

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has requested that certain pages of this document not be disclosed. This request was incorporated in a letter of August 13, 1965, to Dr. Wayne C. Grover, Archivist of the United States from Norbert A. Schlei, Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legal Counsel, Department of Justice.

Commission Document Number: 7

Pages Withheld: 494-777

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20535

November 25, 1966

On November 21, 1966, Mr. J. Edgar Hoover, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, received a letter from a newsman expressing concern over the rash of books, articles and statements which are "creating confusion and doubts about the validity of the findings of the Warren Commission regarding the assassination of President Kennedy." The newsman said that one of the "conflicts" concerned the alleged variance of the results of the medical examination of the President's body, recorded in FBI reports dated December 9, 1963, and January 13, 1964, and the official autopsy report.

The newsman said he would appreciate any comment Mr. Hoover would make concerning these matters.

The newsman requested that Mr. Hoover prepare a statement regarding the alleged conflict between information reported by the FBI and the autopsy report.

By letter dated November 23, 1966, to the newsman, Mr. Hoover said he shared the concern of the newsman regarding the criticisms of the Warren Commission's findings. He pointed out that while the critics had every right to state their views, they "should show more regard for the facts on record. They have ignored certain facts, misinterpreted others, and expressed pure speculation as truth."

Mr. Hoover sent the newsman the attached statement and stated, "I am speaking only for the FBI, not for any other agency or group involved in any phase of the inquiry into the assassination of President Kennedy."

Enclosure

November 23, 1963

The Warren Commission and its findings concerning the assassination of President Kennedy currently are being severely criticized. The conclusions of the Commission, especially its conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in the assassination, have been openly challenged.

In support of their speculations, some of the critics allege, among other things, that there is a "conflict" between portions of two FBI reports and the official autopsy report regarding the wounds found in the President's body.

While there is a difference in the information reported by the FBI and the information contained in the autopsy report concerning the wounds, there is no conflict. The FBI reports record oral statements made by autopsy physicians while the examination was being conducted and before all facts were known. The autopsy report records the final findings of the examination.

Briefly, this is what happened. The autopsy was conducted at Bethesda Naval Hospital on the evening of November 22, 1963. Two

FBI Agents were present. They reported that Dr. James J. Humes, chief autopsy surgeon, located what appeared to be a bullet hole in the back below the shoulder and probed it to the end of the opening with a finger. The examining physicians were unable to explain why they could find no bullet or point of exit.

Unknown to the Agents, the physicians eventually were able to trace the path of the bullet through the body. On the morning of November 23, 1963, Dr. Humes contacted doctors who treated the President at Parkland Hospital in Dallas, Texas, the previous day and confirmed his assumption that a tracheotomy had been performed using a bullet hole in the front of the neck as the point of incision.

The information reported by the Agents present during the autopsy was summarized on page 18 of the FBI report dated December 9, 1963. Meanwhile, the clothing worn by the President when he was shot was examined in the FBI Laboratory. This examination revealed a small hole in the back of his coat and shirt and a slit characteristic of an exit hole for a projectile in the front of the shirt one inch below the collar button. A nick on the left side of the tie knot, possibly caused by the same projectile which passed through the shirt, also was noted.

These findings clearly indicated the examining physician's early observation that the bullet penetrated only a short distance into the President's back probably was in error. Since this observation had been included in the FBI report of December 9, 1963, another reference was made to it in the report of January 13, 1964, in conjunction with the Laboratory findings to point up this probability.

The FBI and the Warren Commission each received a copy of the official autopsy report on December 23, 1963, from Secret Service following a specific request for this document. Since the FBI knew the Commission had a copy of the official autopsy, its contents were not repeated in an FBI report.

Recently the charge has been made that the FBI altered the film of the assassination taken by Abraham Zapruder. This is totally false. The FBI never had the original Zapruder film in its possession--it was purchased by a national magazine. The FBI obtained a copy of the original uncut film and reproduced this for the Commission which since has turned it over to National Archives.

At the direction of President Johnson, the FBI conducted a prompt, intensive, objective and thorough investigation of the assassination. The results of this investigation were accurately reported to

the Warren Commission. Not one shred of evidence has been developed to link any other person in a conspiracy with Oswald to assassinate President Kennedy. All available evidence and facts point to one conclusion--that Oswald acted alone in his crime.

head to the right and rear, falling towards Mrs. Connally, as a circle of light resembling an explosive blast encircles the President's head. The Zapruder film runs for 33 seconds. Part of the action shown in this film was photographed simultaneously by Orville O. Nix.

