

FBI Releases Half-Ton File on Kennedy

Reports Give Nothing
to Alter Belief Oswald
Was Lone Assassin

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and NORMAN KEMPSTER

Times Staff Writers

WASHINGTON—The FBI Wednesday released a half-ton of documents on former President John F. Kennedy's assassination, adding some footnotes to history and detailing the bureau's painstaking detective work in the months after the 1963 shooting.

But the 40,001 pages of reports, memos and investigative files made available under the Freedom of Information Act disclosed nothing to alter the Warren Commission's principal finding—that Lee Harvey Oswald was Kennedy's lone assassin.

The files reflect FBI interviews with gun experts, bartenders, friends of Oswald and ordinary citizens, and they illustrate the early thinking in FBI headquarters.

One newly disclosed memo showed that J. Edgar Hoover, the late FBI director, told then-Atty. Gen. Robert F. Kennedy shortly after Oswald's arrest and just two hours after the slaying that Oswald was the assassin.

Hoover's memo to his files on Nov. 22, 1963, said he had just told Robert Kennedy that Oswald was "a mean-minded individual . . . in the category of a nut."

Oswald was shot to death the next day in the basement of a Dallas police station by nightclub owner Jack Ruby.

Hoover, however, remained cautious on the question of whether Oswald had accomplices, the files showed.

Nineteen days after Oswald's death, the FBI director persuaded President Lyndon B. Johnson to keep the Justice Department from announcing a preliminary finding that Oswald had acted alone. Hoover believed the question should be investigated further, the documents showed.

"I said I personally believe Oswald was the assassin," Hoover wrote in a Dec. 12, 1963, memorandum. But he added "The second aspect as to whether he was the only man gives me great concern."

As had the Warren Commission more than a decade ago, the FBI files traced Oswald's links to Fidel Castro's Cuba.

In his Dec. 12, 1963, memo, Hoover said, the FBI had several letters "written to him (Oswald) from Cuba" referring to the job he was going to do, his good marksmanship and stating (that) when it was all over, he would be brought back to Cuba and presented to the chief.

Hoover said, however, that the FBI lacked the sources in Cuba to check the authenticity of the letters.

In another incident, according to the files, a Los Angeles informer gave FBI agents the names of two San Juan, Puerto Rico, men who were said to know about "activities between Cuba and the United States." FBI agents were ordered to interview the men.

The Warren Commission had investigated, among other things, Oswald's activities in support of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee in this country, including his distribution of pamphlets demanding that the United States keep hands off the Castro-controlled island.

The FBI files may provide material

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Secretary of State Cyri
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for doubters as well as for supporters
of the Warren Commission's findings.
The documents contained no
evidence of a conspiracy, but the fact
that the FBI disclosed unsuccessful
efforts to verify hundreds of tips may
raise additional doubts among those
clinging to the conspiracy theory.

Several thousand documents were
withheld from the public under tradi-
tional exemptions of the Freedom of
Information Act. These included files
that might disclose the identities of
confidential informants, national se-
curity secrets or information fur-
nished by foreign governments, ac-
cording to FBI officials.

The files opened Wednesday will
be kept in a special FBI reading room
for scholars, researchers and other
interested persons and may be photo-
copied for 10 cents a page. An addi-
tional 40,000 pages covering the re-
mainder of the FBI's investigation
will be released in January.

FBI agents checked out tips,
hunches and gossip volunteered by
hundreds of Americans who believed
Oswald might have had accomplices.
The new documents show.
This mission sometimes led them to
interview strippers, drunks and per-
sons who apparently had psychiatric
problems, as well as citizens who
were honestly mistaken.
One woman told the FBI that she
had seen a struggle between a woman

and one or two gunmen in the win-
dow of a building just after the shoot-
ing. She said she saw this episode on
her television screen as cameras
scanned the motorcade route.
Agents visited major television sta-
tions and carefully viewed all their
film. They found nothing to verify
her account, the files show.

Agents were often told that if they
interviewed a particular person they
would get sensational information,
which the tipster recounted. But in-
terviews with such persons, related in
the files, showed the tipster had ap-
parently passed on an exaggerated
rumor.

Some persons called the FBI to say
they just realized the stranger they
had talked to weeks ago was Oswald
or that Oswald and Ruby had been
close associates. The files showed
these reports may have been cases of
mistaken identity.

For example, Ralph Leon Yates, a
refrigerator repairman, signed an af-
fidavit dated Dec. 10, 1963, in which
he told the FBI he had picked up a
hitchhiker he believed to be Oswald
two days before the assassination.
Yates said the man asked if he
knew Jack Ruby, who the
hitchhiker said was better known as
Jack Ruby. Yates said also that the
man had carried a four-foot-long
package wrapped in brown paper and
talked about killing Kennedy.
Apparently this account could not

be verified by the FBI. There was no
further reference to it in the docu-
ments, and the FBI never substan-
tiated that Oswald and Ruby knew
each other.
Ruby was convicted of murdering
Oswald in 1964 and died of a brain tu-
mor in 1967 after suffering from can-
cer for some time.

Other documents showed that just
13 days before he killed Kennedy, Os-
wald prodded the Soviet Embassy in
Washington to expedite his and his
wife, Marina's, request to return to
Russia.
Oswald had first gone to Russia in
1959, had married his Soviet-born
wife and returned with her to the
United States in June, 1962.

As early as Feb. 17, 1963, according
to records, Marina Oswald wrote the
Soviet Embassy to ask how she could
return to Russia alone. She later
wrote that her husband wanted to
join her.
The FBI investigation showed that
Oswald's last request to the Soviet
Embassy—on Nov. 9, 1963, just two
weeks before the assassination—had
never been acted on.

Throughout their reports, FBI
agents stressed that Oswald had long
expressed Communist sympathies,
even as a child.
In reporting on an interview with
Joseph Allen Skiles, a former sixth-
grade classmate of Oswald's, the FBI
said:

"Oswald was frequently summoned
to the principal's office because of ar-
guments between himself and his
teachers. He (Skiles) stated that most
of these arguments arose during so-
cial studies class when the theory of
democracy was being discussed. Os-
wald always questioned this theory
and seemed to disagree with it."

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ABORTION COMPROMISE APPROVED

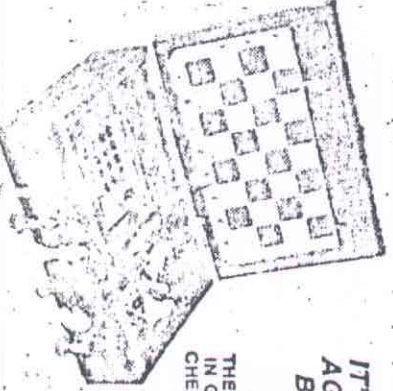
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rape or incest and the incident has
been reported promptly to police or a
public health service agency.
—Two doctors determine that a

Because of protests by Hyde and
others that the provision was open to
fraud, sponsors of the compromise
added language that would require
certification by two physicians.

"It is a major victory for women's
rights," said Sen. Jacob K. Javits (R-
N.Y.), one of Brooke's major allies in
the struggle to liberalize abortion
standards.
Brooke was more restrained. He

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