# **Assassination Records Review Board Final Determination Notification**

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RECORD SERIES : SECURITY CLASSIFIED TESTIMONY

AGENCY FILE NUMBER : 014874

February 9, 1996

Status of Document: Open in Full

After consultation with appropriate Federal agencies, the Review Board determined that the attached record from the House Select Committee on Assassinations may now be opened in full -- as referenced in the Federal Register notice for the Board's 12/13/95 meeting.

Date: 07/17/95

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# JFK ASSASSINATION SYSTEM IDENTIFICATION FORM

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# Stenographic Transcript OTOP SECRET

HEARINGS

Before The

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS

# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DEPOSITION OF J. LEE RANKIN

Washington.D.C.

TO A TO BEAUTY AND A SECOND OF THE ACT

August 17, 1978

Alderson Reporting Company, Inc.
Official Reporters

300 Seventh St., S. W. Washington, D. C.

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### SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS

Subcommittee on the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy

Washington, D. C. Thursday, August 17, 1978

Deposition of

### J. LEE RANKIN

called for examination by counsel for the Subcommittee, pursuant to notice, in the offices of the Select Committee on Assassinations, House Annex No. 2, Second and D Street, S. W., Washington, D. C., continuing from the open session at 4:10 o'clock p.m., when were present:

### For the Subcommittee:

THE COURT

(This transcript of the deposition of J. Lee Rankin follows the open session)

By Mr. Goldsmith:

O Mr. Rankin, I am going to be focusing at this point on the relationship between the Warren Commission and the CIA.

My first question to you is to what extent, if any, did the agency's concern for protecting sensitive sources and methods have an impact on the equality of the information that they were giving to the Warren Commission?

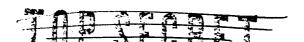
A There was not any apparent impact on such information

Q When the agency gave you information did they make reference to the sources and methods that were involved?

A No. We assumed that if this was a full disclosure when we asked for information that if there were sources and methods that they could not reveal that they would bring that to our attention and then we could consider whether there was some way to overcome it.

Q So basically was the case that you felt that so long as you were getting the substance of the information involved the Commission was not particularly concerned with the source of the information? Is that an accurate statement?

A Well, I think we would look at the information first and if there was some question about credibility or whether it was something that we could rely on, then we might want some verification but that didn't occur as I remember. We didn't



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ask for verification by who did this or -- we were introduced to some of their specialists in Soviet and Cuban matters and we thought that they were giving their best.

Q Did you ever feel there was a reluctance on the part of the agency to disclose sources and methods to the Commission?

A It never came up. I had always known that that was true with the FBI when I was with the Department of Justice and so I just assumed it, I guess, it never was discussed, and I assumed that it was with the FBI. If you had a question of sources and methods, then you could go into that and see how much you wanted to have revealed or how much information you wanted to have and how limited you wanted to have the information; that is, whether just the Commission would know it and myself or whether the staff -- it could go further than the staff and things of that type.

Q When information touching upon sources and methods was given to the Commission or its staff, would it be given orally or in writing?

A Well, mostly it was written by the FBI. The FBI didn't do too much orally.

Q What about the agency?

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A The CIA, I think that was generally written but I don't remember methods and personnel, it coming up that way.

Q Well, perhaps when we get into some of the documents that the agency has made available to us your memory may be

triggered more specifically.

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In terms of the Commission's relationship with the agency, was the relationship such that the agency provided information only in response to requests from the Commission or would the agency have pretty much provided the Cojmission with whatever it came up with regardless of whether there had been a request from the Commission?

A We were assured that they would cooperate fully and give us everything that would have any bearing on the investigation. Now apparently they didn't.

Q So you were not working under the impression then that the agency's responsibility was simply to respond to questions that were addressed to it by the Commission?

A Not at all and if anybody had told me that I would have insisted that the Commission communicate with the President and get a different arrangement because we might not ask the right questions and then we would not have the information and that would be absurd.

