

Hoover's notes
Dear Dave,

9/13/79

FBI paper makes a fascinating study. It is always self-serving, the first law being the protection of the Bureau, and its fidelity to fact if not its honesty must unfortunately always be questioned. (Omissions, distortions and unreal interpretations are more common than outright lies.) The riddles will never be solved, undoubtedly one of the original intentions, because too many seemingly reasonable interpretations are possible. And the great mass of the paper complicates this while also being a means of denial of access. Who can find anything in more than 100,000 pages, or be sure there is not a contradictory records?

One of the more fascinating questions to me is the meaning to be given to the notes Hoover added to records.

Off and on for years I've heard questions asked about how much in control he was at the time of the JFK assassination - meaning compared with the control he exercised before then. More recently an former agent suggested to me that by then the "palace guard" had taken over.

There is an unreality to some of these notes and they always appear to be self-serving, yet there is also the suggestion that the old man might not have known otherwise. Certainly all the paper created, the special formulations employed could have led him to believe that his notes reflect, yet it is not easy to believe.

Lately I've been reading the Commission file (62-109090) from the beginning. I'm in the eighth section. There are more of his notes per page in these sections than in the many others I've read as I've worked my way through the records.

It is because I believe that historians will wonder forever about how much in actual control Hoover was that I call this to your attention.

It is almost as though all the records were created to form his mind. But there is a difference between this being the purpose and the effect.

Comprehension is impossible without subject expertise. Those without detailed factual knowledge are certain to be misled by this great volume of bureaucratic paper and what it says.

Hoover's great fear appears to have been that the FBI would be damaged. His descriptions of Warren are as his enemy, of Warren and the Commission being out to get the FBI, which could hardly be farther from the truth. He ordered all sorts of things to avoid this, or what he anticipated that wasn't there.

Yet it seems impossible that in his complaints about the FBI taking what he called a narrow view of Commission requests he was not aware of the FBI's purposes in taking narrow views - not to disclose what a correct interpretation of Commission requests would have required or led to. (An example is the FBI's omission of Hosty from its retyping of the Oswald addressbook.)

The political manipulations are important and clear enough although probably far from complete. The use of the right extreme in the Congress is apparent, as are the relationships. So is the forming of the conclusions the Commission could or would reach prior to its beginnings, the manipulations to prevent Warren Olney from being general counsel and getting Rankin in - the FBI and Hoover liked him based on past experiences with him.

Whenever anything was written about any request from the Commission that anyone in the FBI hierarchy might have had a question about or that could be taken as criticism the record always began with an account of the praise Rankin heaped on the FBI for its great work. If that record reached Hoover.... And of course, with what it knew of him and the FBI the Commission would likely have taken this kind of approach. But it was never questioned in any record. ...Everything the FBI did was right and everyone else was wrong or its enemy. The paranoia also is clear enough. ... This hasty note intended only as a guide to a fascinating puzzle all the pieces of which will never be put in place.

A BOOK FOR TODAY

Foreign View of Kennedy Probe

By JEREMIAH O'LEARY

THE OSWALD AFFAIR: An Examination of the Contradictions and Omissions of the Warren Report. By Leo Sauvage. The World Publishing Co. 418 pages. \$6.95.

The correspondent for Le Figaro in the United States has two sentiments about the way things are in America that may partly explain his disbelief in the findings of the Warren Commission.

About the U.S. press, he writes: "Personally, I don't see why it should be necessary for a reporter to limit himself to reproducing dispassionately everything said or done as if nothing affected him, leaving all comment to the editorial writers."

About the U.S. concept of courtroom justice: "Americans do have a rather extreme concept of the required impartiality of jurors; foreign correspondents who sat through the selection of the jury in the Ruby trial marveled at the procedure. It seemed to them that the perfect juror would be the village idiot who never read a newspaper, never listened to the radio or watched TV (except soap operas). . . ."

