

Waggoner Carr Wanted Agents Quizzed in JFK's Death

BY MARTIN RALBOVSKY

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The Texas attorney general asked the Warren Commission in January 1964 to put under oath every CIA and FBI agent, informant, spy, double agent and undercover agent in the Dallas area from April to December 1963 and find out if any of them knew of Lee Harvey Oswald.

A letter on file in the Texas State Archives in Austin of the Texas Court of Inquiry into the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, shows that Waggoner Carr, attorney general and chairman of the court of inquiry, made the recommendation in writing on Jan. 19, 1964, to J. Lee Rankin, chief counsel for the Warren Commission. Kennedy was slain Nov. 22, 1963.

The intent of the letter, according to Carr, now an attorney in Austin, was to have the Warren commission "comb the depths" of both agencies.

The letter, Carr said, was never answered or acknowledged. He said he is "frustrated" to this day by the commission's almost total reliance "on the integrity of agency directors at the time" in determining if Oswald was involved in some way with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) or the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

In his letter, Carr advised the Warren commission to put under oath every agent and "representative in service," of the two agencies in question.

By "representative in service," Carr said he meant every informant, double agent, undercover agent or spy used by the CIA and the FBI.

The letter was written five days after a meeting in Washington among the heads of the Warren Commission and the three-member Texas court of inquiry, as well as the two top men in the Dallas district attorney's office. It was agreed by all parties, Carr said, that rumors of Os-

wald's possible link with the FBI or CIA were to be explored.

Carr said in his letter: "It is possible that knowledge of the matter rests with only one or two individuals (in the CIA or FBI) and this makes it particularly important that every single person who was in the area during the months involved be available for interrogation."

The Warren commission summary report, released on Sept. 24, 1964, listed 552 persons from whom testimony was taken, either in person, or by deposition, affidavit, or statement.

No person identified in the Warren commission summary as being a CIA agent or "representative in service," was interviewed by the commission. The only CIA people interviewed by the commission were John McCone, CIA director at the time, and Richard Helms, the agency's deputy director of plans at the time. Only one FBI agent from Dallas, James Hosty, was interviewed by the commission in person.

He was called after Dallas police chief Jesse Curry released a statement from Dallas Police Lt. Jack Revill to the commission that quoted Hosty as saying the FBI had advance information that Oswald was capable of killing Kennedy.

That statement, Curry subsequently admitted, was suppressed by him for at least five months upon the request of the Dallas district agent in charge at the time, J. Gordon Shanklin, the Chronicle reported Monday.

Revill stood by his statement in his

testimony before the Warren commission. Hosty denied that the FBI had advance information that Oswald was capable of killing the president. The Warren commission dismissed it all as a disagreement between the two men "about the conversation which took place between them."

One FBI agent from Houston, John

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This is a copy of the letter from Waggoner Carr, Texas Attorney general, to J. Lee Rankin, chief counsel for the Warren Commission. Carr explained in a recent interview that the two agencies he referred to were the CIA and the FBI.

January 29, 1964

CONFIDENTIAL

Honorable J. Lee Rankin
General Counsel
President's Commission
200 Maryland Avenue, N.E.
Washington, D. C. 20002

Dear General Rankin:

Doubtless these suggestions are superfluous but in an effort to be of aid in ferreting out the facts relating to the subject of the discussion of last Friday at which Chief Justice Warren, you, my special counsel and I, Mr. Henry Wade and his assistant, Mr. Alexander, were present, I respectfully suggest that the Commission consider taking the following steps:

- (1) From the director of both agencies involved, there should be obtained the names of every agent and representative in service in the Dallas area between the months of August and December. This information must be complete so that every single representative who acted for these agencies in that area, whether for only a few days or for several months, is to be included.
- (2) Each of the men on these two lists should be examined under oath to determine whether he has any knowledge of the subject matter under discussion.
- (3) The director--the number one man of each agency-- as well as the district director of each agency (being the district in which Dallas lies) each should similarly be examined to ascertain whether any of these has any knowledge of the matter under inquiry.

If there is any substance to the report under investigation, it is possible that knowledge of the matter rests with only one or two individuals and this makes it particularly important that every single person who was in the area during the months involved be available for interrogation.

