

Hoover's FBI

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The Inside Story by
Hoover's Trusted Lieutenant

Cartha "Deke" DeLoach



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1995

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I didn't like the sound of it.

"Let me check with the director and get back to you," I said.

First—as always—I went to Tolson. He passed me along to Hoover without comment. Those were dangerous waters, and Tolson wasn't about to wet his big toe, much less dive in head first. When I told Hoover what Jenkins wanted, he blinked, then wagged his head in disapproval.

"Lyndon is way out of line," he grunted.

"Should I just tell him we can't do it, that it's beyond the limits of our mission?"

Hoover sat for a moment, brooding. A master bureaucrat, he had often been able to circumvent what had been his biggest headache over the years—politicians who wanted to turn the FBI into their personal political goon squad. That was exactly what the department had been on its way to becoming when Hoover had been appointed to reform it decades before. But the same bureaucratic instincts also told him when he was trapped. Jenkins had been careful to phrase the request under the cover of a legal and imperative duty: to protect the president. Only a few months before, Hoover's beloved agency had been bitterly criticized for failing to stop Lee Harvey Oswald, a man whose bizarre history the bureau had in its files, from assassinating JFK. If Hoover did not cooperate now, and, heaven forbid, anything happened, the bureau could be destroyed in the crossfire. Certainly it would be the end of Hoover's career. LBJ wasn't a bad bureaucratic infighter himself.

"No, I guess not," Hoover replied. "Tell Walter we'll give him whatever help he wants."

We selected a team of seasoned agents who could handle an assignment involving masses of people, agents level-headed enough to remain calm in a crowd, whatever the provocation. The hours would be long and pressure-packed. Most of the agents—based in Washington, Newark, and Atlantic City—were familiar with the dissident groups most likely to cause trouble and were trained to detect hot spots before a fire broke out.

Because the White House had called for our involvement at the last minute, we had to work day and night to plan our strategy, leaving many heavy case loads in abeyance. First, we compiled all

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ment's abuses had been the smallish Bureau of Investigation—start-
ed in 1908, but not yet called the FBI. Stone complained that the
bureau had an "exceedingly bad odor" and within a month forced
its chief, William J. Burns, to resign. The GID was part of the
bureau, and many believed that Hoover virtually ran the bureau for
Burns.

Stone, however, did not toss Hoover out with Burns. Hoover had
earned a number of recommendations that were forwarded to the
new attorney general, including the support of then-Commerce Sec-
retary Herbert Hoover (no relation—the future president had an
assistant who was a friend of J. Edgar's). Stone wanted to reform the
bureau—which had been a dumping ground for political hacks who
used their patronage jobs as investigators to harass and intimidate
political enemies—and he came to see in Hoover a man of like mind.

"There is always the possibility that a secret police may become
a menace to free governments and free institutions because it car-
ries with it the possibility of abuses of power that are not always
quickly apprehended or understood," Stone announced on the day
he ousted Burns. The Bureau of Investigation is "a necessary instru-
ment of law enforcement. But it is important that its activities be
strictly limited to the performance of those functions for which it
was created and that its agents themselves be not above the law or
beyond its reach." Stone concluded that the "Bureau of Investiga-
tion is not concerned with political or other opinions of individu-
als. It is concerned only with their conduct and then only with such
conduct as is forbidden by the laws of the United States. When a
police system passes beyond these limits, it is dangerous to the
proper administration of justice and to human liberty, which it
should be our first concern to cherish."

Hoover assured Stone that he shared the new attorney general's
worries, and that he would only take the job—an interim appoint-
ment to replace Burns—if he could professionalize the outfit, get rid
of the hacks, and grant promotions only on the basis of "proven
ability." Hoover moved quickly to carry out the detailed instruc-
tions Stone gave him to reorder the bureau. He fired the political
hacks, known as "dollar-a-year men," an action later referred to in
the bureau as the "great purge." Hoover's quick action convinced

The FBI's jurisdiction is limited to federal crimes. As I noted above, one of the great ironies of the Kennedy assassination was that Lee Harvey Oswald broke no federal law when he killed the president of the United States. For this reason, a good deal of confusion surrounded the investigation of Kennedy's death; and some of the subsequent conspiracy theories grew out of that confusion. For example, Dallas County Coroner Earl Rose was acting properly when he refused to surrender Kennedy's body to the presidential party. The crime had been committed in his jurisdiction. It was his responsibility to gather forensic evidence. He was prevented from doing so through enormous political pressure. As a direct consequence, more than thirty years later critics are still raising questions about the nature of the president's wounds and the number of bullets fired.

At the time, the FBI had no legal authority to interject itself into that particular murder investigation, no matter that the victim was the highest official in the federal government. But we were ordered to do so by President Johnson, and since we were on the scene, we took over the investigation and began gathering evidence. Still, we had to fight the Dallas Police Department every step of the way, and they had the law on their side. Today, it's a federal crime to kill the president of the United States; and should such a tragedy ever recur the FBI will have primary jurisdiction.

Most crimes committed in the United States are violations of state law rather than federal law. Ordinarily, robbery, rape, murder, and other such acts aren't covered under federal statutes but fall under state penal codes and are tried in state courts. There are exceptions, of course. For example, if any of these crimes is committed on federal property, or if other federal crimes are involved, then the FBI can immediately move into the case.

Most people believe that the bureau has jurisdiction over all kidnappings. This is not so. The FBI becomes involved only if the kidnapper transports the victim across state lines. For this reason, the bureau waits twenty-four hours before entering many kidnapping cases. When this period has elapsed, the courts presume that the kidnapper and victim have had time to leave the state, and the FBI enters the picture with all its resources, since transporting a kidnap victim across state lines is a federal offense. Much as the FBI was

given the authority because of the kidnapping grew local authorities—

Kidnapping resulted against the FBI investigate. As for Wayne Gacy and purview of the FBI frequently on cases of property. And our agents for position

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The Secret Files That Weren't • 29

hadn't even been discovered when the Calomaris family claimed to have witnessed this titillating scene; it is absurd to suggest that someone intuited his death and thereupon removed his files.

In any event, the files in question were not even kept at Hoover's house, neither in a sealed vault, nor in some sliding panel in his office. They were kept in two standard metal file cabinets behind the desk of Helen Gandy, Hoover's secretary, and they were available to any official in the bureau who had good reason to see them.

The truth is, the FBI kept no "secret files" during the Hoover years. And certainly no files were squirreled away for purposes of blackmail. Virtually all of the FBI's records were closed to the general public, since they contained sensitive and personal information about federal employees, as well as persons suspected of crimes but not convicted. I can't imagine that anyone would want the results of clearance investigations made available to any reporter or busybody who walked in off the street. It was precisely to avoid the possibility of blackmail or intimidation that such files were open only to authorized personnel. Indeed, the Privacy Act of 1974 mandated just such handling of personnel files throughout the government.

In rereading the testimony before the House Subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations, I was struck by the inability of members to understand the FBI's filing system, which to me always seemed logical and simple in concept. I suspect that at least some of the blackmail charges stem from a genuine confusion concerning this system, though others stem from a willful disregard of the obvious.

The largest and most common files were the "Central Files," which held most correspondence and information. This file contained reports of investigations, letters of complaint, general correspondence directed to the agency, most of the intelligence collected from various kinds of surveillance, memos and directives from other government agencies, personnel files, and miscellaneous communications and information. The Central Files were in an area open to virtually the entire bureau staff and were used many times every day by a variety of people, many of them filing clerks.

no what I said in FBI lawsuit

Gandy testified she personally did this after he died

Needless to say, the Central Files were enormous, as in any federal agency. Numerous people fed information into those files over the years, and they were too large for any one person to master. We tried to purge these records periodically, but with the growth of the bureau's activities, it was a losing battle.

Because some materials were too sensitive to file in such an open marketplace, the FBI maintained two small cabinets of "Official-and-Confidential Files." These files, located in Hoover's suite behind Helen Gandy's desk, contained information about well-known people both in and out of government. The purpose of keeping the O&C Files in an area of limited access was to protect the privacy of those about whom information had been gathered, not to maintain secret records for the purpose of blackmail.

The same kind of information was stored both in the Central Files and the O&C Files. In fact, when someone became famous enough to warrant special treatment, his or her file was transferred from the more accessible area to Hoover's suite. Thus when John F. Kennedy won the Democratic nomination for the presidency, the files concerning his affair with an alleged German espionage agent were transferred from the Central Files to the O&C Files.

In marked contrast to the Central Files, the O&C Files were relatively small. Helen Gandy, testifying under oath, said they amounted to "[a]bout a drawer and a half." This was the file that contained information on political figures. Gathering information about these figures was never initiated by the FBI for the purpose of influencing either Congress or the White House.

It is important to note here that these were not "secret" in the sense that no one but Hoover could look at them, as several commentators have suggested. As to who else had access, Miss Gandy testified as follows when questioned by Congressman Frank McCloskey:

Mr. McCloskey: Did you have the right to determine who looked at these files and who did not?

Miss Gandy: With Mr. Hoover's approval. From time to time there would be inquiries about something that might be in those files, but Mr. Hoover had to give his

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"You'll get lost in the shuffle."

"The field is the only place for a real FBI man."

"Washington is no place to raise a family."

This pessimism puzzled and disturbed me, but I didn't feel I could turn down a promotion. And my brother-in-law, the Barber-ton doctor, encouraged me to take it.

"It's a step forward," he reasoned. "You can't decline a promo-tion. It would indicate a poor attitude, an unwillingness to try new things, to accept new responsibilities. Serving at FBI headquarters will broaden your experience and improve your qualifications."

He smiled.

"It's only natural that you enjoy being 'Mr. FBI' here in a small-er city, but surely you don't want to serve in a one-man resident agency for the rest of your career. Go to Washington!"

I took his advice and headed for the capital city.

I was assigned to the Atomic Energy-Applclicant Section of the Domestic Intelligence Division. My duty was to supervise field investigations of people seeking employment inside atomic energy operations; for example, truck drivers. This was routine work, sim-plified by guidelines that were detailed, precise, and clear. But I did well, and worked my way up through the FBI bureaucracy until I finally caught Hoover's eye. I was made an inspector, a job that sent me all over the country supervising investigations. This role taught me the most about being a G-man. The experience served me well when I was promoted to help Assistant Director Louis Nichols run the public relations and congressional relations shop at the bureau.

Soon after Nichols retired in 1957, Hoover named me acting assistant director, and in 1959 the "acting" was dropped. I was thirty-eight years old.

I remained assistant director for six years. Then, in 1965, Hoover promoted me to the FBI's number three slot—assistant to the director. In that position I was in command of the bureau's three investigative divisions, as well as the public relations division. I was responsible for general criminal investigations, all special investiga-tive matters (for example, organized crime, fugitives), intelligence and internal security cases, and the public affairs of the bureau.

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The Assassination of JFK

BEFORE LEAVING THE TEXAS HOTEL in Ft. Worth on November 22, 1963, John F. Kennedy made a prophetic remark to his old friend Kenneth O'Donnell, assistant to the president. He said that if anybody really wanted to shoot the president of the United States, it would be an easy task. All he'd have to do was station himself somewhere in a high building with a telescopic rifle. From such a vantage point, nobody could stop him. After making this casual remark, the president prepared to leave for the airport.

John F. Kennedy was not the only person concerned with presidential safety that morning. Shortly after 8:00 A.M., Gordon Shanklin, special agent in charge (SAC) of the FBI's Dallas office, held a meeting with his agents, reminding them one more time that the president of the United States was scheduled to tour downtown Dallas later in the day.

"If there is any indication of any possibility of acts of violence against the president or the vice president," Shanklin said, "if you have anything, anything at all, I want it confirmed in writing."

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The Dallas police did not call and the tip was not to the FBI

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The agents took such requests for information very seriously. They had already passed along information to the Secret Service concerning someone from nearby Denton who'd made threats against Kennedy. The FBI had also reported a tip that the president's speech at the Trade Mart would be picketed. And Agent James Hosty had picked up some street pamphlets highly critical of the president and had taken them to the Secret Service office—just in case.

Hosty was one of the agents who sat in silence on that November morning as Gordon Shanklin asked if they had any additional information that might be useful to the Secret Service. One of Hosty's case files contained the record of a disgruntled defector to the Soviet Union who had returned to the United States and was now living in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area. Hosty had filed a brief report on the man only four days earlier. His name was Lee Harvey Oswald, and he'd recently sent Hosty an alleged threatening note.

Calvin Coolidge once said, "Nobody ever got into trouble for something he didn't say." It's not true. Ask Jim Hosty. His silence that morning and his subsequent actions in the wake of the assassination would become a matter of great controversy for decades.

Dallas and Ft. Worth were only a few miles apart, and most people made the trip from one to the other by automobile. But to save time, the presidential party flew from Ft. Worth to Dallas's Love Field, a flight of about ten minutes.

