

FBI files renew questions on JFK

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By BOB DUDNEY

Times Herald Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Shortly after FBI headquarters opened its doors today, the most unsettling thought about the assassination of President Kennedy once again arose in much the same way that the Warren Commission expressed it years ago.

"Because of the difficulty of proving negatives to a certainty," the commission said, "the possibility of others being involved with Oswald... cannot be rejected categorically. But if there is any such evidence, it has been beyond the reach of all of the investigative agencies and resources of the United States."

With the release of some 40,001 pages from the FBI's massive file on the slaying in Dallas, the central question still is whether Lee Harvey Oswald, the presumed assassin, acted in concert with still unknown conspirators. The new FBI material, rather than laying the controversy to rest, appears destined to deepen it.

Those convinced that the assassination was indeed part of a continuing conspiracy beyond the reach of the law will be examining the long-secret FBI papers for new clues and insights into the events of Nov. 22, 1963, and afterward,

especially data on Oswald himself. The Warren Commission concluded Oswald was the lone assassin.

Others who are familiar with the 80,000-page file, the second half of which will be released next month, claim it gives solid basis to the commission's findings in 1964, and the essence of the volume is reflected in those FBI papers made public during the official investigation at the time.

As the new materials became public, a number of critical areas have become obvious targets of interest, chief of which may be Oswald's visit to Mexico City several weeks before the assassination.

The accused assassin is known to have visited the Soviet embassy and Cuban consulate during this trip. The commission concluded that the intent was to acquire a visa for travel to Cuba based on Oswald's past association with pro-Cuban groups and avowed Communist beliefs. The Central Intelligence Agency also had intercepted telephone calls from Oswald to the embassies during routine surveillance.

But the Mexico City trip has loomed as a dark mystery to others suspicious of the possible involvement of regular Cu-

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Start of investigation marked by confusion

By ROY E. BODE

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WASHINGTON — The initial FBI investigation of President John F. Kennedy's assassination shows a frantic search for a domestic or foreign conspiracy marked by chaos and misinformation, according to previously secret agency documents made public today.

Only a handful of reporters showed up at the Justice Department for the

FBI records show Oswald told wife about Walker shooting, Page 27-A

long awaited and highly publicized opening of the half-ton of documents, which consisted mainly of interoffice memos.

The documents show the massive FBI investigation started less than a hour after shots were fired at Kennedy's motorcade as it wound through downtown Dallas.

"Get everyone involved in shooting the President and get them fast," said an urgent message on a Justice Department letterhead from someone identified only as James Walsh.

A few hours later on Nov. 22, 1963, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover ordered his agents to "contact all informants — security, racial and criminal — as well as other sources for information bearing on the assassination of President Kennedy."

He added the whereabouts of "bombing suspects, all known Klansmen and hate-group members and known racial extremists" and any others "possibly involved" were to be determined immediately.

The investigation quickly focused on Lee Harvey Oswald and, within 48 hours, it widened to include the man who shot him, Jack Ruby.

The picture that emerges from the files shows the probe widening frantically to determine whether the assassination and Oswald's murder was part of a domestic or foreign conspiracy.

Oswald's background was traced quickly back to his activities in the Soviet Union and the files indicated the agency searched thoroughly for any Communist connection or underworld ties with Ruby.

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Hoover ordered hunt for possible suspects

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A link with Cuba was one possibility investigated by the bureau.

Much of the early information came from sketchy -- and often incorrect -- radio reports from Dallas stations.

Hoover's embarrassment was clearly evident as he explained in a mid-afternoon memo how he had telephoned the president's brother, Atty. Gen. Robert F. Kennedy, and told him the president was "very, very critical."

"The attorney general then told me the president had died," Hoover's 1:10 p.m. memo said. (The president's death had officially been announced 10 minutes earlier.)

Early reports from Dallas Special Agent in Charge Gordon Shanklin provided much false information to Hoover, who quickly spread it to other governmental entities, the memos show.

