

Mr. Haynes Johnson
Washington Post
1150 15 St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20071

6/11/87

Dear Mr. Johnson,

Meese is much more culpable than indicated in your yesterday's piece. He began by assuring the possibility, if not, in fact, the probability, of a coverup.

At the White House press conference in which he announced the diversion of Iranian money to the Contras he was asked if the FBI was investigating. He replied, presenting himself as a civil libertarian, saying that in the absence of suspicion of any law violation it would be improper for the FBI to make any investigation. I was shocked at the enormity of his lie and at the apparent lack of knowledge on the part of the questioners. I was even more shocked that Meese stated, without any demurrer, and Dodge Webster agreed with him.

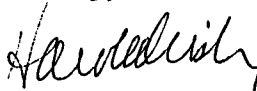
The FBI does make and is empowered to make "special investigations" for the president. Meese and Webster had to know this. The quoted words are from J. Edgar Hoover's testimony before the Warren Commission, Volume 5, page 98, copy enclosed.

Thus, at the very least, Meese began by providing the opportunity for the known North/Hall shredding party and who can know what else.

It is difficult for me to believe that after all those years in power there was nobody in the White House aware of this provision for FBI conduct of presidential investigations.

Or that, if innocent, any president ever had greater need for such an investigation.

Sincerely,



Harold Weisberg
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The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Rankin will carry on the examination, Mr. Director.

MR. RANKIN: Mr. Chief Justice, do you want to tell him briefly what our purpose is?

The CHAIRMAN: Oh, yes; it is our practice to make a brief statement before the testimony of each witness, and I will do it now.

MR. HOOVER will be asked to testify in regard to whether Lee H. Oswald was ever an agent, directly or indirectly, or an informer or acting on behalf of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in any capacity at any time, and whether he knows of any credible evidence of any conspiracy, either domestic or foreign, involved in the assassination of President Kennedy.

What he has to say about an article in the National Enquirer, Commission Exhibit No. 837, and concerning the failure to include the name and information concerning special agent Hoesty in the initial report of the Oswald address book and any suggestions and recommendations he may have concerning improvements or changes in provisions for the protection of the President of the United States. Now, Mr. Rankin, you may proceed.

MR. RANKIN: Mr. Hoover, will you state for the record your name and position?

MR. HOOVER: J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation of the Department of Justice.

MR. RANKIN: Where do you live, Mr. Hoover?

MR. HOOVER: I live at 4936 30th Place, Northwest, Washington, D. C.

MR. RANKIN: And you have been Director of the Bureau for some 40 years according to the newspapers?

MR. HOOVER: That is correct; since 1924.

MR. RANKIN: You have furnished us a considerable amount of information, Mr. Hoover, about whether or not Lee Harvey Oswald was ever an agent or acting for the Bureau in any capacity as informant or otherwise at any time. Are those statements correct?

MR. HOOVER: They are correct. I can most emphatically say that at no time was he ever an employee of the Bureau in any capacity, either as an agent or as a special employee, or as an informant.

MR. RANKIN: I call your particular attention to Exhibit 835, and suggest that you will find that that is your letter, together with your affidavit about this subject matter, and other matters that you furnished to us concerning this particular subject.

MR. HOOVER: That is correct.

MR. RANKIN: Do you wish to add anything?

MR. HOOVER: No; there is nothing that I desire to add to what appears in this letter and my affidavit which accompanied it to the Commission.

MR. RANKIN: You have provided many things to us in assisting the Commission in connection with this investigation and I assume, at least in a general way, you are familiar with the investigation of the assassination of President Kennedy. Is that correct?

MR. HOOVER: That is correct. When President Johnson returned to Washington he communicated with me within the first 24 hours, and asked the Bureau to pick up the investigation of the assassination because as you are aware, there is no Federal jurisdiction for such an investigation. (It is not a Federal crime to kill or attack the President or the Vice President or any of the continuity of officers who would succeed to the Presidency.)

However, the President has a right to request the Bureau to make special investigations, and in this instance he asked that this investigation be made. I immediately assigned a special force headed by the special agent in charge at Dallas, Texas, to initiate the investigation, and to get all details and facts concerning it, which we obtained, and then prepared a report which we submitted to the Attorney General for transmission to the President.