Q At this point we are going to get into some of the specific agency sources and methods of operation that touched upon the Oswald case.

When, if ever, did the agency tell the Commission about the photo surveillance operation that the agency had in effect in the Cuban and Soviet embassy and consulate in Mexico City?

A I don't recall anything about that.

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Q So you don't recall ever being informed about the
surveillance operations in Mexico City, the photo surveillance
operations?
A Not photo surveillance.
Q I might state for the record that Mr. Coleman and
other staff members went to Mexico City and did see the take

from the photo surveillance project. That was in April of 1964

A No, I am not aware of it before that either.

Commission had been apprised of that prior to that time.

and actually I was concerned at this point with whether the

- Q Okay. Do you remember the controversy that arose when Marguerite Oswald testified before the Commission and made reference to a photograph that she claimed to show Jack Ruby?
  - A Yes.

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- Q Now that photograph had been provided shortly after the assassination to the FBI and the FBI showed that photograph to Marguerite Oswald. The photograph had been provided by the CIA and it had been obtained by virtue of the photo surveillance in Mexico City. Do you remember that?
  - A It is rather vague but I remember generally.
- O Do you remember incurring any difficulty in obtaining an explanation from the agency as to the source of that photo-graph?
- A Yes, I do. I don't remember their response but I remember there was some problem about getting it.



Q Let me show you at this time CIA document number 2221 and 2222. I might state for the record that the agency has provided to the committee documents in their unsanitized form. For security purposes the agency has numbered each document that it has made available to the committee and we use the CIA security numbers for reference purposes in these depositions and hearings.

I would ask you to read this document. It is a memo written by Mr. Coleman.

A Yes.

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Q From that memo is it apparent that Mr. Coleman at least at that point, which I believe was March 26, was not satisfied with the explanation that the agency had provided concerning that photograph?

A Yes.

Q Let me show you at this point the explanation that the agency gave. This is CIA No. 3259, a memo dated 23 March 1964. I would refer your attention to paragraph number 4.

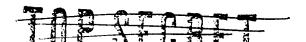
You have read the relevant section.

A I was also interested in whether an exact copy of this dissemination was in fact attached. Is it an exact copy?

 $\Omega$  I am not sure I am following your question, sir.

A They said an exact copy was attached. Was it an exact copy or not?

O My impression is that the attachment is an exact



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Had the same errors?

Yes, and in fact we will go into that dissemination Q cable shortly.

In any event, after having read paragraph 4 of CIA document 3259, does that refresh your recollection as to the nature of the difficulty that the Commission was experiencing with the agency in obtaining an explanation from them regarding this photograph?

Well, it refreshes my memory about what they said. I am not sure it adequately explains the discrepancy. That was my problem.

That is true. The answer does not explain the dis-0 crepancy and that really is the issue here.

Do you know whether the Commission ever received a satisfactory explanation of how that photograph was obtained and who the individual involved was?

I don't recall that they ever got any adequate explanation of it.

When you say "it" do you mean the agency or the Warren Commission?

The Warren Commission.

I always thought this question of these photographs had not been supplied to this agency by November 22, 1963, was suspect.

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Q Did any members of the Warren Commission or its staff have an opportunity to review the cable traffic that was generated from the Mexico City station to CIA headquarters and from CIA headquarters to Mexico City station pertaining to the Oswald case?

A I don't recall that. Maybe you can refresh my memory if there is anything on that.

Q I am unable to refresh your memory because the information is not available to me.

Let me show you at this time CIA No. 177 which is a cable dated October 9, 1963, from the Mexico City station to CIA headquarters.

A Before we leave 3295, I was always disturbed by these changes in names and how that could be noticed to anybody that they were sending that out to and that sticks in my mind now.

- Q Did the agency give you an adequate explanation regarding these problems?
  - A Is this a wire tap?
  - Q I will explain to you at this point.
  - A Okay.