Once at Love Field, President Kennedy, the First Lady, Governor and Mrs. John Connally, and Vice President and Mrs. Lyndon Johnson climbed into open automobiles, surrounded by Secret Service agents, and rode in a motorcade along Harry Hines Boulevard and through the streets of downtown Dallas. The parade route had been published in the newspaper the day before. The crowds jammed the sidewalks, 250,000 people waving and cheering as the president and his entourage passed.

When the motorcade reached Dealey Plaza, it turned right, then turned left again. During those crucial moments, the open automobile in which the president was riding slowed to a crawl. Just before the car picked up speed to move onto Stemmons Freeway, Lee Har-

Hosty sent a letter to W.C. Sullivan, who was in the Dallas office. He would file back from him. Hosty was a man. It was longer by plane with time to get from sight.

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vey Oswald squeezed off three rounds from a sixth-story window
right above the president's limousine. For a practiced marksman, it
was like shooting pigeons on the ground.

Both the president and Governor Connally were bleeding from
bullet wounds. Mrs. Kennedy, who had seen her husband's head
blown to pieces not two feet away, panicked and tried to climb
across the trunk of the car, but was pushed back by a Secret Service
agent. Several people in the crowd started to scream, and the driver
hit the gas pedal. The limousine zoomed under a triple underpass
and out onto Stemmons Freeway, followed by the other vehicles in
the motorcade. With sirens screaming, they headed toward Park-
land Hospital, which was back on Harry Hines Boulevard.

Special Agent in Charge Shanklin was in his office when a secretary
knocked and entered. She told Shanklin a young clerk had been
monitoring the Dallas police frequencies and had something to tell
him. Shanklin agreed to see him and the young man came in and
blurted out his message: "Some shots were fired at the president's
car." Then he gave a few more details. Shanklin first called Agent
Vincent Drain into his office, then dialed Hoover's number in
Washington.

"SAC Gordon Shanklin, Dallas office," he said. "Let me speak
to the director."

Hoover knew that Shanklin would not make a direct call unless
it was important so he got on the line immediately.

"Gordon Shanklin. The president has been reported as shot in
Dallas."

Several historians have remarked that Hoover received the news
dispassionately, devoid of human feelings, quickly considering the
proposition with a cold and analytical eye. It was always his way in
times of stress. It was his greatest asset in a job that frequently
placed him in the middle of situations where life and death hung in
the balance. On such occasions he became a machine, spitting out
orders almost automatically, measuring his words with the preci-
sion of a jeweler.

He asked a few questions, then told Shanklin, "Offer the full ser-
vices of our laboratory and fingerprint division." It was an offer he

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Hoover
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By 1/18, he took control
 would shortly regret. He also told Shanklin, "Find out how badly he's hurt and call me back."

Shanklin hung up and said to Vince Drain, "Get to Parkland at once." He also told Drain to "offer our laboratory facilities if we can help." At that point, the bureau had done all it was legally entitled to do. The FBI had jurisdiction only over federal crimes, and—astonishingly—it was not against federal law to kill the president of the United States, not in 1963. President Kennedy had been shot in Dallas, Texas, and the case belonged to Dallas Police Chief Jesse Curry—at least for the moment.

Back in Washington, Hoover hung up and asked Miss Gandy to place a call to Bobby Kennedy. While she was dialing, Hoover summoned Tolson to his room. Next he called in Al Belmont, assistant director in charge of Investigative Activities. Then he tried to call me. My secretary told him I was at lunch.

"Get him back immediately. Tell him the president's been shot, that he may be dying."

Meanwhile, Agent Doyle Williams had rushed to Parkland Hospital, plunged through the doorway into the emergency room, and was roughed up by two Secret Service men, one of whom clipped him in the jaw. They held him up against a wall, a machine gun trained on him, while he fished out his government ID. Only then was he allowed to take his station and act as Shanklin's eyes and ears. *He refused to i.d. himself*

Agent Hosty was eating lunch in a restaurant a block away from FBI headquarters when the president was shot. He'd seen the motorcade roll by minutes before the assassination. A waitress told him she'd just heard over the radio that the president and vice president had both been shot. Hosty paid his bill and dashed out the door. When he got back to the office, he was told to go to his car, turn on the radio, and listen for instructions. First he was ordered to Parkland Hospital. When he got there, he was ordered back to headquarters to go over his case files to see if anyone he'd investigated looked like a presidential assassin. One of the files he exam-

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ined was that of Lee Harvey Oswald, but Hosty still couldn't
believe Oswald was a killer.

I was seated in a restaurant in the bowels of the World Bank in
Washington with Erle Cocke, the Bank's deputy director. We were
both active in the American Legion and were there to talk about the
organization. I didn't know anything had happened until shortly
after 1:30, Washington time. We'd eaten and were winding up our
discussion when a waiter came up to me with a questioning look on
his face.

"Mr. DeLoach?"

I nodded.

"There's a telephone call for you," he said. "It's your office. An
urgent call, sir."

I frowned. I knew my secretary, Marie Robusky, would never
interrupt me unless some crisis had arisen. Nothing overly impor-
tant was pending at the bureau. I thought of my family as I excused
myself and followed the waiter to the phone. I grabbed the receiv-
er and said, "Hello."

Marie was sobbing.

"Mr. Hoover wants you back in the office immediately. The pres-
ident's been shot in Dallas. They think he's dying."

I felt suddenly numb.

"I'll be there as quickly as I can," I said.

As I hurried back to the table, Erle could see the shock and dis-
belief in my face.

I started to tell him what had happened, then hesitated. I didn't
know anything for certain, so I decided to err on the side of discre-
tion. I'd learned long ago that casual words over lunch could end
up on the front page of the *Washington Post*.

"Erle," I said, "this is a major emergency. I've got to leave right
now. I apologize, but this won't wait."

He nodded his understanding and I moved quickly between
tables and out the front door. I was on the wrong side of the street
for a taxi; I crossed against the light and almost got hit by a car. I
hailed a cab and on the way back to the Justice Department tried
to come to terms with what I'd just been told.

Less than a week earlier, my wife, Barbara, and I had attended a reception for the federal judiciary at the White House. As we were standing around talking, Bobby Kennedy, who was then attorney general, came up, grabbed me by the sleeve, and said, "Deke, I want you to meet the president." The introduction had been brief and formal. Bobby had told his brother, "Mr. President, this man has been of great service to us."

I'd been astonished. Bobby had seldom said a kind word about the FBI—and particularly its administration. Shaking the president's hand, I'd mumbled a few polite words, and wandered back into the social crush, weaving my way between Supreme Court justices, appellate judges, and executives of various government agencies. I'd tried to appear nonchalant, but Barbara could tell by the look on my face where I'd been. Even though I'd met a lot of important people in Washington, it was an introduction I wouldn't forget.

As I rode across Washington, I remembered the energetic young man whose hand I'd shaken just a few days earlier. Then I thought of his brother, the man I knew and had worked with over the past two years, and the whole tragedy seemed more human, more personal—ininitely sadder. At that point, we turned onto Pennsylvania Avenue, and I began to steel myself for what lay ahead.

Once on the fifth floor, I started to go straight to Mr. Hoover's office, but I decided to stop by and check with Marie first. At this stage of my career, I was assistant director of the Crime Records Division, and one of my responsibilities was to maintain liaison with the White House, Congress, and the press. When I entered the office I saw at once that the place was in a state of uncharacteristic turmoil. Everyone was on the phone or rushing from one room to the next.

Marie looked up at me with a grief-stricken face.

"What do we know?" I asked as she followed me into the office.

"We now know that he's been shot, that he's seriously wounded, that he may be dead."

"Do they have anybody in custody?"

"We don't know," she said. "All we know is what I've told you."

"And is that much for certain?"

"Yes, sir," she said. "The director got a call from SAC Shanklin. But it's on the television networks now."

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ten face.

owed me into the office.
ne's seriously wounded,

is what I've told you."

all from SAC Shanklin.

I turned on the television that sat across from my desk and watched as the flickering black-and-white images became the face of Walter Cronkite. For the next twenty-four hours, I would be watching the screen as I talked to callers from every corner of the nation, picking up information from all three networks, changing direction in midsentence to reflect the latest news bulletin.

My phone had been ringing since I entered the office. All lines were tied up, and Inspector Bob Wick, Don Hanning, and the other agents working under me were already on the phone, handling as many inquiries as they could.

"O.K.," I said. "If that's all we know, then I guess I'm ready to take calls."

And the calls came—from newspaper reporters, from the networks, from Capitol Hill, from heads of other government agencies. At the start I realized I couldn't take them according to strict priority, since virtually everybody who was calling was important. So I began to field them in order.

"Deke, what happened?"

"Do you know anything more than we're getting on the tube?"

"Is he still alive?"

"Does the FBI have any idea who shot him?"

"Where's the vice president?"

"Is this a plot against the government?"

Some of the calls involved rumors.

A black informant of the Washington field office called to tell me he'd overheard someone say, "Now that we've got the president, we're going to get Senator Byrd." I didn't take this tip too seriously, but we notified Senator Byrd and the Capitol police, then sent an agent to check out the story. The Associated Press in St. Louis wanted to confirm a rumor that Bobby Baker, the former Capitol Hill wheeler-dealer, was involved. I told them that no one at the FBI had heard such allegations.

In Parkland Hospital, FBI Agent Vincent Drain stood by as doctors worked quickly, quietly, desperately trying to bring their patient out of the lengthening shadow of death. Drain watched in morbid fascination as one surgeon took a scalpel and quickly slit the throat of

I doubt that if Drain was there, as I do not recall from any record he was there by then. And he SS. kept not involved with surgery out of F.N.

the president of the United States—a tracheotomy to try to facilitate breathing. (Many sensationalists later claimed this surgical cut was the result of a frontal or forth shot. This is absolutely false.) Drain focused on the chest of the patient, but there was no sudden heaving. It was obvious to everyone in the room that John F. Kennedy was dead.

Another call to Hoover came from SAC Shanklin. The president had died in Dallas's Parkland Hospital. Marie came into the office to tell me. I stopped for a moment to offer a silent prayer. Then I took the next call.

This is an untrue account from the FBI's own records

In Dallas, after the shots had been fired, a man entered the Texas Book Depository and walked up to a slim, youthful employee, standing just inside the door. "Secret Service," said the man, flashing his ID. "Where is the phone?" The employee gestured in the direction of the telephone, and the man hurried over to make his call. He had lied to the employee, as any good reporter would have done under such circumstances. He was Robert MacNeil of NBC, and he was about to file the story of his life—the assassination of a U.S. president. But he had missed the opportunity for an even greater story. The employee he had fooled with his quick flash of ID had just shot the president.

Having jettisoned the murder weapon, Lee Harvey Oswald quickly left the building, walked a few blocks, caught a cab, then a bus. But a man named Howard Brennan had reported seeing a man fire the shots from the Texas Book Depository window, and he gave a description to Dallas Police Sergeant D. V. Harkness. Soon Dallas police radios were broadcasting the description all over town: "White male, approximately five feet, ten inches tall, weighing 165, in his early thirties."

One of the police officers who heard this broadcast was John Tippit. He was cruising in a squad car through Oak Cliff, technically within the city limits, but several miles from downtown Dallas, with a business center and residential neighborhoods of its own. Tippit spotted a man walking down Tenth Street who matched the description of the assassin, a little shorter perhaps, but

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his broadcast was John ough Oak Cliff, techni- s from downtown Dal- il neighborhoods of its own Tenth Street who ttle shorter perhaps, but

close enough. He pulled up beside the pedestrian, asked him a few questions, then got out of the patrol car. As he stood facing the suspect across the hood of the car, the young man whipped out a pistol and fired five shots. Four of them struck Tippit, who crumpled slowly to the pavement, attempting to draw his weapon even as he slipped into unconsciousness. The man who fired the shots started running. Tippit lay dead on the pavement behind him.

Meanwhile, police at the Texas Book Depository had found the rifle, a 6.5 Mannlicher-Carcano bolt-action, and gave a name to the description of the killer—Lee Harvey Oswald, an employee at the Depository. And Oswald was missing. The police were no longer trying to solve a murder mystery; they had launched a manhunt.

did not happen

After shooting Officer Tippit, Lee Harvey Oswald panicked. If he'd had any detailed plan for shooting the president, it had long since fallen to pieces. Now he'd killed a policeman, and soon the area would be swarming with patrol cars. He abandoned the sidewalk and began to cut across lawns and backyards, hoping to elude the net he knew would soon be closing around the area.

false

He emerged on Jefferson Boulevard and heard a siren wail. A police car was tearing down the street in his direction. He stopped, turned, and pretended to look at the merchandise in the window of Hardy's Shoe Shop. The police car went careening by, and for the moment it appeared as if Oswald had escaped once again. But he had made a mistake. Johnny Brewer, manager of the shoe store, had noticed this peculiar behavior. Why would a man turn away to look in a store window—just at the moment when most people would be watching the speeding police car? Brewer had also been listening on the radio to the ongoing story of the Kennedy assassination and had just heard that an officer had been shot in the neighborhood.

