

Handbook, which is in the possession of every Bureau special agent, provided:

Threats against the President of the U.S., members of his immediate family, the President-elect, and the Vice-President

Investigation of threats against the President of the United States, members of his immediate family, the President-Elect, and the Vice-President is within the exclusive jurisdiction of the U.S. Secret Service. Any information indicating the possibility of an attempt against the person or safety of the President, members of the immediate family of the President, the President-Elect or the Vice-President must be referred immediately by the most expeditious means of communication to the nearest office of the U.S. Secret Service. Advise the Bureau at the same time by teletype of the information so furnished to the Secret Service and the fact that it has been so disseminated. The above action should be taken without delay in order to attempt to verify the information and no evaluation of the information should be attempted. When the threat is in the form of a written communication, give a copy to local Secret Service and forward the original to the Bureau where it will be made available to Secret Service headquarters in Washington. The referral of the copy to local Secret Service should not delay the immediate referral of the information by the fastest available means of communication to Secret Service locally.³⁸

The State Department advised the Secret Service of all crank and threat letter mail or crank visitors and furnished reports concerning any assassination or attempted assassination of a ruler or other major official anywhere in the world.³⁹ The several military intelligence agencies reported crank mail and similar threats involving the President.⁴⁰ According to Special Agent in Charge Bouck, the Secret Service had no standard procedure for the systematic review of its requests for and receipt of information from other Federal agencies.⁴¹

The Commission believes that the facilities and procedures of the Protective Research Section of the Secret Service prior to November 29, 1963, were inadequate. Its efforts appear to have been too largely directed at the "crank" threat. Although the Service recognized that its advance preventive measures must encompass more than these most obvious dangers, it made little effort to identify factors in the activities of an individual or an organized group, other than specific threats, which suggested a source of danger against which timely precautions could be taken. Except for its special "trip index" file of 400 names, none of the cases in the PRS general files was available for systematic review on a geographic basis when the President planned a particular trip.

As reported in chapter II, when the special file was reviewed on November 8, it contained the names of no persons from the entire

Dallas-Fort Worth area, notwithstanding the fact that Ambassador Stevenson had been abused by pickets in Dallas less than a month before. Bouck explained the failure to try to identify the individuals involved in the Stevenson incident after it occurred on the ground that PRS required a more direct indication of a threat to the President, and that there was no such indication until the President's scheduled visit to that area became known.⁴² Such an approach seriously undermines the precautionary nature of PRS work; if the presence in Dallas of the Stevenson pickets might have created a danger for the President on a visit to that city, PRS should have investigated and been prepared to guard against it.

Other agencies occasionally provided information to the Secret Service concerning potentially dangerous political groups. This was done in the case of the Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico, for example, but only after members of the group had resorted to political violence.⁴³ However, the vague requests for information which the Secret Service made to Federal intelligence and law enforcement agencies were not well designed to elicit information from them about persons other than those who were obvious threats to the President. The requests shifted the responsibility for evaluating difficult cases from the Service, the agency most responsible for performing that task, to the other agencies. No specific guidance was provided. Although the CIA had on file requests from the Treasury Department for information on the counterfeiting of U.S. currency and certain smuggling matters,⁴⁴ it had no written specification of intelligence information collected by CIA abroad which was desired by the Secret Service in advance of Presidential trips outside the United States.

Information known about Lee Harvey Oswald prior to the assassination.—No information concerning Lee Harvey Oswald appeared in PRS files before the President's trip to Dallas. Oswald was known to other Federal agencies with which the Secret Service maintained intelligence liaison. The FBI had been interested in him, to some degree at least, since the time of his defection in October 1959. It had interviewed him twice shortly after his return to the United States, again a year later at his request and was investigating him at the time of the assassination. The Commission has taken the testimony of Bureau agents who interviewed Oswald after his return from the Soviet Union and prior to November 22, 1963, the agent who was assigned his case at the time of the assassination, the Director of the FBI, and the Assistant to the Director in charge of all investigative activities under the Director and Associate Director.⁴⁵ In addition, the Director and Deputy Director for Plans of the CIA testified concerning that Agency's limited knowledge of Oswald before the assassination.⁴⁶ Finally, the Commission has reviewed the complete files on Oswald, as they existed at the time of the assassination, of the Department of State, the Office of Naval Intelligence, the FBI, and the CIA. The information known to the FBI is summarized below.

potential danger to him. On November 4, 1963, after mentioning the responsibility for advance preparations for the visit to Dallas, Agent Lawson stated that the FBI was not taking any action deemed to be a potential danger to the President or the security of the Secret Service program which includes the President's visit.

