commission will be able to make reasoned judgments in this area. It is the purpose of this memorandum to suggest, in summary fashion, the kinds of further inquiry of all investigative agencies involved that appear to be necessary, using the Secret Service and the FBI as illustrations.

1. Secret Service

The Secret Service has provided a memorandum by the agent in charge of the Protective Research Section, summarizing in very general terms its operations. (See Comm. No. 3, Exhibits 2 and 3.) The memorandum tells us almost nothing about the qualitative standards used for determining when information warrants being placed in PRS files, the extent to which original investigations are instituted to develop preventative intelligence information, the data storage and retrieval systems used, including the degree of automation or other modern data processing techniques employed, etc.

To develop the kind of information the Commission will ultimately require, as a first step the Commission should write to Secretary Dillon, requesting all existing written information about arrangements for safeguarding the President, including particularly descriptions of PRS operations, and also requesting the preparation of written reports to the extent that materials do not now exist. A draft letter has been prepared for the Commission's consideration.

Once such information is received, it may well suggest other fruitful lines of inquiry. Members of the Commission staff should conduct extensive interviews with Secret Service, and particularly, PRS personnel, to learn precisely how these functions are carried out.

Eventually, the Commission may well want to memorialize the statements of the most knowledgeable Secret Service agents by taking their testimony.

2. Federal Bureau of Investigation

The Commission has very little from the FBI describing its processes and operations in the area of Presidential security. Any information on these matters now available to the Commission is only in the form of case reports, occasionally augmented by more general statements in response to particular inquiries.

As a first step in obtaining further information, the Commission should send to the FBI a general request for any existing memoranda or studies pertaining to arrangements for safeguarding the President, particularly with respect to liaison with the Secret Service, and should request the preparation of written descriptions covering any matters which are not now adequately set forth in existing writings. A draft letter has been prepared for the Commission's consideration, and parallel letters have also been prepared to solicit the same information from the CIA, DOD, and a representative sample of local law enforcement agencies.

The information already available to the Commission regarding the FBI's investigation of Oswald from 1960 until the assassination, raises a number of specific questions. The FBI knew a great deal about Oswald and his activities before the assassination, the most important aspects of which may be summarized as follows:

- (1) Before his return in June 1962, the FBI knew of his U.S. Marine Corps experience and training, his attempted defection and efforts to become a Soviet citizen, his threat to divulge military information to the Soviet Government, his marriage to a Soviet national, and his impending return.
- (2) The FBI apparently did not attempt to interview him until two weeks after his return. When interviewed, his attitude was "impatient and arrogant." He was interviewed a second time within two months of the first interview.
- (3) He was not interviewed again by the FBI for a full year. During this time, the FBI knew that he was having trouble maintaining a job, and that neighbors had complained of his drinking and wife beating. He subscribed to Communist Party publications and became active for the F.P.C.C.

(4) In New Orleans and perhaps earlier in Dallas, he took part in street demonstrations for F.P.C.C., which led to his arrest in New Orleans. He asked to be interviewed in August 1963 by an FBI agent and proceeded to tell the agent a great many lies about his past activities. The information given by Oswald was significantly inconsistent with data known by the FBI to be correct.

(5) CIA advised FBI that Oswald had contacted Soviet Embassy in Mexico City on October 1, 1963.

(6) When Oswald left New Orleans, FBI learned that he gave the address of Mrs. Paine's home in Irving, Texas as his forwarding address. FBI agents made three visits to Mrs. Paine's house within eight days to try to determine his whereabouts. They learned he was living separately in Dallas and working at the Book Depository but apparently did not pursue this lead and waited until Mrs. Paine could tell them his Dallas address.

(7) On November 18 the FBI was advised that Oswald wrote to the Soviet Embassy in Washington that he had been in Mexico City under an assumed name and that he had originally intended to visit the Soviet Embassy in Cuba but was unable to reach Cuba.

(8) An FBI agent told two Secret Service agents on November 22 that Oswald had, within the past 15 days, contacted two known subversive agents.

The historical record compiled by the Commission would obviously be incomplete if the FBI were not to be given an opportunity to explain the many questions raised by the record now before the Commission. On the facts now available, the Commission cannot begin to understand the true degree of concern in which the FBI held Oswald immediately preceding the assassination, why the FBI apparently did not consider that his conduct merited advice to the Secret Service, particularly in the liaison activities immediately preceding the President's trip, and why the FBI was not more actively pursuing Oswald in connection with its own direct responsibilities.

Initially, this information may best be obtained by putting to the FBI a series of specific questions concerning its investigation of Oswald. It seems probable that it will be necessary to follow these questions by requesting from the FBI all internal memoranda, internal surveillance and mail cover reports, and logs of the activities of those agents who had any contact with his case. The next stage might be staff interviews with FBI personnel, and the Commission may ultimately desire to memorialize this information by taking the testimony of particular agents.