

9/12/69 HW

Helms memo to Rowley, 2/18, is legitimate and raises an inherently valid point and a persisting suspicion: was this the real Lee Harvey Oswald; did he really, seriously attempt suicide in Moscow? I have written Gary earlier about this and referred him to the Oswald Autopsy. No wrist scars are indicated on the body charts. Under findings it has scars on left wrist and left arm. On the second page this is indicated as 1 3/4" slightly raised and white scar. However, there seems to be no interest in the Marine-Corps wound, where he shot himself by accident, and in hastily scanning the autopsy now I see no such wound indicated. If the CIA was interested in identifying the murdered man as the real Oswald, by 2/18 it knew of his Marine-Corps history. So, this was not their interest, and I am unaware of any other such interest.

The care suggested in the second paragraph, was there indication of other sources of wounds, is warranted because a wrist wound need not have been self-inflicted. The corps showed several wounds and scars.

In his memo of the same date to the FBI, much longer, he quotes Marina's opinion Oswald wasn't a suicide type. I'd reached the same conclusions, with a basis no more scientific than hers.

But the CIA, from the final paragraph, was unaware of the autopsy findings of a scar and seemingly assumes there was no autopsy (or lacked confidence in it), for it doesn't suggest checking it!

The mixture of bona fides and childishness here is interesting.

I wonder whether this line taken by the CIA was its own thought or inspired by the Commission? I recall no other pursuit, even this inadequately. Does anyone else know of any interest like this?

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

18 FEB 1964

DAI  
CIA

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief  
United States Secret Service

SUBJECT: Assassination of President John F. Kennedy

1. According to entries for late October 1959 in Lee Harvey OSWALD's "Historic Diary," he attempted suicide in Moscow on 21 October 1959 by cutting his left wrist. In connection with our efforts to assist the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy by providing information which might be helpful in interpreting available materials relating to OSWALD's activities abroad, we have noted the entry with regard to attempted suicide, consider it important and one which might be subject to verification.

2. It will be appreciated if you will advise whether any of your officers can provide direct evidence based on personal observation of the wrist of OSWALD, specifically as to whether there was evidence of former cutting thereof by a scar or scars. We would also appreciate any additional information on this point which you may have acquired from others who may have had an opportunity to observe the wrist of OSWALD in the course of investigations in this matter.

3. Copies of this memorandum are being provided to Mr. J. Lee Rankin, Counsel for the Commission, and the FBI through liaison channels. We would appreciate a response at your earliest convenience.

(Signed) Richard Helms

Richard Helms  
Deputy Director for Plans

cc: Federal Bureau of Investigation

✓ Mr. J. Lee Rankin, Esq.

GROUP 1  
Excluded from automatic  
downgrading and  
declassification

Investigation and Evidence 3-14

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

18 FEB 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Attention: Mr. S. J. Fapich

SUBJECT: Assassination of President John F. Kennedy

1. According to entries for late October 1959 in Lee Harvey OSWALD's "Historic Diary," he attempted suicide in Moscow on 21 October 1959 by cutting his left wrist. In an interview of Marina Oswald, conducted by your Special Agents Anatole A. Boguslav and Wallace R. Heitman on 2 December 1964 at Dallas, Texas, as shown by memorandum dated 3 December 1963 furnished to this Agency, she stated that she never knew OSWALD to speak of or attempt suicide, that she did not think that he was capable of suicide and she did not believe he had ever attempted suicide. She also stated that she recalled seeing a scar on the inner left wrist of OSWALD after they were married. This scar she said was completely healed and she asked him about this and he evaded answering her.
2. In connection with our efforts to assist the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy by providing information which might be helpful in interpreting available materials relating to OSWALD's activities abroad, we have considered the entry with regard to attempted suicide. We consider this entry as being of considerable importance and one which might be subject to verification.
3. The only information we have received which would appear to have a direct bearing on the accuracy of the diary entry is that contained in the above mentioned memorandum of interview dated 3 December 1964. The information contained therein was provided by his widow, a Soviet citizen. We feel that statements on the part of Marina OSWALD are not adequate and that independent corroborative evidence on this point should be obtained if it is possible to do so.
4. We would appreciate receiving any other information, such as statements of observations by police or others, including the undertakers, copies of any reports, such as autopsy or other, which may contain information pertinent to this point.

~~SECRET~~



CIA-34

~~SECRET~~

5. The best evidence of a scar or scars on the left wrist would of course be direct examination by a competent authority and we recommend that this be done and that a photograph of the inner and outer surfaces of the left wrist be made if there has been no other evidence acceptable to the Commission that he did in fact attempt suicide by cutting his wrist.

(Signed) Richard Helms

Richard Helms  
Deputy Director for Plans

✓cc: Mr. J. Lee Rankin, Esq.