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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.

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HEARINGS

Before The

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DEPOSITION OF J. LEE RANKIN

Washington, D.C.

August 17, 1978

Alderson Reporting Company, Inc.

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SHORT

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:

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

3 By Mr. Goldsmith:

4 Q Mr. Rankin, I am going to be focusing at this point
5 on the relationship between the Warren Commission and the CIA.
6 My first question to you is to what extent, if any, did the
7 agency's concern for protecting sensitive sources and methods
8 have an impact on the equality of the information that they
9 were giving to the Warren Commission?

10 A There was not any apparent impact on such information.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

21 Q What about the agency?

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

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

1 triggered more specifically.

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

8 A We were assured that they would cooperate fully and
9 give us everything that would have any bearing on the investi-
10 gation. Now apparently they didn't.

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

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

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

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

25 A I don't recall anything about that.

1 Q So you don't recall ever being informed about the
2 surveillance operations in Mexico City, the photo surveillance
3 operations?

4 A Not photo surveillance.

5 Q I might state for the record that Mr. Coleman and
6 other staff members went to Mexico City and did see the take
7 from the photo surveillance project. That was in April of 1964
8 and actually I was concerned at this point with whether the
9 Commission had been apprised of that prior to that time.

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

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

14 A Yes.

15 Q Now that photograph had been provided shortly after
16 the assassination to the FBI and the FBI showed that photograph
17 to Marguerite Oswald. The photograph had been provided by the
18 CIA and it had been obtained by virtue of the photo surveillance
19 in Mexico City. Do you remember that?

20 A It is rather vague but I remember generally.

21 Q Do you remember incurring any difficulty in obtaining
22 an explanation from the agency as to the source of that photo-
23 graph?

24 A Yes, I do. I don't remember their response but I
25 remember there was some problem about getting it.

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

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

10 A Yes.

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

15 A Yes.

16 Q Let me show you at this point the explanation that
17 the agency gave. This is CIA No. 3259, a memo dated 23 March
18 1964. I would refer your attention to paragraph number 4.

19 You have read the relevant section.

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

22 Q I am not sure I am following your question, sir.

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

25 Q My impression is that the attachment is an exact

1 copy.

2 A Had the same errors?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

22 A The Warren Commission.

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

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

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

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

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

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

16 Q Did the agency give you an adequate explanation
17 regarding these problems?

18 A Is this a wire tap?

19 Q I will explain to you at this point.

20 A Okay.

21 Q The cryptonym LIENVOY refers to the telephonic
22 surveillance operation in Mexico City. In paragraph 2 the
23 source indicated is LIENPTY. That refers to the photo sur-
24 veillance in Mexico City. Have you ever seen this cable
25 before?

1 A No, I don't recall it.

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

10 A No, I was not.

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

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

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

18 A That probably is a different wire tap.

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

25 A Yes, and also to the Commission.

1 Q When was the Commission first told that Oswald had
2 contacted the Cuban embassy in addition to the Soviet embassy?

3 A I would not know without looking at the record but I
4 think we had that information.

5 Q Yes, the Warren Commission does indicate that there
6 was a contact with the Cuban embassy on Oswald's part. The
7 record is very clear on that.

8 A What is the date, do you recall?

9 Q No. My recollection is that the record simply states
10 that the agency had not assimilated that until subsequent to
11 the assassination. In fact, that is an issue here as to when
12 that information had been obtained and processed.

13 Now I would note that paragraph 2 makes reference here to
14 an individual who does not fit Oswald's description, is that
15 correct?

16 A He is too tall.

17 Q And the age is not the same either.

18 Do you recall whether the agency ever gave a satisfactory
19 explanation regarding this individual?

20 A No, I don't.

21 Q When Marguerite Oswald made reference to the photo-
22 graph that she thought showed Jack Ruby, did you know that was
23 the photograph that the agency had earlier tied into Oswald's
24 contact in Mexico City?

25 A I don't believe so.

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

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

10 Q That is correct.

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

15 A I read that and nobody seemed to pick that up appar-
16 ently, the discrepancy.

17 Q So you are making reference now to the fact that the
18 headquarters response correctly describes Oswald.

19 A That is correct.

20 Q Do you recall whether you have ever seen this cable
21 before?

22 A No, I am quite sure I have not.

23 Q In this cable the CIA reports Oswald's middle name as
24 Henry, is that correct?

25 A I noted that.

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

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

7 Have you had a chance to read that first paragraph?

8 A Yes, I have. It is another misdescription of Oswald.

9 Q Exactly. I was going to point out the description
10 here is not accurate. I might point out further that the cable
11 that went to Mexico City station which had the correct descrip-
12 tion, that is CIA No. 179, went out earlier than this one which
13 is CIA No. 2140. I can determine that by referring to 9Z in
14 the upper right hand corner of the cable that went to Mexico
15 City on 10/10/63 and the one that went to the intelligence
16 community, went out the same day at 12Z -- Z being Greenwich
17 time.