Q The cryptonym LIENVOY refers to the telephonic surveillance operation in Mexico City. In paragraph 2 the source indicated is LIENPTY. That refers to the photo surveillance in Mexico City. Have you ever seen this cable before?

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A No, I don't recall it.

Oswald was referring to and the one that she alleged depicted Jack Ruby and which in fact did not depict Jack Ruby was the photograph reported in paragraph 2 of this cable? In other words, were you aware that not only had the agency reported a contact by Oswald in Mexico City but that it at least at some time, the agency, had a photograph that it thought pertained to Oswald?

A No, I was not.

Q Do you think that the agency should have made this information available?

A Of course. It looks as though they were disturbed about what it might reveal about their knowledge and their failure to do something that might have prevented this.

Q Now this cable makes no reference to Oswald's contact with the Cuban embassy and consulate in Mexico City.

A That probably is a different wire tap.

Q Fine. I understand. My question, however, is assuming that the agency in Mexico City had processed the information that showed that Oswald had been in contact with the Cuban embassy during his stay in Mexico City, do you think that information should have been made available immediately to agency headquarters?

A Yes, and also to the Commission.

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When Marguerite Oswald made reference to the photograph that she thought showed Jack Ruby, did you know that was the photograph that the agency had earlier tied into Oswald's contact in Mexico City?

Α I don't believe so.

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Q Again for purposes of making sure that the record is
clear, was the Commission ever told that this photograph, the
one that Marguerite Oswald referred to and which has since been
known to be a photograph of a man who has been commonly referred
to as the Mexico mystery man, was the Commission ever told that
this photograph was at one time linked to Oswald?

A Not to my recollection. It seems to me when she brought it up that the Commission felt that it was definitely not Ruby.

Q That is correct.

Let me show you at this time CIA No. 179 which is the headquarters response to the Mesico City cable of October 9. This document is dated October 10, 1963, and I would ask you to read just the first paragraph at this time.

A I read that and nobody seemed to pick that up apparantly, the discrepancy.

- Ω So you are making reference now to the fact that the headquarters response correctly describes Oswald.
  - A That is correct.
- Q Do you recall whether you have ever seen this cable before?
  - A No, I am quite sure I have not.
- Q In this cable the CIA reports Oswald's middle name as Henry, is that correct?
  - A I noted that.

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Q I have no specific questions about this document at this time, I just wanted to show it to you for reference purposes.

Let me show you now CIA No. 2140 which was the dissemination calle that was sent to the intelligence community and I would ask you to read the first paragraph of this cable. Please read CIA No. 2140, the first paragraph.

Have you had a chance to read that first paragraph?

- A Yes, I have. It is another misdescription of Oswald.
- Q Exactly. I was going to point out the description here is not accurate. I might point out further that the cable that went to Mexico City station which had the correct description, that is CIA No. 179, went out earlier than this one which is CIA No. 2140. I can determine that by referring to 9Z in the upper right hand corner of the cable that went to Mexico City on 10/10/63 and the one that went to the intelligence community, went out the same day at 12Z -- Z being Greenwich time.
  - A Yes.
  - Q In other words, the agency uses standard time.
  - A Yes.
- Q Were you ever made aware of these conflicting descriptions of Oswald in the agency's cable traffic?
  - A Not that I can recall.
- Q Well, do you think that if you had been made aware of these conflicts that you would remember it?

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	A Yes, I would have asked somebody to check on it. I
'	think they are very curious. It looks like either somebody
	quite incompetent or deliberate.
	Q Was the agency ever asked whether it had obtained a
	pactograph of Oswald in Mexico City?
-	A I think it was, I am not sure. I think that was one
	of our inquiries. Did you check that with Coleman?
-	Q Yes, we did check that with Mr. Coleman.

Didn't he ask?

