

MR. JENKINS

10/8/75

D.W. MOORE, JR.

DAN RATHER, CORRESPONDENT

SANFORD SOCOLOW
CBS NEWS

VISIT WITH THE DIRECTOR, 10/6/75

With regard to CBS' request to the Director authorizing CBS to interview Shanklin, Hosty, Fain and deBrueys, I contacted [redacted] this morning indicating to him that the Attorney General felt in view of the on-going investigation presently being conducted permission was therefore denied at this time for such interview by CBS.

[redacted] indicated the President of CBS News, Richard Salant, was a very close friend of Attorney General Levi and that Salant may call Levi and appeal to him to allow CBS to interview Fain and deBrueys. [redacted] indicated that they respected the position taken with regard to the on-going investigation in Dallas but felt that the interviews of Fain and deBrueys were totally unrelated to our interviews being conducted in Dallas. He said he had hoped that we could allow such interviews of Fain and deBrueys because CBS has certain information that would obviously not be presented in the best light for the FBI. I asked [redacted] if he could indicate to me what information CBS has. He said in confidence that they (CBS) have a source who he identified as a former FBI informant, who was known to deBrueys and that this source has indicated that Oswald was an FBI informant and that after the assassination of President Kennedy, deBrueys told his source that if he (the source) said anything to the Warren Commission that he (deBrueys) would "kick his a---". [redacted] indicated that this obviously would not present the FBI in the best possible light. [redacted] indicated if the FBI was able to make some statement in this regard it would obviously put us in a much better position.

With regard to Fain, [redacted] indicated their information is that in August, 1963, Fain debriefed Oswald upon his return to the United States from Russia and that they merely were desirous of contacting Fain in order to establish this fact.

1 - Mr. Callahan
1 - Mr. Jenkins
1 - Mr. Adams

1 - Mr. Gallagher
1 - Mr. Wannall
① - Mr. Moore

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(CONTINUED-OVER)

Section 182

Moore to Jenkins Memo (cont'd.)
DAN RATHER, CORRESPONDENT
LES MIDGLEY, PRODUCER

He concluded by saying that he feels that if the FBI could permit these interviews of deBrueys and Fain it would obviously be to the FBI's advantage rather than leaving open questions to that which he indicated above.

He asked if Mr. Kelley would be disturbed if Salant contacted the Attorney General. I indicated I certainly did not think so but it would obviously be Mr. Salant's prerogative as to whether he would attempt to intercede by contacting the Attorney General.

I asked [redacted] when CBS proposed to air the commentary on President Kennedy's assassination. He indicated CBS was most desirous of doing so as soon as possible, however, it would be a minimum of 5 weeks before such public airing would take place. He thanked me for our prompt reply and indicated that CBS wants to present the entire issue in the best light possible which, in fact, precipitated their contact with Mr. Kelley.

I gathered from my conversation with [redacted] that if approval were given for them to interview deBrueys and Fain that they would present to us the questions which they propose to ask. [redacted] did not indicate this but I gathered from inferences that this might be possible.

I discussed [redacted] conversation with Mr. Callahan indicating to him the possibility of Salant contacting the Attorney General. Mr. Callahan, in turn, contacted Deputy Attorney General Tyler indicating to him the fact that Salant may contact Attorney General Levi for his approval for CBS to contact Fain and deBrueys.

RECOMMENDATION:

For information.

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FBI/DOJ Secret. Protocol

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Telephone R.
Director Sec.

October 8, 1975

Dear Ed:

CBS News is engaged in a major inquiry into the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King and the attempt on the life of Governor George Wallace. I believe you already know about this project as a result of a request made last Monday by Leslie Midgley, the producer and Dan Rather, the principal correspondent, to Director Clarence Kelley of the FBI for permission to interview four agents or former agents who were concerned with the case of Lee Harvey Oswald.

Mr. Kelley's office notified us this morning that the request could not be granted because an on-going investigation is under way by your office which may involve at least some of these agents. The investigation, we understand, concerns the destruction of a letter left by Oswald at the FBI office in Dallas before the assassination. That action already has been reported in the press and confirmed by the FBI.

We asked for interviews with James Hosty, who visited Mrs. Oswald before the assassination and to whom Oswald's letter was reportedly addressed, and Gordon Shanklin, who was in charge of the Dallas office of the FBI in 1963.

In addition we asked for interviews with John Fain, who was the first agent to interview Oswald on his return from Russia, and Warren duBrueys, an agent we have reason to believe had contacts with Oswald in New Orleans.

Mr. Kelley indicated his own willingness to have these interviews conducted, saying the only problem was the Department of Justice investigation in progress. If we are going to include any of them in our proposed series they must be filmed within the next three or four weeks. If there is any possibility that the investigation will be concluded within that time I would greatly appreciate being advised of a possible date for filming.

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October 8, 1975

I am sure you are aware that if we cannot talk to these agents we have no recourse except to include in our broadcasts the stories of people who say they had various kinds of contacts with the FBI. Then Rather would go on to say that we are unable to verify the stories because the agents will not talk to us. This is not good for our journalistic enterprise and, I am sure you will agree, will not be good for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, already having credibility problems with the American people.

If your investigation concerns only events in Dallas and thus only Mr. Hosty and Mr. Shanklin, could we agree that Mr. Fain and Mr. duBrucys might talk to us, since they are concerned only with events in New Orleans, not Dallas?

Mr. Rather and Mr. Mideley tell me Mr. Kelley seemed completely assured that we are engaged in a serious and responsible investigation of these events and that we will treat them on the air in a serious and responsible manner. Please accept my own assurance in this regard.

It seems to me that it is in our mutual interest--and the interest of the public--that this problem be speedily resolved and the requested interviews and information be made available.

Best regards,

D. A. Salant

Dick Salant

Honorable Edward H. Levi
Attorney General
Department of Justice
Constitution Avenue between 9th and 10th Street
Washington, D.C. 20530

cc Mr. Clarence Kelley, Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation

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