There were -- for instance -- reports from the Dallas agent that a Secret Service agent had been killed and that a black man had fired "a Winchester rifle" from the fourth floor of the Texas School Book Depository building.

At the time this report got to Hoover, the Mannlicher-Carcano rifle had not been removed from between two boxes and had not been examined. Three black depository workers had been leaning out of a fifth-floor window, looking upward to the sixth-floor perch where shots had come from and the rumors that a Secret Service man had been shot or killed were still rife among investigators though nobody could determine the authenticity of the rumor.

Other files show the U.S. Embassy in Rome sent Hoover a name from an

American newspaper columnist there who claimed the Spanish ambassador to Italy had shown him a report from the Spanish Intelligence Service claiming Fidel Castro was behind the assassination.

The columnist said, as he understood the report, Castro was "very much disturbed" by the deaths of the Diem brothers in Vietnam and felt they had been plotted by the CIA. South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem and his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu, chief of South Vietnamese secret police, were killed Nov. 1, 1963 in a military coup.

The intelligence report also reportedly said Castro was upset "by the apparent rapport established between President Kennedy and Premier (Nikita) Krushchev ... and felt that some direct act was needed to destroy this rapport."

The FBI cables the U.S. Embassy in Madrid asking it to check further with Spanish intelligence.

Elsewhere in the documents, FBI officials in Dallas asked Hoover's office to check passport records, CIA and State Department sources to determine if Ruby had been to Havana. Nothing apparently was found.

Much of the material details the painstaking manner in which the FBI went about assembling the backgrounds of Oswald and Ruby.

Hundreds of people who had reportedly made threatening remarks about the president also were investigated and leads were followed even when they apparently were worthless.

For example, an agent in Los Angeles listened to a convict in a California pris-



J. Edgar Hoover ...
... telephoned Robert Kennedy

on explain he had met Ruby about 10 years earlier while he was operating a club in Dallas.

"The point that (he) made the most of (was) that for the period of some three years that he associated with Ruby in various questionable activities, Ruby was extremely fond of fried chicken and he had noticed in news reports that Oswald had apparently left some evidence of eating chicken behind when he fled the scene of the assassination," the agent wrote in a report to Hoover.

An agent in Utah filed a report a few days after the assassination about a phone call from someone claiming that President Kennedy was not dead and his apparent shooting "was a gigantic hoax engineered by the FBI to trap the Mafia." The agent said he was unable to obtain further information because he had to take a call regarding the kidnapping of Frank Sinatra Jr.

Police told IRA plotted revenge in Dallas after Kennedy death

Times Herald Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — An anonymous caller warned the Orange County (Calif.) Sheriff's Office that the Irish Republican Army was planning to "commit mayhem" on Dallas after the assassination of President Kennedy, an FBI document says.

The report of an FBI agent in Los Angeles said the caller told a sheriff's captain he was told of the plan by a relative in England.

The IRA, the caller said, would attempt to get a company of IRA members into the United States via Air Lingas and, if unsuccessful, they would enter the country individually "for the purpose of going to Dallas to commit mayhem on that city."

The sheriff's captain concluded that the caller was "sane and well-educated," the agent wrote.

No terrorist incidents were reported in Dallas following the assassination. The IRA is a militant organization which has been fighting against British dominance in Ireland for years.

President Kennedy was of Irish heritage.

FBI releases 40,000 pages

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ban or anti-Castro exile elements in the president's murder. The FBI material may shed new light on the subject.

Another salient subject is the wide suspicion that Oswald had connections with American intelligence agencies. After Oswald, who defected to Russia in 1959, returned to America he had several contacts with FBI agents, including an interview with John Quigley in New Orleans instigated by Oswald.

Virtually all of the contacts appear to have been the result of an FBI security case on Oswald, routine for all former defectors to Communist nations, but many view them as evidence of Oswald's alleged employment by either the FBI or CIA. The Warren Commission rejected the suggestions completely.