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- And he did. Unfortunately, I have to say that I have to ask the questions.
- Well, that is my recollection. That is one of the things I am sure we asked.
- Do you recall whether the agency ever produced a photograph of Mr. Oswald?
- No, I am not sure about that. I don't think they dic but I am not sure.
- Now the record indicates that Oswald visited the 0 various embassies in Mexico City.
  - And that was well known.
- Yes, and that he visited them anywhere from five to six times at minimum.
  - Α That is right.
- In light of the fact that the agency had a photo surveillance operation in effect at that time, would you say

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it was unusual that the agency did not obtain a photograph of Oswald?

A I don't recall knowing that they ever had such a photo surveillance and I don't know whether they were revealing that to us or making that known; and if they didn't want it known, it is very possible they just would not come through with any photo.

O I might indicate for the record that Oswald went to the embassy five or six times as a minimum. At different times he went to either the embassy entrance or the consulate entrance and there was a question as to the scope and the nature of the agency's surveillance operation at that time.

- A Did they ever supply the photograph?
- Q The agency's position is that no photograph of Oswald was ever obtained and my question was concerning whether that had ever been an issue in 1964.

I take it it was not an issue.

A No.

O Did the agency inform you that it had a telephonic Jurveillance operation in effect against the embassies and consulates of the Soviet Union and Cuba in Mexico City in 1963?

A Not that I recall.

Q Is it possible that they would have communicated this information to Mr. Coleman instead of directly to yourself?

A It could have been.

0 Did Mr. Coleman after his trip to Mexico City where he visited the CIA station report to you about the telephonic. surveillance operations? I think that I knew that there was some but I thought that they were FBI. I may be mistaken about that. Let me show you at this point CIA No. 2007 and 2008 which is a memo dated 31 January 1964. I would ask you to read the first two and a half pages of this document. Now is it fair to say that the first paragraph on CIA No. 2008 essentially summarizes Oswald's contact with the Soviet embassy in Mexico City? Α Yes. Does that summary which went to the Warren Commission make any reference to a telephonic surveillance operation? No, it does not. At this time I would ask you to read CIA No. 1980 and 0 1981. It does not tell anything about photographic surveillance either. CIA No. 1980 and 1981 is a memorandum dated 1 April 1964 from Coleman Slawson. I am going to ask you to read only a portion of it starting with paragraph number 3 on 1980 and reading to the end of that paragraph on 1981.

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A Who is this document by?

Q This is a Coleman/Slawson memo. Now does it appear

to you from reading that paragraph that at least as of April 1 when this memo was written the author or authors were not aware of the telephonic surveillance operation: in fact, they were under the misimpression that Oswald had been observed at the Soviet embassy? In other words, that the contact as they perceived it to be was Oswald being physically observed at the embassy when in fact the contact was a telephonic contact?

A Well, that would appear from the fact that the memo refers to a hidden camera but I don't understand how they could get this other part from photographic surveillance.

- Q Which other part?
- A Where they say that Oswald was told by the military attache that he should inquire at the Soviet embassy.
  - Q Right. That would suggest that there was --
  - A Something else.
  - Q Telephonic surveillance?
  - A An informant or conversation overheard.
- O The point I am trying to make here is that by virtue of the agency not informing the Commission about the telephonic surveillance operation, here at least is one example as late as April of 1964 where the Commission staff members may have been under the misimpression that Oswald had at one time been seen at the embassy when actually the contact was a telephonic contact.
  - A Yes, that is correct.

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Was the agency ever asked whether it had obtained Q and had in existence after the assassination a tape recording of Oswald's voice?

Α From the agency?

In other words, whether the agency's Mexico City 0 station had obtained a tape recording of Oswald's voice through its telephonic recording operation.

I don't recall. Α

Let me show you at this time CIA No. 205. a cable that starts at CIA No. 204 dated 23 November 1963. will show you paragraph number 4. I might add for the record that the cable makes reference to Oswald's contact at the Soviet embassy on 1 October 1963 as well as to an earlier contact on September 28, 1963.

Please read paragraphs 3 and 4.

Yes, I have read it.

