

# 40,001 Pages From FBI Files



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Jack Ruby, right, shoots Lee Harvey Oswald as Oswald is being transferred to county jail.

## Bickering, but Little New Evidence

12/8/77  
By William Claiborne  
and George Lardner Jr.  
Washington Post Staff Writers

The FBI yesterday made public thousands of new documents that reveal intense backstage bickering and infighting over how to investigate President Kennedy's assassination, but apparently no startling new evidence about the murder.

At one point, nearly three weeks after the President was killed in

Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963, then-FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover professed far greater misgivings than he ever publicly acknowledged about the possibility that others besides Lee Harvey Oswald may have been involved.

Recounting a conversation he had just had with Warren Commission general counsel Lee Rankin on Dec. 12, 1963, Hoover said in a four-page memo that morning that "I personally believe Oswald was the assas-

sin" but "the second aspect as to whether he was the only man gives me great concern . . ."

But it remained unclear whether the canny FBI director was voicing this fear simply for the record or whether he was really troubled by it. As evidence of his apprehensions, he said he told Rankin of "several letters" written to Oswald from Cuba "referring to the job he was going to do . . ."

See DOCUMENTS, A12, Col. 4

# FBI Papers on JFK Murder Produce Little New Evidence

## DOCUMENTS, From A1

In another memo written that day, Hoover, however, dwelt on the suspicious nature of those letters, noted that they had been written on the same typewriter although ostensibly signed by different individuals, and concluded that they were apparently "an attempted hoax." Rankin was evidently told none of this.

The massive compilation of documents, a total of 40,001 pages released by the FBI under the Freedom of Information Act, is full of similar puzzles and contradictions on the events following the Kennedy murder.

Another 40,000 pages is expected to be released next month as a result of the bureau's "Project Onslaught," a four-month, \$2.8 million effort to reduce its huge backlog of FOIA requests. FBI officials said the release of the Kennedy papers alone, covering more than 200 volumes, cost, by conservative estimate, at least \$188,000.

Many of the papers released yesterday had been previously made public over the years, but these were re-released together with the new documents without any distinction. Uncounted pages bearing on the Kennedy assassination in key FBI field offices, such as Dallas and New Orleans, are still locked up. The files being released consist solely of FBI headquarters documents in three categories: the JFK assassination, Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby.

Just three days after the assassination, high-ranking FBI officials began already to reflect in their internal correspondence the frustration of trying to prove, in effect, a negative proposition—that a foreign conspiracy did not exist.

Courtney Evans, a top aide to Hoover, mused about a telephone conversation he had with then Deputy Attorney General Nicholas B. Katzenbach, in which the two discussed the pending bureau report and the pressures to make the findings of the investigation public.

"We are being called upon, in many instances, to prove the negative. Katzenbach notes it is more difficult to prove that something did not happen than it is to prove that it did happen.

"From the facts disclosed in our investigation, there is no question that we can submit in our report convincing evidence beyond any doubt showing Oswald was the man who killed President Kennedy," Evans said. But, he allowed, "We must be factual and recognize that a matter of this magnitude cannot be fully investigated in a week's time." 3

A handwritten notation—the writer unknown—added, "Just how long do you estimate it will take. It seems to me we have the basic facts now."

The next day, Evans wrote another memo to Hoover aide Alan Belmont repeating not only Katzenbach's concern for a speedy report of the FBI's findings, but also mounting worries about press speculation about a conspiracy.

One of the dangers Katzenbach cited, according to this memo, was that an inquiry by state officials in Texas would delve into the sensitive area of Oswald's motives.

"One of the dangers which Katzenbach sees is the possibility that the state hearing . . . may develop some pertinent information not now known," Evans wrote.

In an effort to minimize that danger, he said, he dispatched a Justice Department official to talk with Texas officials "to have them restrict their hearing to the proposition of showing merely that Oswald killed the President . . . He hopes to avoid the state hearing going into the question of motive or trying to resolve the communist angle."

The same memo revealed that Katzenbach had learned, "on an extremely confidential basis," that Washington attorney Abe Fortas, a confidant of President Johnson, had talked with Johnson and argued against the idea of having a presidential commission look into the assassination.

Fortas' argument, according to Evans, was that even to announce such a commission would suggest there was more to the assassination than one man acting alone, and that it would also call into question the effectiveness of the FBI.