Please be assured that I am available to you, as are my special counsel, for such assistance as we can render in this or other phases of the investigation.

Yours very truly,

Waggoner Carr

WC:cr

bcc: Honorable Leon Jaworski

bcc: Honorable Robert G. Storey

Carr Cites Oswald Case Frustration

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Fain, also testified before the commission in person and two others from Dallas, James Bookhout and Manning Clements were interviewed by deposition. The Dallas district office of the FBI, on Nov. 22, 1963, had an estimated 50 agents. How many CIA agents, if any, were in Dallas at the time is not known.

The Warren commission concluded that Oswald was in no way connected with either the CIA or the FBI.

It said it based its conclusion upon the testimony of the late J. Edgar Hoover, director of the FBI at the time, and McCone, the CIA director, and an investigation of the files of the two agencies.

Carr, in interviews with the Chronicle, said: "All of the records were in the hands of the two agencies and, if they so desired, any information or files could have been destroyed or laundered prior to the time the commission could get them. We knew that then, which is why we recommended what we did."

When asked if those possibilities were discussed at the meeting in Washington, Carr cited the opening words of his letter

as an answer. They said: "Doubtless these suggestions are superfluous."

Carr said, "At the time, I thought the suggestions were basic, very elementary. There were no doubts in my mind that they would do those things. All along, I kept assuming they were interviewing all sorts of FBI and CIA people, from top to bottom. There was no way to double check, though, to see if they were."

"We would get lists of people they interviewed from them, the big people, Hoover, Helms. But at the time, we never really thought they were interviewing all sorts of people under them."

Carr said it was the general policy of the Warren commission, particularly its chief counsel, Rankin, to put as little as possible in writing, which, he said, may be an explanation of why Rankin did not answer his Jan. 29 letter. That policy contributed, Carr said, to his own wording in certain parts of his letter to Rankin.

But he said: "Yes, the agencies we talked about were the CIA and the FBI. I think anybody reading that letter would know right away what we were after."

Carr said he remembers well the meeting in Washington from which his suggestions resulted. He said:

"Chief Justice Warren specifically wanted Bill Alexander (then chief assistant district attorney in Dallas) there. Warren told me he thought Alexander knew more about the assassination than anyone else on earth. He was very eager to talk to him."

Alexander, now an attorney in Dallas, said: "I was never called before the commission to testify. The only people who talked to me were (Allen) Dulles and (John) McCloy of the commission and that was one time and it was pretty superficial. I said on the day it happened that it was a conspiracy. I've taken nothing but abuse since. But I'll tell you this:

"Waggoner Carr and I are in Washington and I'm telling the commission to check out this address I found in Oswald's notebook, in his apartment, the day of the killing. None of those Yankee hot dogs are paying any attention to me."

"So I say to Waggoner, 'C'mon, let's get a cab.' We jump in and tell the driver to take us to this address. We get there and what do you think it is? The goddam Russian Embassy. Now, what does that tell you?"

"You want to know something else? To this day, I don't think anybody from that commission followed that up."

Carr told the Chronicle that he would personally be in favor of a new governmental investigation into the assassination if "something turned up involving the FBI or the CIA and Oswald. But," he added, "I don't think that's going to happen. Anything on paper has been destroyed by now."

Rankin, now an attorney in New York City, was unavailable.

FBI Silent on Chronicle Story

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in Washington refused to comment late Monday on the Chronicle copyright story that the FBI and Dallas police suppressed for five months a statement quoting an FBI agent as saying the bureau had advance information that Oswald was capable of assassinating President Kennedy.

The statement was made by Lt. Jack Revill of the Dallas police department based on his conversation with FBI agent James Hosty shortly after Kennedy was slain,

according to Texas investigation documents in Austin.

The Dallas Police Chief Jesse Curry admitted in a letter to Chief Justice Earl Warren that he kept the statement locked in a desk at the request of FBI agent J. Gordon Shanklin, in charge of the Dallas office at the time.

Tom Harrington, a spokesman at FBI headquarters, said: "The bureau hasn't seen the letter or the story. There will be no comment on either until it does."