

Lies By CIA, FBI?... Yes, Dulles Told Commission On JFK Killing

By Donald P. Baker
Times-Peak News Service

WASHINGTON — Newly declassified documents reveal that former CIA director Allen Dulles told the Warren Commission on the assassination of President Kennedy that the directors of the CIA and FBI might lie to anyone except the President to protect the identity of their operations and undercover agents.

The formerly top-secret documents, contained in a book published today, the 11th anniversary of Kennedy's death, quotes Dulles, a member of the commission, as saying:

"I would tell the President of the United States anything. Yes, I am under his control. I wouldn't necessarily tell anybody else, unless the President authorized me to do it. We had that come up a couple of times."

Dulles was no longer director of the CIA when he served on the commission headed by then-Chief Justice Earl Warren.

The book is "Whiteash IV," by Harold Weisberg, a Frederick, Md.,

writer and investigator who sued the government for release of the documents.

Weisberg lost the case, but shortly after the court decision last summer, the National Archives declassified the information and sent copies to Weisberg.

On Jan. 27, 1964, the commission discussed whether the heads of the CIA and the FBI would truthfully answer questions about whether Lee Harvey Oswald, accused assassin of Kennedy, ever worked for either agency, as was rumored in press reports.

The agency heads then were J. Edgar Hoover of the FBI and John J. McCone of the CIA.

When Dulles made his statement he was asked by John J. McCloy, a member of the commission, "You wouldn't tell the secretary of defense?"

"Well, it depends a little bit on the circumstances," Dulles replied. "If it was within the jurisdiction of the secretary of defense, but otherwise I

would go to the President and I do on some cases."

J. Lee Rankin, the commission's general counsel, said: "If that is all that is necessary, I think he could get the President to direct anybody working for the government to answer this question. If we have to we would get that direction."

Dulles continued: "What I was getting at, I think under any circumstances, I think Mr. Hoover would say certainly he didn't have anything to do with this fellow."

Earlier in the discussion, commission member Sen. Richard B. Russell said to Dulles, "If Oswald never had assassinated the President or at least been charged with assassinating the President and had been in the employ of the FBI and somebody had gone to the FBI they would have denied he was an agent."

Dulles: "Oh, yes."

Russell: "They would be the first to deny it. Your agents would have done exactly the same thing."
Dulles: "Exactly."

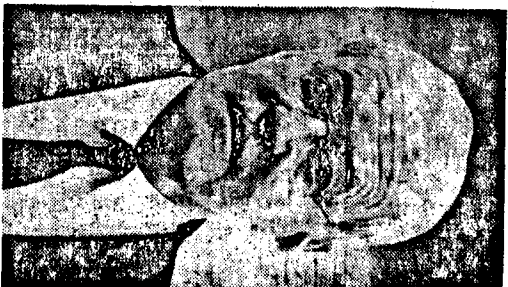
James H. Lesar, a Washington attorney who worked with Weisberg on private investigations of the assassinations of President Kennedy and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., said the documents show that "the Warren Commission had no investigative staff, and had to rely on the FBI and CIA, even while they recognized they may have had a 'fox in the henhouse' problem."

Lesar said other previously disclosed testimony was "proof that the commission didn't have the courage to investigate Hoover."

When Hoover was questioned by the commission, on May 14, 1964, he testified: "I can most emphatically say that at no time was he (Oswald) ever an employee of the bureau in any capacity, either as an agent or as a special employee, or as an informant."

CIA director McCone testified the same day that Oswald had no connection with the CIA.

Other comments made during the
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Allen Dulles
AP Photo

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Jan. 27, 1964, discussion were revealed in the book "Portrait of the Assassin," written in 1965 by then Rep. Gerald R. Ford.

Ford, who also was a member of the Warren Commission, did not report Dulles' remarks.

Because of his experience as director of the CIA from 1953 to 1961, Dulles was asked by other commission members for advice on how to handle what Ford described in his book as "this touchy matter."

Dulles at one point told the commission that in some instances CIA employees would not tell their superiors about undercover agents they employed even if they were under oath.

The late Rep. Hale Boggs, D-La., another commission member, responded: "What you do is to make out a problem if this be true (about Oswald), make our problem utterly impossible because you say this rumor can't be dissipated under any circumstances."

Dulles: "I don't think it can unless you believe Mr. Hoover, and so forth and so on, which probably most of the people will."

Weisberg, a longtime critic of the Warren report, said the commission failed to interview any of the news reporters who wrote that "sources" told them Oswald was employed by the FBI or CIA, a statement corroborated by a check of witnesses called by the commission.

In an interview at his house in rural Frederick this week, Weisberg said, "I have no idea who killed J.F.B. That's a function of government. I just know it wasn't Oswald."

Weisberg, who published the book himself with money borrowed by Lesar, has written three other books on the Kennedy assassination and one on King's assassination.