"Fortas, of course, is no friend of the bureau and there would appear to be some obvious underhanded motive in his using us in his argument, although we don't know what this is," the Hoover aide said.

The Evans remark ran counter to a widespread assumption that Fortas was a principal advocate of the creation of the Warren Commission.

Signs of internal rivalry and occasional bickering among the highest levels of the assassination probe began to develop just a few weeks after the President was slain.

For instance, on Dec. 2, Katzenbach telephoned Evans, according to a memorandum of conversation, and said that Chief Justice Earl Warren was "strongly opposing" any publication of the still incomplete FBI report on the assassination. Warren felt so strongly about it, Katzenbach is quoted as saying, that he would resign from the commission if anything was

released.

The memo went on to say that Katzenbach also regarded Warren Olney, who was being considered as chief counsel to the commission, as "undesirable" for the post. His reasons were not spelled out.

The next day, Cartha (Deke) DeLoach, assistant FBI director, reported in a memo that Katzenbach had called him and said he believed that Olney had "definitely been dumped," and that he had given the go-ahead for the appointment of Lee Rankin as general counsel.

Occasionally testy discussions also developed at the Justice Department and the White House over the form of a press release that was to be issued concerning the investigation.

According to a Dec. 9 DeLoach memo, Hoover felt "strongly" that only the first paragraph of a proposed press release—asserting blandly that an FBI report had been transmitted to the commission—should be released.

However, Katzenbach is quoted as saying there was a "stalemate" at the White House in connection with the release, with Fortas arguing that the entire release should be issued.

Fortas' argument, DeLoach wrote, was that "speculation, rumors and gossip should be dispelled right now.

"He claimed that it made no difference that the presidential commission would present findings to the President and the general public. He felt rumors concerning collusion between Ruby and Oswald, also concerning international conspiracy, should be hit hard now," DeLoach wrote.

As a result of the bickering, he said, there would be no press release. Instead, Katzenbach was to write a letter to Warren and each commission member appealing for a quick report so that rumors and speculation could be eliminated.

Referring to Katzenbach's letter, DeLoach said, "He goes on to point out that (the) investigation thus far has nailed down the point that Oswald assassinated the President and had no assistance. He further mentions that Ruby operated strictly as an 'individual and had no assistance. He points out that there is no evidence of collusion or international intrigue."

Interestingly, the suppressed press release did not seem worthy of so much bureaucratic anguish.

It merely stated that an FBI report had been sent to the commission, and that the Justice Department was of the opinion that scientific examination of evidence had established that Oswald shot Kennedy. It also said that no evidence had been uncovered

to date of a conspiracy involving any persons, including Jack Ruby, but that this aspect of the probe would be investigated further.

The letters Hoover cited to Rankin as potential indicators of a conspiracy pointing toward Cuban Premier Fidel Castro concerned a so-called Pedro or Peter Charles. Hoover said he told Rankin that they alluded to Oswald's "good marksmanship" and stated "when it was all over, he [Oswald] would be brought back to Cuba and presented to the chief." Hoover said it was not certain that "the chief" was Castro, but suggested that the letters were sufficient reason for his strongly urging Rankin at that point in the inquiry "that we not reach conclusion Oswald was the only man."

Despite all that, the FBI laboratory had by then made a thorough examination of the Charles letter, which was dated Nov. 10, 1963, but not postmarked in Havana until Nov. 23, 1963, and compared it with another letter, also postmarked in Havana on Nov. 23, 1963, and addressed to Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy.

The first letter, from Charles to "Friend Lee," was intercepted in Dallas Dec. 5, 1963, and was not, in itself, a new disclosure. It was written in such a way as to suggest that Oswald had been paid off by Charles in Miami to carry out an unspecified mission that involved accurate shooting.

The other letter, dated Nov. 27, 1963, and addresses to Robert Kennedy by someone calling himself "Mario del

Rosario Molina," asserted that Oswald had killed the President at the direction of Pedro Charles, a Castro agent who was supposed to have met Oswald in Miami some two months earlier and paid him \$7,000.

The FBI's Intelligence Division reported on Dec. 11, 1963, however, that both letters had been written on the same Remington typewriter, that the same type pen and ink had been used to sign both letters, and that the two postmark contained the same irregularities.

"... [It] seems clear that this matter represents an attempted hoax, possibly perpetrated by some anti-Castro group seeking to attach blame to the Castro government," the FBI's W. R. Wannall informed his boss in the Intelligence Division, William C. Sullivan.

