

Leon Jaworski's contacts with the Warren Commission show that (at the very least) he knows how to go along with a coverup. He issued an official endorsement of the conclusion of the Warren Report on the assassination of President Kennedy. He highly praised the thoroughness of its methods and investigations, although he personally had cut off one aspect of the investigation into the report that Lee Harvey Oswald had been an FBI informant. Jaworski had joined other Texas officials in bringing this rumor to the attention of the Commission; their motivation may have been in that instance - as it certainly was on other occasions - to take some of the heat off Texas.

Jaworski's views are given in the 20-page "Texas Supplemental Report on the Assassination ...," issued on October 5, 1964. It was issued under the name of Texas Attorney General Waggoner Carr, who had been responsible for whatever assassination investigation was to be done by the state of Texas; Jaworski served as his Special Counsel in connection with this. The Texas Report states that Jaworski and Robert Storey "have prominently participated in the preparation of this report and approve it as herein presented above." (P. 19-20) So it is fair to cite this report as indicating Jaworski's opinions.

Understandably, this report got very little attention. It is primarily a ringing endorsement of the Warren Report, adding nearly nothing, and emphasizing the local angles. Jaworski (& Carr and Storey) had "not the slightest hesitancy in concurring" with the Commission's conclusion that Oswald had acted alone, and not as part of any conspiracy. (P. 10) He praised the Dallas Police, which even the Warren Commission was not able to bring itself to do. (P. 11) Oswald was described as "an enemy of the political philosophy of Texas. The evidence clearly refutes the early insinuations emanating in some quarters (!) that the political philosophy of Dallas was responsible for this tragedy." (Pp. 11-12)

The Carr-Jaworski-Storey report said that "the orderly procedures of the rule of law were placed under severe strain and unusual demands in three particulars:" (p. 16-17) Two of the specified points were the aggressiveness of the news media (implied to be a contributing factor in allowing Ruby to get to Oswald) and the misbehavior of the press and Melvin Belli during the Ruby trial. The final point (#2) defies paraphrase: "While local officials recognize that subsequent events, including the killing of Oswald by Ruby during an attempted transfer from the City Jail to the County Jail, magnified the deficiency in security measures, they do not accept the full responsibility for such conditions, because of the fact that they had no knowledge whatever of Lee Harvey Oswald and his background until after the assassination on November 22, when they were advised of his presence in Dallas and his past activities by the Federal authorities."

Two themes are prominent in these conclusions: the Dallas authorities were not all that responsible for letting Oswald get shot, and (as various other Texans also indicated) if the Feds had only told us what they knew about Oswald, we would have been sitting on his lap.

The general story of the origin of the Texas inquiry, how it was sidetracked, and how the Texans cooperated with the Warren Commission, has been told well by Sylvia Meagher, based on the correspondence files and other records in the National Archives. (Minority of One, July-August 1968) Jaworski's personal role was limited, but large enough to show that his expressed confidence in the Commission's investigation was unjustified.

In January 1964, Texas officials brought to the attention of the Commission a rumor that Oswald was an FBI informant. The first chapter of Gerald Ford's book (Portrait of the Assassin) tells how seriously the Commission took this report, and how they resolved to investigate it thoroughly. (Incidentally, Ford quoted sections of the Top Secret transcript of the Commission's meeting on what to do; that transcript is still unavailable to the public, but that's another story.) Leon Jaworski was one of the five Texans who presented this

material to the Commission on January 24, 1964.

One of the sources of the rumor that Oswald had been an FBI agent was reporter Lonnie Hudkins. According to Inquest, by Ed Epstein (p. 39, based on interviews with Warren Commission General Counsel J. Lee Rankin), Jaworski "was asked to speak informally to Hudkins about the rumor." In fact, it now seems more likely that the rumor was deliberately fed to Hudkins by Texas officials that that he was its originator; in any case, he was an important witness in any investigation of this rumor. "According to Rankin, Jaworski reported back to the Commission that 'there was absolutely nothing to the story' and that it was 'sheer speculation based on nothing but Hudkins' imagination.'" This may be what Jaworski told Rankin informally, or it may just be the impression Rankin got; Jaworski's letter of May 8 to Rankin, although not quite so definitive, is strong enough. He had in fact not been able to locate Hudkins. Instead, he had reread the newspaper story; he pointed out to Rankin that "Hudkins' story does not say that Oswald was an informant. He simply raises the question based on the speculation of others, including that of (Assistant Dallas D.A.) Bill Alexander" All the more reason to call Alexander as a witness; that was never done. Jaworski concluded "Inasmuch as you have the testimony of the FBI agents (only some of them, in fact -PLH) as well as that of Marguerite Oswald, I am wondering if it is really worth your effort to follow up on Hudkins."

Needless to say, Hudkins was never called as a witness. This was only one part of the Commission's investigation of this allegation, but the rest was just as bad. So much for Rep. Ford's highly praised investigation. And when Ford's praise was echoed by Jaworski in the Texas Report, he personally knew better than to say, as he did: "So far as I have been able to determine, the Warren Commission has explored fully all available avenues of information and has left no stone unturned in an effort to ascertain the full truth. I have (that is, Carr with Jaworski's agreement) been considerably impressed by the resourcefulness and exhaustiveness of its labors.... So far as is known to me or my special counsel, there are no untapped sources of information in the assembling of all material facts pertaining to the assassination" (pp. 10, 12; my emphasis)

Jaworski was by no means a key person in the Warren Commission's work; however, the allegation that Oswald had been an FBI informant was a very important issue, and Jaworski's role was not trivial. The whole matter of the validity of the allegation, and the motivation of those who were spreading it around, is a very complex one. My book will deal with these problems in some detail. It is my personal belief that the FBI did have a special relationship with Oswald, which it succeeded in withholding from the Warren Commission, but that it probably had no direct significance in terms of the assassination. I would speculate that the rumors about Oswald and the FBI served the purpose of inhibiting the FBI's own investigation and taking the heat off some of the suspicious actions of Texas law enforcement authorities. I am particularly interested in studying how the Commission's expressed commitment to investigate this allegation faded away, largely under pressure from the FBI itself.

Sources: The Texas Report is available as Warren Commission Document 15²⁶ at the National Archives. The correspondence between the Texas authorities and the Commission is also at the Archives, and has been published on microfilm. (I have a copy of Jaworski's letter of May 8 to Rankin.) The Ford and Epstein books are widely available. I can provide Xerox copies of Sylvia Meagher's article in TMO.

Paul L. Hoch
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