

FBI Withheld Files

Longer version, WXP same date,
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THE FBI withheld from the Warren Commission hundreds of documents about the John F. Kennedy assassination.

These are raw FBI files, which the commission requested but never received. They contain no startling information that will overturn the commission's verdict, but they reveal intimately how the FBI handled its most important case.

In the margins of some suppressed memos, the late FBI chief, J. Edgar Hoover, scribbled caustic comments in blue ink. He was critical of almost everyone involved in the investigation from Dallas police chief Jesse Curry to President Lyndon Johnson.

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CONFIDENTIAL NOTES kept by one top FBI official, for example, quote Hoover as warning: "Johnson may become very dictatorial. We must keep our guard up."

Sources familiar with the suppressed documents say the contents were summarized and submitted to the Warren Commission. But there were some subtle, perhaps deliberate, omissions.

The documents show that Hoover brought pressure on his subordinates to rush out a preliminary report on the FBI investigation before the murdered President's brother, Robert Kennedy, returned to his post as Attorney General.

The confidential notes quote Hoover as instructing his subordinates to get the report out of the Justice Department "before Bobby gets back."

Apparently, the FBI chief also feared Deputy Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach might tamper with the report before forwarding it to the Warren Commission. Hoover told his aides to alert President Johnson's major domo, Walter Jenkins.

"Let Jenkins know after report is out of our hands," Hoover directed. "Let Jenkins know what Katzenbach is doing. Might cause long delay. Must not consider any alteration."

Thirteen days after President Kennedy was gunned down in Dallas, Hoover delivered a detailed report to Katzenbach naming Lee Harvey Oswald as the assassin. Katzenbach kept it four more days before submitting it to the commission.

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THE WARREN COMMISSION adopted a resolution, meanwhile, calling for "the raw materials upon which any reports given to the commission are based, together with all raw materials and reports relating to the work of the commission since the date of any and all earlier reports."

J. Lee Rankin, the general counsel, followed up with a "Dear Edgar" letter to the FBI chief requesting the raw files "as promptly as possible." But they were never delivered.