Hoover indicated the next day, in one of the newly disclosed memos, that he agreed, saying that "it appears this matter represents an attempted hoax," especially in view of the delayed mailing, but adding that the CIA and State department had been asked to be alert for any signs that Molina might try to get to Venezuela as his Nov. 27 letter had stated.

There was no indication in the documents reviewed yesterday that he ever did.

Rich in detail, the documents portray a thoroughness which seems to transcend even the FBI's reputation

for attention to detail. No matter how obscure or ambiguous, each lead was tracked down with personal interviews, tireless background checks and a seeming obsession for completeness.

The Warren Commission encouraged such thoroughness, as Rankin wrote increasing numbers of letters to the FBI telling it about new tips received or claims of overheard conversations.

At one point, FBI officials seemed to show minor annoyance with what the commission was forwarding to the bureau.

"From general appearances of this communication, it would appear the correspondent has little, if any information... and might also be a mental case," the FBI said of one letter-writer. "However, in view of the commission's request, it is not felt we have any alternative but to handle the request," the memo added.

No matter who was brought to the bureau's attention—or no matter for what purpose—the subject would be checked out. Somebody at American Broadcasting Co. sent Hoover a complimentary record album with key broadcasts about the Dallas tragedy, and enclosed a form letter saying it was from ABC-Paramount Theaters President Leonard H. Goldenson. Hoover wrote a cordial letter of thanks, to which a bureau official attached the note, "Bufiles [bureau files] contain no derogatory information regarding Mr. Goldenson."

**Bizarre Theories Offered**

# Tips, Tipsters Probed

12/8/77

By John Jacobs and Ronald Kessler

Washington Post Staff Writers

In investigating the assassination of President Kennedy, the FBI pursued tips from sources ranging from shoeshine boys to deranged spouses, and one agent even speculated that some chalk handwriting found inside a boxcar in Newport, Mich., could have been Lee Harvey Oswald's and should be investigated.

The 40,001 pages of FBI documents relating to the John F. Kennedy assassination, released yesterday under a Freedom of Information Act request, reveal that the bureau, as might be expected, was eager to enhance its reputation, preserve its investigative territory from encroachment by other government agencies and investigate the backgrounds of people who sent in tips.

An example of the thoroughness with which the FBI followed its leads, no matter how seemingly

See GLEANINGS, A12, Col. 1

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (62-109260) (filed by 3040)  
Exempt from GDS, Category 2

FROM: SAC, ALBANY (62-1646) (P) Declassification 7/21/82

SUBJECT: ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY  
11/22/63, DALLAS, TEXAS  
MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION CONCERNING

Re Dallas airtel to Bureau, 3/4/64.

