

Excerpts From Hoover Testimony

Following are excerpts from the testimony of J. Edgar Hoover, director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, on May 14, 1964:

Chief Justice Warren, chairman — the commission will come to order.

Director Hoover, will you please raise your right hand to be sworn, please. You solemnly swear the testimony you are about to give before the Commission will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God? Mr. Hoover, I do.

J. Lee Rankin, general counsel to the commission — 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, Tex., 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.

Q — 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 here was a conspiracy either foreign or domestic involved in the assassination?

A.—I know of no substantial evidence of any type that would support any contention of that character. I have read all of the requests that have come to the bureau from this commission, and I have read and signed all the replies that have come to the commission.

In addition, 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 GERALD R. FORD—The point that I think ought to be made is that despite the magnitude of the effort that has been made by the F.B.I. and by other agencies, and despite the tremendous effort that has been made, I believe, by the Commission to help and assist and to consolidate all of the evidence that we possibly could, that there is always the possibility at some future date

that some evidence might come to the surface.

Mr. Hoover — That is, of course, possible; yes.

[After answering a later question, Mr. Hoover went on to say]:

Well now, if any person has fought communism, I certainly have fought it. We have tried to fight it and expose it in democratic ways I think that is the thing we have to very definitely keep in mind in this whole problem in the security of the President and the successor to office. Just how far you are going to go for his protection and his security. I don't think you can get absolute security without almost establishing a police state, and we don't want that. You can't put security in a black groove or a white groove.

It is in a gray groove, and certain chances have to be taken. You are dealing with a human being when you are dealing with the President of the United States. President Johnson is a very down to earth human being, and it makes the security problem all the more difficult, but you can't bar him from the people.

Felt 'Great Concern'

There are certain things that can be done, and I submitted a memorandum to the Secret Service, and to the White House on certain security steps that might be taken and tightened up. But you are dealing with the general public and that is what has given me great concern in the recent expansion, of the criteria for dissemination that we adopted after the assassination.

Prior to that time we reported to the Secret Service all information that dealt with individuals who were potential killers or by whom acts of violence might be anticipated. The Secret Service would take that information and would do with it as they saw fit. I gave great consideration to it because I am not very happy with the criteria expansion, but I felt we had to include subversives of various character, and extremists. We have, in turn, furnished their names to the Secret Service. I think 5,000 names up to the present time already have been submitted and there are at least three or four thousand more that will be submitted within the next few months.

Then you come to the problem of what you are going to do when the Secret Service gets those names. They have to call upon the local authorities. Just recently, in the city of Chicago, when the President was there, the local authorities were asked

to give assistance as they usually do to the Secret Service and they went to the homes of some of these people, and it resulted really almost in a house arrest.

Now, I don't think there is any place in this country for that kind of thing, but these people who belonged to extreme subversive organizations or or-



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TOLD ABOUT INQUIRY:
J. Edgar Hoover, director of F.B.I., as he arrived to testify before Warren Commission in Washington.

ganizations that advocated the overthrow of government by force and violence were told that they couldn't leave their house or if they did they would be accompanied by a police officer. That gives me great concern because in New York City alone, you run into maybe three or four thousand such individuals who would be members of subversive organizations, and then you get into the twilight zone of subversive fronts.

Conspiracy Doubted

REPRESENTATIVE HALE BOGGS—That brings me back to the questions I think I heard Congressman Ford ask you as I came into the room, because I think this is the crux of our investigation.

I read the F.B.I. report very carefully and the whole implication of the report is that, number one, Oswald shot the President; number two, that he was not connected with any conspiracy of any kind, nature or description.

MR. HOOVER—Correct.

Q.—Do you still subscribe to that? A.—I subscribe to it even more strongly today than I did at the time that the report was written. You see, the original idea was that there would be an investigation by the FBI and a report would be prepared in such form that it could be released to the public.

Q.—Surely, A.—Then a few days later, after further consideration, the President decided to form a commission, which I think was very wise, because I feel that the report of any agency of Government investi-

gating what might be some short comings on the part of other agencies of Government ought to be reviewed by an impartial group such as this commission. And the more I have read these reports, the more I am convinced that Oswald was the man who fired the gun; and he fired three times, killed the President, and wounded Governor Connally.

And I also am further convinced that there is absolutely no association between Oswald or Ruby. There was no such evidence ever established.

ALLEN W. DULLES, commission member—Or Oswald and anybody else? Would you go that far?

MR. HOOVER—Anybody else who might be—

MR. DULLES—In connection with the assassination?

MR. HOOVER—Yes; I would certainly go that far. There was suspicion at first this might be a Castro act.

MR. BOGGS—Right.