At that moment, Oswald saw the Texas Theater, which had opened only a few minutes earlier. The cashier, Julia Postal, was not in the ticket booth. She had walked out to the curb to talk to the theater manager. On an impulse, Oswald ducked inside the theater without buying a ticket.

not in FBI records

Brewer, still suspicious, talked to the cashier, who, after hearing the description of the man, agreed that he was indeed a suspicious character. She called the Dallas Police Department and told them, "We have your man." Skeptical at first, the officer on the other end of the line heard the description and became increasingly attentive.

In a matter of minutes, the lights in the Texas Theater went on and police swarmed down the aisles. One spotted Oswald out of the corner of his eye, wheeled, and barked "On your feet!" Oswald stood up, raised his hands, and said, "It's all over."

James Bookhout, one of Shanklin's Dallas agents, called FBI headquarters there to report that Officer Tippit's likely killer had been picked up by the police in Oak Cliff. His name? Lee Harvey Oswald. The word went from office to office, and when James Hosty heard it, he must have felt sick inside. He went immediately to Shanklin and told him about the file on Oswald.

Shanklin asked what was in the file, and Hosty summarized the contents, adding that nothing there would indicate that Oswald was capable of shooting anyone. Shanklin immediately called Will Fritz, head of the Homicide Division of the Dallas Police Department.

"I want to assure you," he said, "that the FBI will cooperate with you in any way possible. Remember that our laboratory and fingerprint division are at your disposal."

Then he made a request.

"We know a little something about Lee Harvey Oswald. One of our agents has a file on him. I wonder if he could come and sit in on your interrogation of Oswald?"

"Sure," said Fritz. "Send him over."

When Hosty arrived at Fritz's Office, Fritz invited him to join the ongoing interrogation of Oswald. Agent Bookhout was already there. Hosty showed Oswald his ID, then sat down. Fritz allowed Hosty to question Oswald, assuming the FBI agent knew the subject better than anyone present.

"Have you been in Russia?" Hosty asked.

"Yes," Oswald replied, "I was in Russia three years."

"Did you ever write to the Russian Embassy?" Hosty continued.

He was trying to establish whether Oswald would lie concerning

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Embassy?" Hosty continued.
Oswald would lie concerning

verifiable facts. Initially Oswald refused the bait.

"Yes, I wrote."

Then Hosty asked a question that surprised and disturbed
Oswald.

"Have you ever been to Mexico City?"

Oswald began to lose his composure. The FBI knew more about
his movements than he'd imagined.

"No!"

Hosty, remaining calm, didn't question Oswald's answer.
Instead, he said, "When were you in Mexico City?" *The Hosty did not know*

At this point Oswald leaped up. Pounding his handcuffed fists on
the table he shouted: "I know you! I know you! You're the one who
accosted my wife twice!"

Fritz restrained him.

"Take it easy. Sit down," he said.

"Oh, I know you."

"What do you mean he accosted your wife?" Fritz said to
Oswald.

"Well, he threatened her," Oswald said. "He practically told her
she would have to go back to Russia [Oswald's wife was Russian].
He accosted her on two different occasions."

That was Oswald's only moment of panic, the one time during a
long afternoon of interrogation when he came close to breaking.
The rest of the session he was evasive, arrogant, and condescend-
ing—a man more and more confident of himself even as more and
more evidence mounted against him.

Sometime during or shortly after the Oswald interrogation, Jack
Revill, a lieutenant in the Criminal Intelligence Section of the Dal-
las Police Department, who had talked to Agent Hosty briefly when
he came over to interview Oswald, offered the following summary
of their conversation:

Captain W. F. Gannaway
Special Service Bureau
Subject: Lee Harvey Oswald
605 Eisbeth Street

*He did not "offer" it
was ordered to do it
by C.I.D. will Fritz*

Sir:

On November 22, at approximately 2:50 P.M., the undersigned officer met Special Agent James Hosty of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the basement of the City Hall.

At that time Special Agent Hosty related to this officer that the subject was a member of the Communist party, and that he was residing in Dallas.

The subject was arrested for the murder of Officer J. D. Tippit and is a prime suspect in the assassination of President Kennedy.

The information regarding the subject's affiliation with the Communist party is the first information this officer has received from the Federal Bureau of Investigation regarding same.

Agent Hosty further stated that the Federal Bureau of Investigation was aware of the subject and that they had information that this subject was capable of committing the assassination of President Kennedy.

This memo was written during the frantic time immediately following the death of the president, since by 1:30 A.M. Saturday morning, Oswald was no longer merely "a prime suspect" but had been officially charged with the assassination. And the motive of the memo was clear from the statement in paragraph four emphasizing that this was the "first information" received from the FBI concerning these alarming "facts" about Oswald.

But of course they weren't facts, nor was it likely that Hosty had said what Officer Revill claimed he'd said. As Hosty's own file clearly showed, Oswald was not a member of the Communist party, despite his addiction to Marxism. The FBI had informants who regularly attended local Communist party meetings, and Oswald was never there, nor did his name show up in any of the party's correspondence. Indeed, one of the reasons Hosty had not taken Oswald too seriously was because of his very lack of involvement in Communist party activities.

Second, neither Hosty nor the FBI had any information that

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Oswald constituted a serious threat to the president. On the very day the memo was written—and with such a threat uppermost in his mind—Gordon Shanklin had called twice for a review of all files, once before Kennedy was shot and once afterward. Neither time had Agent Hosty thought Oswald worth mentioning as potentially dangerous. He knew the Secret Service only investigated people who had made direct or indirect threats against the president. Oswald had done nothing of the sort.

So did Officer Revill lie in his statement? Probably not. After reviewing the matter, we concluded that in all likelihood he had reported what he thought he'd heard. Hosty had undoubtedly told him about Oswald's defection to Russia and his Marxism. To Revill, "Marxism" had probably translated into Communist party membership—and a dangerous figure.

Regardless of how the misunderstanding occurred, Police Chief Curry—anxious to shift the blame for the assassination to the federal level—put the report in his drawer and waited for the most opportune moment to use it.

Surprisingly, Oswald, the prime suspect in Officer Tippit's killing, sat in Dallas police headquarters for a long time before anyone in the media realized he was the Book Depository employee wanted in connection with the assassination of the president. When someone made the connection, the press swarmed all over the place like red ants. They also began to call me. Everyone wanted to know what prior information the FBI had collected concerning Lee Harvey Oswald.

In Dallas, Marguerite Oswald, mother of Lee Harvey Oswald, arrived at City Hall. She was there to provide her son with the warm wet blanket of protective love that had all but smothered him since he was a small child. She refused to talk to the Dallas police. Instead, she said, "I want to speak to the FBI."

Two agents, both named Brown, met with her in a small room. She began with an extraordinary statement, one that others would echo in the future. She said, "I want to talk with you gentlemen because I feel like my son is an agent of the government, and, for the security of my country, I don't want this to get out."

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Perhaps sensing their doubt, Mrs. Oswald said, "I want to talk to FBI agents from Washington."

"Mrs. Oswald, we are from Washington," one of them told her. She was skeptical.

"I understand you work with Washington," she said, "but I want officials from Washington."

The agents, knowing at this point that whatever information she gave them would probably be useless, nevertheless tried to encourage her to talk to them.

"Well," one said, "we work through Washington."

"I know you do," she said. "I would like Washington men."

At length they convinced her that they were worth talking to, and she told them her bizarre tale, first cautioning them to keep their lips sealed.

"For the security of the country," she told them, "I want this kept perfectly quiet until you investigate."

They nodded.

"I happen to know that the State Department furnished the money for my son to return to the United States, and I don't know, if that would be made public, what that would involve, and so please will you investigate this and keep this quiet."

She went on to assure them that "Congressman Jim Wright knows about this," and gave the agents the names of State Department officials who could corroborate the story.

The FBI already knew everything Marguerite Oswald was reporting—and then some. The State Department had indeed lent Lee Harvey Oswald money for such a purpose, as they did routinely for many Americans stranded in foreign countries without the price of a ticket home. In this instance, Oswald had repaid the loan. But Mrs. Oswald, for reasons any parent could understand, was anxious to find some way to exonerate her child from the terrible charges he faced, some explanation that would buy him sympathy and grace.

The two agents thanked her for her information and escorted her out the door. They had treated her courteously, and for the moment she seemed satisfied. But she would be heard from again and again and again. In the years to come, hers would be one of the most per-

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sistent voices accusing the U.S. government of duplicity in her son's arrest and death. Every few months a new book or magazine article would feature quotes from this distressed woman, most of them vague accusations. Like many of the liberal journalists who exploited her, she simply would not believe that Lee Harvey Oswald had alone planned and executed the assassination of the president. That day, when she left the two agents shaking their heads, she was on her way to becoming a permanent footnote in the pages of American history.

During the day, FBI strategy for handling the Kennedy assassination was developing according to a familiar pattern. Hoover was making some decisions himself, but he was also asking the rest of us for recommendations. He was delegating responsibility, not only to get the best expert advice, but also to hedge against possible disaster. If anything went wrong—and it sometimes did—he could always point an accusing finger at the man who'd recommended a particular course of action. Over the years, FBI failures were never the fault of the director. The press always blamed some poor bastard who'd given Hoover bad advice. I'll say this: When he asked us for recommendations, we never offered them without considering every possible outcome that might bring official censure.

Now the director talked to each of us in turn, either face to face or over the intercom. Among those he consulted were Tolson, Al Belmont, Gordon Shanklin, assistant directors, special agents in charge nationwide, and key agents in our laboratory. In addition, all off-duty agents were called and ordered to report for duty immediately.

With Hoover spitting orders, and with the rest of us offering reasoned suggestions, a comprehensive plan took shape. At FBI headquarters in Washington, Belmont would supervise the entire operation. He would be aided by Assistant Director Alex Rosen and Inspector James Malley of the General Investigative Division. William C. Sullivan would be in charge of investigating the degree to which the assassination posed a threat to internal security. As assistant director of the Crime Records Division, I would work closely with Belmont in the investigation and also continue as liaison with Congress, the White House, and the press.

As for the field operation, Inspector Malley would lead a team of forty-nine special agents and forty support personnel. They would leave for Dallas almost immediately to join the massive investigation and lend assistance to the force already on the scene. All information collected around the nation that pertained to the assassination would be channeled to Dallas. This order covered calls, letters, teletypes, airtels, interview reports, and memoranda. All leads were to be prepared on duplicate lead sheets, one copy of which would be retained to follow the coverage of the lead, the other given to the agent who was assigned the lead. Results of investigations were to be typed on multiliths, which were to be read for accuracy.

Already we were getting tips and leads from well-meaning citizens, crackpots, and publicity seekers. We established a "Communications Index" identifying each communication by date, type of communication (call, wire), with a brief comment on the subject matter. (This index later proved invaluable and was maintained for approximately four years after the assassination, when the volume of correspondence finally began to subside.)

Shanklin would continue to run his own operation, which provided the bureau with the bulk of its manpower. The Dallas office consisted of some one hundred agents, about half of them assigned as resident agents in cities surrounding Dallas. Over the years they had been doing a quietly competent job. Now they would be the focus of the world's attention. Already news reporters and television crews were flying to Texas from all parts of the world.

At one point during the development of this strategy I looked out the office window and was surprised to see that it was getting dark outside. I thought fleetingly of home, Barbara, and the children. But I knew I'd be there all night and that if I were lucky, I'd catch an hour of sleep on the sofa in my office. It was always that way on big cases, and this was the biggest case of all.

False
Late that afternoon, an FBI agent boarded a plane at Love Field in Dallas. He had with him a box that contained three fragments of the president's skull. Two had been found inside the car and one in the gutter on Elm Street, right in front of the Texas Book Depository. These fragments would be the first of many pieces of physical

evidence from the crime to be analyzed in our Washington crime laboratory—the most advanced facility of its kind in the world.

At Andrews Air Force Base, where Air Force One had landed with the newly sworn-in president and the late president's body, a Secret Service agent gave FBI Agent Elmer Todd a small object, a bullet. Todd took the bullet immediately to the FBI's Fire Arms Identification Section, where Agent Robert Frazier received it with great interest.

"Where did it come from?" he asked Todd.

"It fell off a stretcher in Parkland Hospital."

As Frazier looked at the object, his interest grew. A ballistics expert who worked with such specimens daily, he was pleased to see that the bullet was not flattened, shattered, or fragmented. After examining the size, he raised his eyebrows.

"The first reports claimed that the gun was a 7.35 Mauser. This is very interesting."