B. Colored pictures made by Orville O. Nix with an 8 mm. home movie camera

Nix, standing on the Plaza grass across the road from the Pergola (where Zapruder viewed the motorcade), photographed the motorcade as it approached the triple underpass (refer to scale model). Nix photographed the left side of the Presidential car with Mrs. Kennedy in the foreground waving when the President's head suddenly snaps to the left and the car picks up speed as a man jumps on the left foothold. The Nix film runs about 8 seconds.

C. Colored pictures made by Robert J. E. Hughes with an 8 mm. home movie camera

Hughes, standing at the intersection of Main and Houston Streets (refer to scale model), focused his camera up Main Street in an easterly direction photographing the

approaching motorcade as it turned right on Houston Street. Hughes obtained a close-up view of the Presidential car turning north and traveling on Houston for a distance of 279 feet. . There the Presidential car moved out of view after turning left into the Parkway in front of the Texas School Book Depository Building. The Hughes film runs about 17 seconds.

PC 7

MEMORANDUM

GREEN
Copy

February 21, 1964

TO: J. Lee Rankin
FROM: Norman Redlich
SUBJECT: Assignments of Messrs. Redlich and Eisenberg

The areas in which I am working are as follows:

1. The extent to which the evidence being reviewed by the Commission should be made open to the public after submission of the Report.
2. Review of the preliminary memoranda prepared by the various staff members.
3. Review of the testimony of the witnesses appearing before the Commission.
4. Study of assassination films to locate position of car when shots hit President Kennedy and Governor Connally.
5. Wound ballistics to determine paths of bullets before and after penetration.
6. Coordination of efforts in area of Oswald as a possible agent of a Government department.
7. I also consider it part of my responsibility to review all of the underlying materials, including the major Ruby reports.

From the nature of these areas, most of them must be worked on concurrently, although priority is being given to items 1 and 2.

The areas in which Mr. Eisenberg is working are as follows:

1. Cataloging the evidence in the FBI's possession and the exhibits introduced into evidence in connection with the Marina Oswald deposition. (This involves obtaining translations, identification of photographs and books, and making up descriptive lists and cross-indexes.)
2. Working with me on the problem of studying assassination films to locate car position when bullets hit President Kennedy and Governor Connally.

3. Developing expert knowledge in certain areas of criminal investigation with a view toward assisting Messrs. Ball and Belin in the evaluation of the evidence concerning the assassination and related events. These areas, in the following order of priority, are: weapon identification; ballistics; paraffin tests; fingerprint and palm print evidence; handwriting identifications.
4. Mr. Eisenberg also considers it his responsibility to review the major underlying materials.

Two legal questions which you sent to us, dealing with the Commission's subpoena powers and the effect of an oath administered by the staff, have been assigned to Mr. Mosk.

P.S.

The difficulty of assigning priorities to our areas of work is best evidenced by the fact that since this memo was written I have been assigned the job of preparing the questions for James Martin which has assumed top priority over everything else.

EAC:mfd:20Mar64

MEMORANDUM

IN 8
March 20, 1964

TO: J. Lee Rankin

FROM: Edward A. Conroy
John J. O'Brien

SUBJECT: Items for Possible Inquiry

At your suggestion we have set forth below specific questions which have occurred to us while working on the chronology. We have not included such broad areas of inquiry as Oswald's Mexican trip or Ruby's Cuban trip, etc. In all probability many of these items may have already been considered. However, some of them may be worthy of further study or action.

1. Jack Ruby maintained a safe-deposit box (No. 448) at the Merchants' State Bank in Dallas. In Commission #86, page 379 it states that Captain Will Fritz accompanied by Detective B. L. Shenkle and William F. Alexander, Assistant District Attorney, Dallas County, opened Ruby's safe-deposit box. It was empty. Virtually all banks require individuals opening safe-deposit boxes to sign a book or sheet. However, it is obvious that under certain circumstances this could be circumvented. Therefore, in view of the box being empty, perhaps it would be desirable to make inquiries of bank personnel to determine if any access was had to the box by unknown persons in the interim period between Ruby's last recorded entry into the box and Captain Fritz' examination of the box?

2. No fingerprints were found on the three spent cartridge casings found by the window. Would the firing of a cartridge of this type in the rifle have the effect of removing prints from the cartridge casing?

3. Oswald was taken into custody by the Dallas police at approximately 2:00 p.m. on November 22, 1963. He remained in their custody until he was shot at approximately 11:25 on November 24, 1963. Does the Commission have any direct testimony or information from the individuals who were guarding him regarding his comments, actions, etc., as distinguished from official statements by Dallas police spokesmen, most of which seem to be in the nature of a summary?

cc: Mail Room Files
Mr. Rankin's Chron File
Mr. Conroy