

5/11/75 PHILA. INQUIRER

FBI, Oswald Tale Aired by Warren Unit

Associated Press

WASHINGTON—The Warren Commission discussed a report that Lee Harvey Oswald had worked as an FBI undercover agent for more than a year before the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, according to a recently declassified commission transcript.

Members of the commission, including the late Chief Justice Earl Warren and then Rep. Gerald R. Ford of Michigan, discussed the report at a closed session Jan. 22, 1964.

The transcript remained classified top secret for 11 years until released to Harold Weisberg, an author who had filed suit under the Freedom of Information Act. Weisberg had written numerous books and articles criticizing the Warren Commission investigation and its conclusion that Oswald, acting alone, shot Kennedy to death in Dallas Nov. 22, 1963.

A copy of the transcript was obtained by The Associated Press.

At the start of the meeting, J. Lee Rankin, general counsel of the commission, said he had been told by Waggoner Carr, Texas attorney general, that "the word had come out . . . that Oswald was acting as an FBI undercover agent and that they had the information of his badge, which was given as number 179, and that he was being paid \$200 a month from September of 1962 up through the time of the assassination."

Source of Report

Rankin said he had talked to Henry Wade, Dallas district attorney, who told him that the source of the report was a member of the press.

"There is a denial of this in one of these FBI records, as you know," interjected the late Rep. Hale Boggs (D., La.), another commission member.

Later, Rankin commented that he and Warren had discussed the report and "we said if that was true and it ever came out and



LEE HARVEY OSWALD

could be established, then you would have people think that there was a conspiracy to accomplish this assassination, that nothing the commission did or anybody could dissipate."

"You are so right," Boggs said.

"Oh, terrible," said the late Allen Dulles, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency and a member of the Warren Commission.

Dulles questioned why the FBI would hire Oswald as an undercover agent.

Question Asked

"What was the ostensible mission?" asked Dulles. "I mean, when they hire someone they hire somebody for a purpose . . . Was it to penetrate the Fair Play for Cuba Committee? . . ."

"He (Oswald) was playing ball, writing letters to both the elements of the Communist parties," Ford said. "I mean, he was playing ball with the Trotskyites and with the others. This was a strange circumstance to me."

"But the FBI get people right inside, you know," commented the former CIA head. "They don't need a person like this on the outside. The only place where he did anything at all was with the Fair Play for Cuba Committee."

An unidentified speaker brought up the tension between the commission and the FBI and particularly its director, the late J. Edgar Hoover.

"That is somewhat an issue in this case, and I suppose you are all aware of it," said the speaker.

Weisberg said that in all the transcripts he had obtained, only Rankin and Warren were not identified by name when they spoke. He speculated that the speaker in this case was the chief justice.

Later, they discussed their fear that the FBI was trying to maneuver them simply into endorsing the FBI investigation and described how the FBI probably wanted the case handled.

One unidentified speaker said, "They (the FBI) would like to have us fold up and quit."

"They found the man," said Rankin. "There is nothing more to do. The commission supports their conclusions and we can go on home and that is the end of it."

Dulles agreed that the FBI was trying to capture credit for having solved the case, then with the discussion about to end he said, "I think this record ought to be destroyed. Do you think we need a record of this?"

An unidentified speaker replied, "I don't. Except that we would have records of meetings and so we called the reporter in the formal way."

"I would hope that none of these records are circulated to anybody," Boggs said.