After measuring the round, he nodded.

"Just as I thought. This is not a 7.35. It is a 6.5 millimeter. Did the Secret Service man know which stretcher it was on?"

"No," said Todd. "The man who found it thought it came off of Governor Connally's stretcher."

After examining the bullet at some length, Frazier was able to come to an additional conclusion.

"It's not foreign made," he said. "It's American."

The fact that the bullet was in good shape and made in the United States greatly simplified Frazier's task and that of the Fire Arms Identification Section. In murder mysteries, ballistics tests are always perfectly executed and conclusive. You look through the microscope and see a perfect match—by no means the case in many instances in the real world. When bullets strike bone they tend to flatten or shatter. Often identification is difficult—and sometimes impossible.

Also, foreign-manufactured ammunition was frequently hard to identify, whereas virtually all ammunition made and sold in the United States was known to Frazier and his colleagues. With this bullet, his task could be done quicker and more precisely.

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By 7:00 P.M. Eastern Standard Time, President Kennedy's body had arrived at Bethesda Naval Hospital, located in the Maryland suburbs of Washington. Accompanying the casket were two FBI agents, Francis O'Neill and James Sibert. They were not there to protect the remains of a president. That was the job of Roy Kellerman and his Secret Service agents. The FBI representatives were there to ensure the integrity of the examination that was to follow and to report back to headquarters. They remained as observers during the autopsy.

Outside the hospital the sky was dark and the streets were alive with the lights of automobiles on their way into Maryland—federal bureaucrats winding their way home, their eyes on the crawling cars ahead, their attention focused on the radio. As the traffic was beginning to thin, J. Edgar Hoover got a call from Lyndon B. Johnson, sworn in as president and already back in Washington.

The new president informed Hoover that he wanted the FBI to conduct an exhaustive investigation of the assassination and to have a report on his desk by Monday morning. He told the director to assume whatever powers the executive branch had to offer to accomplish this task. Actually, the president had no real powers to give. He certainly had the authority to order the FBI into the case, but this order did not supersede the Tenth Amendment, which gave the state of Texas jurisdiction over murder committed within its boundaries, and the state had in turn delegated its authority to local police departments. Johnson's order might help with the Secret Service; it would do nothing legally to shake the evidence loose from Chief Jesse Curry and Captain Will Fritz.

In the past Hoover had sometimes found it necessary to work with less than full authority. The FBI adhered rigidly to most of the restrictions imposed on it; but occasions arose when Hoover believed the end justified the means, that regulations should give way to expediency, particularly in national security cases. These occasions occurred far less frequently than his critics want you to believe—but this was clearly one of them.

Soon FBI officers all over the country were working on the case. In the New York office, agents were soon identifying and contacting

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all companies that sold firearms through the U.S. mail. By 10:00 P.M. that night, they had located the manufacturer of the weapon, Crescent Firearms of New York, and also the mail order house to whom that particular rifle had been sold—Klein's Sporting Goods, Inc. of Chicago, Illinois. The Chicago office located William J. Waldman, vice president of the company, and he accompanied our agents to the company's headquarters, where the group began to rummage through company files. A little after midnight they discovered the invoice for the rifle Oswald had used. It had been in a shipment of ten cases purchased from Crescent on March 4, 1963.

Fortunately, Klein's Sporting Goods kept microfilmed photostats of all sales, so the purchaser could be identified. Unfortunately, the orders were filed according to the date received—and Klein's had sold a lot of rifles.

The post office box to which the gun had been sent had been rented by Lee Harvey Oswald. The company had received the order in March of 1963 with payment in the form of a money order. The money order was signed by A. Hidell.

At Bethesda Naval Hospital, doctors finishing up their autopsy ran into a problem. They had no bullet for the entry wound they found in the right strap muscle. At that point, William Greer, the Secret Service agent who had driven the automobile and who was in attendance at the autopsy, told the doctors about the bullet that had fallen out. FBI agents Francis X. O'Neill and James W. Sibert were on hand, taking notes on the findings to make certain the Fire Arms Identification Section had every bit of information available.

In Dallas, Shanklin was running into some difficulties with Curry and his subordinates. Despite the fact that President Lyndon Johnson had ordered the FBI to take full charge of the investigation, the Dallas Police Department continued to maintain that the jurisdiction was theirs—as, in a strictly legal sense, it was. We requested that all evidence be sent to our laboratory in Washington, but Captain Will Fritz of Homicide was saying he needed the evidence right there in Dallas for his own investigation.

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Then Jesse Curry made his move. We began to get calls from the networks and wire services telling us that the chief of the Dallas Police Department had just been on television, claiming that the FBI had had Lee Harvey Oswald under surveillance. The callers wanted to know if Curry's statement was true. When the first call hit, I could only say that I'd check the story and get back as soon as possible with an answer.

I immediately dialed Gordon Shanklin in Dallas.

"It's not true," he said, and explained to me about Hosty and the status of the Oswald case.

A file, he told me, had been opened on January 12, 1961, as the result of a letter from the District Intelligence Office of the Eighth Naval District, New Orleans, Louisiana. Among other facts, the file contained the information that Oswald had attempted to defect to the Soviet Union in October of 1959; had married a Russian woman; had returned to the United States; had formed a chapter of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee in New Orleans, which listed a fictitious "A. J. Hidell" as its president; had moved back to his native Texas; had taken up residence locally; had not joined the Communist party; had made a trip to Mexico only two months earlier. Hosty had interviewed Marina Oswald because she was a resident alien, but had never found Lee at home.

I put a hold on further calls and dialed Clyde Tolson. He told me to call or see the director. I buzzed Helen Gandy and told her I had to see the Old Man. When I reached the inner office, the director was on the phone, and this one time he didn't bother to rise or to come around the desk to greet me. I learned from listening to his conversation that he knew about the capture of Lee Harvey Oswald. No surprise. He'd probably talked to Shanklin earlier. He saw me, and barked into the receiver, "Hold on a minute."

"Mr. Hoover," I said, "the Dallas chief of police is on national television, saying the FBI has had this Oswald under surveillance."

"Is it true?" he asked, a worried look on his face. If so—and if Oswald were indeed the Kennedy assassin—it would mean we had either lost touch with him during surveillance or, worse, stood by while he shot the president of the United States. As always, the director was concerned with his own reputation and that of his bureau.

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"No," I said. "It's not true. I just talked to Shanklin. We have a file on Oswald because he defected to the Soviet Union, but he hasn't been under surveillance. The agent in charge of the case has never even seen the man."

Hoover nodded with grim satisfaction. He understood just what kind of file we had on Oswald and how many files of this sort we maintained nationwide—literally thousands.

"Call Curry and tell him that's a lie, that he's to make a public retraction as soon as possible."

I started to leave, but he held up his hand.

"And tell him if he doesn't offer the retraction, we'll cut off all privileges."

The phrase had a very specific meaning. Ordinarily the FBI responds to all official requests for fingerprint and laboratory assistance from law enforcement officers all over the free world. But this cooperation is not mandated by law. It is a courtesy extended by the bureau, and one that can be withdrawn at the pleasure of the director. Hoover withdrew the privilege only rarely. That he was threatening to do so now—in the middle of this extraordinary investigation—was some measure of his anger and frustration.

I went back to my office, immediately called Gordon Shanklin, and he in turn spoke to Dallas Police Chief Jesse Curry. Within minutes Curry was back on television with a correction—of sorts. But it was insufficient to stem the Old Man's fury; and in succeeding days, after more evidence of hostility and incompetence on Curry's part, the FBI did in fact cut off his department's privileges.

Early Friday evening, November 22, we sent out instructions to all FBI offices nationwide "to immediately contact all informants, security, racial and criminal, as well as other sources, for information bearing on the assassination." The dispatch requested that all offices "establish the whereabouts of bombing suspects, all known Klan and hate group members, known racial extremists and other individuals" who, on the basis of available evidence, might have been involved in a plot to kill the president of the United States.

In 1976, the Senate Select Committee, commonly referred to as

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the "Church Committee," published its final report, which stated that the FBI sent a teletype dispatch to all field offices "rescinding" this order, implying that the bureau was somehow remiss in not pursuing such leads. That is untrue. In fact, on Saturday, November 23, with the case against Oswald firmly established, FBI headquarters instructed all field offices "to resume normal contacts with informants and other resources." This merely meant that agents throughout the country could contact their informants in the normal course of business rather than waking them up in the middle of the night, as the previous day's communique had ordered.

Eventually I took a break and called Barbara. We spoke only briefly. She already knew I'd be working round the clock, so we exchanged a few comments on the grisly events of the day, discussed the children's reaction, and speculated on my chances of coming home the next night. All the while the phones were ringing in the background, and I had to get back to work.

In Dallas, the police department was gathering evidence, much of which it jealously guarded. By this time the tension between local and federal authorities was obvious. Chief Curry had attempted to saddle the bureau with primary blame for the assassination, and Hoover had responded with a demand for a retraction and a stern threat.

Unaware of this tension, Agent Drain dropped by the Dallas police laboratory to see if any new evidence had been uncovered. Lt. J. C. Day had just lifted a handprint from the rifle.

"The metal is rough," he'd told his assistant. "If it was smooth, this print would be sharper."

Day showed Drain what he'd found, and Drain again offered the resources of the FBI Identification Division, which had the most comprehensive file of fingerprints in the world. Day, apparently more aware of the rivalry than Drain, refused, saying it was up to Chief Curry to make such a decision. Drain left, empty-handed and frustrated.

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Soon Chief Curry began to receive phone calls from local bigwigs, urging him to turn the evidence over to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for a day or two. Annoyed by these intrusions, Curry dug in his heels, set his jaw, and refused to cooperate with the FBI. Given the importance of the callers, he wondered who had generated these invasions into what he clearly viewed as his exclusive business.

The telephone campaign bore the unmistakable fingerprints of Hoover, who was annoyed to distraction by Curry's accusations against the bureau and who had powerful contacts in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area. Texas big-wigs Clint Murchison and Sid Richardson were among his few close friends, and they in turn knew everybody in local and state politics. There were also members of Congress who were sympathetic with the FBI or owed Hoover favors—and more than one who feared him. He undoubtedly made four or five calls in rapid succession, then sat back and waited until his contacts got back to him, reporting on their conversations with Chief Curry.

Again, Curry had the law on his side. The matter was indubitably within his jurisdiction. But cooperation among all available law enforcement agencies would clearly help everyone. The idea that the Dallas Police Department could, without any support from the FBI, carry on a complete and thorough investigation of the assassination was absurd.

Our fingerprint files, our Fire Arms Identification Section, and our New York office were all crucial in developing the tissue of evidence that ultimately made the case for Oswald's guilt. The Dallas Police Department could not have done it alone in the length of time necessary to satiate the demands of the general public. They too contributed key evidence, but the FBI pinned Oswald to the wall.

Earlier in the afternoon the day of the assassination the Washington office had asked the Dallas office for a biography and description of Lee Harvey Oswald. It was to be an essential element of the report we were preparing for President Johnson. But in the course of the day's frantic activities, our people in Dallas forgot about this request. Late in the evening, we again asked for the information.

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Agent Manning Clements asked James Bookhout if he'd gathered the information, and Bookhout said he was unaware anyone had asked him to do so. Some of this information was in the file, but Clements concluded that the easiest way to fill in the gaps was to go down to the Dallas city jail and interview Oswald. He asked Captain Will Fritz for permission and received it. When Clements spoke to Oswald, he, too, made no objection. Indeed, he was cooperative, supplying a list of family members, dates of birth, height, weight, addresses, schools, cities of residence, and employment record. While Oswald was out of the room, Clements also went through his wallet, which was lying on the captain's desk. In short order he had all the information he needed for a preliminary biography and physical description.

It was almost midnight, the night of the assassination, when District Attorney Henry Wade finally persuaded Chief Curry that it was foolish not to ask for assistance from the FBI, and its famous laboratory, its capacity to track down leads all over the country, and its offices in New Orleans and New York—cities where Oswald had once lived. Wade was a man with tremendous clout in Dallas County. He enjoyed the same kind of reputation locally that Hoover had earned nationally—as a crime fighter. Curry could go to war with Washington without alienating his local constituency. If he fought with Henry Wade, he would lose on his own home field.

So very, very reluctantly, Curry agreed to hand over all physical evidence to the bureau as soon as possible. But there was a catch. He would give us less than twenty-four hours to work with it. We could fly the exhibits to Washington immediately. The FBI would sign for each piece. We could work on the evidence all day. But we would have to have everything back in Dallas by the stroke of midnight, otherwise we would all turn into pumpkins.

Drain heard the conditions, heaved a sigh, and agreed. Then he called Gordon Shanklin to pass along the news. Shanklin in turn called Washington. Al Belmont took the call.

"We'll be waiting," he said.

