

Allen Dulles

By Donald P. Baker

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Newly declassified documents reveal that former CIA director Allen Dulles told the Warren Commission on the assassination of President Kennedy that the directors of the CIA and FBI might lie to anyone except the President to protect the identity of their operations and undercover agents.

The formerly top-secret documents, contained in a book being published today on the 11th anniversary of Kennedy's death, quotes Dulles, a member of the commission that investigated the assassination, as saying:

"I would tell the President of the United States anything, yes, I am under his control . . . I wouldn't necessarily tell anybody else, unless the President authorized me to do it. We had that come up a couple of times."

Dulles was no longer director of the CIA when he served on the commission headed by then-Chief Justice Earl Warren.

The newly-declassified documents are reproduced in a book called "Whitewash IV," by Harold Weisberg, a Frederick, Md., writer and investigator who sued the government for release of the documents. Weisberg lost the case, but shortly after the court decision last summer, the National Archives declassified the information and sent copies to Weisberg.

Dulles' comments were part of a discussion by Warren Commission members on Jan. 27, 1964, directors J. Edgar Hoover of the FBI and John A. McCone of the CIA would truthfully answer questions about whether Lee Harvey Oswald, Kennedy's accused assassin, had ever worked for either of their agencies, as had been rumored in some press reports.

After Dulles had said that he, when he headed the CIA, would tell the President anything, commission member John J. McCloy asked Dulles: "You wouldn't tell the Secretary of Defense?"

"Well, it depends a little bit on the circumstances," Dulles replied. "If it was within the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Defense, but otherwise I would go to the President, and I do on some cases."

J. Lee Rankin, the commission's general counsel, said, "if that is all that is necessary, I think we could get the President to direct anybody working for the government to answer this question. If we have to we would get that direction."

Dulles continued: "What I



J. EDGAR HOOVER

... "Oswald no employee"

was getting at, I think under any circumstances, I think Mr. Hoover would say certainly he didn't have anything to do with this fellow."

Earlier in the discussion, commission member Sen. Richard B. Russell said to Dulles, "If Oswald never had assassinated the President, or at least been charged with assassinating the President and had been in the employ of the FBI and somebody had gone to the FBI they would have denied he was an agent."

Dulles: "Oh, yes."

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Dulles Testified CIA, FBI Would Lie

Russell: "They would be the first to deny it. Your agents would have done exactly the same thing."

Dulles: "Exactly."

James H. Lesar, a Washington attorney who has worked with Weisberg on private investigations of the assassinations of President Kennedy and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., said the documents show that "the Warren Commission had no investigative staff, and had to rely on the FBI and CIA, even while they recognized they may have had a 'fox in the hen house' problem."

Lesar said other previously disclosed testimony was "proof that the commission didn't have the courage to investigate Hoover."

When Hoover was questioned by the commission, on May 14, 1964, he testified that "I can most emphatically say that at no time was he (Oswald) ever an employee of the bureau in any capacity, either as an agent or as a special employee, or as an informant."

CIA director McCone testified the same day as Hoover. He was asked by Rankin whether Oswald "had any connection with the CIA, informer, or indirectly as an employee, or any other capacity?"

McCone replied that "I have determined to my sat-



LEE HARVEY OSWALD
... in declassified papers

isfaction that he had no such connection . . ."

Other comments made during the Jan. 27, 1964, discussion among Warren Commission members were revealed in the book "Portrait of the Assassin," written in 1965 by then Rep. Gerald R. Ford.

President Ford, who also was a member of the Warren Commission, did not report Dulles' remarks concerning how he would answer the President about CIA operation, as posed by commission members.

The question of whether Oswald had ever worked for

the FBI or the CIA had been raised in several newspaper and magazine articles shortly after Oswald was fatally shot in the Dallas police station by Jack Ruby on Nov. 24, 1963.

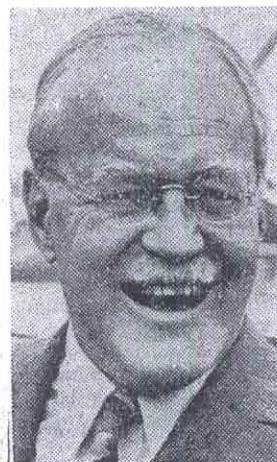
Because of his experience as director of the CIA from 1953 to 1961, other commission members turned to Dulles for advice on how to handle what author Ford described in his book as "this touchy matter."

Dulles at one point in the Jan. 27, 1964, transcript told commission members that in some instances CIA employees would not tell their superiors about the undercover agents they had employed, even if they were under oath.

Rep. Hale Boggs (D-La.), another commission member, responded: "What you do is to make out a problem if this be true (about Oswald), make our problem utterly impossible because you say this rumor can't be dissipated under any circumstances."

Dulles: "I don't think it can unless you believe Mr. Hoover, and so forth and so on, which probably most of the people will."

In his new book, Weisberg, a long-time critic of the Warren Report, said that the commission failed to interview any of the news reporters who had

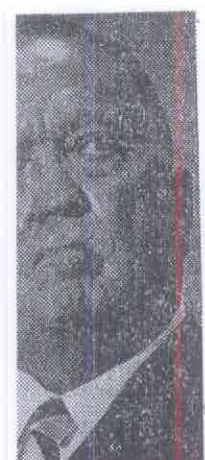


ALLEN DULLES
... would tell President

written that "sources" had told them that Oswald had been employed by the FBI or CIA, a statement corroborated by a check of witnesses called by the commission.

In an interview at his house in rural Frederick this week, Weisberg said, "I have no idea who killed JFK. That's a function of government. I just know it wasn't Oswald."

Weisberg, who published the book himself with money borrowed by attorney Lesar, has written three other books on the Kennedy assassination, and one on King's assassination.



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