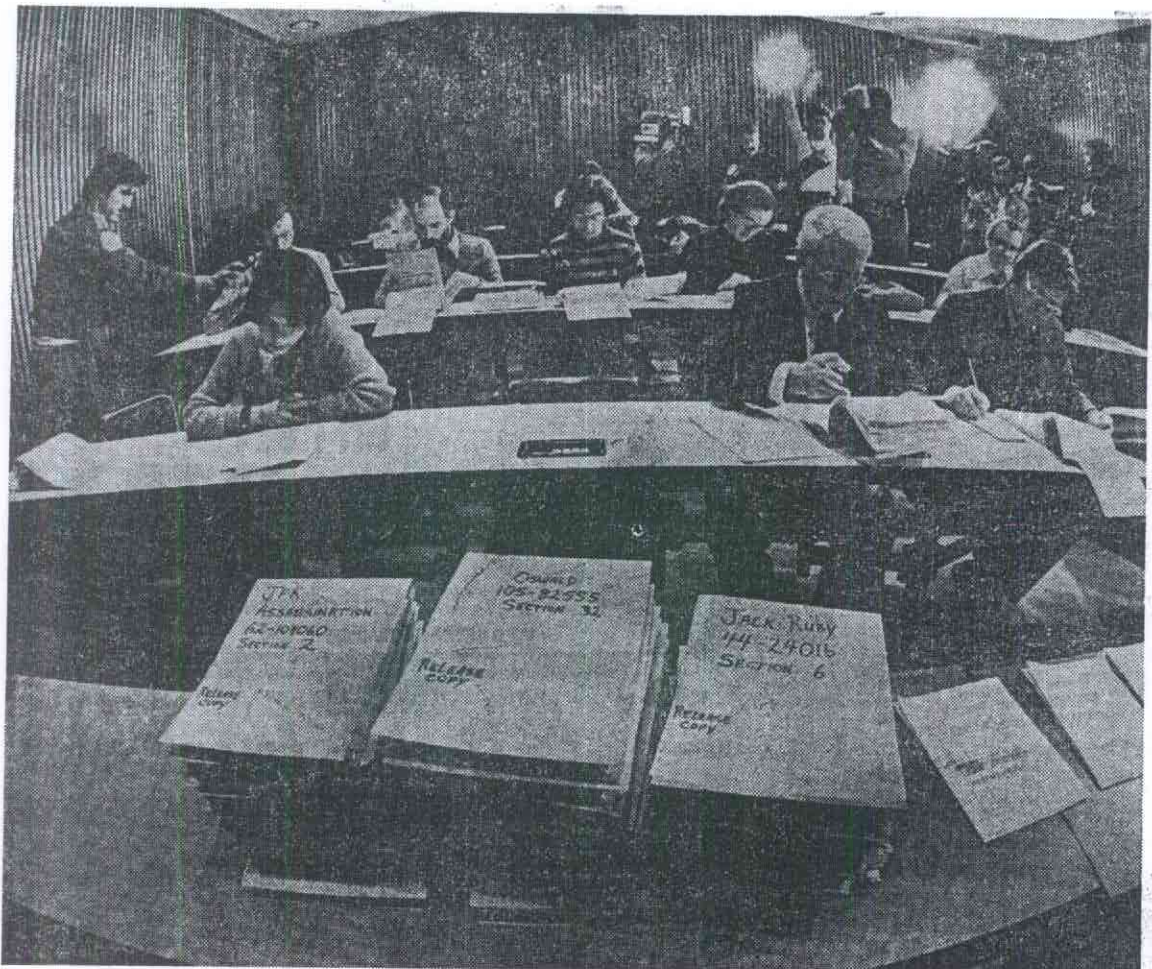
The following investigation was conducted by SA EDWARD A. MC SHANE, JR.: U

AT MONTREAL, CANADA

[REDACTED]

Bureau (RM) CONFIDENTIAL  
2-Dallas (100-10461) (RM)  
2-Albany  
JWF:jmb  
EX-108  
13 MAR 1964  
REC-9 13 MAR 1964 - 2664  
100  
54

A censored page from the FBI files.



By Frank Johnston—The Washington Post  
Reporters read through documents released yesterday by the FBI on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

# FBI Probed Tips and the Tipsters As Bizarre Theories Were Offered

GLEANINGS, From A1

Inconsequential, was a bulletin from the Miami field office to Director J. Edgar Hoover on Nov. 2, 1963, the day after the assassination. The Miami agent relayed a tip from a shoeshine agent relayed a tip from a shoeshine boy that a Miami Beach gangster known as "Jimmy Blue Eyes" was heard to remark: "They should have gotten the whole family, including Robert Kennedy."

Prior to a gubernatorial election in Louisiana, a source overheard a man in a Stetson hat say, "If we can't put a man in by ballot, we'll get rid of this one with a 30-30." The FBI investigated men around the state Capitol who wore Stetsons, discovering that five state senators and three state representatives did.

The files also contain a report about a Portsmouth, Va., woman who forged a letter in which her ex-husband confessed to the assassination.

Something about the Kennedy assassination seemed to provoke people's paranoid fears and resulted in a large number of bizarre predictions, hypotheses or leads to follow.

One man volunteered that Jack Ruby, who shot Oswald while he was being transferred from the Dallas city jail, did card tricks in Muncie, Indiana, in 1942 while visiting leftist relatives who ran a jewelry store. Another woman said her husband's relatives were "as mean as rattlesnakes" and could have killed Kennedy. She said her husband had been trying to drive her crazy for 16 years, but he was the one who was really nuts.

An anonymous caller informed the FBI that the Irish Republican Army was coming to Dallas to "commit mayhem on that city." The bureau relayed

that grim message to the State Department, the CIA, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service in addition to cabling unknown parties in London.

An Italian from Vicenza wrote Hoover offering his services in the investigation. "I think to know whom has had the idea of shooting [sic] J.F. Kennedy," Gazzotto Amedeo wrote on April 2, 1964. "Do not think that I am an insane person I have (unintelligible) all the vicissitudes of his death."

