

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 22, 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.