

THREE*"Goddamn the Kennedys"*

I WAS IN BOLTON, MASSACHUSETTS, on 22 November 1963. I had been working days, nights, and weekends for months at FBI headquarters in Washington, and when the workload finally eased a bit I took a few days off to go back home and relax. I was walking in the woods that morning, and my plan had been to walk in the woods all day. Around midday though, I got one of those hunches no one can explain, a funny intuitive feeling that someone wanted me, so I turned around and started for home. Sure enough, my sister was waiting for me in a clearing between the house and the woods, and she looked as if she'd been crying. "You have to go back to Washington right away," she told me. "President Kennedy has been shot and the FBI has been calling."

She didn't know whether the president was dead or alive. I ran for the nearest house to call the office. When they told me President Kennedy was dead, I left for Washington at once. I had been working as assistant director of the FBI's Domestic Intelligence Division since June 1961, and I knew I would be heading the intelligence end of the assassination investigation.

The trip to Washington was a nightmare. I was stunned, shocked. When I arrived at FBI headquarters, I went in to see Hoover right away. He was all business. "We want to go all out on this investigation," he said briskly, "and we want to move fast." There wasn't a trace of sadness or sorrow. All he was thinking about was protecting the bureau, avoiding criticism.

This was true too of Hoover's expression of condolence to President Kennedy's brother, Attorney General Robert Kennedy. Hoover's note to him was just one brusque line of regret over the death of the president—just enough to cover himself.