The Washington Post

Harold,

Sorry for the delay. I've got married.

George

P.S. I have copy of 1/24/64 H.C. session. That was yours, I'm sure.

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Harold Weisberg
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Dear Harold:

Your June 8 letter arrived in this morning's mail, by way of pony from Baltimore no doubt. I was going to call you about it, but decided instead to write a response.

I won't go into every point you raise. I don't have the time. But I do want to correct the record on at least a few matters. You say that I accepted your proposal for a 50-50 split after my taking expenses. Not so. I mentioned to you that you had earlier proposed taking 30 per cent[which struck me as a fair proposition since I would be doing most of the work]. You denied saying that. I didn't want to argue the point at that time so I said all right, forget it[i.e., what you said or didn't say]. I also told you I would have to think about your proposal and that we would have to talk some more about it. I should point out that I have also spent much of my own time on this project.

Part of your proposal, I should add, was that I would have "complete control over the content," as you correctly stated in your June 1 letter to Ben Bradlee. Now in your June 8 letter, you say that you agreed only for me "to control the writing," and that "that did not...include the content of the book--what it would say." On that, you are absolutely wrong, as your own letter to Ben demonstrates.

On the subject of Vietnam, you say that Kennedy had, "without reasonable question," decided before he was killed to pull out of Vietnam completely. I disagree. Prouty told me the documentation he had for this. I got a copy from the Kennedy Library in Boston. It documents no such decision. I also talked to several historians about it. But I don't think I should have to justify my reporting on this. If you want to take Prouty's word for it, go ahead.

On the mob, I did not say in the outline I did that it was involved in the assassination. I do say the possibility of such involvement was one Garrison should have pursued. As for Life's decision to withdraw its support for Garrison's investigation because he was "too close to the mob," Garrison himself wrote in his book that this was the reason Billings gave him. I have also done my own reporting on this. You are wrong in saying it "beseeches unnecessary trouble."

On the Warren Commission being frustrated from hiring its own investigators, you say you have "no reason to believe it." That suggests to me that every point you do not instantly recall, I

would have to prove to you. On this one, I am enclosing a 1977 article I did. I misremembered a CIA role in opposing the idea, but not the FBI's. The Commission, of course, did wind up relying primarily on the FBI and the CIA.

You say at various points in the letter that I agreed not to say this, that or the other thing in the book. Not so. For instance, the way of handling Vietnam and the Stone-Garrison line on it. I agreed basically that that was the best approach for the article, not the book. The draft article also had some quotes from Bill Moyers and more from historian Gibbons and another historian. These were cut for reasons of space.

On the outline, I told you several times that George Wilson, an old colleague at the Post, had called an editor he knew at Macmillan and recommended I send that editor an outline of no more than 3 pages right away. It took me longer than I would have liked because of the fuss over the Stone letter to the Post and my response to that, but you knew I was doing the outline on a rush basis. The "whips and chains," by the way, would have been in context. The point is they are in the script. I don't need any lectures on fairness, Harold, not from you or anybody.

Once again, on matters we did not agree upon, I did not agree to omit the script from the book, except for what has been published. You suggested that. I told you that I didn't think it was necessary to go that far, especially since Time magazine, a part of the Warner empire now, had gone into the script, too.

I was, frankly, stunned to get your letter. What it says to me, through all the harping and niggling, and mistaken claims of what we agreed upon, is that it would be impossible to do a book with you. Believe me, I am sorrier than you. I will return your records as soon as I can get them together. I should point out that I got many of them a second time from Jim Lesar. As I recall, he had all or almost all in his files and I refrained from copying only those I distinctly remembered having gotten from you. You've always talked about how your files are open to all comers, anyone who wants to use them[E. G., the Moorman photo you supplied Gary Mack]. I didn't know you were talking only about what you got under FOIA.