Shanklin then phoned the commanding general at Carswell Air Force Base in Texas.

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"One of our agents is taking evidence in the assassination to Washington. We have a directive that you will help us fly it up and wait for it to come back."

It was after 1:00 A.M. when Agents Sibert and O'Neill left the site of the autopsy at Bethesda Naval Hospital and returned to the Justice Department building, most of the lights still blazing on its upper floors. In the Fire Arms Identification Section, Robert Frazier was waiting for them impatiently. He knew this would probably be the most important case he would ever work on, and he was still wide awake. When Sibert and O'Neill came through the door, he asked them immediately, "Did you find anything?"

They knew exactly what he meant. He wanted pieces of the grisly puzzle, and they had something for him in a salve jar—two tiny slivers of lead, precisely what Frazier wanted to see.

"Here are some metal fragments from the president's head," Sibert said.

Frazier looked at them dubiously. One weighed 1.65 grams, the other only 0.15 of a grain.

"Is this all you found?"

They told him the frustrating truth. X-rays showed that there were thirty or forty fragments still lodged along the skull and embedded in the brain. The doctors decided not to attempt to retrieve them, since they were too small.

Frazier knew that fragments of the bullet (or bullets) were still missing. So where were they? One possibility was in the SS-100-X—the president's automobile. It had been flown to Washington and was now over at an M Street garage, guarded by Secret Service agents. Frazier got a group together, and they all drove over to M Street.

With the help of the Secret Service, they rolled out the car, removed the plastic cover and the leatherette convertible top. One of the FBI agents, a photographer, took pictures from all angles, including the interior of the trunk. Then Frazier and his crew began to examine the automobile, patiently, carefully, with precise attention to every detail. They measured the crack on the windshield, gleaming in the artificial light like a spider web. Then they ran their

fingers across it, outside and inside. Outside the spider web was smooth to the touch. Inside it was sharp and grooved. They carefully scraped the cracks with a knife and captured tiny bits of metal along with the ground glass. Later they would discover that the metal was identical with the slivers found during the autopsy.

After carefully harvesting the windshield, they examined every other likely inch of the automobile—tires, fenders, upholstery, dashboard, floor. On the back seat and on the rug they discovered dried blood and brain tissue, which they examined for metal fragments. They also found fragments of metal—more pieces of the puzzle—on the floor. Two of them were fairly large. Maybe large enough! Frazier was encouraged. It was tedious and exacting work, but every little piece in place clarified the picture.

By 1:30 Saturday morning, November 23, the evidence was there to charge Lee Harvey Oswald with the assassination of the president of the United States. It had been gathered by both the FBI and the Dallas Police Department, despite the attempt on the part of Chief Curry and his subordinates to exclude both the bureau and the Secret Service from its investigation.

Meanwhile, at Carswell Air Force Base, Agent Drain was waiting in a car with the crucial pieces of evidence Chief Curry had finally been willing to surrender. He was soon joined by Winston Lawson, a Secret Service agent, who had been ordered to accompany him.

"I remember you," said Drain. "You were at headquarters this morning." Drain told Lawson he would be happy to have him aboard.

When they were airborne, Lawson asked Drain if he could take inventory of the evidence. Lawson recorded the evidence as consisting of the following:

1. A live 6.5-millimeter rifle shell found in a 6.5 Mannlicher-Carcano rifle on the sixth floor of the Texas Book Depository building.
2. Three spent 6.5-millimeter shells, found on sixth floor of the Depository inside the northeast window.

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3. One blanket found in garage of Mrs. Ruth Paine, 2515 Fifth Street, Irving, Texas.
4. Shirt taken from Lee H. Oswald at police headquarters.
5. Brown wrapping paper found on sixth floor, near rifle, believed to have been used to wrap the weapon.
6. Sample of brown paper used by School Book Depository and sample of paper tape used for mailing books.
7. Fragment of bullet found in the wrist of Governor John Connally.
8. Smith and Wesson .38 revolver, V510210, taken from Lee H. Oswald at Texas Theater.
9. .38 bullet recovered from the body of Officer J. D. Tippit.
10. One 6.5-millimeter bolt action rifle, inscribed "1940, Made in Italy," serial number C2766. Also inscribed on the rifle was a crown similar to an English crown. Under it was inscribed "R-E." Also inscribed was "Rocca," which was enclosed in rectangular lines and was on the plunger on the bolt action on the rear of the gun. On the four-power scope of the gun was inscribed "Ordnance Optics Inc., Hollywood, California, 010 or 010 Japan." Also inscribed was a cloverleaf and inside the cloverleaf was "OSC."

Back in Washington headquarters, most members of the bureau had surrendered to physical and emotional exhaustion. I was still on duty. By 3:00 A.M. the calls had almost ceased, and I'd seen enough of the grim images on the black-and-white television screen: the solemn and often tearful statements of famous people and anonymous passersby; the speculations of reporters and commentators; the arrival in Washington of the current president and the casket of the former president; the already famous Zapruder film, run again and again, with its jerky image of John Kennedy pitching suddenly forward and his terrified wife trying to scramble out of the car.

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Weary and numb, I turned down the sound, left the screen to flicker in the gloom of the office, and stretched out on the sofa. As soon as I closed my eyes, the phone rang, and I had to leap up and grab it. This happened virtually all night. Sometimes it was the press. Sometimes it was Al Belmont or Gordon Shanklin.

I didn't get a full hour of sleep the entire night, and by dawn the phones were ringing as persistently and frequently as the previous day. Saturday morning, November 23, between calls, I was able to drink some coffee and eat something, though I had little appetite. Hoover called Belmont and me to receive reports and give additional orders. He spoke to us numerous times during the day.

A little after 5:00 A.M., Drain arrived at the Justice Department, evidence in hand, accompanied by Lawson. At that point, the evidence was apportioned according to expertise, with most of it going to Frazier and the Fire Arms Inspection Section. Virtually everyone had been awake for most or all of the night, but they were bright-eyed and alert. They had been told the terms of the agreement Drain had reached with the Dallas Police Department and Chief Jesse Curry. They had slightly more than one full working day to complete their respective investigations. Outside it was still cold and starry. It was late in the fall, and no trace of dawn colored the sharp edges of buildings or the remaining dark leaves of trees. By the time the sun had risen they would be hard at work, and when it set in the late afternoon, they would have to be finished. No one had time to be sleepy.

Agent Robert A. Frazier had been with the bureau for over twenty years, examining weapons and identifying bullets and cartridge cases to determine whether they had been used in specific crimes or fired from particular weapons. The Kennedy shooting, though certainly a challenging case, did not pose extraordinary problems for either Frazier or his team of experts. He had seen bullets more fragmented, had successfully reconstructed more difficult puzzles. According to his own testimony before the Warren Commission, he had made "in the neighborhood of 50,000 to 60,000" firearms comparisons and had "testified in court about 400 times."

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He was a connoisseur of rifles and bullets, and no one living knew more about them. When you were as experienced as Frazier in any field, you came to a point where you instantly and instinctively knew things that other people could not discover by hours and hours of diligent concentration. But by the end of the day—when the evidence had to be gathered up and dispatched back to Dallas, hand-carried by the weary Vincent Drain—even Frazier could draw only a limited number of conclusions. Some questions could never be answered, given the impact of the bullet and the scattering of metal fragments. But this much Frazier could say for certain by the time he had to give up the evidence: The bullet found on the stretcher and the two larger bullet fragments found in the president's limousine had been fired from the C2766 Mannlicher-Carcano rifle found in the Texas Book Depository "to the exclusion of all other weapons."

By 6:45 A.M. on Saturday, we were able to say with some degree of certainty that the information on the documents used to order the murder weapon was in the handwriting of Lee Harvey Oswald, that he was, in effect, A. Hidell. This new evidence complemented the information gleaned the previous night. And by then we had also identified the handprint the Dallas police had found on the rifle. It belonged to Oswald. /?

The accumulation of such evidence and the formal charging made my job much easier on Saturday than the day before. I was able to offer details of the case to members of Congress and other government officials, though I still had to be selective in what I said. Many of the people who contacted me were still shaken and close to tears. Members of the press, though less emotional, were more irritable and impatient than they'd been the previous day. Like me, most of them had been up all night, and they were under tremendous pressure to turn up something—anything—that would beat the competition.

By Saturday evening the calls had diminished to the point where we could actually handle them efficiently and courteously. The nation, over its initial shock, was now sad and silent. Utterly exhausted, my throat raw, I finally gave up and went home, assur-

ing myself, in my ignorance, that the crisis had passed. But in a city the size of Dallas, more than one crazy fool walks the streets.

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Jack Ruby

JACK RUBY WAS AN INTENSE MAN who had admired John F. Kennedy and was emotionally devastated when the young president was assassinated in Dallas. Heavy-set and often overdressed, Ruby looked like a Mafia boss in a Hollywood movie. He owned two nightclubs—the Carousel Club, a downtown strip joint, and the Vegas Club, a rock 'n' roll hangout in the Oak Lawn area. Both were cheap and sleazy, but they didn't cater to the criminal element.

In the ongoing drama of the assassination, Ruby appeared at first as a character actor, showing his face in scene after scene, never taking part in the central action. A little after noon on Friday, at the very time Kennedy was shot, Ruby was in the *Dallas Morning News* office, just five blocks away from Dealey Plaza. He was placing a weekly ad for his nightclubs; and while there, he also protested a black-bordered advertisement in the *News* that morning which read, "Welcome, Mr. Kennedy." It was signed with the name "Bernard Weissman." Ruby thought the ad was inhospitable.

Ruby was still in the *Morning News* building when he learned

that the president had been fired at. It's conceivable that if a window had been open he could have heard the shots. Later in the day, he would call back and cancel his ads, substituting an announcement that both his clubs would close for the weekend out of respect for the deceased president.

Later, one reporter would claim to have spoken briefly with the nightclub owner at Parkland Hospital less than an hour after the shooting. But Ruby denied being there, and none of the photographs and video tapes of Parkland on that day corroborate the reporter's story.

That Friday night, Ruby was on the third floor of the Dallas Police Department. He'd come because he was increasingly obsessed with the assassination, unable to stand at a distance and watch the developments as a bystander. The police should never have let him enter—but they were unaware that he'd done so. Newsman John Rutledge described how Ruby gained access to the building:

I saw Jack and two out-of-state reporters, whom I did not know, leave the elevator door and proceed toward those television cameras, to go around the corner where Captain Fritz's office was. Jack walked between them. These two out-of-state reporters had big press cards pinned on their coats, great big red ones. I think they said "President Kennedy's Visit to Dallas—Press," or something like that. And Jack didn't have one, but the man on either side of him did. And they walked pretty rapidly from the elevator area past the policeman, and Jack was bent over like this—writing on a piece of paper, and talking to one of the reporters, and pointing to something on the piece of paper, he was kind of hunched over.

While at the police station that night, Ruby, standing on a table-top with several other newsmen, got his first glimpse of Lee Harvey Oswald. A little later he watched District Attorney Henry Wade field questions at a press conference. After the questioning, Ruby went up to Wade and introduced himself: "Hi, Henry. Don't you

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self: "Hi, Henry. Don't you

know me? I am Jack Ruby. I run the Vegas Club." He was begin-
ning to feel the pull of history.

After Ruby left the police department, he drove to KLIF radio,
where he habitually hung out with the staff and announcers. He
talked about the assassination, telling one employee that he had
closed down both his nightclubs because he didn't want to remain
open at such a time in the nation's history. As he left KLIF, Ruby
told one of the station's announcers that right-wing "radicals" were
partially responsible for the president's death.

About 4:00 A.M., Ruby showed up at the composing room of
the *Dallas Times-Herald*, where he spoke excitedly about the assas-
sination with some of the employees.

Later that morning, after a few hours of sleep, he drove down to
Dealey Plaza and engaged a police officer in a conversation about
the assassination. The policeman pointed out the sixth-story win-
dow from which Oswald had fired the shots, and Ruby looked at
the wreaths that had been laid there in memory of the president.

On Saturday afternoon, Ruby made up his mind to be at the city
jail the next morning to witness Oswald's transfer to county facili-
ties, which would be open to the press. He was heard telling a
friend that he would be "acting like a reporter," saying, "you know
I'll be there."

During the rest of that day and night, Ruby became increasingly
depressed and angry over the failure of competitors to close down
their clubs in honor of Kennedy. He paced up and down, talking to
himself. Friends and family noticed that he was morose and distant,
and later remembered: "There was something wrong with him,"
"He was jabbering."

On Sunday morning, Ruby got up, drove downtown, wired an
employee some money, then walked one block to the Dallas city jail,
where he entered the building, using the auto ramp. Once in the base-
ment, he mingled with reporters and officers, awaiting the transfer of
Lee Harvey Oswald. When Oswald appeared, Ruby was no longer
content to stand by and merely watch history take place. He had
decided to become a major player. As two officers hustled Oswald
toward him, Jack Ruby stepped forward, drawing his pistol.

