

November 25, 1963

10:40am

TELEPHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND
MR. JOE ALSOP

LBJ: Joe?

JA: Yes, Mr. President.

LBJ: I appreciate very much your calling...

JB: Well, you know what I feel about you and you know how I ... well,
I put it all in the letter...

LBJ: ..he has ordered or will order during the day, probably right after
the funeral, a state court of inquiry headed by the Attorney General
which he will have associated with him one or two of the outstanding
civil liberties jurists in the country, perhaps Jarwarski who
represented the Attorney General in the 5th Circuit negro case or
some of the trial lawyers of America or Dean Story, or...

JA: You mean, somebody from outside of Texas?

LBJ: No, they're going to have FBI from outside Texas, but this is under
Texas law and they take all the involvements and we don't send in a
bunch of carpet-baggers ...that's the worse thing he could do right
now...

JA: You think so...

LBJ: I know...well, we've got the FBI doing anything that..if there's any
question about Texas operation, they've got an FBI that's going to the
bottom of it and direct with the Attorney General..but paralleling that
is the blue ribbon state board of inquiry headed by the brilliant Attorney
General and associated with him somebody like say John Garwood,
Will Clayton's son-in-law, who was a brilliant Supreme Court Justice
that's retired...somebody like Roberts did at Pearl Harbor...and
that's what the Attorney General is doing...now, if we have another
Commission, hell, you're gonna have people running over each other
and everybody agreed..now I know that some of the lawyers..they
thought of the blue ribbon commission first, the Justice, and we just
can't have them lobbying them against the President, when he makes
these decisions. We decided that the best thing to do, number one

nt'd)

convictions...this very small addition to the admirable machinery that you've already have...will help you and I believe that it will ~~strengthen~~ the imagination of the country and be a very useful, happy thing ...and the man asks if you have two seconds...this afternoon.. for example...ask Dean Acheson...he's the man to ask...I see all the arguments you make and you're dead right and I'm not...my conception is completely wrong...but I do think that this additional feature is needed..

LBJ: I talked to...I guess, after midnight last night...

JA: Well I know how you must have been concerned...

LBJ: the ablest, the truest civil liberties lawyer in this town in my judgment..the man that's made the best arguments before the Supreme Court and it was his judgement the worst mistake we could make ...getting trapped...

JA: And, I now see exactly how right you are and how wrong I was about this idea of a blue ribbon commission...

LBJ: Now, you see, Katzenbach suggested that ^{that} and ~~provoked~~ ^{provoked} it..the lawyers and the council just hit the ceiling...said, my God Almighty..

JA: I see...I see...I see that you're right and he was wrong..what I do ...

LBJ: Then I called back to Katzenbach and I thought he accepted

JA: Well, I don't know anything about Katzenbach...I haven't talked to him for three weeks..but what I am suggesting is not at all what Katzenbach suggested...I am suggesting simply a device...

LBJ: Well, let me talk to Acheson and...

JA: for summing up the result of the FBI inquiry in a way that will be completely coherent, detailed, and will carry unchallengeable convictions and this carrying conviction is just as important as carrying on the investigation ..in the right way...and I worry about the Post

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10:30 a.m.

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TELEPHONE CALL
THE PRESIDENT TO
J. EDGAR HOOVER

Pres. Two things. Apparently some lawyer in Justice is lobbying with the Post because that's where the suggestion came from for this Presidential Commission which we think would be very bad and put it right in the White House. Now we can't be checking up on every shooting scrape in the country, but they've gone to the Post now to get them an editorial, and the Post is calling up and saying they're going to run an editorial if we don't do things. Now we're going to do two things and I wanted you to know about it.

One: We believe that the way to handle this as we said yesterday -- your suggestion -- that you put at every facility at your command, making a full report to the Attorney General and then they make it available to the country in whatever form may seem desirable.

Second: It's a state matter, too, and the State Attorney General is young and able and prudent and very cooperative with you -- he's going to run a court of inquiry which is provided for by a state law and he's going to have associated with him the most outstanding jurists in the country. But he's a good conservative fellow and we don't start invading local jurisdictions that way and he understands what you're doing and he's for it, and I wanted you to understand what he was doing, and he's very strong for it and he's going to announce it today. Now if you get too many cooks messing with the broth it makes -- mess it up. And I think that these two are trained organizations and the Attorney General of the state holds Courts of Inquiry every time a law is violated, and the FBI makes these investigations. So I wanted you to know that and you ought to tell your press men that that's what's happening and they can expect Waggoner Carr the Attorney General of Texas to make an announcement this morning, to have a state inquiry and you can offer them your full cooperation and vice versa, he'll do it with you.

JEH

We'll work together on it.

Pres. And any influence you got with the Post, have them point to them that you don't want too many things and just picking out a Tom Dewey lawyer from New York and sending him down -- hunting new facts -- this Commission thing, Mr. Herbert Hoover tried that and sometimes a Commission that's not trained hurts more than it helps.

JEH It's a regular circus then.

LBJ That's right.

JEH Because it'll be covered by TV and everything like that.

LBJ Just like an investigating committee.

JEH Exactly. I don't have much influence with the Post because I frankly don't read it. I view it like the Daily Worker.

LBJ You told me that once before.
I just want your people to know the facts, and your people can say that and that kind of negates it, you see?

JEH Yes sir.

LBJ Thank you

JEH Thank you, Mr. President.