

DeLoach to Mohr 11-10-64

Re: Sarah McElhenny, Background Briefing Sessions Group
Appointment with the Director, 10:00 a.m., 11-13-64

A reporter inquired as to the Director's opinion as to whether the Nation's press was out of line in coverage of the murder of Lee Harvey Oswald by Jack Ruby. The Director replied that with respect to the entire assassination matter there had been extreme unwarranted criticism of the press. He stated that the FBI never has any difficulty in working with the press. He explained that our policy was "no comment" until a case is solved. The Director added that, of course, the Dallas police should not have allowed the press in the basement of the building when Oswald was being removed.

A reporter inquired as to whether the FBI specifically warned the Dallas police that Jack Ruby planned to kill Lee Harvey Oswald. The Director stated that we had twice warned the Dallas police that information had been furnished the FBI that an attempt would be made against Oswald's life, however, Jack Ruby's name had not been given to the FBI.

A reporter asked the Director to explain the complete lack of alertness on the part of the Dallas police in guarding Oswald. The Director replied, off the record, that there is a lot of "ham" in all of us, however, the Dallas police were certainly "hamming it up" for the television cameras when they brought Oswald through the basement of the building. The Director explained that we had very strict rules in the FBI concerning the handling of prisoners and concerning the conduct of our investigations.

A reporter stated that the Warren Commission had criticized the FBI because the FBI had taken an unduly restrictive view of its authority in preventing intelligence. The reporter inquired as to whether the Director agreed with this criticism. The Director emphatically replied that the criticism by the Warren Commission was unwarranted, untrue, and a classic example of Monday morning quarterbacking. The Director again reiterated that the FBI had not known of any violence whatsoever in Oswald's background. As a result there had been no need or necessity to furnish Oswald's name to the Secret Service or to the Dallas police.

Mr. Hoover

11-11-64

The Director stated the Warren Commission had completely distorted the FBI's investigation of Oswald; that Oswald had not given any indication of being a violent type of individual, nor did we have any record of violence on his part until after the assassination. He was a "loner." He had gone to Russia, had defected, and had worked in a factory in Paris. Mr. Hoover said he personally thought it was wrong to grant Oswald a visa to return to this country and to allow him full citizenship rights when he did return.

He stated that none of Oswald's actions showed he was a threat to the President or that he was dangerous. The FBI did not know of his psychiatric treatment in New York until after the assassination. He stated that on the day of the assassination the police went into the building where Oswald worked, accompanied by a building employee. They encountered Oswald, at which time the building employee identified Oswald as an employee of the building with no further explanation.

The next question was whether the FBI was still investigating the Kennedy assassination. Mr. Hoover stated, "Yes--as long as any additional evidence is received."

The next question dealt with whether there was any foreign intrigue connected with Oswald. Mr. Hoover stated there was no indication of any foreign conspiracy either by Castro or the Soviets.

A reporter then asked about Oswald's requesting an interview with an FBI Agent at the time he distributed leaflets in New Orleans. Mr. Hoover stated Oswald had already been interviewed by FBI Agents as he was interviewed 3 days after he arrived back in the United States. The Director again made very clear the fact that Oswald was a man of nonviolence, according to our files.

For record purpose, I returned to the "briefing" at this point and resumed taking notes. The question was raised as to the Director's opinion regarding placing Secret Service under FBI jurisdiction. The Director replied that he was unalterably opposed to such a plan. He stated that Chief Jim Rowley is a good man, a former Special Agent, with whom we have excellent cooperation. He added, however, that Secret Service is hopelessly undermanned and in need of equipment. The Director summed up by stating we have enough problems of our own without taking on Secret Service's problems.

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