The employment of the FBI in the Secret Service depends largely on the nature of the potential threat. Immediately before the visit of the President to Dallas on November 4, 1963, the local police and the local Secret Service units conducted a search of the local police and the local offices of the Federal Bureau of Investigation for potential dangers to the President. Although there was no mention in FBI files of the demonstration in Dallas against Ambassador Adlai Stevenson on October 24, 1963, Lawson acquired about the incident and obtained through the local police photographs of some of the persons involved. On November 22 a Secret Service agent stood at the entrance to the Trade Mart, where the President was scheduled to speak, with copies of these photographs. Dallas detectives in the lobby of the Trade Mart and in the luncheon area also had copies of these photographs. A number of people who resembled some of those in the photographs were placed under surveillance at the Trade Mart.

The FBI office in Dallas gave the local Secret Service representatives the names of a possibly dangerous individual in the Dallas area who was investigated. It also advised the Secret Service of the circulation on November 21 of a pamphlet sharply critical of President Kennedy, discussed in chapter VI of this report. Shortly before the Dallas police had reported to the Secret Service that the handbill had appeared on the steps of DeSoto. Whether the Dallas police nor the FBI had yet learned the source of the handbill. No one else was identified to the Secret Service through local inquiry as potentially dangerous, nor did FBI develop any additional information between November 21 when Lawson left Washington, and November 22. The absence of the intelligence system maintained by the Secret Service at that time of the demonstration, including a detailed description of the available data on Lee Harvey Oswald and the reasons why his name had not been furnished to the Secret Service, is discussed in chapter VIII.

The Secret Service

An important purpose of the President's visit to Dallas was to speak at a luncheon given by business and civic leaders. The White House would therefore like Secret Service to have the President arrive and depart from Dallas' Love Field that a motorcade through the downtown area of Dallas to the luncheon site should be arranged; and that following the luncheon the President would return to the airport by the most direct route. Accordingly, it was important to

determine the luncheon site as quickly as possible.

On November 4, Gerald A. Behn, agent in charge of the White House detail, asked Sorrels to examine three potential sites for the luncheon. One building, Market Hall, was unavailable for November 22. The second, the Women's Building at the State Fair Grounds, was a one-story building with few entrances and easy to make secure, but it lacked necessary food-handling facilities and had certain unattractive features, including a low ceiling with exposed conduits and beams. The third possibility, the Trade Mart, a handsome new building with all the necessary facilities, presented security problems. It had numerous entrances, several tiers of balconies surrounding the central court where the luncheon would be held, and several catwalks crossing the court at each level. On November 4, Sorrels told Behn he believed security difficulties at the Trade Mart could be overcome by special precautions. Lawson also evaluated the security hazards at the Trade Mart on November 13. Kenneth O'Donnell made the final decision to hold the luncheon at the Trade Mart; Behn so notified Lawson on November 14.

Once the Trade Mart had been selected, Sorrels and Lawson worked out detailed arrangements for security at the building. In addition to the preventive measures already mentioned, they provided for controlling access to the building, closing off and policing areas around it, securing the roof and insuring the presence of numerous police officers inside and around the building. Ultimately more than 200 law enforcement officers, mainly Dallas police but including 8 Secret Service agents, were deployed in and around the Trade Mart.

The Motorcade Route

On November 8, when Lawson was briefed on the itinerary for the trip to Dallas, he was told that 45 minutes had been allotted for a motorcade procession from Love Field to the luncheon site. Lawson was not specifically instructed to select the parade route, but he understood that this was one of his functions. Even before the Trade Mart had been definitely selected, Lawson and Sorrels began to consider the best motorcade route from Love Field to the Trade Mart. On November 14, Lawson and Sorrels attended a meeting at Love Field and on their return to Dallas drove over the route which Sorrels believed best suited for the proposed motorcade. This route, eventually selected for the motorcade from the airport to the Trade Mart, measured 10 miles and could be driven easily within the allotted 45 minutes. From Love Field the route passed through a portion of suburban Dallas, through the downtown area along Main Street and then to the Trade Mart via Stemmons Freeway. For the President's return to Love Field following the luncheon, the agents selected the most direct route, which was approximately 4 miles.

After the selection of the Trade Mart as the luncheon site, Lawson and Sorrels met with Dallas Chief of Police Jesse E. Curry, Assistant