MR. HOOVER—We found no indication at all that Oswald was a man addicted to violence. The first indication of an act of violence came after he, Oswald, had been killed, and Mrs. Oswald told us about the attempt on General Walker's life by Oswald. No one had known a thing about that.

Who Was Intended Victim?

There has been some question raised which cannot be resolved, because Oswald is dead, as to whether he was trying to kill the President or trying to kill the Governor. He had had some correspondence with the Governor as to the form of his discharge from the Marine Corps. It was not a dishonorable discharge, but a discharge less than honorable after he defected.

Governor Connally had left the Navy Department, and was back in Texas as Governor. Oswald may have had his anger or his animosity against the Governor, but no one can say definitely—that is mere speculation, no one can tell that, because the gun and the sighting of the gun was directed at the car.

Now, first, it was thought that the President had been shot through the throat that is what the doctors at the Parkland Hospital felt when he was brought in.

If that had been true, the shot would have had to come from the overpass. But as soon as the body arrived in Washington, the doctors at Bethesda Hospital performed the autopsy and it was then determined definitely from their point of view that he had been shot from the rear, and that portions of the skull had been practically shot off.

There was no question but that the gun and the telescopic lens could pinpoint the President perfectly. The car was moving slowly. It wasn't going at a high rate of speed, so that he had perfect opportunity to do it.

Now, some people have raised the question: Why didn't he shoot the President as the car came toward the storehouse where he was working?

The reason for that is, I think, the fact there were some trees between his window on the sixth floor and the cars as

they turned and went through the park. So he waited until the car got out from under the trees, and the limbs, and then he had a perfectly clear view of the occupants of the car, and I think he took aim, either on the President or Connally, and I personally believe it was the President in view of the twisted mentality the man had.

But he had given no indication of that—we had interviewed him, I think, three times. Of course, our interviews were predicated to find out whether he had been recruited by the Russian intelligence service, because they frequently do that.

MR. BOGGS—Now we have some people, including this man's mother, talk about Oswald having been an agent of the Government of the United States. I think his mother mentioned the C.I.A.; she has made these statements publicly for money, apparently.

MR. HOOVER—Yes, she has.

MR. BOGGS—And the allegations she has made about this man being an agent either of the C.I.A. or the F.B.I. are false?

MR. HOOVER—Well, I can certainly speak for the F.B.I. that it is false, and I have discussed the matter, naturally, with Mr. McCone, the Director of C.I.A., and he, of course, will no doubt appear himself, but there is no indication at all that he was employed by them. We frequently get that kind of a story from individuals who, when they get into some kind of difficulty, will claim they were working for the C.I.A. or they were working for the F.B.I.

MR. BOGGS—Surely.

MR. HOOVER—Now, no one can work for the F.B.I. without the approval being given at Washington and a record kept of it, even of the confidential informants. That is very tightly controlled. We have no so-called lump sum that we can use to hire people. So there has to be a voucher and specific details of payment. And I know at no time was he an informant or agent or a special employee or working in any capacity for the F.B.I.

MR. RANKIN—Now, in light of what happened, Mr. Hoover, I think the Commission would desire to have your comments or whatever you care to tell them, concerning the reasons why you did not furnish the information you had concerning Lee Harvey Oswald to the Secret Service prior to the time of the President's assassination.

MR. HOOVER—Well, I have gone into that very thoroughly because that was obviously one of the questions that I had in my mind when the tragedy occurred in Dallas.

In going back over the record, and I have read each one of the reports dealing with that and the reports of Mr. Hosty [a Secret Service official] who had dealt with the Oswald situation largely in Dallas, we had the matter that I have previously referred to, the report of the State Department that indicated this man was a thoroughly safe risk, he had changed his views, he was a loyal man now

and had seen the light of day, so to speak.

How intensive or how extensive that interview in Moscow was, I don't know. But, nevertheless, it was in a State Department document that was furnished to us.

Now, we interviewed Oswald a few days after he arrived. We interviewed him twice in regard to that angle that we were looking for. We had no indication at this time of anything other than his so-called Marxist leanings, Marxist beliefs.

There is not a year goes by but that individuals and groups of individuals, sometimes on these cultural exchanges, go through Russia and recruits are enlisted by the Russian intelligence, usually through blackmail. The individual is threatened that if he doesn't come back to this country and work for them they will expose the fact that he is a homosexual or a degenerate or has been indiscrete.

Pictures are usually taken of individuals who become implicated in that sort of thing, so the individual is really desperate. Such blackmail has occurred year after year for some time.

In Oswald's case we had no suspicion that any pressure like that had been brought to bear on him because he had gone voluntarily and had obviously wanted to live in Russia and had married a Russian woman.

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