Perhaps the most enduring mystery of the Kennedy assassination is what motive Oswald would have had for committing such an act. Oswald, who

earlier had shot at arch-conservative Gen. Edwin A. Walker in Dallas and talked of killing Richard Nixon, had evidenced no grudge against Kennedy.

The answer even eluded the Warren Commission, which reported that while "many factors were undoubtedly involved in Oswald's motivation... the commission does not believe that it can ascribe any one motive or group of motives."

on Kennedy's assassination

About 600 pages of the FBI material already had been released under the Freedom of Information Act to a private researcher, and while they revealed no explosive new aspects of the case they raised a number of tantalizing questions which may be resolved in the additional disclosures.

For instance, the FBI noted in one memorandum that it had traced the bullets from Oswald's 6.5mm Manlicher-

Carcano rifle to the Western Cartridge Co. of Alton, Ill. The company had manufactured four million rounds for the Marine Corps under contract in 1954, but agents later learned the shells did not fit any weapon then in use by the service.

"This gives rise to the obvious speculation that it is a contract for ammunition plotted by CIA with Western under a USMC cover for concealment pur-

poses," the Dec. 2, 1963 memorandum stated. The memo does not resolve the question, although the bullets could have been obtained from another batch produced later.

A number of persons feel the most intriguing of all the new FBI material may be those types of speculative memos, indicating the suspicions raised during the investigation and how they were handled.

FBI records show Oswald to

WASHINGTON (UPI) — FBI records released today included a detailed account from Marina Oswald of how her "crazy" husband tried to shoot Maj. Gen. Edwin Walker in Dallas almost eight months before he assassinated John F. Kennedy.

The report showed Lee Harvey Oswald told his wife he escaped from the Walker shooting scene on foot and by bus — the same transportation methods he used after the Kennedy killing — after deciding his speed afoot would let him elude police searching for someone in a car.

Agents reported Mrs. Oswald told

them of the April 10, 1963, attempt to kill Walker when they questioned her about a farewell letter written in Russian by her husband at the time of the Walker incident but still in the Oswald house when Kennedy was shot.

She said Oswald left their Dallas home April 10, telling her he was going to a night school typing class, but rushed home about midnight "and immediately turned on the radio and lay on the bed in a very agitated condition."

When Mrs. Oswald asked what was wrong, the report said, Oswald replied that he had tried to kill Walker by

shooting him with a rifle and did not know whether he had succeeded.

Mrs. Oswald told agents she did not see her husband take a rifle with him when he left the evening of April 10 and that he did not bring the weapon home. She said he told her he had hidden it in some bushes.

The report said Mrs. Oswald told agents she kept her husband's farewell letter to use against him if he ever had another "crazy scheme." It said when she saw the report on television that Kennedy had been shot, she feared her "crazy" husband was the sniper.

(Mrs. Oswald, testifying before the

old wife of Walker shooting

Warren Commission on Feb. 3, 1964, said she worried about her husband's whereabouts that night and, before he returned home, she discovered a note he had left for her.

(The note, which said "If I am arrested . . ." informed Mrs. Oswald where money had been left for her, the location of the mailbox key and other information, she testified.

(She said she could not remember the exact time Oswald arrived home that night, but estimated it at 11 p.m.

("When he came back in I asked him what had happened," Mrs. Oswald testified in 1964. "He was very pale."

("And he told me not to ask him any questions. He only told me that he had shot at General Walker."

(Mrs. Oswald recalled having first seen the rifle Oswald used that night about two months before the attempt on Walker's life.

("He said that it would come in handy some time for hunting," she testified.

(She said Oswald's preparations for the Walker shooting included taking pictures of Walker's house, checking bus schedules for his trip to and from Walker's home and shooting several practice rounds with the rifle at a site near Dallas Love Field.

(Asked why her husband shot Walker, Mrs. Oswald told the Warren Commission her husband told her "that this was a very bad man, that he was a fascist, that he was the leader of a fascist organization . . . He said if someone had killed Hitler in time it might have saved many lives."

