

PORTRAIT OF THE ASSASSIN

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Feldman pointed out that Oswald paid Miss Pauline Bates, a public stenographer, to type parts of a manuscript he was writing about his experiences in the Soviet Union. This was money he could ill afford to spend. He "hinted he had gone to the Soviet as a U.S. Secret Agent." Furthermore, he was alleged to have told her, "When the State Department granted my visa, they stipulated they could not stand behind me in any way," which could imply that they knew he was taking a desperate chance acting as an agent and would have to repudiate him if he was caught.

His activities in the Fair Play for Cuba Committee must have been costly. He was rumored to have rented at his own expense an office for thirty dollars a month; he arranged to have leaflets printed and recruited helpers to distribute them; and when he was arrested he promptly came up with payment of his fine. These activities did not sound like the work of a "loner."

The police were said to have found \$150 in his room when he was arrested for the shooting of Officer Tippit. Some time previously he had purchased a rifle with a telescopic sight and a revolver and had supposedly spent other money on rifle-range practice and bore sighting of the weapon. Practice rifle shooting is not inexpensive.

And where did he get the money for a quick trip to Mexico City? His meanderings around the world sounded more like the journeys of a well-heeled globetrotter than the restricted life of a sometimes employed laborer without a skill. It was said that if he had obtained a visa from the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City he intended to junket over to Havana and then perhaps on to Moscow once more for a little sight-seeing. This was almost too much to believe. *Pravda* had recently explained it by stating that without a doubt Oswald had been an American spy from the beginning. Again there was the possibility he could have been a CIA agent, perhaps trained by the FBI, and upon returning to the USA was used to penetrate such groups as the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. With his background as a defector, he could have made a perfect counteragent to spy on Castro's supporters.

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had carried this Associated Press dispatch—again the allegation that Oswald had received money via Western Union: “Someone telegraphed small amounts of money to Lee Harvey Oswald for several months before the assassination of President Kennedy, it was reported today. The unidentified sender telegraphed Oswald \$10 to \$20 at a time.”

The writer of “Oswald and the FBI,” after examining some of the threads in the web, stated what every American would agree to: “The Warren Commission should, if possible, tell us how President Kennedy was killed, who killed him, and why. But beyond that it must tell us if the FBI or any other government intelligence agency was in any way connected with the alleged assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald.” The same day on which the Commission was confronted with this challenge by Attorney General Carr, Feldman summed up the impressions of most laymen with the observation, “At this moment the possibility of such associations in the young man’s life is intolerably a subject for speculation.”

Discussions among members of the Commission on Monday, January 27, indicated they couldn’t agree more—but just how to go about uncovering the facts was not an easy matter.

Because of the background of Mr. Allen Dulles, other members turned to him for suggestions on how best to handle this touchy matter. What were they to do with a story like this?

“This is a terribly hard thing to disprove,” he told the others.

“Let’s take a specific case,” Representative Hale Boggs suggested. “That fellow Powers was one of your men.”

“Oh yes, but he was not an agent. He was an employee.”

“There was no problem in proving he was employed by the CIA?”

“No, we had a signed contract.”

In the case of the U-2 incident and Powers, he was not an undercover agent, as Mr. Dulles pointed out. The problem was far more difficult with a true undercover agent, where there is nothing in writing.

Mr. Boggs observed with some uneasiness, “What you do is to make out a problem, if this be true—make our problem utterly impossible, because you say this rumor can’t be dissipated under any circumstance.”

These observations by Allen Dulles pinpointed the difficulty the

Commission would face in dealing not only with the possibility that Oswald might be an FBI agent but also with all the myriad rumors that the imaginations of thousands of writers would create in the next thousand years. They dramatized the complexity of the Commission's charge. A free society must have some secret agencies to defend itself against the deception of its potential enemies. On the other hand, secrecy is the enemy of truth, and the Commission was appointed by the President of the United States to find out *all* the circumstances surrounding the assassination of President Kennedy.

Mr. Rankin, chief counsel for the Commission, explained why Dallas' District Attorney Wade was so troubled. Wade had told Rankin about his wartime experiences as a former FBI man.