MR. RANKIN: From your study of this entire matter of the assassination and work in connection with it, do you know of any credible evidence that has ever come to your attention that there was a conspiracy either foreign or domestic involved in the assassination?

come to the attention of the Commission. I have read many of the reports that our agents have made and I have been unable to find any scintilla of evidence showing any foreign conspiracy or any domestic conspiracy that culminated in the assassination of President Kennedy.

Representative Ford: May I ask this, Mr. Hoover. As I understand your testimony, it is based on the evidence that has been accumulated thus far?

MR. HOOVER: That is correct, sir.

Representative Ford: Is the Federal Bureau of Investigation continuing its investigation of all possible ramifications of this assassination?

MR. HOOVER: That is correct. We are receiving and we, I expect, will continue to receive for days or weeks to come, letters from individuals that normally would probably be in the category of what we would call crank letters in which various wild allegations are made or in which people have reported and in turn vibrations. We are still running out letters of that character and in turn making a report to this Commission upon it, notwithstanding the fact that on the face of it the allegation is without any foundation. Individuals who could not have known any of the facts have made some very strange statements. There have been publications and books written, the contents of which have been shared and without a scintilla of foundation of fact. I feel, from my experience in the Bureau, where we are in constant receipt over the years of these so-called crank letters, that such allegations will be going on possibly for some years to come.

I, personally, feel that any finding of the Commission will not be accepted by everybody because there are bound to be some extremists who have very pronounced views, without any foundation for them, who will disagree violently with whatever findings the Commission makes. But I think it is essential that the FBI investigate the allegations that are received for the future, so it can't be said that we had ignored them or that the case is closed and forgotten.

Representative Ford: Now could you give us some idea of how many agents are currently working to one degree or another on any aspects of this case?

MR. HOOVER: I would estimate, Congressman Ford, that there are at the present time at least 50 or 60 men giving their entire time to various aspects of the investigation, because while Dallas is the office of origin, investigation is required in auxiliary offices such as Los Angeles or San Francisco, and even in some foreign countries like Mexico. We have representatives in Mexico City.

At the outset of the investigation, following the assassination, it was the desire of the President to have this report completed by the Bureau just as quickly as possible, and as thoroughly as possible, and I would say we had about 150 men at that time, working on the report in the field, and at Washington, D. C. Now, all the reports that come in from the field are, of course, reviewed at Washington by the supervisor in charge of the case, and then in turn by the assistant director of the division, and then in turn by Mr. Belmont, who is the assistant to the Director.

Reports in which there is a controversial issue or where statements have been made of the existence of some particular thing that we have never heard of before, I myself go over these to see that we haven't missed anything or haven't had any gain in the investigation so it can be tied down.

Recently the National Enquirer had a fantastic article in it as to the existence of a letter that had been written or a request that had been made by the Department of Justice to Chief Curry of the Dallas Police Department, to withhold President Rubinstein, or Ruby, and Oswald after the Oswald attempt on General Walker's life.

First, I had the agent in charge at Dallas interview Chief Curry and I have sent to the Commission a letter as to what Chief Curry had to say. He branded as an entire lie—that he had never received any request of that kind. I had our files searched to be certain we had not written any such letter as that and we had not. I requested the Department of Justice to advise me whether or not they had written any such letter and Mr. Katzenbach advises there is no ref-

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4/26/87

Dear Mr. Goshko,

The first of your series, "America's Bading Foreign Service," is fine, important and I hope not the end of reporting of what happened in and to the State Department and the consequences. It began earlier than when you suggest, the McCarthy period. I know because I was one of its victims.

Most of you younger reporters have some knowledge of the terrorization of the foreign service's far eastern and remarkably able experts that began during World War II. At about the same time it also happened to Latin Americanists in research and intelligence, and this greatly influenced the information that was available to and was passed up to the diplomatic and policy people.

As an illustration of what you younger ones do not know, and certainly not as criticism, today's paper has David Hoffman's important piece on Oliver North and a facsimile of his letter to "Felix." North concludes with what neither Mr. Hoffman nor his researcher, Ms. Michelle Hall, recognized as a rough counterpart of "Heil Hitler" of the Spanish fascists, "Vaya con Dios." I'd appreciate it if you would please pass this on to them. I am surprised only that he put it on paper. His association with persons involved in the contra/Iran mess associates him with such views and beliefs. A current source is the Anderson ~~brothers~~ brothers' book, "Inside the League," meaning what calls itself the World Anti-Communist League.

There was what in some respects was a pogrom inside the State Department, where significant changes began almost before FDR's body was cold. It was banner headlined at the time, along with leaks. There was considerably less attention to the meager justice done us and none of which I am aware to the consequences.