With regrets,

George

George Lardner

ıvestigative Unit or Warren Panel pposed by FBI

By George Lardner Jr. and William Chapman
Washington Post Staff Writers

\cting on an early tip from the ntral Intelligence Agency, FBI icials apparently successfully re ted efforts of the Warren Com ssion to organize its own investigat staff.

nstead of taking that step, the com ssion wound up relying primarily the FBI and the CIA to serve as investigators for the inquiry into e murder of President John F. nned

DEC 9 1977

FBI officials learned on Dec. 17, 63—the day after former Solicitor eneral Lee Rankin was sworn in as neral counsel for the Warren Com ission—that Rankin was "consider g an investigative staff to conduct ldditional investigation."

"Frankly I think Rankin should be sc uraged from having an investiga ve staff," Al Rosen, head of the FBI's eneral investigative division, told lan H. Belmont, one of FBI Director Edgar Hoover's top assistants. Rosen ald the bureau "should make it clear hat we stand ready to run out ad itional investigative leads the com ission wants covered."

The Senate Intelligence Committee oncluded just last year that both the BI and CIA withheld crucial informa ion from the commission, particularly ithin connection with the CIA's at empts to assassinate Cuban Premier

See DOCUMENTS, A8, Col. 3

iel Castro and in connection with le significance of Oswald's contacts th pro-Castro and anti-Castro oups for the many months before e assassination."

The FBI files, made public this ek under the Freedom of Informa n Act, show that the tip about nkin's plans came from the CIA's ief of counterintelligence, James gleton, who had "picked up com nts from Allen Dulles" about the posal. Dulles, the CIA's former ector who left the agency shortly er the Bay of Pigs debacle in 1961, s a member of the Warren Com ssion.

DEC 9 1977

Just six months after the assassina n, some Warren Commission offi ls began worrying about gaps in evidentiary material amassed by FBI and about their vulnerabil to criticism from outside.

The FBI was never too busy to erlook any damage to its reputation. n bureau officials were incensed

Nov. 23, 1963, the hectic day after assassination, when Dallas Police ief Jesse Curry was reported to ve charged publicly that the FBI led to notify his department about e Harvey Oswald even though the reau had him under surveillance. n a three-page memo that same , FBI assistant director Cartha ke) DeLoach indignantly related t the Dallas FBI agent in charge rdon Shanklin had been told to hold of Curry "and set him aight regarding these allegations." l get Curry back on television and touch with the wire services to orm them "immediately of the sity of his statements."

I asked him [Shanklin] if he knew y Chief Curry would make such pid statements," DeLoach report to the FBI's John Mohr. "Shank stated that Curry was usually very perative, a very good friend of the l, however, did not think very fast l obviously made the above state nts without giving any thought to repercussions."

urry "agreed to make the retrac ıs" and told the media, with apolo s to the FBI, according to the mo, "that the FBI was under no onsibility to report to the Dallas ice any individuals of subversive kgrounds who might be in Dallas ."

eLoach added that "we called our rces at both United Press Inter ional and the Associated Press" as i as "Jerry O'Leary of the 'Wash ton Evening Star'" who was in las and who agreed to contact Cur mmediately. DeLoach said O'Leary called back to say he had inter wed Curry and "has prepared an cle putting Curry on record as ing there was a misunderstanding urry further told O'Leary that ıeone late night told him the FBI Secretly interviewed Oswald ry added that he now knows this e false."

BI agents questioned Oswald twice ength in 1962 following his return Russia. An FBI agent in New Or s also interviewed Oswald in Au

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gust, 1963, following his arrest there in connection with his distribution of Fair Play for Cuba leaflets.

FBI agent James Hosty of Dallas had been looking for Oswald in early November and was informed by Ruth Paine, friend and landlady of Oswald's wife, Marina, that he was working at the Texas School Book Depository.

Nonetheless, UPI reported on the afternoon of Nov. 23: "Police at first said the FBI, knowing of Oswald and his pro-Communist, pro-Castro background, had questioned him a week ago in Dallas. Later, the police withdrew the statement as not in accordance with the facts."