"He did say he had considerable experience with the FBI and knew their practices, that he handled as much as \$2,000 a month during the war period in which he paid off informers and undercover agents in South America, and he knew that it wasn't revealed on any records he ever handled who he was paying it to and he never got any receipts, and it wasn't the practice to get receipts; that he would have a list of numbers in his office—that was one of the most closely guarded records that he had—and he would put down the amount he paid off.

"He was frank, however, about stating that he didn't know whether that practice continued; he didn't know how they were doing it; that was a long time ago and how the FBI would handle any such transaction now, he didn't know.

"He thought that the postal box was an ideal way to handle such transactions and was a way he had used at various times in the past too.

"He didn't indicate that he was sure this was the case at all. He just indicated that it was a possibility, and some of the things that happened he thought were curious."

In mentioning the use of postal boxes, Wade was thinking of the habit Oswald had of using these blind addresses wherever he went—again, why?

The dilemma of the Commission was how to go about checking the allegation that the FBI was involved in this matter. For more than thirty years the FBI had been one of the most highly respected agencies of the United States Government. Not that the members of the Commission would be awed by the prestige of the bureau or of

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its almost legendary director, J. Edgar Hoover, but certainly it would not be justified in plunging into the matter in some irresponsible manner that might jeopardize the effectiveness of an important agency's future operations.

The President's order creating the Commission implicitly authorized it to look into the security policies of the Secret Service. Every intelligence agency of the Government also had to be scrutinized. The Commission would have to devise an approach that was independent of all these agencies, and yet obviously the President's Commission could not create a "scientific crime bureau" of its own just for the purpose of this inquiry. They would need trained men from the CIA, the Secret Service, local police and certainly the FBI. They would need fingerprint experts, ballistics experts, handwriting analysts and dozens of other professional helpers. Thus the matter of determining at the outset how to handle the rumor that Oswald was connected with the FBI was a test of the ability of the Commission to execute its mission. Its members approached this challenge carefully. Senator Russell asked chief counsel Lee Rankin, "What steps, if any, have we taken to clear up this matter, Mr. Rankin, if it can be cleared up, to determine whether there is anything to this or not?"

Mr. Rankin: "Well, we have discussed various possibilities—that is, the Chief Justice and myself have—and I want to tell you about them, and I think you will have to instruct us what you want us to do.

"We thought, first, about approaching the Department with a request that the Attorney General inform us as to the situation, not only as to what he would say about whether Oswald was or was not an undercover agent, but also with the supporting data that the Commission could rely upon.

"I suggested the possibility for the Commission to consider that I should go over and see Edgar Hoover myself and tell him this problem and that he should have as much interest as the Commission in trying to put an end to any such speculations, not only by his statement, which I would be frank to tell him I would think would not be sufficient, but also if it was possible to demonstrate by whatever records and materials they have that it just couldn't be true, and see if we couldn't get his cooperation to present that with the understanding that the Commission—and stated understanding, at the time—the Commission would have to feel free to make such other inves-

tigation and take testimony if it found it necessary, in order to satisfy the American people that this question of an undercover agent was out of the picture."

Representative Boggs asked, "What other alternatives are there?"

Mr. Rankin replied, "Well, the other alternative would be to examine Hudkins, the reporter. Also to examine Hosty, the FBI agent who was working in that area, and to examine the Special Agent in charge of the area, and to examine Mr. Hoover, under oath, right up the line.

"We do have a dirty rumor that is very bad for the Commission, the problem, and it is very damaging to the agencies that are involved in it and it must be wiped out insofar as it is possible to do so by this Commission.

"So it seemed to me in light of the way I would treat it, if I were in their position, would be to have someone approach me, tell me the problem and see what I frankly could do to clear my skirts, if there was a way to do it, and as long as the Commission didn't agree not to go further, if they felt that would not satisfy them, I don't see how the Commission would be prejudiced."

Chairman Warren: "Well, Lee and I both agreed that we shouldn't leave this thing in this present posture, that we should go ahead and try to clear the matter up as best we can.

"Now, my own suggestion was to Lee that we find out first from these people as far as we can if there is any substance to it or whether it is just plain rumor.

