

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO: Mr. Conrad *[Signature]*

- 1 - Mr. Conrad
- 1 - Mr. Jevons
- 1 - Mr. Gallagher
- 1 - Mr. Heiberger

DATE: 5/20/70

FROM: R. H. Jevons *[Signature]*

SUBJECT: HAROLD WEISBERG
DEPARTMENTAL REQUEST

Tolson	_____
DeLoach	_____
Mohr	_____
Bishop	_____
Casper	_____
Callahan	_____
Conrad	_____
Felt	_____
Gale	_____
Rosen	_____
Sullivan	_____
Tavel	_____
Soyars	_____
Tele. Room	_____
Holmes	_____
Gandy	_____

Mr. Carl Eardley, Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the Civil Division, has advised that the Department is in receipt of a request from Harold Weisberg for the spectrographic analyses of certain of the bullets and fragments recovered in the investigation of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Harold Weisberg is the author of Whitewash, a "leftist" book highly critical of the Bureau and its investigation of the assassination.

Spectrographic analysis of material, such as bullet metal, permits a comparison of the composition of different samples and thus some indication as to whether such samples may have originated from the same or different bullets. Laboratory examiners furnished testimony before the Commission that certain fragments were examined spectrographically and were similar in composition. The detailed notes, work sheets, and photographic plates comprising the raw data upon which this conclusion was based were, of course, prepared by the Examiners at the time the analyses were made and constitute "raw data" which are a part of the Bureau's investigative files pertaining to this matter. To assist him in preparing his denial for this information, Mr. Eardley has requested to see these notes, work sheets and spectrographic plates.

In a somewhat similar earlier situation in which a "would-be" author desired to obtain this raw data, the request was denied by the Department based upon the fact that this material is part of the Bureau's investigative files compiled for law enforcement purposes. This earlier request came through Mr. Eardley's Office and the Department sustained the Bureau's recommended position of denial.

- 1 - Mr. Mohr
- 1 - Mr. DeLoach
- 1 - Mr. Rosen

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Eardley was reminded of the earlier similar situation and advised that he recalled the previous request and the action taken thereon. He was also reminded that the testimony as to the conclusions was set forth in the Commission report. Eardley indicated that he also planned to deny the request from Weisberg but pointed out that it would be extremely helpful to him (Eardley) in preparing his denial if he could be permitted to see the notes, work sheets, and spectrographic plates which constitute the "raw material" in the Bureau file, from which the conclusions were drawn. It was pointed out to Eardley that, except insofar as the examiner's notes reflect the examiner's conclusion, much of the material, including the photographic plates themselves, is of a highly technical nature and requires scientific training for their proper interpretation.

Eardley has been friendly and helpful to the Bureau in the past and, as indicated above, has stated that he plans to deny the current request from Weisberg. Accordingly, although certain of the raw material will be meaningless to him, except where the notes are self-explanatory, it is suggested that the Bureau will wish to comply with Eardley's request to see this material. If approved, the specific material involved, namely examiner's notes, work sheets, and spectrographic plates will be shown to Eardley. He will not, of course, have access to any remaining part of the file.

RECOMMENDATION:

Accordingly, it is recommended that Mr. Eardley be authorized to view the spectrographic plates and notes pertaining to this matter. If approved, Mr. Eardley will be telephonically advised.