It was noted on the bottom of his letter that he was interviewed "in the presence of the 163d Military Intelligence Battalion, U.S. Forces."

And then there was the "four jacks" theory. This contribution to the investigation was sent in anonymously. "J.F. Kennedy was killed by a rat named Jack Webber," the theory went, "and Oswald was killed by another rat named Jack Ruby and Webber was done away by Jack Prasher and his body done away with. There are four jacks named here and there is four jacks in a deck of cards and Webber was a partner of Ruby in crime and Oswald was ready to tell what he knew about Kennedy's death when he was done away with by a rat of low rating."

Alice Kinner of Albany, N.Y., wrote in that she dreamed about Kennedy's death two weeks before it happened. All the details were the same, except that in her dream his initials were in "big, black, bold print" in the newspaper, but "in real life, it was ordinary print."

Jack Mitchell Clay, of Rockford, Ill., informed the bureau that if Oswald hadn't killed the President, he would have. He further advised, according to an April 9, 1964, FBI memo, "that he would shoot any police officer or Negro who set foot on his porch."

One informant clued the bureau in to the possibility that a black waiter at a party in an Arlington motel "looked suspicious." He could have been connected, the informant said. A Nov. 27, 1963, memo summarizing this call noted that he thought perhaps even Richard Nixon arranged the assassination, but he could furnish no proof.

An FBI bulletin the day after the assassination singled out an El Paso man convicted for sending an extortion note to his mother. The El Paso field office thought he would fall "within the category of bureau interest" in the investigation because his probation officer thought he remembered that the convict wrote a threatening letter to the President in 1959.

Not content to simply investigate tips, the FBI also investigated the people who gave them:

After then Rep. Pat Minor Martin (R-Calif.) forwarded a constituent's letter suggesting that Oswald had really intended to shoot then-Texas Gov. John B. Connally, the FBI wrote in its own files, "Bufiles (Bureau files) contain limited contact with Cong. Martin (R-Calif.) and there is no derogatory information concerning him."

When the FBI learned that William Manchester had been chosen by Kennedy's widow to write a history of the assassination, the bureau noted in its files, "Bureau files contain no derogatory information [on Manchester]."

Karl Zerk of Los Angeles suggested in a letter to the Warren Commission that right-wing groups might have been behind the assassination and noted that Hoover's book "Masters of Deceit" had long been the "bible" of such extremists.

The letter was obtained by the FBI, which concluded Zerk had no information on the assassination. However, Hoover ordered a background check on Zerk, commenting that "... the general tone of his communication is insulting and prejudicial to us."

In other cases, the FBI directed its investigative zeal at other government agencies that might embarrass the bureau.

In a Dec. 18, 1963, memo, the FBI complained that the Secret Service was trying to establish that the bureau had had personal contact with Oswald and his wife prior to the dates already acknowledged by the FBI.

Characterizing this as displaying "more than normal interest in our activities than would be considered necessary in the investigation of the President's assassination," the memo recommended determining the purpose of the inquiries and obtaining a copy of the Secret Service's report before it was to be submitted to the Warren Commission.

When then-U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Thomas C. Mann attempted to pursue a possible Cuban connection to the assassination, Hoover wrote that he was "one of these pseudo-investigators, a Sherlock Holmes."

Commenting on a request from the Warren Commission that the FBI try to determine the exact speed of the presidential motorcade when Kennedy was shot, Hoover said, "OK. It sounds like a lot of poppycock to me."

Despite the crackpots and the weird allegations, the FBI managed to keep a straight face. One deadpan report described an investigation of the "Church of the Firstborn of the Fullness (Sic) of Times (Sic)." Another quoted Oswald's wife, Marina, as describing where she and Lee stood on the subject of America:

"Me like America. Lee no like America. like moon."

# FBI Tried to Avert Post Editorials

## Memo Relates Effort Against Appeal for Assassination Panel

By Paul W. Valentine  
Washington Post Staff Writer

High-ranking FBI officials made an elaborate attempt to stop The Washington Post from editorializing about the need for a "presidential commission" to investigate the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963, according to internal FBI documents released yesterday.

Cartha (Deke) DeLoach, a retired FBI assistant director and onetime confidant of director J. Edgar Hoover, told Hoover in a Nov. 25, 1963, memo that then Post managing editor Alfred Friendly at first assured him such an editorial would be killed but that Friendly withdrew the "commitment" 40 minutes later.