While the FBI researched its files for derogatory information on people who may have written things critical of or embarrassing to the bureau, it also kept what it called a "Special Correspondents List," in which it rewarded its friends, including Leslie Scott, editor of "Security Gazette," a British publication.

Always attentive to what the national and international media was saying about the assassination and investigation, high-level bureau officials frequently exchanged memos summarizing the latest articles. A Jan. 9, 1964, memo to assistant director DeLoach summarized an article in "Security Gazette," which described breaches in security surrounding the Kennedy trip to Dallas. The article concluded that the main reasons for the security failure were the lack of coordination between the FBI, the Secret Service and the local police, and the atmosphere of violence in the United States.

Because a search of FBI files showed the bureau to have "friendly relations" with the magazine, the bureau tried the soft sell.

"In view of the friendly relationship that exists between the FBI and the officials of this publication," the memo said, "it is felt that the best interest of the bureau would be served by having Legat London contact Mr. Scott and tactfully point out to him the splendid relationship that exists between the FBI and the Secret Service."

Others weren't so lucky. Thomas Gittings Buchanan Jr. wrote a series of articles for the French newsweekly L'Express, expressing doubts that Oswald acted alone and that he may have once been an informant for the FBI or CIA. An April 8, 1964, memo noted that he was a member of the Communist Party who had been dismissed from the Washington Evening Star in 1948 when he informed his editor of his party membership.

One Buchanan article was caustically dismissed in the FBI memo with the note that it was "typical of his previous articles in 'L'Express' in that he deals in implications and previously published speculation on the guilt or nonguilt of Oswald, the claim that Oswald was part of a conspiracy, and the allegation that Ruby was also involved in that conspiracy."

Another memo of the same day said Mark Lane, then raising doubts about Oswald's guilt, "has long been a Soviet apologist, has participated prominently in the activities of various CP front groups and reportedly enjoyed CP support in an unsuccessful effort to secure nomination as a congressional candidate."

When Staughton Lynd and Jack Minnis wrote an article, entitled "Seeds of Doubt" for The New Republic, which again raised questions about the assassination, White House aide Arthur A. Schlesinger Jr. forwarded it to the bureau. A Dec. 26, 1963, memo from W. A. Branigan to W. C. Sullivan, both high bureau officials, noted that Lynd had associated with "known Communists" and Minnis had been in touch with the Soviet embassy. In 1958, Branigan recommended that this information be sent to the assistant attorney general for the Justice Department's Criminal Division.

The investigation of Jack Ruby's shadowy background and dancehall associations seemed to be boundless, even long after the Warren Commission had concluded that Ruby acted alone in killing Oswald in the basement of Dallas police headquarters.

Hundreds of telephone calls—many of them far-fetched and apparently from persons with nothing more than a casual knowledge of the case—were pursued with the same degree of diligence the FBI had tracked down early tips on the movements of Oswald.

The volume seemed to increase after it became known that Ruby, imprisoned in the Dallas County jail was dying of cancer.

On March 7, 1964, Deputy FBI Director Rosen reported in a memo that 3,357 interviews had been conducted into Ruby's background and the slaying of Oswald, and that there was no evidence that Ruby had conspired with anyone before the shooting.

The Warren Commission accepted the FBI's conclusion in its own report of Sept. 27, 1964, but the tips continued, and the FBI kept on amassing new volumes of documents on Ruby.

A waitress in a Chicago restaurant, for example, was the subject of a lengthy report from Chicago FBI agents because Ruby had apparently dined there once in the summer of 1963 and attempted to "get her a screen test if she desired."

In lavish detail, the report told how Ruby had suggested the waitress resembled Elizabeth Taylor, and that he had telephoned her several times from Dallas offering to help pay her way through college if only she would go to Texas to meet him.

In other instances, the FBI recorded detailed interviews with people who appeared to have been nothing more than one-time patrons at Ruby's nightclubs. In many cases, the bureau followed up the patrons' innocuous statements with background investigations of the persons interviewed.

The documents also contain allegations of curious voyeristic sexual interests on the part of Ruby.