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CBS EVENING NEWS WITH WALTER CRONKITE

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ANNOUNCER: From CBS News headquarters in New York, this is the CBS EVENING NEWS WITH WALTER CRONKITE; and Peter Collins in Vientiane, Laos; Randy Daniels in Detroit; Robert Schakne in New York; David Culhane in New York; Sharron Lovejoy in Lansing, Michigan; Daniel Schorr in Washington; and Barry Serafin in Washington.

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CRONKITE: New questions are being asked about the assassination of President Kennedy and about Lee Harvey Oswald, the man who killed him. Daniel Schorr has learned some significant details about the Russian phase of Oswald's life.

DANIEL SCHORR: In February, '64, ten weeks after the Kennedy assassination, Lieutenant Colonel Yuri Nosenko of the KGB - the Soviet secret police - defected to the U.S. with details of the KGB file on Lee Harvey Oswald. Now his existence and his FBI interrogation report have been disclosed, after eleven years. Nosenko told the FBI the KGB considered Oswald mentally abnormal, possibly an American agent, decided not to try to recruit him. The report wasn't cited when CIA Director John McCone and his deputy, Richard Helms, testified before the Warren Commission. Today, McCone explained why.

JOHN MC CONE [former CIA Director]: It is traditional in the intelligence business that we do not accept a defector's statements until we have proven beyond any doubt that the man is legitimate and the information is correct. It took some time to prove the bona fides of the man, which subsequently were proven, however, but were not known at the time of the testimony.

SCHORR: Nosenko said the KGB had decided to refuse Oswald Soviet citizenship, tried to get rid of him, and only after he slashed his wrists in a Moscow hotel, permitted him to go to Minsk, with instructions that he be watched but not recruited. Russians who hunted rabbits with Oswald reported he was a very poor shot.

When Oswald turned up at the Soviet embassy in Mexico in September, '63, said Nosenko, the KGB vetoed a visa for him.

After the assassination, in November, the KGB found in Oswald's file an entry that the KGB in Minsk had tried to influence Oswald in the right direction, suggesting a possible assignment. But a crash report to Nikita Khrushchev concluded that was a bureaucratic, self-serving statement and wrong.

—Daniel Schorr, CBS News, Washington.