Now paragraph 4 makes reference to a transcriber having made a comparison of voices and concluding that Oswald was the person that was involved in both conversations. I ask you specifically about paragraph 4, do you know whether this cable was ever shown to any staff member of the Commission?

I don't know.

Does paragraph 4 suggest to you that at least on November 23 the agency still had in existence a tape recording of Oswald's voice?

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A Well, it is clear that someone or this person made a comparison of some kind of a transcription. Now whether they still had it or whether it was, I can't tell from the document.

Q Fine. Let me ask you this question then. Had this cable been shown to the Warren Commission or its staff instead of simply summarizing the information contained in the cable, would the Commission have asked the CIA to make available any existing transcripts of Oswald's voice?

A Yes.

Q Let me show you now CIA No. 1950 and ask you to read from 1950 through the top of CIA No. 1954. I would indicate for the record that this is a document prepared in 1975 by a Raymond Rocca who was a CIA employee and I am asking you to read only four pages of that document. It is a very long document. Please read starting on paragraph number 18 and read through paragraph number 23.

Now the section that you just read makes reference to a conversation involving a Louisa Calderon who may have had connections with DGI, Cuban intelligence. The substance of the four pages I believe makes reference to a conversation involving Calderon which suggests in part that she had fore knowledge of the assassination. I might add for the record that we have the full transcript of that conversation available and that you have just seen a summary of that part of the

conversation that pertains to the assassination.

Do you recall, was the Warren Commission ever told about this conversation?

- A I don't recall it.
- O In light of the significance of the substance of the conversation, if the agency had informed either the Warren Commission or its staff about this conversation, do you think that you would have a memory of it?
  - A Yes.

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- Q Did the agency ever investigate the possible involvement of Louisa Calderon in the assassination of the President?
  - A Not that I know of.
- O Do you think this information should have been provided?
  - A Yes.
- Q Although it is quite long, I would like for you to have an opportunity to read that conversation in the full Context.
  - A Okay.
- Q I will not have any questions to ask you about that transcript but you may have some comments to make about it.

Prior to showing you this transcript I want to make it very clear, Mr. Rankin, that neither myself nor anyone connected with the committee has drawn the conclusion that Louisa Calderon had fore knowledge of the assassination. All I meant to suggest

by showing you this document and by having you read the transcript which I am about to show you is that there is a possibility from what she says that she had fore knowledge and I am concerned with whether the Warren Commission was given an opportunity to look into this issue.

A Yes. I think I have answered that but I think that the document is open to the construction that she only learned it about five hours after the assassination.

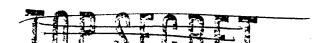
- Q Why do you say that?
- A Because that is what she says on the call.
- Q Isn't the relevant language in this summary her statement the caller asked her if she had heard the latest news Louisa jokingly replied: "Yes, of course. I knew it almost before Kennedy."

A Yes, but that does not necessarily mean she did know it before it happened.

O Fine. As I said, I don't want to give you the impression that we have drawn any conclusion about this document. Our only concern is whether it was made available to the Commission.

A In any event it was made available and we should have had an opportunity to follow it up.

O I would ask you at this time, especially since you have raised the question of whether that document is really suggestive of fore knowledge, to read the full transcript and



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you will see from reading the full transcript that the Kennedy aspect of the conversation is a relatively minor portion of the conversation. Starting with CIA 1844 it runs approximately two and a half pages.

A Well, I don't say that that document is not suggestive of fore knowledge where she refers to knowing it even before Kennedy but I say it is open to the construction that she didn't.

O Yes.

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A And the fact that it is a possibility is enough for us to have been supplied it by the CIA, yes.

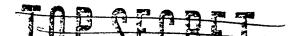
Q Having read that document, do you have any comments in addition to make about it?

A Well, I think it should have been supplied to the Commission.

Q I would ask you to read now this one page CIA No. 3178 which is page 24 of a memo dated April 22, 1964, from Mr. Slawson. The subject of the memo is the trip to Mexico City. Please read the paragraph that is underlined.