18 A Yes.

19 Q In other words, the agency uses standard time.

20 A Yes.

21 Q Were you ever made aware of these conflicting
22 descriptions of Oswald in the agency's cable traffic?

23 A Not that I can recall.

24 Q Well, do you think that if you had been made aware
25 of these conflicts that you would remember it?

1 A Yes, I would have asked somebody to check on it. I
2 think they are very curious. It looks like either somebody
3 quite incompetent or deliberate.

4 Q Was the agency ever asked whether it had obtained a
5 photograph of Oswald in Mexico City?

6 A I think it was, I am not sure. I think that was one
7 of our inquiries. Did you check that with Coleman?

8 Q Yes, we did check that with Mr. Coleman.

9 A Didn't he ask?

10 Q And he did. Unfortunately, I have to say that I have
11 to ask the questions.

12 A Well, that is my recollection. That is one of the
13 things I am sure we asked.

14 Q Do you recall whether the agency ever produced a
15 photograph of Mr. Oswald?

16 A No, I am not sure about that. I don't think they
17 did but I am not sure.

18 Q Now the record indicates that Oswald visited the
19 various embassies in Mexico City.

20 A And that was well known.

21 Q Yes, and that he visited them anywhere from five to
22 six times at minimum.

23 A That is right.

24 Q In light of the fact that the agency had a photo
25 surveillance operation in effect at that time, would you say

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

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

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

13 A Did they ever supply the photograph?

14 Q The agency's position is that no photograph of Oswald
15 was ever obtained and my question was concerning whether that
16 had ever been an issue in 1964.

17 I take it it was not an issue.

18 A No.

19 Q Did the agency inform you that it had a telephonic
20 surveillance operation in effect against the embassies and
21 consulates of the Soviet Union and Cuba in Mexico City in 1963?

22 A Not that I recall.

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

25 A It could have been.

1 Q Did Mr. Coleman after his trip to Mexico City where
2 he visited the CIA station report to you about the telephonic
3 surveillance operations?

4 A I think that I knew that there was some but I thought
5 that they were FBI. I may be mistaken about that.

6 Q Let me show you at this point CIA No. 2007 and 2008
7 which is a memo dated 31 January 1964. I would ask you to read
8 the first two and a half pages of this document.

9 Now is it fair to say that the first paragraph on CIA
10 No. 2008 essentially summarizes Oswald's contact with the
11 Soviet embassy in Mexico City?

12 A Yes.

13 Q Does that summary which went to the Warren Commission
14 make any reference to a telephonic surveillance operation?

15 A No, it does not.

16 Q At this time I would ask you to read CIA No. 1980 and
17 1981.

18 A It does not tell anything about photographic
19 surveillance either.

20 Q CIA No. 1980 and 1981 is a memorandum dated 1 April
21 1964 from Coleman Slawson. I am going to ask you to read only
22 a portion of it starting with paragraph number 3 on 1980 and
23 reading to the end of that paragraph on 1981.

24 A Who is this document by?

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

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

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

11 Q Which other part?

12 A Where they say that Oswald was told by the military
13 attache that he should inquire at the Soviet embassy.

14 Q Right. That would suggest that there was --

15 A Something else.

16 Q Telephonic surveillance?

17 A An informant or conversation overheard.

18 Q The point I am trying to make here is that by virtue
19 of the agency not informing the Commission about the telephonic
20 surveillance operation, here at least is one example as late as
21 April of 1964 where the Commission staff members may have been
22 under the misimpression that Oswald had at one time been seen
23 at the embassy when actually the contact was a telephonic
24 contact.

25 A Yes, that is correct.

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

4 A From the agency?

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

8 A I don't recall.

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

15 Please read paragraphs 3 and 4.

16 A Yes, I have read it.

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

22 A I don't know.

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

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

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

10 A Yes.

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

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

1 conversation that pertains to the assassination.

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

4 A I don't recall it.

5 Q In light of the significance of the substance of the
6 conversation, if the agency had informed either the Warren
7 Commission or its staff about this conversation, do you think
8 that you would have a memory of it?

9 A Yes.

10 Q Did the agency ever investigate the possible involve-
11 ment of Louisa Calderon in the assassination of the President?

12 A Not that I know of.

13 Q Do you think this information should have been
14 provided?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Although it is quite long, I would like for you to
17 have an opportunity to read that conversation in the full
18 context.

19 A Okay.

20 Q I will not have any questions to ask you about that
21 transcript but you may have some comments to make about it.

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

1 by showing you this document and by having you read the tran-
2 script which I am about to show you is that there is a possi-
3 bility from what she says that she had fore knowledge and I am
4 concerned with whether the Warren Commission was given an
5 opportunity to look into this issue.

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

9 Q Why do you say that?

10 A Because that is what she says on the call.

11 Q Isn't the relevant language in this summary her
12 statement the caller asked her if she had heard the latest
13 news Louisa jokingly replied: "Yes, of course. I knew it
14 almost before Kennedy."