Back in the office on Sunday, I remember feeling some satisfaction at the progress we'd made. The efficiency of the FBI was reassuring in a period of national crisis, and that knowledge took away some of our pain. For the first time in two days my television was turned off, and I was going over reports that had been piling up on my desk—most of them from Dallas, some of them from agents in other parts of the country, all of them relating to the Kennedy assassination.

"Oh, my God," someone shouted from a nearby office. I heard another cry somewhere farther down the hall. Then the intercom came on. "Deke, somebody just shot Oswald!"

Shot Oswald? I couldn't believe it! How could anyone have shot a man in a secure jail? Then I remembered. They were transferring him from the Dallas city jail to the Dallas county jail this morning. I turned on the television just in time to see the replay.

It all happened again right before my eyes in slow motion: the basement crowded with police officers and reporters, the sudden surge of excitement, the burst of flashbulbs, the appearance of Oswald flanked by two detectives, from the right the appearance of a hulk in a wide-brimmed hat, Oswald's apprehensive glance, the lunge, the muffled explosion, the look of instant agony on Oswald's face, the convergence of a mob of officers. It was the first murder ever to occur live on television, and that blast would echo in the memory of millions of Americans.

I heard profane exclamations from all over the office, and I knew exactly how they felt. We'd had a perfect case in the making. We'd hoped we might even get a confession. The investigation would be wrapped up and tied neatly in ribbon by Christmas—a gift to the nation and punishment for a man who had not only murdered another human being, but had committed a crime against the people of the United States. Now our case was moot.

Someone stuck his head into my office.

"What do you think Oswald's chances are from what you could see?"

I shook my head.

The phone, which had been silent most of the morning, suddenly started jangling. It had begun all over again.

Immediately after Oswald was shot, Gordon Shanklin dispatched two FBI agents to Parkland Hospital, the same place Kennedy had been taken to only two days earlier.

"We're here to take any confession Oswald might make," they said.

The physician in charge nodded.

"O.K.," he said, "but you'll have to put on surgical masks and gowns and wait in the hallway. If he's conscious and talking, I'll let you come in. Right now he's unconscious."

They did as they were instructed, but they were never called inside. Lee Harvey Oswald died on the operating table without ever regaining consciousness.

Within the hour, we received word that Oswald was dead. Suddenly, the case we'd been pursuing—Oswald's assassination of the president—had become just a little less urgent than it had been at the start of the day, and in addition to the assassination, we were investigating a new crime—the murder of our chief suspect. Immediately we wondered if the Dallas Police Department would attempt to exclude us from the investigation, on the same grounds—jurisdiction. This time, however, we had a foothold. We were told that we could investigate the possibility that Lee Harvey Oswald's civil rights had been violated. That was an area within our jurisdiction, and we proceeded to respond as quickly as possible.

In the Dallas office, Shanklin immediately assigned Special Agents Manning Clements and Bob Gemberling to take charge of investigating Oswald's shooting as well as Kennedy's. They divided the responsibilities between them. Clements headed the "Ruby Squad" and Gemberling the "Oswald Squad." Each man had about twenty-five agents under him.

Agents Gemberling and Clements had been given a gargantuan task, one Gemberling hadn't completed by the time he retired in 1976. The two teams, utilizing all the resources and personnel of the FBI, collected an enormous amount of information on both Ruby and Oswald. No investigation in the nation's past had been conducted with such painstaking care, with such attention to minute detail.

Our agents followed leads that were so farfetched they were laughable. They also pursued tips that seemed grounded in fact and pointed to conspiracy. Yet in the end, the FBI concluded that both shootings were precisely what they'd appeared to be from the start—lone acts, each perpetrated by an unbalanced man caught up in the raw excitement of contemporary history.

On November 29, just one week after the death of John F. Kennedy, President Lyndon Johnson announced that Chief Justice Earl Warren would head a commission to evaluate all the evidence pertinent to the Kennedy assassination. According to published reports, when the president asked him to undertake this enormous task, Warren broke down and cried.

The Warren Commission took as its purview the study and evaluation of all data gathered by investigative agencies, whether municipal, state, or federal; and the two FBI committees were ordered to report directly to the commission. Accordingly, Gemberling submitted his first report on November 30, one day after the commission was established, eight days after the death of the president. The document, submitted through FBI headquarters in Washington, was 515 pages in length and contained virtually all of the basic facts that were to provide the substance of the final report by the Warren Commission. Though portions of this report have been challenged by everyone from Mark Lane to Oliver Stone, none of the information has ever been proven erroneous.

Because the press was already speculating about a possible conspiracy, still hoping to implicate the radical right, the commission was particularly interested in all information about the life of Lee Harvey Oswald. So after Gemberling had submitted his lengthy report, the bureau also provided the seven members and their staff with a complete history of Lee Harvey Oswald's life, the kind of detailed personal narrative you would find in the definitive biography of a famous figure. The narrative covered his time in nursery school, elementary school, and high school, his decision to drop out of the tenth grade, his enlistment in the Marine Corps at the age of seventeen, his military career, his defection to the Soviet Union, his life there, and his return to the United States.

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We provided the commission with a well-documented account of his employment record, finances, and places of residence since birth. We scrutinized his travels outside the United States: Russia (October 1959 to June 1962) and Mexico City (September 26 to October 3, 1963). We examined his affiliations with foreign organizations, notably his connection with the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. And we investigated all allegations against him and either proved or disproved them with persuasive evidence or credible witnesses.

In the end, the Warren Commission—after sifting through a mountain of evidence that might have topped the Washington Monument—came to the same conclusion as the FBI: Oswald shot President Kennedy without the aid of any conspirator; Jack Ruby shot Oswald by himself.

For a while it appeared as if the Warren Commission report would treat the FBI respectfully, or so we heard from Congressman Gerald Ford, our chief contact on the seven-man commission. At that point, with the bureau's position apparently secure, Hoover was in a benevolent mood. He even had a long, fatherly conversation with Jim Hosty, in which he told the Dallas agent not to worry about the future, that the whole matter would soon be forgotten. What Hosty did not know was that Hoover was ready to throw him or anyone else overboard if the situation changed and the bureau—or the director—were put at any risk.

Then the wind changed. According to Ford, Chief Justice Warren was pressing the rest of the commissioners to issue a report critical of the bureau. In the beginning, it appeared as if five members were opposed to such criticism and only two in favor. But by the time Warren had finished lobbying them the vote was four to three in favor—with John Sherman Cooper, Allen Dulles, and John J. McCloy joining Warren in voting for a mild and qualified reprimand.

When he heard this news, Hoover's benevolence vanished. Rain clouds formed in his office. He wasn't about to shoulder the blame. He decided to spread it around. When I heard about his intentions, I wrote a memorandum suggesting he delay any administrative censure against the agents involved.

"In a few months this will all blow over," I said. "Then we can

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review the actions of everybody working on this case. Censuring them now will result in bad public relations. In the meantime, the FBI can surely weather the storm." Other assistant directors joined with me in this advice.

I knew it was futile even then. He'd made up his mind. He thought it would be best to show the American public that in such cases the bureau could move swiftly despite the mildness of the alleged derelictions. Consequently he took disciplinary action against seventeen agents. Twelve of these received what agents called "slap on the wrist" letters, mild rebukes—but signed by the director himself. Most agents and administrators picked up a few such letters along the way; but these were usually more than outweighed by the "atta boy" letters Hoover wrote in abundance.

He took more severe action against five agents. Hosty's supervisor in Dallas was busted back to agent and reassigned to Seattle. The case agent in New Orleans was transferred to Springfield, Illinois. One supervisor in Washington headquarters was sent back to the field, though Hoover couldn't reduce his pay, since he was a war veteran and was protected from such arbitrary action under the Civil Service Law. A second Washington supervisor was reassigned to the Washington field office.

Jim Hosty took the biggest hit. First Hoover attempted to fire him because of his failure to anticipate Oswald's behavior; but Hosty, also a war veteran, challenged the action before a Civil Service review board and won. Then Hoover suspended him for thirty days without pay and reassigned him to Kansas City, where a good friend of Hosty's was the special agent in charge. Hosty's fellow agents in Washington and Dallas, convinced that he was being persecuted, took up a collection to cover his salary loss, giving Hosty an all-expenses-paid vacation. Resettled in Kansas City, he thought the whole matter was behind him. Unfortunately, he was wrong. The whole matter would be resurrected more than ten years later.

Following the investigation of the Kennedy assassination, the FBI's relations with at least two law enforcement agencies were strained. Most obvious was the bad blood between the bureau and the Dal-

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las Police Department. Hoover had made it official—all privileges
had been withdrawn, and this punishment did not apply exclusive-
ly to the Kennedy case, but to every single case from that time for-
ward until Hoover chose to rescind his decision. Today the director
of the FBI could not engage in such selective retribution. In those
days Hoover could do as he pleased. With a single stroke of the pen,
Hoover had put the Dallas police in a time machine and zapped
them back to the days of Bonnie and Clyde, when nobody cooper-
ated with anybody.

Obviously this rift had to be mended, but neither Hoover nor
Dallas Chief Curry had any intention of giving an inch. Maybe
Curry didn't know that his only chance for absolution lay in a full
admission of culpability and an abject plea for forgiveness. Maybe
he knew what was required and wasn't willing to humble himself.
Whatever his reasons, the chief made no move to appease Hoover,
and the impasse continued well into 1964. At that point, two non-
combatants got together to effect a reconciliation.

I was scheduled to make a speech before a veterans' organization
in Dallas. The day before I left, Marie buzzed me on the intercom
to tell me that Eric Jonsson was on the line.

"Who's Eric Jonsson?" I asked.

"He's the mayor of Dallas."

Then I remembered. He'd been elected quite recently, the candi-
date of a nonpartisan group called the City Charter Association,
which represented Dallas business interests. Jonsson himself had
been the CEO and co-founder of Texas Instruments, one of the
major manufacturers in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area, and a giant in
the aerospace industry.

I got on the phone immediately.

"Mr. DeLoach," he said, "I understand you're going to be in
Dallas tomorrow. I wonder if you could have breakfast with me.
There's something I'd like to discuss with you. Perhaps you can
guess what it is."

I told him I thought I knew the subject, that I'd be happy to meet
with him.

The next morning, as we were finishing coffee, Mayor Jonsson,
an extraordinarily friendly and courteous man, put the question to

me directly: "What would it take to mend fences between your agency and the Dallas Police Department?"

I explained Chief Curry's inaccurate statements and Hoover's attitude in response. We both understood who had made the decision, who was in charge. I could offer advice, but there was no guarantee Hoover would listen.

"If Jesse Curry apologizes in the right way," I told Jonsson, "I believe the director will accept his apology." Jonsson leaned forward and spoke more quietly.

"Suppose Jesse Curry is no longer chief of police?"

"In that case," I said, "we would have a whole new ball game."

He nodded and was silent for a moment. I had the feeling he was searching for the right words.

"We can't allow this situation to continue," he said. "It's important to the future of this city for our police to be on friendly terms with federal law enforcement agencies, and particularly the FBI. We've always had a good working relationship. That has to be reestablished. I can promise you that soon—very soon—Chief Curry will be gone."

"In which case," I said, "I will certainly tell Mr. Hoover about our conversation and strongly recommend that we reinstate privileges as soon as that happens."

He smiled thinly.

"And not before?"

I returned his smile.

"And not before."

When I got back to Washington, I told Hoover what had happened, and he nodded. It sounded good, but we would wait and see. Shortly thereafter, Chief Curry left the Dallas Police Department, and J. Edgar Hoover immediately reinstated the department's privileges. He wasn't one to hold a grudge—at least not when his enemy's head was delivered to him on a platter.

The lingering ill feeling between the FBI and the Secret Service following the Kennedy assassination posed a slightly more complicated problem. Each was sensitive about its role in the shooting and its aftermath. Rightly or wrongly, both were accused of failing to mon-

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itor Oswald's movements more closely prior to the shooting, and both brooded over these charges. The FBI fretted that it might have advised Secret Service agents that Lee Harvey Oswald lived in the area and had exhibited erratic behavior. The Secret Service took to heart the allegation that it should have broadened its own survey of potential assassins to include troubled misfits like Oswald. At the same time, each agency circled the wagons to defend its own personnel and reputation. The result: serious name calling, which led to a growing bitterness that threatened the ability of the agencies to work together.

It was a bad time to quarrel. The nation needed to believe that the president of the United States was safe while driving down the streets of America. As the quarrel worsened, Father Daniel J. Power, S.J., head of development at Georgetown University, called me and said, "Deke, why don't you and Jim Rowley have a quiet lunch with me at my office at the university?" Rowley, chief of the Secret Service, was a former FBI agent whom I knew and liked; we both accepted.

