

FBI Wanted to Control the JFK Probe

By JOSEPH VOLZ and FRANK VAN RIPER



UP photo
Researcher checking stacks of files on JFK assassination at FBI building.

Washington (News Bureau)—J. Edgar Hoover's FBI conducted a monumental investigation into the assassination of President Kennedy while it also was fighting a bitter bureaucratic battle to retain control over the inquiry and avoid any hint of criticism, newly released FBI documents disclosed.

Hoover, then at the height of his power as FBI director, personally directed the JFK investigation, and was reluctant to have the bureau's efforts overshadowed by a special presidential commission.

Although President Johnson shared Hoover's reluctance, according to the documents, Johnson ultimately named the commission and appointed Chief Justice Earl Warren to head it. The Warren Commission, whose findings leveled criticisms at the FBI and the Secret Service, concluded that Lee Harvey Oswald was the sole assassin of Kennedy.

The 40,000 pages of FBI documents, so-called "raw" files rarely seen by the general public, were released Wednesday under the Freedom of Information Act. Although names of informants and other apparently sensitive bits of information were excised, the documents afford a rare glimpse of how the FBI

J. Edgar Hoover's first impressions of the assassination of John F. Kennedy were apparently correct. See today's Capitol Staff by James Wiegart on page 42.

Seemingly relentless, the bureau whose methods have come under sharp criticism in the 14 years since Kennedy's death—tracked down hundreds of leads regardless of how bizarre or fruitless they appeared to be.

It tracked down, for example, the hobo who scrawled Oswald's name inside a railroad box car. It interviewed a long distance telephone operator who thought she overheard conversations about the assassination. It sifted hundreds of supposedly private records from telephone and telegraph companies, employment agencies and the like. Often, the information was supplied by

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a "friendly" source in the firm, or by someone so moved by Kennedy's murder that he or she willingly divulged the information to authorities.

Concerned with its investigation, the FBI also was concerned with covering itself. It was not above putting the President of the United States "on the spot" to protect the bureau's image for thoroughness.

In January 1964, the records revealed, the FBI wanted to get Johnson on record as saying that the bureau had no data before the assassination regarding Oswald that would have given a clue that Oswald was a potential assassin. The FBI had been aware of Oswald, knew that he was in Dallas, and even had interviewed Oswald's Russian-born wife, Marina.

A Letter to the President

The vehicle for Johnson's planned remarks was to have been a reply to a letter the President received from a Dallas photographer, M.M. (Pat) Murphee, urging Johnson to publicly exonerate the Dallas police for the actions following the Kennedy assassination.

The White House asked the FBI to prepare a response on behalf of the President.

The FBI-drafted reply stated that "the FBI has continually and promptly advised the Secret Service of all information in its possession indicating a potential danger to the President or his family. The data the FBI had prior to Nov. 22 gave absolutely no clue that he (Oswald) was a potential assassin."

Assistant FBI Director Alan Belmont, in suggesting the letter's wording, noted to superiors that "the President may feel that we are putting him on the spot by including these two sen-

ances even though we regard them as truthful and accurate." It was not clear from the FBI documents released yesterday whether Johnson ever sent the letter to the Dallas photographer.

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Social Aide Here Tagged Oswald Before Dallas

By JOSEPH VOLZ

Washington (News Bureau)—A psychiatric study of Lee Harvey Oswald, drawn up by a staff member of the Bronx, N.Y., Youth House 10 years before the assassination of John F. Kennedy, was tragically borne out by the events in Dallas, FBI files show.

An unidentified social worker from the house, at 1221 Spofford Ave. told the New York Family Court that Oswald then 13 and often truant, was "a seriously detached, withdrawn youngster . . . laconic and taciturn," a loner "with fantasies about being powerful and sometimes hurting or killing people." She was right on target according to no less an authority than the late FBI director, J. Edgar Hoover.

In words that unknowingly echoed the psychiatric report, Hoover said in an internal FBI memorandum on the day of the assassination, Nov. 22, 1963, that "our agents view him (Oswald) as a nut as he freezes up and withdrawn into himself when he is being questioned as he did this afternoon down in Dallas."

Veil Between Him, Others

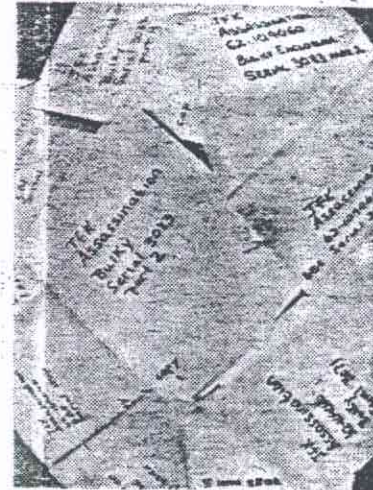
Described in 1953 as an "emotionally starved, affectionless youngster," Oswald was said to have "detached himself from the world around him because no one in it ever met any of his needs

and love . . . He feels almost as if there is a veil between him and other people through which they cannot reach him, but he prefers this veil to remain intact."

Oswald's father, an insurance agent, died of a heart attack two months before Oswald was born, and his mother, Marguerite, was described by the Bronx social worker as "a rigid, self-involved woman with strong ideas and . . . little understanding of this boy's behavior nor of the protective shell he has drawn around himself in his effort to avoid contact with people which may result in hurt for him."

'Can Be Reached'

There was hope in the report, however. "We gained the definite impression that Lee can be reached through contact with an understanding and very patient psychotherapist and if he could be drawn at the same time into group psychotherapy," the report said. "He



Associated Press photo
Some of folders released on assassination of President Kennedy.

had a score of IQ 118 on the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for children."

But Oswald's mother strongly rejected any such assistance, and "consistently refused to contact" Oswald's parole officer, giving as her excuse the exigencies of her job in a Brooklyn department store.

In January 1954, the Oswalds, mother and son, moved from New York, and that was the last time the Family Court heard of Lee until Nov. 22, 1963.

FBI Pondered: Was Marina Oswald a Spy?

Washington (News Bureau)—She appeared to the world as the frightened widow of the President's assassin. She could barely speak English and seemed overwhelmed, though not surprised, that her husband, Lee, had done what he did.

But was Marina Oswald really a Russian spy? In the initial investigation of the President's assassination, that possibility was discussed.

FBI documents released this week quote an unnamed Soviet intelligence

source as stating that he believed "Oswald and his wife had some connection with the Russian Intelligence service."

The informant, whose name was blacked out in the files released to the press and public, was believed to be Yuri Nosenko, a ranking member of the Soviet KGB who had spent years being debriefed by U.S. authorities following his defection in the 1960s.

The FBI memo quotes the informant as questioning the ease with which Oswald and his wife were able to leave

Russia for the United States after Oswald had defected to Russia. The memo said of Marina: ". . . either (she was) an uneducated peasant type and considered safe to leave the Soviet Union or had connections with the Soviet intelligence service."

The informant ended by saying that Marina "should be observed closely and thoroughly interrogated."

Marina Oswald, now remarried, has always contended that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone.