

A **POST** Exclusive

# Hoover's warning: Oswald may be a phony



FBI DIRECTOR J. Edgar Hoover suspected an impostor was using the name Lee Harvey Oswald three years before John F. Kennedy's assassination.

The Post learned today that Hoover expressed this suspicion in an official memo to the State Dept.

The disclosure of the memo raises many questions.

It comes at a time when Texas officials are debating whether to exhume Oswald's body on the strength of allegations by a British author and lawyer that the man in the Oswald grave is not Oswald at all but a Russian agent.

The memo, dated June 6, 1960, when Oswald is

known to have been in Moscow, said:

"Since there's a possibility that an impostor is using Oswald's birth certificate, any current information the Dept. of State may have concerning this subject will be appreciated."

Nine months later, the chief of the Passport

Bureau in the State Dept., Edward J. Hickey, sent a memo to the consular section citing previous reports there was an Oswald impostor.

The Hickey memo, dated March 31, 1961, read:

"That it has been stated

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(sic) that there is an impostor memo seems to indicate, that a Soviet citizen (or agent) might make use of the Oswald papers?

● Was there an attempt to follow up this information, by either Hoover or the Warren Commission itself?

● What significance, if any, did the FBI or the State Dept. attach to either the query or the response?

● If the FBI was "on" to Oswald — even in a minor way — three years before the assassination of President Kennedy, why has that information not been made public or acted upon?

● Is there a connection between the memo and the allegations by Eddowes that the man in Oswald's grave is a Russian agent?

There is a possibility the memo has no significance at all to later developments in Oswald's life, that it was a standard inquiry into activities by a U.S. citizen traveling in the Soviet Union.

Such inquiries were not unusual, but whether they were made in the name of Director Hoover — for every traveler — is uncertain.

Eddowes' lawyer, Jerry Pittman, said today: "This proves that there was a pre-assassination file on Oswald which has never been released."

Eddowes, according to Pittman, obtained the

memos and secret Warren Commission transcripts from the National Archives through the Freedom of Information Act.

The archives' file of documents relating to the Kennedy assassination is sealed for 75 years. Individual documents can be obtained only if they are specifically requested.

"The government was attempting to hide information in the national archives," Pittman said.

"They were obviously trying to keep something from the public."

Warren Commission transcripts show commission members wanted to secretly cremate or hide Oswald's body 60 days after the Kennedy assassination, Pittman said.

Pittman said a transcript of a closed-door commission session on Jan. 21, 1964, Sen. Richard Russell — a commission member — said:

"I thought we might get some mausoleum to take the body and seal it up and put it in the mausoleum, unknown to anyone else. If they can do that no one would know where it was.

"And [Oswald's] wife would consent to it, I think, and the mother hasn't got anything to say about it anyway."

Minutes later, according to Pittman, another commissioner, ex-World Bank president John McCloy, said:



J. EDGAR HOOVER



JOHN F. KENNEDY

"I don't think we ought to have on record that we are moving in this thing. We are not saying anything about it."

Commission chairman Earl Warren then noted: "It has been suggested that to save expense they exhume him and then cremate him . . . But I don't think we would want that disposed of, until our report has been made."

Russell said a year before his death in 1971 that he never believed Oswald planned the assassination alone. Warren died in 1974.

McCloy, an influential lawyer here, was traveling abroad and unavailable for comment, his office said.

The transcripts in Pittman's possession do not disclose why the Warren Commission may have wanted to dispose of the body in secret.

One possible explanation: they wanted to protect it from graverobbers.