Mr. Belmont

February 7, 1964

A. Rosen

LEE HARVEY OSWALD
INTERNAL SECURITY - R

The Director's affidavit relative to the fact that Lee Harvey Oswald was never an informant of the FBI and the administrative procedures for the handling and payment of confidential informants was delivered to Mr. J. Lee Rankin of the President's Commission today.

Mr. Rankin read the cover letter and the affidavit very carefully, after which he commented that he wanted to make it clear that Henry Wade did not actually testify before the President's Commission. Rather than testifying, Mr. Wade appeared at the offices of the Commission and was interviewed relative to his knowledge concerning the allegation that Oswald had been an informant of the FBI and was then questioned concerning his recollection of procedures for handling informants while Wade was a Bureau employee. Rankin stated that he wanted to make it extremely clear to the Director that Mr. Wade was furnishing information to the best of his recollection concerning Bureau procedures and was not vouching for the correctness of his statements. Mr. Rankin also advised that Wade was not in any way critical of the Bureau or any of its procedures.

Mr. Rankin commented that Chief Justice Warren and he, Mr. Rankin, were extremely appreciative of the Director's attitude concerning this matter, that he had seen fit to furnish an affidavit covering this situation, and that he had expressed a willingness to testify before the Commission if such should be necessary. He also commented that the Commission was most certainly not questioning the word of the Bureau and that they certainly accepted the Director's statement as being true, but they were considering this problem from two angles: (1) The necessity for satisfying the Commission of the truthfulness of the situation, which had already been done; and (2) having the record sufficiently complete so that at such time as the public would have an opportunity to see the work of the Commission there would be sufficient facts to show that the matter was fully explored and that the record would completely reflect the true situation.

With regard to Mr. Hudkins, the reporter from a Houston, Texas, newspaper, Mr. Rankin stated that the matter of calling Hudkins before the Commission had been considered and that prior to calling Hudkins the Chief

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Justice desired to see the Director's affidavit. He advised that now that the affidavit has been received consideration will be given to calling Hudkins before the Commission. He advised that there was no objection to the Bureau going right ahead with an interview with Hudkins or anyone else that the Bureau desired to interview to nail this situation down. He stated that if Hudkins were interviewed he would appreciate it if a signed statement could be obtained from him. He also stated that in the event Hudkins attempted to rely on some source of his for this story and would not disclose the source he had in mind calling his employer and Hudkins before the Commission in order to obtain the true facts.

Concerning Henry Wade and the material which was shown to Mr. Rankin portraying the actual handling of expense money and payments to informants and receipts and full accounting of Wade's expenditures in South America, Mr. Rankin stated he would like very much to have a copy of this material and he was told it would be prepared and made available to him as soon as possible. He also advised that there was no objection to talking to Mr. Wade concerning his expenditures while he was in South America in order that Wade would be fully apprised of what his activities were at that time and how he accounted for his expenditures.

RUMORS THAT OSWALD WAS FBI INFORMANT

Mr. Rankin was advised that the allegation that Oswald was an FBI informant is spreading rapidly; that the Bureau had had a number of press inquiries and that we were answering such inquiries with "No comment." He was told that if this story breaks and the allegation is made in the press, the Director would necessarily have to make a statement that it is an absolute lie. Rankin was told that Senator James O. Eastland (D.-Mississippi) of the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee had advised this rumor had come to his attention and that it had also been brought to the attention of Senators Roman L. Hruska (R.-Nebraska) and Everett McKinley Dirksen (R.-Illinois). He was told that consideration was being given to calling a meeting of the committee to air this matter fully and the committee was considering calling the Director to furnish testimony on the matter. Rankin was told that the Director was instructing that Senator Eastland be contacted to let him see in confidence the affidavit that the Director had prepared concerning this matter. He was also advised that if Senator Eastland desired, the affidavit would also be shown to Senators Hruska and Dirksen. Rankin was advised that any hearing by the Internal Security Subcommittee would be a duplication of the work of the President's Commission and that the purpose of contacting Senator Eastland and the other Senators was to keep the matter in the hands of the President's Commission to avoid publicity. He was advised that the Bureau was being placed in a bad position and that the best way to handle this situation was to show the affidavit to Senator Eastland in confidence.

MR. RANKIN DESIRES THE BUREAU TO PROTECT ITSELF

Mr. Rankin commented that this situation was extremely bad and that the Bureau's reputation was involved; that the President's Commission did not desire to interfere in any way with the Bureau's handling of this situation. He stated the Bureau should proceed in this matter in the same manner that it would handle any situation arising and disregard the existence of the President's Commission. He also commented that, in addition to this being a problem for the FBI, the Commission considered it a problem involving all of the intelligence agencies. He stated that rumors were beginning to circulate involving other intelligence agencies and that for this reason the Commission intended to go into this matter thoroughly and would explore it to whatever extent necessary to clarify the record. He stated that when the Bureau completed its inquiries into this matter he would appreciate being furnished the results and he was assured that this would be done at the earliest possible time.

Mr. Rankin again repeated his statement that he wanted the Director to know that the Commission was not questioning the Bureau's statement concerning the fact that Oswald was not an informant but they were desirous of clarifying the record.

Mr. Rankin also asked if we could furnish him with the affidavits which we have taken from our agents who interviewed Oswald and our files in the field where these interviews were conducted. He was told that these would be made available to him promptly.

Action (Mr. Belmont):

1. Mr. Belmont was advised that the Bureau's affidavit should be shown to Senator Eastland at once, and if Eastland agreed it should be given to Senators Dirksen and Kuchel. Further, Mr. Belmont should raise inquiry for his source in the State Department and CIA who allegedly confirmed the story that Oswald was an informant of the FBI.

2. Following Mr. Belmont's discussion with Sourwine, our liaison will contact State Department and CIA, refer to these allegations, and pin them down.

(continued, next page)

Mr. Belmont

3. We have notarized affidavits from our field agents and SAC's, with the exception of New Orleans which does not have a notary public. Miss Coleman has been instructed to get these affidavits retrieved through the nearest field office and send them immediately to the Bureau. They will be given to Marvin this coming Monday or Tuesday, 9/30 or 10/1.

4. Our Boston office has been instructed to interview reporter Dennis Sullivan regarding his allegation that Oswald was an informant of the FBI, and get a signed statement from him and send it to the Bureau. This will be furnished to Rankin.

5. Our Dallas Office has been instructed to interview District Attorney Wade. A set of the vouchers and receipts pertaining to Ruby's expenditures is being sent to Dallas tonight so that he can be interviewed over the weekend.

6. A copy of Ruby's vouchers and receipts pertaining to his expenses and handling of informants in South America is being reproduced and will be furnished to Rankin immediately upon his return from New York.