A Yes, sir.

Q Having read that page does it appear to you that at least until such time as several Warren Commission staff members visited the agency's station in Mexico City in April of 1964 the staff was under the misimpression as to information concerning Oswald's contacts with the Soviet and Cuban embassies in Mexico City?



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So I take it then that these are the staff members who would have been apprixed by the CIA about its surveillance

But at least from this memoranda it appears, does it not, that until the April trip the staff members could not have the full information on the surveillance operations in Mexico

And that appears to have had some impact on your perception of what Oswald had done during his Mexico City trip?

Well, I don't understand the last part of your question about what they had done.

The point that I would be trying to make here is that the fact that the staff was not fully informed about the nature and extent of the surveillance operations seems to have had an impact upon the staff's perception of what Oswald did during his Mexico City trip. Would you agree with that statement?

Yes, I think that is correct. Α

While he is looking for that document, in light of Q the materials that I have just shown you do you have any final comments to make about the quality of the information that the



agency was disclosing to the Warren Commission and its staff?

A Well, I think the best description would be that it was finally combed and we were given what they thought we should have.

Q In light of what you have seen, are you satisfied with what you were given?

A No.

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Q Does it appear to you now that the agency's concern, perhaps quite legitimate under the law to protect sensitive sources and methods, did in fact have an effect upon the quality of the information that the Warren Commission and its staff was being given?

A Yes, but I don't think that is any legitimate excuse because I think if they had a question of sensitive materials or methods or personnel they should have disclosed that problem and tried to work it out with us in such a way that the national security would not be injured but we would have the benefit of the information that we needed.

Q Fine. Let me show you at this point CIA No. 2099 which is a polygraph report pertaining to a man known as Gilberto Alvarado Ugarte. This individual is the person who came forward with the allegation that he had seen Oswald at the Cuban embassy and had seen Oswald receiving \$6500 in cash. Do you remember generally that allegation?

A Yes, I do.



THE OSUME Rather than have you read the entire polygraph report I would ask you to read paragraph 1 starting on CIA No. 2099 and continuing on to the next page. Read just that one paragraph. A Yes. That paragraph makes reference to Alvarado stating that he had received money in some connection. The statement with the language is ambiguous, it does not indicate in what cornection he had received money, possibly to come forward with the story in the first place or possibly to renege on the story that he had initially given. Ugarte's comment about being offered money?

Was the Warren Commission or its staff ever told about

I don't recall that there was anything of that kind told and I think it was an incident that appeared important enough at the time that I would remember if it had happened.

Thank you. Q

Turning to another area --

Α Before you leave that, is ODACID there CIA or intelligence?

0 We are referring now to the cryptonym ODACID which I believe refers to either the FBI or the State Department. I am not sure at this time which.

- You mean the FBI of Mexico or ours? Α
- The American FBI. Q

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A Do you read that there is an inference there that some official was connected with giving him money?

No, I didn't necessarily draw that inference. I was simply focusing on his reference to having received money from someone. It could have been an official, it could have been someone else, and it seemed to me that statement on his part was worthwhile investigating.

A Yes, no question about that.

Q Turning to the final area of inquiry at this time, to what extent, if any, did the Commission concern itself with the issue of whether Oswald was either an agent of the CIA or informant of the FBI?

A Well, it was very much interested in the answer to both of those questions.

O Do you recall how those issues were investigated by the Commission?

A My recollection was that we had a claim made that
Oswald was an agent for the FBI and that part of the claim was
that his name would not appear in the FBI files but he would
have been assigned a number and that it is only by checking
out those numbers that we could determine whether or not he
had ever been an agent of the FBI and the Commission considered
that and they were advised by the FBI as I recall that if they
examined each agent that was under the cover of a number that
they would be uncovering all of these agents that they had



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Commission and the staff and that it would be very damaging to the security and the work of the FBI and that J. Edgar Hoover would be willing to swear under oath that Oswald had never been an FBI agent and could come before the Commission and do that rather than to have all of these agents uncovered by this action, and so the Commission decided to accept that.

