

Memorandum

7/7/68

Re: Followup investigation of CE 3067--Martinsburg
Investigation conducted at Urbana, Maryland--Box284 (white house near
the school)

From: Gary Richard Schoener

Interview: With the aid of Harold Weisberg who lives in the vicinity, Mr. and Mrs. Gerald A. Kauffman were spoken with individually. Harold helped to warm things up with Mr. Kauffman who was encountered first since the Kauffmans were at that time having an aerial put on the house, and the TV repairman was a friend of Harold's. Mr. Kauffman was very reserved and appeared to be somewhat introverted, although in general he was friendly. According to the usual procedure, I gave him copies of the FBI reports on the interviews with him, his wife, and his mother-in-law Mrs. Hoover. He glanced at them and said that he would read them later and be willing to comment on the accuracy of their contents. He said that he knew very little of the incident of the paper Mrs. Hoover found and went into the house to get his wife to come out and speak with us.

Several minutes later Mrs. Kauffman came outside and from the outset she was clearly disturbed and agitated. She was very angry about my visit and this anger persisted. I explained that I would never have made a trip to Maryland just to see her but that I was recuperating from my injuries of July 4 at Harold Weisberg's place which is in the neighborhood, so we decided to take a ride over to see her. She was so agitated that neither this nor any number of other things we said to her calmed her down very much. By the way, one of the first things she had done upon coming out of the house was to shove the FBI reports and copies of my newspaper articles my way and tell me to take them away and that she didn't want to see them. Many times she reiterated that she wanted to forget the whole thing and that she couldn't see how or why it mattered. Harold asked: "Does it matter that they shot him down in cold blood in broad daylight?" which served to break through her agitation somewhat. After that she mentioned that many of the people in Martinsburg had suspected the Fernandeses of involvement in the assassination, at which point Harold pointed out that this was very interesting because naturally everyone in the town knew that they were in Martinsburg that day. He pointed out that despite her certainty that she knew nothing of importance, she had already given us something of importance. But, as before, she was agitated and continually denying that anything she knew might be important. The interview was terminated at her insistence.

Note: Mr. Kauffman is described by members of the family as friendly but potentially explosive. Due to the FBI's handling of the case in Martinsburg there had been an explosive episode, and apparently his wife has been afraid of the subject ever since because it might enrage her husband. Investigations in Martinsburg disclosed that no one but the immediate family of Mrs. Hoover knew about the FBI interviews or note she found, so suspicions of the Fernandeses must have another basis. The family purposely kept the incident quiet because of the trouble brought on them by the FBI. Mrs. Kauffman is described by everyone as a very nervous woman who is constantly apprehensive about how her husband will react towards things, so her reaction to this situation is not atypical. Subsequent letters and conversations with Mrs. Hoover have indicated that her daughter is now sorry about how she acted and was so agitated that she never really registered the explanation for why we had dropped in on her. Her husband never made a comment about it, which is another reason she regretted having been so un hospitable.