DeLoach said in the memo that Friendly "obviously had talked with Russ Wiggins," then editor of The Post and the person responsible for Post editorial policy.

Friendly called DeLoach back, the memo said, "to let me know as of this time no definite commitment could be given."

DeLoach then added: "This, of course is the usual 'hogwash' on the part of Wiggins who cannot be trusted and usually attempts to run opposite good judgment in order to satisfy his own ego."

The memo also notes that Nicholas deB. Katzenbach, deputy attorney general under Robert Kennedy at the time, called Wiggins and asked him not to be "specific" about the kind of mechanism for investigating the assassination.

Wiggins and Friendly, both now retired from The Post, said yesterday they could not recall an attempt by DeLoach to stop any editorials.

"I have no recollection of it whatsoever," said Friendly. "... It would have been absurd for him to call me. In the first place, I had no control or authority over editorials [as managing editor, Friendly was in charge of news operations at The Post], and in the second place, I never would have given such a commitment [to kill an editorial]."

Wiggins said he does recall Katzenbach's call. "He asked that we not be specific as to alternative [ways of investigating the assassination since the murder of suspected assassin Lee Harvey Oswald precluded a conventional criminal trial]."

Wiggins said Katzenbach's call had no effect. "We wrote what we wanted."

The Post ran two editorials on the subject shortly after Kennedy's death on Nov. 22, 1963. On Nov. 26 the day following the DeLoach memo, The Post published an editorial entitled "Full Inquiry."

It called for the federal government to "prosecute

this inquiry by means that assure the most objective, the most thorough and the most speedy analysis and canvass of every scrap of relevant information."

Two days later, on Nov. 28, another editorial noted that more than 50 FBI agents were assigned to the investigation in Dallas, where Kennedy was slain, but "it will remain for an experienced body of fact-finders to sift this evidence, to pursue any avenues that may remain clouded and to give the country a comprehensive view of the crime, and why it happened."

In his memo, DeLoach complained that a Post editorial urging a "presidential commission"—in which the FBI would be a subordinate element—"would merely 'muddy the waters' and would created further confusion and hysteria."

DeLoach said he stressed to Friendly that the FBI's own investigation was being personally supervised by Hoover and was "proving to be swift and intensive."

Additional internal memoranda released by the FBI yesterday indicate that the FBI role in the Kennedy assassination investigation generated other encounters with the press.

In one incident, DeLoach said he countered a published report that Oswald had been an FBI informant by issuing a general denial to the "wire services" and to Jeremiah O'Leary, longtime law enforcement reporter for the Washington Star who was known for his closeness with Hoover.

In the same memo, DeLoach described Jay Iselin, a correspondent for Newsweek magazine, as "friendly" to the FBI. He said Iselin told the FBI he had talked with Thomas Gettings Buchanan Jr., author of the Oswald-informant story, and believed Buchanan was a member of the Communist Party.

In another memo addressed to DeLoach, FBI official M. A. Jones expressed surprise about an article critical of the FBI that appeared in Security Gazette magazine, a publication with which "we have enjoyed friendly relations."

The article, which appeared in the magazine's December 1963 issue, criticized what it called an "apparent lack of liaison between the Secret Service, the FBI and the local police" in preparing for Kennedy's Dallas visit.

The memo suggested that FBI officials contact the magazine's editor and "tactfully point out to him the splendid relationship that exists between the FBI and Secret Service."

# All for the Answer: A Nation

By Ward Sinclair  
Washington Post Staff Writer

It is, as Harold Weisberg wrote in the first of his seven books on the murder of John F. Kennedy, a story like none other in our history.

With its disconcerting undertone of morbid compulsion, it has made us all a nation of G-men and, more, a nation of unrelenting skeptics.

All for the answer.

All for the answer, the Gallup Poll reports, half of us disbelieve the Warren Commission conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone as the assassin.

All for the answer, a disbelieving Congress sets out to conduct its own inquiry into the curious contradictions that continue to fuel the disbelief.

All for the answer, as could happen only in America, it has spawned a lucrative school of commercial revisionism and a cadre of media heroes who savor what we ask and tell us what we don't dare to know.

So yesterday, 14 years after that day in Dallas, the FBI responded to the endemic skepticism and doubt and turned loose 40,001 documents from the assassination file that hitherto had

been secreted in the bureau's eyes-only repository.