I'd been a reporter, investigative report^{er} and Senate editor and investigator before my Army service. Mumps got me transferred from the military police to OSS, where my last duties were in the Latin American Division. It had use for my knowledge and expertise reflected in a series of exposes I did of Nazi cartels and their influence on the war effort. I required security clearance, of course, and I was never a Communist. I have solid credentials for what was known as the "shibboleth" period of the Nazi-Soviet Pact, including this series of exposes. When Truman ended OSS I was in the part transferred to State, to research and analysis. All of the research and analysis of which I was aware was strictly independent and thus, with the changes that began with FDR's passing, unwelcome to the Neundertgals who moved in and took over. Ten of us were fired under the McCarran Rider, since found to be Unconstitutional. I led and organized our defense and in the end State rehired us and we resigned. I was gypped out of my back pay, they were that vindictive/intimidated. Of the four of us who were Latin Americanists, two anthropologists and proteges of Margaret Mead and the other a college professor, I have no reason to believe that any was a Communist. One had been but the work he praised that I did leaves it without question that he then was not a Communist. Our lawyers were the firm then known as Arnold, Fortas and Porter. All the partners were active in it and a great part of the work was done by Milton Friedman who, if he is still active, can perhaps tell you what I cannot. I'd known Judge Arnold and Paul Porter earlier. I was able to assist Arnold who, when he headed Anti-Trust, handled Nazi cartel cases.

If I ever knew I now do not recall whether the others were given charges or

hearings. I was not and none were possible. The worst that could have been said of me was, in the saying of the era, that I was a "premature anti-fascist." ^{Even} that is not in any of the records since disclosed to me. What was later known as "Carbology" was practised on my wife and me by the so-called investigators then and the most terrible thing they found led to the false conclusion that my wife was more than a member of the League of Women Shoppers, a consumers group. I'd been a member of the newspaper guild only.

Perhaps the morgue the Post got from the Times-Herald, to which the story was leaked, will indicate who did the leaking. It had to be the FBI or the so-called "security" office at State. Records I got from the FBI, withheld by State, show that the late John Peurifoy phoned J. Edgar Hoover to exult that he'd gotten me and others fired. (That E.A. Tamm took the phone in Hoover's absence never prevented him as a judge from sitting on my FOIA cases.) I'd know Peurifoy slightly but well enough not to be surprised when his wildness killed him in Guatemala. He was ambassador to Guatemala and part of our overthrow of its democratic government. Your morgue should have the Post's printing of the Herald-Tribune's story on us and Hoover's statement that the worst he could have told some of us was that we were keeping bad company, as he understood bad company.

I use the word "pogrom" because most of us were Jews and because from my own inquiries I did learn that there was an element of anti-Semitism in it connected with the Hill. Its immediate effects were to eliminate independent reporting and analysis and to intimidate all but the most reactionary. Inevitably, this controls what higher authority is told and can know and inevitably that influences policy.

Before McCarthy this was so brazen and open that even fascists were hired and worked with me. One I recall clearly was actually a relative of the Dominican dictator Trujillo and was actually assigned to the "Latin American" division!

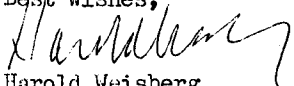
and I can tell you real horror stories of the intelligence, if you'll excuse the expression, from the FBI and State, reflecting the kind of ~~recruiting~~ recruiting there.

So, if what I believe is correct, this administration has merely carried to more open and extreme form what began almost as soon as FDR was dead. I think that there is no real question about it: our policy and record in Latin America has been disastrous for us and for Latin America since then and this was made easier by the sort of evil in which I was caught up.

If this is of any interest to you, I am usually home after daily physical therapy by 10:30 a.m. (301/473-8186) and an hour or less from northwest D.C. Some of the others are probably still alive. One not fired, ^{or} was manager of the National Symphony for a while, Bob Rogers. (He also headed 549 heads for 515 in NW DC)

If you check your morgue and find the stories I refer to I'd appreciate copies. I gave mine to Hilt Friedman and never got them back. This includes a decoration I got from General Wild Bill Donovan and the CIA claims it can't find a record of in my OSS records. I'd like them for the archive I'm leaving of my more recent work.

I do hope that you and the Post will continue with this kind of reporting because if we are ever to work our way out of all these messes it requires that representative society work and that is possible only when the people are honestly and accurately informed.

Best wishes,

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