



TREASURY DEPARTMENT  
UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE

*Secret Service*

WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF

May 3, 1964

Mr. J. Lee Rankin  
General Counsel  
President's Commission on the  
Assassination of President Kennedy  
Washington, D. C.

CE 1019

Dear Mr. Rankin:

Reference is made to your letter of April 21, 1964.

Columnist Drew Pearson in a newscast over Radio Station WTOP, Saturday, November 30, 1963, was quoted to the effect that the night before the assassination at Dallas, Texas, "Six Secret Service men . . . were in the Fort Worth Press Club . . . some of them remaining until 3 AM." that several of these agents went later to an all night "beatnik" rendezvous called "The Cellar." Similar statements were made in Mr. Pearson's syndicated newspaper column of December 1, 1963, with the additional statement that "One of them was reported to have been inebriated."

As a result of these allegations, an Inspector from my staff was dispatched to Dallas on December 1, 1963, to conduct an immediate investigation.

On December 1, 1963, Mr. Pat Kirkwood and Mr. R. J. "Dick" Mackie were interviewed. Mr. Kirkwood is the proprietor of a nightclub called "The Cellar Coffee House," 10th and Main Streets, Fort Worth, Texas. Mr. Mackie acts as manager of this club. Mr. Mackie stated that he was working in his capacity as manager of the nightclub on the night of November 21, and the morning hours of November 22, 1963. The club is open from 6 p.m. until approximately 5 or 6 a.m., depending upon the condition of business. He stated that shortly after the Presidential party arrived at Fort Worth, he had a telephone call from a member of the press corps who told him that some members of the Presidential party wished to come to "The Cellar."

During the night, up until at least 4:30 or 5 a.m., Mr. Mackie stated that numerous guests arrived and left. As each arrived he was brought over to Mr. Mackie, introduced only as a member of the White House party or press. Mr. Mackie stated that no one entering was intoxicated, or disorderly, that he could not differentiate whether

a person was a press member or White House staff, guest, or agent of the Secret Service. He stated, however, that if there were Secret Service agents in the room, they certainly were not intoxicated. He advised that all guests left his club in the same condition as they entered, as they serve no alcoholic drinks, the only refreshments being coffee, cola, and various fruit drinks.

On December 2, 1963, Mr. Calvin Sutton, Sunday Editor and Assistant Managing Editor of the Morning Star Telegram, Fort Worth, Texas, was interviewed. Mr. Sutton is also President of the Press Club of Fort Worth. He advised that he was aware of the remarks made by Drew Pearson and was very disturbed by the uncomplimentary reference to the Secret Service as he felt the remarks were grossly inaccurate. The Press Club has a closing curfew of 12 midnight. Mr. Sutton admitted he kept the Press Club open till sometime after 2 a.m. because he felt obligated as a good host to extend this courtesy to the visiting White House press and staff.

Mr. Sutton stated that he had received a long distance phone call from Drew Pearson on November 27, 1963; Mr. Pearson advised him at that time that he had been told by White House reporters that several Secret Service agents were at the Press Club party on November 22, and one of them could have been drunk. Mr. Sutton told Drew Pearson at that time that his information was erroneous, that none of the individuals he believed to be Secret Service agents were inebriated.

Mr. Sutton stated that at about 2 a.m., November 22, 1963, he ordered the bar at the Press Club closed. As the bar was being closed, a party of about four people arrived who were later identified to him as Secret Service agents. Mr. Sutton requested the bartender to serve them one drink, after which the bar was again closed and the party left.

During the interview with Mr. Sutton, he stated that he had been a newspaper man for many years; he has attended many parties such as the above; that at no time on the evening of November 21 did he see any person who was identified to him as a member of the Secret Service who was intoxicated, disorderly or ill-mannered. He further stated that at no time did he know of any agents who had more than one or two drinks.

Miss Barbara F. Richardson, a reporter for the Star Telegram, Fort Worth, Texas, was interviewed on December 2, 1963. She stated that while covering the President's arrival at Fort Worth, Texas, on November 21, 1963, she had occasion to talk to several of the Secret Service agents assigned to the airport about their duties pertaining to the limitation of the press covering the President's arrival. She

was later introduced to several of these agents at the Press Club party and accompanied some of them to The Cellar. She stated that at no time did she see any persons identified to her as Secret Service agents intoxicated or conducting themselves other than in a gentlemanly manner.

The investigation was continued. All Secret Service personnel involved were interviewed.

There follows a summary of the information secured in the course of this investigation:

- (1) No one was found in the course of the investigation who saw or alleged he saw any Secret Service agent intoxicated or acting other than in an orderly manner or who stated to anyone else that he saw same. All of those interviewed, who were in a position to know, have specifically denied the allegations.
- (2) The only person whose sobriety was questionable was not a Secret Service agent, but a person who represented himself to be a member of the White House staff, and this person was wearing a round red and white lapel identification button, unlike the colored-bar identification worn by Secret Service agents.
- (3) Nine special agents of the White House Detail were in the Press Club at various times and departed at various hours up to 2:00 a.m. The amount of beer and liquor consumed by any of them did not exceed one and a half mixed drinks or, in one case, three glasses of beer.
- (4) During the night, 10 special agents of the Secret Service stopped at The Cellar coffee house at various times for coffee or fruit drinks. No alcoholic beverages were served there.
- (5) The investigation did not disclose that any special agent of the Secret Service was intoxicated.
- (6) All of the Secret Service agents who attended either the Press Club or The Cellar, as well as all other Secret Service agents assigned to the Texas trip, reported for duty at or before the hours assigned for their respective shifts on November 22 in suitable condition to perform their duties.

Sincerely yours,

James J. Rowley