"It may be that Hudkins would claim privilege. If he did, I thought that after we tried to get him to see that it was in the interest of his country to state the facts that we might go to the publisher of his paper and see if we couldn't get—enlist him to have this man tell us where he got his information.

"Lee, on the other hand, felt it would be the better part of cooperation to go over and see Mr. Hoover and tell him frankly what the rumor was, state that it is pure rumor—we haven't evaluated the facts—but ask him, first, if it is true, and secondly if he can supply us with information to establish that these facts are not true, and they are inconsistent with what would be the way of operation of their bureau."

Mr. McCloy observed, "If we got a statement from the Department that the Attorney General and perhaps from Mr. Hoover, or

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from Mr. Hoover himself, which said, 'I am telling you that this man was not in any way employed by the FBI,' or in the case of John McCloy or the CIA, I think that probably stops us, unless we run into something . . ."

Mr. Rankin: "Allen, how would you feel about it, if you were head of the CIA now, and the same claim was made and this Commission was worried about the claim being believed by the public, and they would ask you, would you want the Commission to come to you directly?"

Mr. Dulles: "Oh, yes, certainly I would."

Mr. Rankin: "Or would you want us to go out and examine witnesses first?"

Mr. Dulles: "I think I would want you to come so I could give you leads as to how you could examine witnesses if you wanted to."

Mr. Rankin: "If you had us out examining witnesses about whether you had the man in your employ, would you feel that we were not very fair to you?"

Mr. Dulles: "No. I don't think I would."

Mr. Rankin: "That wouldn't bother you."

Mr. Dulles: "No."

Senator Russell: "There is no man in the employ of the Federal Government who stands higher in the opinion of the American people than J. Edgar Hoover."

Mr. Dulles: "That is right."

Senator Russell: "Of course, we can get an affidavit from Mr. Hoover and put it in this record and go on and act on that, but if we didn't go any further than that, and we don't pursue it down to Hudkins or whoever it is, there still would be thousands of doubting Thomases who would believe this man was an FBI agent and you just didn't try to clear it up and you just took Hoover's word."

"Personally, I would believe J. Edgar Hoover. I have a great deal of confidence in him."

Mr. Dulles: "I do, too."

Senator Russell: "But the other people—I would believe, a simple statement as Holy Writ, this one statement without being under oath, but you can't try cases that way, and you can't base the conclusions of this Commission on that kind of material."

Senator Cooper: "I would like to have your idea about what I suggested."

Mr. McCloy: "State it again."

Senator Cooper: "We know these people have been here, so this speculation or rumor is somewhat official—we will not say it has their approval, but they don't disapprove it."

Mr. McCloy: "They have taken cognizance of it."

Senator Cooper: "That being true, since we are under a duty to see what Hudkins says about it, where he got that information, my suggestion was we do that but apprise Mr. Hoover about the facts—where this information comes from, that we have to inquire into it, that we will inquire into it, and then later talk to him further about it and see if there are any facts which he ought to know about, and it would be a matter of justice to him instead of having him disprove it from the beginning."

Mr. McCloy: "What is your objection, John, to going to Hoover or the Department of Justice, or the CIA, John McCone, or Under Secretary of Defense—he has an intelligence unit too—and ask them if they can give us any information which would prove or disprove this rumor?"

Senator Cooper: "I haven't got any objection to it, but even if—if we are dealing with the FBI now—if Mr. Hoover makes his statement, I think still by reason of the fact you have heard these people and they have said that Hudkins does have some information about the truth of it, whether it is so or not, you still are under a duty to examine them."

Chairman Warren: "We must go into this thing from both ends, from the end of the rumormongers and from the end of the FBI, and if we come into a *cul de sac*—well, there we are, but we can report on it."

"Now that is the way it would appeal to me. These are things where people can reasonably disagree. Whatever you want to do I am willing to approach it in that manner."

Mr. Rankin: "Would it be acceptable to go ahead and find out what we could about these—"

Mr. McCloy: "Hudkins' sources."

Mr. Rankin: "Then if he [J. Edgar Hoover] reacts and says, 'I want to show you that it couldn't be,' or something like that, beforehand, what about that kind of an approach?"