(Mrs. Oswald testified she never reported the attempt on Walker's life to authorities "because it was my husband."

("But, of course, if I had known that Lee intended to repeat something like that, I would have told," she added.

Here's text of Hoover memos after shooting

WASHINGTON (UPI) — The text of FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover's memorandum describing his telephone calls the hour after President Kennedy was assassinated.

November 22, 1963

1:43 p.m.

I called the attorney general at his home and advised him of the news flash announcing that the President and Gov. John Connally of Texas had been shot in Dallas, today, while touring Dallas in an open car, and that the first news flash indicated the shot was believed to be fatal. The attorney general had not previously been advised of this.

I asked the attorney general if there was anything we could do at Dallas. He asked that we do whatever we could, and I told him we would get in touch with the Secret Service there.

1:48 p.m.

SAC (the FBI's special agent in charge) Shanklin called from Dallas. Mr. Shanklin advised that the only information the Dallas office had was from the radio. According to the radio in Dallas, the President and the governor were shot at the corner of Elm and Commerce streets in a motor parade going out to the place where they were to speak. One witness said a Negro man leaned out a window and made two shots, and the police have the whole building surrounded. The President and the governor had been taken to Parkland Hospital and the president was bleeding from the head.

I instructed SAC Shanklin to get in touch with the Secret Service and offer assistance. Mr. Shanklin stated he had already done so. I also told Mr. Shanklin to establish liaison with the local police.

I inquired as to the governor's condition and Mr. Shanklin indicated they had not reported on this. I inquired about the vice president and Mr. Shanklin said the vice president was in the parade but in a different car.

2:17 p.m.

SAC Shanklin called again and stated the President was in very poor condition but not dead. He said they had called in two priests.

Mr. Shanklin related that the shots came from the fourth floor. He stated the Dallas office is maintaining liaison and has offered assistance. They do not know whether the shots were fired by a white person or a colored person. The first story was that a colored man leaned out of a window but they do not know; they are searching the whole building.

Mr. Shanklin advised that the governor had been taken to an emergency operating room and the President was in the general emergency room. The last report was that the President was in very, very critical condition but was still alive.

Mr. Shanklin inquired if the attorney general or anyone whom they should meet would be coming to Dallas. I advised Mr. Shanklin I would let him know if the attorney general decided to travel to Dallas.

Mr. Shanklin advised he had just received word the President was shot with a Winchester rifle.

2:10 p.m.

I called the attorney general to advise him that the President was in very, very critical condition. The attorney general then told me the President had died.

I advised the attorney general that the governor was in very serious condition, that Mrs. Kennedy was not hurt and neither was Mrs. Connally.

I told the attorney general that the shot came from the fourth floor of a building and the building was completely surrounded now. I further advised him the President was shot by a Winchester rifle. I stated the Dallas office is working in every way to help the Secret Service and local police.

I inquired if the attorney general intended to go to Dallas and he stated he did not know exactly what he would do. I told him, if he decided to go down, to let me know and our office would meet him.

2:17 p.m.

SAC Shanklin called and advised that the doctor had just told our agents that President Kennedy had just died. They said this was not being put out yet.

I instructed Mr. Shanklin to go all out on this and find out who did it.

Mr. Shanklin stated they had located 3 or 4 shells in the building and the sheriff's office had picked up one man.

I told Mr. Shanklin to give every assistance we can there and do everything we possibly can there at the building.

Mr. Shanklin stated that a Secret Service agent had also been killed. He stated they did not mention that at first but an agent at the police department advised that one died. He did not know the name of this Secret Service agent.

Mr. Shanklin mentioned that he was supposed to come in Monday and he would cancel that. I advised him I thought he should cancel this.

I told Mr. Shanklin that the attorney general did not know what he was going to do, that he may or may not go to Dallas, but I would let Mr. Shanklin know if the attorney general decided to go to Dallas.

FEH doesn't say he intended reports on sounds