- Q What about in the case of the CIA?
- A My recollection there is that there was an assurance from them that he was never a CIA agent.
- Q Okay. I believe for the record that Mr. McCone gave testimony and also gave an affidavit pertaining to that issue.
  - A Yes.
- Q Was the Commission satisfied with the manner in which the agency handled that issue?
- A Well, they were at the time because under the climate at that time it was not believed by any of the members of the Commission or myself that either Mr. McCone or Mr. Hoover would lie about it and they didn't want to take a chance on any serious injury to the national security, either domestic or foreign, by uncovering all these agents that would be required for a personal examination of the question by the staff once having those assurances.
- O In retrospect do you think that that was the appropriate and best manner for dealing with this issue?



A No. It is obvious that in light of what has happened that you could not rely on those assurances. I don't know about Mr. McCone, whether there is anything in the record that would show that he ever misrepresented anything that is in the record of the Congress' committees, but certainly it is evident that you could not rely on Mr. Hoover's word.

Q Do you recall whether anyone from the Commission or

Q Do you recall whether anyone from the Commission or its staff ever did a study of Oswald's tax records?

A I think that there was some inquiry made in that regard and I don't know whether records were studied or whether it was directed to the Treasury and the Internal Revenue Service or how it was handled.

Q Do you know whether the records indicated that Oswald and money which might have come from --

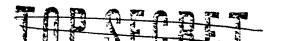
A Payoff?

Q -- payoff for being an agent for the FBI or the CIA?

A No, I think our inquiries revealed that there was not anything of that importance.

One final question. The following factors have been cited by Warren Commission critics as circumstantial evidence indicating that Oswald had connections with the American intelligence community. What I would like to do is read to you generally what those factors are and ask you if you have any comments at all about them.

The absence of any commercially available air transportation



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for Oswald to have traveled from England to Helsinki at the times that he did. If you want detail on that, I will provide it to you.

The ease with which Oswald appeared to have received his discharge from the military.

The ease and speed with which he received his visa to enter the Soviet Union.

The ease and speed with which he was reissued a passport in 1963 despite his earlier attempt to defect to the Soviet Union.

The relative ease with which U.S. officials in Moscow and in the States permitted Oswald to return to America after his stay in the Soviet Union.

What weight, if any, should be given to these factors, do vou think, in evaluating whether Oswald was an agent, source of information or employee of any American intelligence agency?

A I don't know anything about whether there was difficulty about obtaining air travel from England to Helsinki.

Q Let me give you a little bit more detail on that.

Oswald arrived and checked into his hotel in downtown Helsinki at midnight on October 10, 1959, and the only direct flight from England to Helsinki arrived at the airport that evening at 11:33 p.m. There are records, a CIA document, for example, which specifically states that if Oswald arrived at 11:33 p.m. on that flight he could not possibly have made the

trip downtown and signed in at the hotel by midnight. So that is the nature of the issue in that particular instance.

Α I don't think that proves anything about Oswald. The way he operated, I think he was quite capable of arriving at the airport and not checking in until the next day at 12 o'clock, midnight, and doing all kinds of things around Helsinki in the meantime.

Well, fine. I understand your answer. According to the record as it exists, however, Oswald signed in on midnight on the 10th of October which means that he made the trip from the airport.

Not necessarily, if he came in the night before.

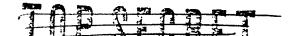
I understand your point. However, let me show you CIA 2137 which I think addresses the issue. This is a memo addressed to you, Mr. Rankin, dated 1 July 1964.

A Was there ever any follow-up on that?

The agency was never able to resolve this specific But hopefully that will clarify that at least according to the record Oswald made that trip, if he made it at all, within twenty-seven minutes and that appears not to be possible.