Perhaps this American correspondent might be permitted to observe that Lee Oswald was handled with considerably more circumspection by the Dallas police in connection with the murder of Kennedy than he would have been in Paris. He was not, in fact, charged with Kennedy's murder but with that of Policeman J. D. Tippit. The French people live with the Code Napoleon under which a suspect is presumed guilty until proven innocent.

It is also a fact of life that French newspapers are fairly free in labeling suspects as guilty parties in criminal cases while American newspapers in general adhere closely to the language of warrants, indictments and quoted statements by responsible officials. If Sauvage's theory that U.S. newspapers should speculate

on the guilt or innocence of parties in criminal cases is valid, would that not be even more reason to seek out juries that have not formed any opinion or read that of others about the facts involved?

Sauvage's book, like all the others, demonstrates an incredible facility at hair-splitting.

Item: Sauvage is fascinated by the chicken bones found near the window from which the death shot was fired at Kennedy and believes they could have been left there by an accomplice. But the commission identified the building employe who ate the chicken and left the bones.

Item: Sauvage questions that the rifle allegedly used by Oswald was capable of being fired with accuracy at a moving target in 5 or 6 seconds. But tests at the FBI laboratory proved that such a thing was possible. And it is important to point out again that although three shots were fired, the first bullet clearly could have been loaded and locked long before the target came into view. Therefore, the stop-watch starts with the pulling of a trigger and only two movements of the bolt had to follow the first shot.

Item: Sauvage claims a number of essential witnesses to the murder of Policeman Tippit were never interviewed. But the commission heard 13 witnesses to that slaying, including two eyewitnesses. All identified Oswald.

Item: Sauvage makes much of the idea that since Oswald did not order ammunition when he bought the assassination rifle, it therefore was not a lethal weapon "since an unloaded weapon is not a lethal weapon." The FBI laboratory established that the rifle Oswald bought fired the shots that killed Kennedy and that his palm-print was on the weapon.

It is Sauvage's conclusion that the assassination was the result of a plot by racial extremists, that Oswald was

their instrument and that Jack Ruby was assigned to be Oswald's executioner, possibly by a separate group of plotters.

Any reasonable person is entitled to wonder about genuine mysteries, notably that Oswald died without confessing and that no one saw him fire the shots that killed Kennedy. But it is strange for a Frenchman to find nothing in the evidence to show that Oswald was the assassin and to contend that any uncertainty should be interpreted to the advantage of the accused.

Napoleon would not have liked that idea at all.

I object when the critics depart from challenging evidence and come up with theories of plots that are totally the products of their imaginations. Sauvage is entitled to applause for the skill with which he demolishes the first in the series of critics, Communist-line American expatriate Thomas Buchanan.

It is such a masterful dissection of an irresponsible pipedream that it is difficult to comprehend that the same author (Sauvage) can postulate his own weird theory.

If Sauvage is right, why wouldn't it have been necessary to get rid of Ruby? I know Ruby could have killed Oswald several times on the night of the President's death because I brushed elbows with him several times as Oswald was led in and out of the Homicide Squad. It would have been easier in the turmoil created by the press mob in the hall than it was on the Sunday morning when Ruby did fire the fatal shot.

If Oswald had to be silenced, why would Sauvage's plotters have waited nearly 48 hours? I believe with the Warren Commission that Oswald was the lone assassin because I have read all of the evidence and prefer to accept it, even with its missing factors, to the dreamed-up theories of Sauvage, Mark Lane, et al.

DeLoach ✓
 Mohr ✓
 Wick ✓
 Casper ✓
 Callahan ✓
 Conrad ✓
 Felt ✓
 Gale ✓
 Rosen ✓
 Sullivan ✓
 Tavel ✓
 Trotter ✓
 Tele. Room ✓
 Holmes ✓
 Gandy ✓
 F. Thompson ✓
 Vary well ✓
 done ✓
 O'Sullivan ✓
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File 411

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