It was the first of a number of such luncheons. Following each, I wrote a memorandum to J. Edgar Hoover with the increasing conviction that Rowley wished to cooperate rather than, as Hoover suspected, make the FBI a scapegoat for his own agency's shortcomings.

Eventually we worked out a number of administrative procedures that strengthened the relationship between the Secret Service and the FBI and ensured greater protection for the president and his family. Today, it is far less likely that a Lee Harvey Oswald could slip through our net.

This reconciliation was all the more essential because the new president, Lyndon Johnson, issued an executive order allowing the president to use the FBI for protection as well as the Secret Service. Had Rowley and I not worked out our differences, such efforts would have been difficult, at best.

As everyone knows, rumors surrounding the Kennedy assassination persevered, even after the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the House Committee on Assassinations had issued reports. The old conspiracy theories continued to circulate, and a

new generation of theorists arose. Every few years the television networks aired skeptical retrospectives; and in 1991, Hollywood activist Oliver Stone took his bizarre version to the screen. At the time the film was released, a national poll indicated that a majority of Americans did not believe Lee Harvey Oswald had acted alone, even though few if any of those surveyed had examined the evidence of the Warren Commission.

The remarkable vitality of these conspiracy theories is a testimony to the power of the press in general and the electronic media in particular. They have kept the doubts and suspicions alive, despite an overwhelming body of evidence to the contrary. But why? Why have they chosen to perpetuate a dark and irrational view of American government and society?

The answer surely lies in the expectations of reporters and commentators during the first hours after the assassination and the failure to see them realized as the story unfolded. From the moment shots were fired at Dealey Plaza, the predominantly liberal press assumed that the assassin was a man of the Right—a Klansman, a neo-Nazi, a John Birchler. After all, the incident had occurred in Dallas, a stronghold of political conservatism, home of billionaire H. L. Hunt, Congressman Joe Pool, General Edwin Walker.

In the hysteria that followed the assassination, reporters and broadcasters forgot that the Dallas city government was securely in the hands of a bipartisan coalition of moderate businessmen like Democratic Mayor Earle Cabell and Republican Eric Jonsson of Texas Instruments, who shared a vision for the city that included a strong role for minorities and a "progressive" political agenda.

From the beginning, commentators on all three networks were hinting—if not stating outright—that the right wing was responsible for the assassination. Walter Cronkite said over and over that the president was shot while en route to deliver a speech attacking the radical right. And when Kennedy's casket was being lowered into the grave, Cronkite called him the first president to be martyred in the cause of civil rights.

When it turned out that the assassin was a Marxist who had connections with the liberal far left Fair Play for Cuba Committee, the liberal media first went into shock, then into denial. Things simply

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couldn't have happened that way. Somehow, some way, the right wing had to have been responsible. So the Left withdrew into one of two great fantasies.

The first fantasy held that in some mysterious, indefinable way the atmosphere of "extremism" and "hatred" in Dallas had subtly affected Oswald's mind and provoked him to violence. The most ambitious attempt to sustain this hallucination was William Manchester's *The Death of a President*, a huge volume written with the cooperation of the Kennedy family and published in 1966 with great fanfare. In his narrative—hurriedly written and littered with innumerable factual errors—Manchester cites crime statistics, newspaper editorials, political flyers, and election results to build his case against "the City of Hate." It wasn't Lee Harvey Oswald who killed John F. Kennedy, he seems to argue, but Dallas itself, using the hapless (and apparently helpless) Oswald as a lethal weapon. A mere twenty-five years later, the proposition seems totally absurd, but for several years after the assassination, it absolved the Left of guilt and transferred responsibility to its wicked step-sister, the Right.

The second fantasy is more satisfying to the Left and therefore more enduring—the conviction that somehow there was a well-planned conspiracy behind Oswald's act, that he was merely the creature of larger and more sinister forces—right-wing industrialists, the CIA, the FBI, that is, the demonology of the 1960s. The children of this era came to view the American system as one giant plot against humanity, and they continue in their paranoid delusion. Hence the success of Oliver Stone's movie and the continuing belief by a majority of the American people that in the early 1960s, their government deceived them, plotted against them, and perhaps even murdered their president.

In fact, the FBI did consider most, if not all, of the conspiracy theories, as well as those speculating on such specific questions as the number of shots fired, the direction from which they came, and the nature of the wounds sustained by both President Kennedy and Governor Connally. Contrary to popular opinion, no one has disproved the bureau's original conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone, fired three shots from the sixth floor of the Texas Book Depository, killing the president of the United States.

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Most of the conspiracy theories were based on one of several false assumptions: that more than three shots were fired, that more than one gunman was involved, that at least one of the bullets that struck the president was fired from "the grassy knoll" in front of him. all

Many of these theories depended in part on the idea that the autopsy at Bethesda Naval Hospital was somehow flawed. In response to the heated public dialogue following the release of Oliver Stone's *JFK*, the American Medical Association decided to review the autopsy findings and determine whether navy doctors had indeed participated in a grand cover-up.

In the May 1992, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA) published the first of two articles exploring allegations that the autopsy findings were untrustworthy. The conclusions dealt a severe blow to conspiracy theories. JAMA stated unequivocally that the physicians who performed the autopsy on the night of November 22 had established beyond reasonable doubt that the president was struck by only two bullets, which hit him from above and behind his head.

use In addition, JAMA revealed a fact hitherto unknown—that far from working with no information concerning events in Dallas, one of the Bethesda doctors had contacted the emergency-room doctors who had worked on the president at Parkland Hospital. This helped the team in Bethesda to perform the autopsy with greater understanding of the wounds they were examining and to make more educated judgments in their final evaluation.

In the October 7, 1992, issue of JAMA, editor George D. Lundberg, M.D., stated: "A series of unbiased experts, forensic scientists, pathologists, and radiologists over the years have re-examined the Kennedy autopsy findings, using written materials, testimony of Humes [James Joseph Humes, M.D.], Boswell [J. Thornton Boswell, M.D.], and Finck [Pierre Finck, M.D.], the Zapruder film, photographs, X-rays, and microscopic slides." Lundberg concluded that these experts have almost unanimously supported the published findings and interpretations of the autopsy team and the Warren Commission, the single dissenting voice being that of Cyril H. Wecht, M.D. Yet even he agreed in 1966 and wrote in 1973 that "all shots were fired from the rear."

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The calm expert testimony in the most distinguished medical publication in the United States countered the emotional outcries of the amateurs. It was, of course, no surprise to those of us who had continued to follow the case. The autopsy findings were confirmed by the Warren Commission in 1964; and in 1968, an impartial panel of four pathologists and radiologists examined all available evidence and made a sixteen-page report to Attorney General Ramsey Clark. Another vote of confidence came in 1969, when Dr. Pierre Finck testified at the trial of Clay Shaw, during District Attorney Jim Garrison's sensational and unwarranted prosecution. It was in part because of Dr. Finck's convincing testimony that Garrison's case collapsed in court.

Many critics of the FBI and the Warren Commission have based their objections on reports that witnesses heard firing from the grassy knoll in front of Kennedy's car. At least one witness reported seeing a puff of smoke from that direction. Indeed, the grassy knoll figures prominently in most conspiracy theories.

On the question of whether a sniper was firing from the grassy knoll we again had concrete evidence to the contrary. A woman named Mary Moorman had photographed the motorcade and the surrounding landscape at the very moment Oswald fired down at John F. Kennedy, and hers was only the best of several such snapshots we examined. In this photograph, the grassy knoll is clearly visible, as are all the people waiting there. You can blow it up to the size of a billboard, and you'll see no gunman there—not a single suspicious figure.

There is yet another source for conspiracy theories—the so-called "acoustical evidence" introduced late in the debate by a second wave of dissenters. When talk of the grassy knoll had died down to a whisper in the dusty libraries that stocked the more than eight hundred assassination books, a new gaggle of doubters produced sounds allegedly recorded from an open microphone on the motorcycle of an officer escorting the presidential party. Some "experts" insisted that this recording picked up one or more shots from the vicinity of the grassy knoll, indicating the presence of a second gunman.

In response to this theory, a later Dallas County sheriff, Jim

Bowles, prepared a 130-page journal entitled *The Kennedy Assassination Tapes—A Rebuttal to the Acoustical Evidence*. Bowles was supervisor of communications at the time of the assassination. As a former motorcycle officer, he was well qualified to study and evaluate the evidence.

Bowles's conclusion: The radio transmission came from a motorcycle traveling at thirty to thirty-five miles per hour in the vicinity of the Dallas Trade Mart two-and-a-half miles from the scene of the shooting. By carefully analyzing all sounds heard on the transmission, Sheriff Bowles was able to expose what he finally termed a "preposterous deception."

Experts at both the FBI Technical Services Division and the National Academy of Sciences, in the light of Sheriff Bowles's study, reviewed the "acoustical evidence" and concluded that the tapes did not necessarily reveal: (1) that a gun had been fired from the grassy knoll; (2) that the sounds recorded were gunshots; and (3) that the sounds originated in the assassination area. Yet the "acoustical evidence" lives on in legend.

In 1975—more than ten years after the Warren Commission hearings—Jim Hosty suddenly found himself the center of renewed controversy. Apparently it all began at a Dallas party attended by several FBI agents, their wives, and at least one reporter. The conversation moved from Watergate to the impending congressional hearings on the Kennedy assassination, and one of the wives speculated that Congress might reopen the question of the note Oswald left Hosty a few days before he shot the president. Someone asked for clarification, and the reporter took out pencil and paper. The next day, Tom Johnson of the *Dallas Times Herald* called then-Director Clarence Kelley, and the whole story broke into the open: Shortly before the assassination, Lee Harvey Oswald had dropped by FBI headquarters in Dallas and had left an allegedly threatening note for Agent Hosty, proving he was a violent man. Furthermore, the note had been destroyed.

The congressional committee picked up on the story and sent investigators around the country to talk to everyone who had worked in Dallas headquarters at the time. One of the people ques-

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tioned was the woman who was at the reception desk at the time Oswald delivered the note. According to Hosty—who has good reason to remember the details—the receptionist told three different stories. The first time she was questioned, in 1963, she said Oswald threatened to kill Hosty. The second time, in 1975, she said it was a letter bomb. The third time, before the congressional committee in 1976, she said Oswald threatened to blow up the Dallas police station. But she also admitted that she gave the note to Agent Kyle Clark, who looked at it, said there was nothing to the threat, and told her to pass the note along to Agent Hosty.

It was at this point that the conspiracy theorists began to cry that the FBI had engaged in a coverup. They were able to make much out of the note's destruction. But the most sinister interpretation is that the note was later destroyed merely because it was embarrassing. At worst, it showed that Hosty had fallen down on the job—not that there was some grand conspiracy. In any case, Hoover never knew the note existed, and was dead by the time the controversy erupted. Had he known of the note in 1964, he would have used it during his disciplinary action against Hosty. *be*

Clearly, it was a breach of FBI regulations to destroy the note. Hosty claimed that Gordon Shanklin ordered him to do so, though he admitted he should never have obeyed. Shanklin testified that he could not remember telling Hosty to do it, but did not deny the charge. No one knows for certain what did happen. But it may be relevant that when the question of the note was revived in 1975, Shanklin told the bureau he was retiring because of a "serious personal problem," effective the next day.

There is no reason to pursue this matter. Shanklin, a good agent, has since died. Hosty, also a good agent, retired after years of successful service in Kansas City. But it's important to note that everything we know about the note suggests that it did not contain a serious threat, that its contents did not intimate Oswald was a danger to the president, and that under then-existing policy it was not the kind of information that would have been passed along to the Secret Service.

Chances are the note was as innocuous as Hosty said it was. Besides, FBI agents soon learn to ignore the threats and ravings of

people who are clearly unbalanced. All sorts of wild people are attracted to FBI offices. During the Kennedy investigation, a Cleveland man called to assure us that Jacqueline Kennedy was a communist, that she knew the president was going to be killed, and that it was done with her permission. And in Dallas, a man came to headquarters, asked for an agent, and when he was ushered into an office began to shout: "George has no business out there! Abba is no kin to me. Peggy is no kin to me. All them people are no kin to me. I'll get the military after you all." No one in the Dallas office, of course, prepared for a possible military invasion. They showed the man to the door. The first time you hear a wild-eyed man say he'll blow you up with fifty pounds of dynamite or disintegrate you with his ray gun, or blow up your headquarters, you're a little unnerved. After a while, you get used to it. If you checked every threat, jailed every loudmouth, you would paralyze the bureau and destroy the federal prison system. So you weigh each case individually—and sometimes you make mistakes.