There will be more to come next month — something like 40,000 more documents from the archives—as the FBI, in its way, answers some 50 requests for data filed under the Freedom of Information Act.

The cache of documents released by the FBI after editing and cleansing is massive: 279 bound volumes of raw data in 12 cardboard cartons.

If the task for assembling the material was formidable, which it was, both in terms of cost (\$187,000) and long man-hours at the FBI, equally imposing was the exercise of digestion.

The media and the public did the best they could to cope with an avalanche of data that, by dint of volume and incongruity, at least defied quick and easy digestion.

In a first-floor reading room at its J. Edgar Hoover headquarters building, the FBI provided space for perusers of the documents. Three research analysts, headed by William Shackleford, who spent the last 18 months assembling the documents, stood by to help.

Our collective thirst for answers

notwithstanding, there was not a land-office atmosphere at the FBI reading room. Maybe—and there were those who said so—it was that the skepticism runs too deep for most to bother with expurgated revelation.

Reporters and researchers sat elbow-to-elbow at long tables in the classroom-like space and pored over the papers, searching for most knew not what.

Shackleford stood next to the six tall file cabinets, where the fruit of his search reposed, and expressed a thought:

"I think it all will point to the same conclusion—that Oswald was the lone assassin."

John Geddie was a reporter in Dallas when Kennedy was slain. Yesterday, as a Washington correspondent for the Dallas Morning News, he sat at the table and studied volume after volume from Shackleford's cabinets.

"I'm mainly looking for things to check out later," Geddie said. "But the volume of information gives a good indication of the amount of work that was done by the FBI."

By midday, after a full morning at his work, Geddie had found little

## of Unrelenting Skeptics

that would be helpful. Rather, he said, echoing others in the room, he was more curious about what the FBI had not included in the collection.

Behind him sat Priscilla Johnson McMillan, an associate at Harvard's Russian Research Center, who "lived with it for 13 years" before publishing "Marina and Lee," the story of the Oswalds.

"I'm looking for what, I don't know," she said. "I'm looking for things that do not show up in the full report of the Warren Commission."

Her pickings were slim. "No big sensations so far," she said. "But the big thing is to find out how much is still classified."

Near her were four researchers from the Assassination Information Bureau (AIB), a group that calls itself, in the phrase of Jeff Goldberg, "the eyes and ears for the people who can't come here."

Goldberg, a director of the group, and his aides were compiling an item-by-item index of the FBI material. "The key to all of this is what's not in the documents," he said. "My hunch is that 10 per cent of this may be worth rereading and studying. But

we're taking a wait-and-see attitude."

He complained that AIB and ordinary citizens who have a need to see the documents are crippled by the cost. At 10 cents a page, the FBI was charging \$4,000.10 for a complete set of the first documents.

AIB has asked the FBI to provide a cost-free set of documents as a public service. The bureau hasn't answered.

Cost was less of a factor for the large news-gathering organizations which mobilized and teamed up with each other to attempt the challenging mission of digesting the mass for deadline distribution.

The Associated Press, United Press International and NBC News each purchased its own set of documents. Newsday, the Long Island daily, bought a set and shared with other papers.

The Washington Post purchased a set, opened a ninth-floor conference room and, with reporters from other outlets joining in, put a team of readers to work to ferret out the new, the revealing, the fresh.

All for the answer, they found on page after page, a voluminous record of FBI investigation, very often down trails of disbelief, chasing tips from

cranks and drunks and pieces of a puzzle that beguiled and misled.

And through it all, the soaring persona of J. Edgar Hoover, responding to the tipsters, neatly brushing off the books, thanking loyal and skeptical Americans for their concern.

Here, a Missouri boy urging examination of the contents of Oswald's stomach. There, a purported Oswald cronie in Paris offering information for \$4,000 and two plane tickets to Portugal.

Now, a man in Argentina whose studies in "spiritism" gave him names and faces in Dallas. Then, memos from C. D. DeLoach, Hoover's right-hand man, fretting and warning about leaks in the investigation.

Harold Weisberg, a sort of father figure of the skeptics and the disbelievers, didn't even bother yesterday. "The people," he said from his Frederick, Md., home, have never believed the official story. . . . The people have great, good sense. Everybody is afraid of the people."

For his part, Weisberg went to see his dentist yesterday. All for another answer.