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

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

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

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

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

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

8 Q Yes.

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

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

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

15 Q I would ask you to read now this one page CIA No.
16 3178 which is page 24 of a memo dated April 22, 1964, from
17 Mr. Slawson. The subject of the memo is the trip to Mexico
18 City. Please read the paragraph that is underlined.

19 A Yes, sir.

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

1 A Yes, insofar as that particular part of the staff
2 was concerned, the ones that went down there, and they were
3 working especially in this area.

4 Q So I take it then that these are the staff members
5 who would have been apprized by the CIA about its surveillance
6 operations in Mexico City.

7 A Should have been.

8 Q But at least from this memoranda it appears, does it
9 not, that until the April trip the staff members could not have
10 the full information on the surveillance operations in Mexico
11 City?

12 A Yes.

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

15 A Well, I don't understand the last part of your ques-
16 tion about what they had done.

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

22 A Yes, I think that is correct.

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

1 agency was disclosing to the Warren Commission and its staff?

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

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

7 A No.

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

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

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

25 A Yes, I do.

1 Q Rather than have you read the entire polygraph report
2 I would ask you to read paragraph 1 starting on CIA No. 2099
3 and continuing on to the next page. Read just that one para-
4 graph.

5 A Yes.

6 Q That paragraph makes reference to Alvarado stating
7 that he had received money in some connection. The statement
8 with the language is ambiguous, it does not indicate in what
9 connection he had received money, possibly to come forward with
10 the story in the first place or possibly to renege on the story
11 that he had initially given.

12 Was the Warren Commission or its staff ever told about
13 Ugarte's comment about being offered money?

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

17 Q Thank you.

18 Turning to another area --

19 A Before you leave that, is ODACID there CIA or
20 intelligence?

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

24 A You mean the FBI of Mexico or ours?

25 Q The American FBI.

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

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

8 A Yes, no question about that.

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

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

15 Q Do you recall how those issues were investigated by
16 the Commission?

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

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

8 Q What about in the case of the CIA?

9 A My recollection there is that there was an assurance
 10 from them that he was never a CIA agent.

11 Q Okay. I believe for the record that Mr. McCone gave
 12 testimony and also gave an affidavit pertaining to that issue.

13 A Yes.

14 Q Was the Commission satisfied with the manner in which
 15 the agency handled that issue?

16 A Well, they were at the time because under the climate
 17 at that time it was not believed by any of the members of the
 18 Commission or myself that either Mr. McCone or Mr. Hoover would
 19 lie about it and they didn't want to take a chance on any
 20 serious injury to the national security, either domestic or
 21 foreign, by uncovering all these agents that would be required
 22 for a personal examination of the question by the staff once
 23 having those assurances.

24 Q In retrospect do you think that that was the appro-
 25 priate and best manner for dealing with this issue?

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

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

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

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

15 A Payoff?

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

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

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

25 The absence of any commercially available air transportation

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

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

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

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

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

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

17 A I don't know anything about whether there was diffi-
18 culty about obtaining air travel from England to Helsinki.

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

20 Oswald arrived and checked into his hotel in downtown
21 Helsinki at midnight on October 10, 1959, and the only direct
22 flight from England to Helsinki arrived at the airport that
23 evening at 11:33 p.m. There are records, a CIA document, for
24 example, which specifically states that if Oswald arrived at
25 11:33 p.m. on that flight he could not possibly have made the

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

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

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

12 A Not necessarily, if he came in the night before.

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

16 A Was there ever any follow-up on that?

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

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

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

1 Q That is correct.

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

5 Q Excuse me for a moment.

6 A Now the next one.

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

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

13 Q Fine.

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

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

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

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

23 Q Not that I am aware of.

24 I would just indicate for the record that Oswald arrived
25 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

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

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

10 Q The next factor was the ease with which Oswald was
11 able to be reissued a passport in 1963 despite his earlier
12 attempt to defect to the Soviet Union. There I might point
13 out that he was able to receive his passport, I believe, within
14 24 hours of applying for its reissuance.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

22 The Witness: I see.

23 Mr. Goldsmith: Thank you very much.

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

1 otherwise.

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

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

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CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

1 I, Annabella Short, the officer before whom the foregoing
 2 deposition was taken, do hereby certify that the witness whose
 3 testimony appears in the foregoing deposition was duly sworn by
 4 me; that the testimony of said witness was taken by me in
 5 shorthand to the best of my ability and thereafter reduced to
 6 typewriting; that said deposition is a true record of the
 7 testimony given by said witness; that I am neither counsel for,
 8 related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in
 9 which this deposition was taken; and further that I am not a
 10 relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the
 11 parties thereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the
 12 outcome of the action.
 13

14
 15 _____
 Notary Public in and for
 the District of Columbia

16 My Commission expires
 17 November 14, 1930
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