Chairman Warren: "Well, Lee, I wouldn't be in favor of going to any agency and saying, 'We would like to do this.' I think we ought

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to know what we are going to do, and do it, and take our chances one way or the other.

"I don't believe we should apologize or make it look that we are in any way reticent about making any investigation that comes to the Commission."

Mr. Rankin: "I don't think the country is going to be satisfied with the mere statement from, not to use Mr. Hoover's name, but just examine about any intelligence agency that Oswald wasn't hired, in light of this kind of an accusation, a rumor."

"I think that the country is going to expect this Commission to try to find out the facts as to how those things are handled to such an extent that this Commission can fairly say, 'In our opinion, he was or was not an employee of any intelligence agency of the United States.'"

It was the consensus of all seven men that the only way to proceed was to conduct extensive and thorough hearings of as many witnesses as was necessary to exhaust not just this rumor but dozens of other rumors. Where doubts were cast on any United States agency, independent experts would be hired and the investigation conducted in such a way as to avoid reliance on a questioned authority. No matter what the cost in time or money, every facet of the events in Dallas had to be explored. The Commission drew up an exhaustive list of witnesses and collected for analysis all pertinent books and magazines and newspaper articles. The staff compiled a directory of names of all persons said to have had any part in the matter. Then began months of hearings, hours of taking sworn testimony, which led from one skein of facts to another. Seldom has a crime appeared to be more complicated and mysterious. Never has a crime been so thoroughly investigated. From that investigation comes this biography of an assassin.

FORD, PARTNER OF THE ASSASSIN

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"That fellow Powers was one of your men."

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COMPARISON WITH TRANScriptions  
DONE VERY QUICKLY, 6/22/74  
PLH

IS IT POSSIBLE HE HAD HIS OWN TAPE?  
(OR USUALLY TO A TAPE?)  
SOME (A FEW) OF THE CHANGES SUGGESTED  
THAT TO ME.

MANY SMALL CHANGES ARE COSMETIC,  
AND UNOBJECTIONABLE. (E.G. J. & —)

MANY INTERESTING OMISSIONS  
& CHANGES. PAR OUT!

Paul

PAGE-LINE: 152.8

... 152.22

... 153.17

135.4

Commission would face in dealing not only with the possibility that Oswald might be an FBI agent, but also with all the myriad rumors that the imaginations of thousands of writers would create in the next thousand years. They dramatized the complexity of the Commission's charge. A free society must have some secret agencies to defend itself against the deception of its potential enemies. On the other hand, secrecy is the enemy of truth, and the Commission was appalled by the President of the United States to find out *all* the circumstances surrounding the assassination of President Kennedy.

Mr. Rankin, chief counsel for the Commission, explained why Dallas' District Attorney Wade was so troubled. Wade had told Rankin about his wartime experiences as a former FBI man.

"He did say he had considerable experience with the FBI, and knew their practices, that he handled as much as \$2,000 a month during the war period in which he paid off informers, and undercover agents in South America, and he knew that it wasn't revealed on any records he ever handled who he was paying it to and he never got any receipts, and it wasn't the practice to get receipts; that he would have a list of numbers in his office—that was one of the most closely guarded records that he had—and he would put down the amount he paid off, *MELOWNE... THE HEAD OF THE GOV'T IN ECQUADOR... (A)*

"He was frank, however, about stating that he didn't know whether that practice continued; he didn't know how they were doing it; that was a long time ago and how the FBI would handle any such transaction now, he didn't know. *(No?)*

"He thought that the postal box was an ideal way to handle such transactions, and was a way, <sup>fact</sup> he had used at various times in the past, too.

"He didn't indicate that he was sure <sup>fact</sup> this was the case at all. He just indicated that it was a possibility, and some of the things that had happened he thought were curious."