Without getting into these factors in detail, unless you would want to discuss them in detail --

Well, my recollection though is that we don't have any record. Nobody has ever produced any record of just what flight he did take.



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O That is correct.

A So that we don't know now whether he took this particular flight or some other earlier flight at the same time or some different way that was not a direct flight.

- Q Excuse me for a moment.
- A Now the next one.

Q Well, as I said, if you would like to discuss these in detail, I will be pleased to do so. What I was thinking of doing was having you evaluate these factors in their entirety. I take it you prefer to go over them individually.

A I would rather not leave them unanswered where I think there is a reasonable response.

O Fine.

The second one was the ease with which Oswald received his discharge from the military.

A I think there is evidence that the Marines were happy to get rid of him.

Q The third was the ease and speed with which he received his visa to enter the Soviet Union.

A Well, I don't recall that there was particular difficulty about that for defectors, I don't know. Was there any explanation by the Soviets?

O Not that I am aware of.

I would just indicate for the record that Oswald arrived in Helsinki on October 10, 1959, and on the 15th of October he was able to cross into the Soviet Union. I believe the 10th

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was a weekend, it was a Friday or Saturday, which unless Oswald was able to apply for the visa on a weekend he was able to get it within just a matter of two or three week days. Either circumstance would appear to be somewhat unusual.

A Well, what I thought was that the fact he was a defector and had close ties with Helsinki and the Soviet and he indicated that he had special information for their benefit like he did, that they would treat it differently than the ordinary visa.

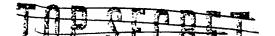
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Q The next factor was the ease with which Oswald was able to be reissued a passport in 1963 despite his earlier attempt to defect to the Soviet Union. There I might point out that he was able to receive his passport, I believe, within 24 hours of applying for its reissuance.

A Well, I never could understand why our intelligence agencies didn't flag more about Oswald but I never found anything that was given to the Commission that indicated that they were trying to favor him in any way.

Q Finally, the final factor that I referred to was the relative ease with which Oswald was permitted to return to the United States after his stay in the Soviet Union.

A Well, I never had any adequate explanation of that. It seemed like the information we were able to obtain in the Commission showed that it was not given any real thought by any part of the government despite the record.



Mr. Goldsmith: Thank you very much, Mr. Rankin, for responding to my questions. I would like to inform you that under normal circumstances when a witness appears before the committee at a hearing he is given five minutes at the end of the hearing to make any statements that he wishes. This proceeding today by way of deposition is not governed by the same rules that apply to a hearing; however, if you would like to make a statement at this time I would like to give you that opportunity.

The Witness: Well, I don't care to make a statement as such. I want to be sure that I have answered any questions that you would want to ask me.

Mr. Goldsmith: I have no further questions then and I am satisfied with the responses you have given to my questions.

The Witness: I would like to know whether you found credible evidence of a conspiracy.

Mr. Goldsmith: I have to tell you that the Committee rules preclude me from making any comments at all about the substance or procedure of the Committee's work so I will have to defer to Mr. Blakey or to Mr. Stokes to respond to that question.

The Witness: I see.

Mr. Goldsmith: Thank you very much.

The Witness: I should think that by now if you had any such evidence that it would be at least leaked if not public

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otherwise.

Mr. Goldsmith: Again I would like to thank you.

(Whereupon, at 5:48 p.m., the deposition was concluded.)

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# 300 7TH STREET, S.W., REPORTERS BUILDING, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20024 (202) 554-2345

### CERTIFICATE OF MOTARY PUBLIC

I, Annabella Short, the officer before whom the foregoing deposition was taken, do hereby certify that the witness whose testimony appears in the foregoing deposition was duly sworn by me; that the testimony of said vitness was taken by me in shorthand to the best of my ability and thereafter reduced to typowriting; that said deposition is a true record of the testimony given by said witness; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which this deposition was taken; and further that I am not a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties thereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.

Notary Public in and for the District of Columbia

My Commission expires November 14, 1930