Since then, both the FBI and the Secret Service have reassessed their criteria for persons who might prove a danger to the chief executive. In 1963, we reported only those known to have threatened the president or expressed unusual hostility—people who had written letters, talked openly about assassination, or mumbled their homicidal intentions within earshot of friends and relatives. Examining the case of Lee Harvey Oswald—and comparing the Kennedy assassination with the murders of Lincoln, Garfield, and McKinley—both the FBI and the Secret Service have widened their nets to include a number of people who would have been overlooked in 1963. Current practice requires many more agents and hours of investigation, and there are those who say the efforts are largely wasted. But we have every reason to believe that today, under new regulations and procedures, a Lee Harvey Oswald would be caught before he could harm the president.

One thing is certain, speculation concerning the assassination of President Kennedy will continue. Even the FBI has not given up on the case. As recently as June 17, 1993—following the death, ten days earlier, of former Texas Governor John Connally—the bur-

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endorsed the idea of retrieving bullet fragments from Connally's body, since he had been wounded in the wrist and thigh by the same bullet that pierced the president's throat.

The *New York Times* reported the story on June 18, 1993, with a Washington dateline: "FBI officials here and in Dallas said they favored trying to recover the fragments if the Connally family consented. 'If the family will allow this to be done, we could put this to rest,' said Oliver B. Revell, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI office in Dallas. 'Conspiracy theorists are not going to let this get away.'"

As the *Times* explained, an examination of the fragments could support the findings by the Warren Commission and the FBI that this was one of the three bullets fired by Oswald and by no other person or persons. But the Connally family objected strenuously to having the body exhumed for this purpose. Said a spokesman for the family, "Mr. Connally was available for thirty years for that purpose, and in all that time no such request was made by any responsible authority. The family will resist any efforts to disturb the body."

I would certainly agree with that decision. Even if an examination proved that the metal fragments in Connally came from the bullet that wounded Kennedy, critics would still claim that other shots were fired, other assassins involved, other evidence suppressed. Nothing will ever satisfy the conspiracy theorists. They have staked too much on their wild hypotheses—many have built whole careers spinning conspiracies. The simple fact remains: Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone, killed John F. Kennedy.

most of this has nothing at all to
do with Jack Ruby

an abusive and anonymous message. In his autobiography, Ralph Abernathy reports their almost automatic reaction:

He ran the tape forward while the squeaky voices chattered in high speed. Then there were other sounds and he slowed the tape down. Clearly what we were hearing were whispers and sighs from a bedroom. After a minute of this, Martin suddenly reached over and punched the stop button.

"That's enough. It just goes on like that," he said quietly. We sat in silence for a moment, staring at each other.

"J. Edgar Hoover," I said.

"It can't be anyone else," he said.

In fact, as Abernathy later acknowledged in his book, it was someone else. As we ourselves later determined, it was Assistant Director William C. Sullivan, at that point riding dangerously high on his ego. Yet both Abernathy and King quickly, almost instinctively, blamed Hoover, who would have been horrified at what Sullivan had done. Clearly neither King nor Abernathy had learned anything from their interview with the director. Such a move was not his style. He was no coward. Had he taken a notion to confront King with his immoral conduct, he would have done so at the meeting in his office. The person who had sent King the tape and the note clearly had the sensibilities of a bushwhacker.

On the other hand, Hoover was just as disgusted as Sullivan with King's private life. In January 1964, I recall seeing one of Hoover's typical "blue-ink" comments on a memo concerning King's adulterous behavior. He called King a "tom cat" who was possessed by "degenerate sexual urges."

(Sullivan once brought one of the tapes to my office and started to play it for me. I listened for a minute or so, then told him to turn it off. The dialogue was sickening. No decent human being could have enjoyed eavesdropping on such conversations. I was happy to see the tapes sealed by a federal court. As published leaks have already indicated, they contain nothing of political or social signif-

icance—no smoking and vulgar sex talk.)

Our surveillance of Martin Luther King Jr. passed on to Attorney General Ramsey Clark, King's closest advisor. In a letter to Clark, Levison had written that at a Communist party convention in Miami, Levison had advised King on administrative procedures, and Levison had prepared a media concerning the Vietnam War. He even gave musical concerts for the

We learned about informants—two brothers, Jack Childs, were on the Cuban Communist party, rung by rung, over the years, both trained for working for the United States. They were so trusted that they were given funds (more than a million dollars) from a Childs brother who gave it back into the United States. The amount increased as the years passed.

We nevertheless exercised great discretion. While the communists laid out their actions, never revealing a rule, it was more of an echelon of the party we received.

The case of Sta

Proven FBI

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Memphis and Alabama, in

Washington we were concentrating on the 30.06 Remington Gamemaster 760—which we had every reason to believe was the weapon that had ended Dr. King's life. Agents in Memphis quickly determined that the rifle abandoned in the bundle dropped in front of the junk shop had been part of a shipment from a Birmingham wholesaler in the spring of 1966. The wholesaler had in turn sold the rifle to a Memphis gun shop on August 31, 1966—almost two years before the killing of Dr. King.

Armed with this information, agents entered the gun shop the day after the assassination and asked to see the sales records. A clerk looked up the transaction.

"Sold to a man who said his name was Harvey Lowmyer. He paid cash for it on March 30—\$248.59. But that's not all he bought."

The agents perked up.

"This same guy had come in here the night before he bought the Remington. That night, he bought a Browning Mauser rifle, let's see, with a Redfield telescopic sight. He also bought a box of ammunition."

"Did he talk? Give any reasons for buying the weapon?"

"He said he was going hunting in Wisconsin. By the way, I have his address. Here—it's on South 11th Street."

The agents wrote down the address, and immediately drove to the spot, hoping to surprise Lowmyer. But when they got there, the tenants in the building said they'd never heard of anyone by that name. It was a false address.

By this time we realized that our chief problem would be to discover the true identity of the killer. He'd already used three names—John Willard, Eric Galt, and Harvey Lowmyer—and chances were we still didn't have his right name.

Memphis agents meanwhile continued to follow up on leads. In examining the registry of the Lamar Avenue motel where Galt had stayed, they noted that he listed as his permanent address 2608 Highland Avenue in Birmingham, Alabama. Two Birmingham agents visited the address and found a huge, sprawling white-clapboard rooming house. Its paint was peeling and it listed to one

Shore's FBI

The Hunt for James Earl Ray • 241

Meanwhile, our undercover agent at the Atlanta rooming house had discovered that, as suspected, the manager hadn't told us everything. When confronted and reminded of the penalty for withholding criminal information, he began to talk. He remembered the full name of his tenant as "Eric S. Galt" and also that Galt had arrived not on April 5, but on March 24.

He'd next seen Galt on March 31, when the rent came due. He confessed he'd entered Galt's room on the morning of April 5th to change the linen and had found a note saying that Galt had gone to Birmingham and would return in about a week. He insisted that this was the last time he'd heard from the suspect and that he'd confiscated the belongings left behind when the rent expired. These items included a portable TV set, a booklet entitled *Your Opportunities in Locksmithing*, a collection of maps of Birmingham, Atlanta, Los Angeles, several Southwestern states, and Mexico. (King was known to have visited all these places, except Mexico.)

Places Ray had been other than Atlanta

With the suspect's white Mustang impounded, agents were able to trace service stickers inside the door to a Ford dealer in California. The dealer dug out records indicating that Eric S. Galt—with an apartment address in Los Angeles—had brought the car in for servicing on February 22, 1968. Agents immediately went to the apartment management and determined that Galt had indeed lived there—in a bachelor unit that cost slightly more than \$100 a month. He'd been a resident from November 1967 to January 1968. But he'd kept to himself, made no apparent attempts to cultivate friendships, and no one saw him receive any visitors. As far as anyone knew, he was unemployed.

From that apartment house, Galt moved to a cheap hotel on Hollywood Boulevard in Los Angeles, where his rent was \$85 a month. When he left the hotel on March 17, he gave his forwarding address as General Delivery, Atlanta, Georgia.

Examining all the reports back in Washington, we began to see a clear picture emerging. All the signs were there: the aliases, the movement from one place of residence to another, the reluctance to

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Hoover's FBI

for the overthrow of the president, and a war of attrition. The Black Panther platform: "In order to destroy the United States, we have to overthrow the government. Over 48 Panthers were arrested for armed robbery, rape, bank robbery, and in 1970, Black Panther Party members on more than 450 occasions, committed criminal violations. Five were killed during the four years; the Panthers claimed that they were responsible for 10 of the twenty, ten died in the process; four were killed by Panthers; four were persons unknown; one was a woman; one died of barbiturate poisoning; one died of a wife over an extramarital affair; one was killed by Panthers themselves.

In 1969, the mutilated body of James Earl Ray was resected. Rackley had been scalded with boiling water, and shot. Of the fourteen Panthers, Rackley was murdered. During 1968 and 1969, the Panthers had machine guns, sawed-off shotguns, and a cache of ammunition, assorted bombs, gunpowder, and in addition to this cache of printed articles on the use of explosives. The newspaper carried the headline: "The newspaper carried the headline: '...to knock the pig out of the blocks.'"

In dealing with this increasing violence, the FBI was caught in a cross-fire. On the one hand, President Johnson, conservative Democrats, and most Republicans were calling on us to end these shocking acts, which were filling the front pages of their newspapers every morning and their television screens every night. On the other hand, the Left was crying "fascism" and "McCarthyism" every time any law enforcement agency attempted to intervene.

In the face of this mounting challenge to the stability of American society, Hoover's level of frustration peaked. One day he called me into his office and asked, "Isn't there some way we can slap some of these riot leaders in jail?" He brought his fist down on the desk. "This burning and looting is an outrage. How about the conspiracy statute?"

I shook my head sadly.

"We're keeping in close touch with the Department of Justice on all outbreaks," I said. "The protest leaders are playing it close to the chest. Publicly, they keep shouting 'nonviolence' and claim that the outbreaks are spontaneous or else provoked by local police. Privately, of course, they're agitating and provoking these youngsters to riot."

"Well, stay on top of it," he demanded. "And tell all of our special agents in charge to be alert to any possible violations within our jurisdiction."

But I hadn't told him what he wanted to hear. He was no longer satisfied with this wait-and-watch philosophy. It appeared to him—and to a majority of Americans—that the very survival of the nation was at stake. No one believed that these students and young blacks could by themselves overthrow the government. They were little more than a petulant mob. But the kind of disorder they promoted was potentially dangerous, and Hoover feared the New Left might open the door for a more purposeful revolution, one that could harness the unbridled rage.

At this point, William Sullivan came up with a plan of action, a suggestion that made him cock of the walk: use COINTELPRO—the active counter-intelligence program we used against Communists and the Klan—against the New Left. That meant infiltrating

the organizations, gaining positions of authority, then gathering intelligence, promoting dissension in the ranks, and pushing self-destructive policies. And that was just for starters. Agents would recruit informants from within the organization and use them as intelligence gatherers; plant false information to mislead the organization in its development of strategy; and discredit true-believing organization officials by engineering circumstances to suggest they were disloyal to their cause and fellow members. The strategy also included using the press to embarrass the organization with hostile press releases, leaked information, and false news stories.

Bringing the full force of COINTELPRO also meant black bag work—surveilling comings and goings, bugging offices and residences, and tapping telephones lines.

If COINTELPRO sounds deliberately deceptive, an exercise in lying and mean-spiritedness, it was certainly these things, and intentionally so. Planned as a means of combatting the Communist party, those who instituted the program simply proposed that we do to the Communists what they were doing to us.

The same methods were used against the Ku Klux Klan in Mississippi. Agents became Klan members, sowed seeds of discontent, set one klansman against another, collected intelligence, and recruited informants—just as we later did to the SDS. Indeed, had it not been for COINTELPRO techniques, we might never have found the bodies of Schwerner, Chaney, and Goodman or gathered sufficient evidence to try and convict their killers.

It is difficult to assess the ultimate effectiveness of COINTELPRO against the New Left. We placed agents in their midst, recruited informants, and learned a great deal about their activities and future plans. We caused dissension within their ranks, harassed them, and built cases for indictments—some of which resulted in convictions. Eventually, the anger on campuses died down, in part because young people have a low attention span, in part because college administrations obediently transformed their philosophies and curricula to accommodate the revolutionaries, in part because of the activities of law enforcement agencies, including the FBI.

The use of COINTELPRO opened up the bureau to criticism from the Left, especially as William Sullivan's ambition got the bet-

ter of him and he began to break the law, and eventually at a time that COINTELPRO was attacking communism. And not only did it violate the civil rights of the people, but it also violated the civil rights that the FBI was using to fight in the late 1960s, the n

In those days, tel- lutionaries, not only in Vietnam, but also as exciting as the c- strations of 1963 a- thy for even the mo- tions, shrugging off and murder. The Bl media; Leonard Be- threw a fund-raisin apartment, a party the Left, *Radical Ca* siasm for radicals, righteous media.

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