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The President's order creating the Commission implicitly authorized it to look into the security policies of the Secret Service. Every intelligence agency of the Government also had to be scrutinized. The Commission would have to devise an approach that was independent of all these agencies, and yet obviously the President's Commission could not create a "scientific crime bureau" of its own just for the purpose of this inquiry. They would need trained men from the CIA, the Secret Service, local police and certainly the FBI. They would need fingerprint experts, ballistics experts, handwriting analysis and dozens of other professional helpers. Thus the matter of determining at the outset how to handle the rumor that Oswald was connected with the FBI was a test of the ability of the Commission to execute its mission. Its members approached this challenge carefully. Senator Russell asked chief counsel Lee Rankin, "What steps, if any, have we taken to clear up this matter, Mr. Rankin, if it can be cleared up, to determine whether there is anything to this or not?"

Mr. Rankin: "Well, we have discussed various possibilities—that is, the Chief Justice and myself have, and I want to tell you about them, and I think you will have to instruct us what you want us to do.

136.10

"We thought, first, about approaching the Department with a request that the Attorney General inform us as to the situation, not only as to what he would say about whether Oswald was or was not an undercover agent, but also with the supporting data that the Commission could rely upon, *and there's some difficulty as to fact... (A)*

"I suggested the possibility for the Commission to consider that I should go over and see Edgar Hoover myself and tell him this problem and that he should have as much interest as the Commission in trying to put an end to any such speculations, not only by his statement, which I would be frank to tell him I would think would be sufficient, but also if it was possible to demonstrate by whatever records and materials they have that it just couldn't be true, and see if we couldn't get his cooperation to present that with the understanding that the Commission and stated understanding at the time, the Commission would have to feel free to make such other inves-

137.16

igation and take testimony if it found it necessary, in order to satisfy the American people that this question of an undercover agent was out of the picture."

Representative Hogg asked, "What other alternatives are there?" Mr. Rankin replied, "Well, the other alternative would be to examine Hudkins, the reporter. Ask to examine Hosty, the FBI Agent who was working in that area, and to examine the Special Agent in Charge of the area, and to examine Mr. Hoover, under oath, right up the line. *4 LINES OMITTED*"

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Chairman Warren: "Well, Lee and I both agreed that we shouldn't leave this thing in this present posture, that we should go ahead and try to clear the matter up as best we can. *we did argue with*"

"Now, my own suggestion was to Lee that we find out first from these people as far as we can if there is any substance to it or whether it is just plain rumor. . . . *2 # (SECRET, ALTERNATE) OMITTED*"

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Mr. McCloy observed, "If we got a statement from the Department that the Attorney General and perhaps from Mr. Hoover, or

*5/11/70  
155.1  
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*SHOULD BE  
MCCLOY  
CITING IN  
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*156, 17*

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The Commission Gets Its First Shock

to know what we are going to do, and do it, and take our chances one way or the other.

"I don't think we should apologize or make it look like we are in any way a team about making any investigation that comes to the Commission." ~~It~~ <sup>It</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> ~~an~~ <sup>an</sup> ~~employee~~ <sup>employee</sup> of any intelligence agency of the United States."

Mr. Rankin: "I don't think the country is going to be satisfied with the bare statement from, not to use Mr. Hoover's name, but just examine about any intelligence agency that Oswald wasn't hired in light of this kind of an accusation, a rumor.

"I think that the country is going to expect this Commission to try to find out the facts as to how those things are handled to such an extent that this Commission can fairly say, 'In our opinion, he was or was not an employee of any intelligence agency of the United States.'"

It was the consensus of all seven men that the only way to proceed was to conduct extensive and thorough hearings of as many witnesses as was necessary to exhaust not just this rumor but dozens of other rumors. Where doubts were cast on any United States agency, independent experts would be hired and the investigation conducted in such a way as to avoid reliance on a questioned authority. No matter what the cost in time or money, every facet of the events in Dallas had to be explored. The Commission drew up an exhaustive list of witnesses and collected for analysis all pertinent books and magazines and newspaper articles. The staff compiled a directory of names of all persons said to have had any part in the matter. Then began months of hearings, hours of taking sworn testimony, which led from one skein of facts to another. Seldom has a crime appeared to be more complicated and mysterious. Never has a crime been so thoroughly investigated. From that investigation comes this biography of an assassin.

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TO MR. HOOPER...

TO COMMISSIONAL ACTION

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