

November 29, 1963

1:40 p. m.

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before Dallas ✓ 80
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TELEPHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND J. EDGAR HOOVER
(from Mr. Hoover)

LBJ Are you familiar with this proposed group that they're trying to put together on this study of your report and other things. .two from the House..two from the Senate.. somebody from the Court... a couple of outsiders?

JEH I haven't heard of that. I've seen the reports on the Senate Investigating Committee that they've been talking about..

LBJ Well, we think if we don't have... I want to get by just with your file and your report..

JEH I think it would be very very bad to have a rash of investigations.. on this thing

LBJ Well, the only way we can stop them is probably to appoint a high-level one to evaluate your report and put somebody that's pretty good on it ... that I can select, out of the Government... and tell the House and Senate not to go ahead with their investigations... because they'll get a lot of television going and I think it would be bad...

JEH That's right... it would be a three-ring circus.

LBJ What do you think about Allen Dulles?

JEH I think he would be a good man.

LBJ What do you think about John McCloy?

JEH I'm not as enthusiastic about McCloy... I knew him back in the Patterson.. when Patterson was down here.. as Secretary... he's a good man... but I'm not so certain as to the matter of the publicity that he might seek on it..

LBJ What about General Norstadt?

JEH Good man

LBJ All right.. I guess Boggs has started it in the House.. I thought maybe I might try to get Boggs and Jerry Ford.. in the House... maybe try to get Dick Russell and maybe Cooper in the Senate.

JEH Yes, I think so.

LBJ I don't know.. you know any reason .. me and you are just going to talk like

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LBJ

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brothers...any reason ...I thought Russell could kind of look after the general situation..see that the states

JEH

Russell would be an excellent man.

LBJ

And I thought Cooper might look after the liberal group..from Kentucky...so they wouldn't think...he's a pretty judicious fellow ..but he's a pretty liberal fellow...I wouldn't want Javits...or some of those on it..

JEH

No...no...no. Javits plays the front page a lot.

LBJ

Cooper is kind of border-state..not South and not North...

JEH

That's right.

LBJ

Do you know Ford from Michigan?

JEH

I know of him but I don't know him. I saw him on tv for the first time the other night..and he handled himself well on that..

LBJ

You know Boggs?

JEH

Oh, yes, I know Boggs.

LBJ

He's kind of the author of the resolution..that's .. why..now Walter tells me..Walter Jenkins..that you've designated Deke to work with us like you did on the Hill...and I want to tell you I sure appreciate that..I didn't ask for it cause I didn't...I know you know how to run your business better than anybody else..I just wanted to tell you though that we consider him as high-class as you do and it is a mighty gracious thing to do and we'll be mighty happy ...we salute you for knowing how to pick good men.

JEH

Well that's mighty nice of you Mr. President!...indeed. We hope to have this thing wrapped up today but could be we probably won't get it until the first of the week. This angle in Mexico...is giving us a great deal of trouble ..because the story is they have this man..Oswald..getting \$6500 from the Cuban Embassy..and then coming back to this country with it. We're not able to prove that fact but the information was that he was there on the 18th of September in Mexico City and we are able to prove conclusively that he was in New Orleans that day. Now then they've changed the dates..the story came in changing the dates to the 28th of September...and he was in Mexico City on the 28th. Now the Mexican authorities..Mexican police have again arrested this woman Duran..who is a member of the Cuban Embassy..and will hold ~~for~~ her for two or three more days...and we're going to confront

JEH
Contd

her with the original informant. . she saw the money pass, so he says. . . and we're also going to put the lie detector test on him. Meantime, of course, Capitol (?) is hollering his head off. .

LBJ Can you pay any attention to those lie detector tests?

JEH I would not pay 100 percent attention to them. . . All that they are is a psychological asset in an investigation. I wouldn't want to be a part to sending a man to the Chair on a lie detector. . . for instance, we've found many cases where we've used them. . . in a bank where there's been embezzlement. . . and the person will confess before the lie detector test is finished. . . they're more or less fearful of the fact that the lie detector test will show them guilty. . . psychologically there is that advantage. . . of course. . . it is a misnomer to call it a "lie detector" . . . because what it really is is the evaluation of the chart as is made by this machine and that evaluation is made by a human being and any human being is apt to make the wrong interpretation . . . so I would not ~~my~~ myself. . . go on that alone. . . if . . . on the other hand. . . if this Oswald had lived . . . and had taken the lie detector and it had shown definitely that he done these various things together with the evidence that we very definitely have. . . it would just have added that much more strength to it. . . there is no question but that he is the man. . . now with the fingerprints and things we have. This fellow, Rubenstein, down there. . . he has offered to take the lie detector test. . . but his lawyer has got to be of course, consulted first. . . and I doubt whether the lawyer will allow it. He's one of these criminal lawyers from the West Coast. . . and somewhat like a Everett Bennett Williams type. . . and almost as much of a shyster. .

LBJ Have you got any relationship between the two yet?

JEH Between Rubenstein? No. . . at the present time we have not. There was a story down there . .

LBJ That he was in his bar. . was he ever in his bar and stuff like that?

JEH There was a story that this fellow had been in the night club. . that is a strip-tease joint that he had. . . but that has not been able to be confirmed. . now. . . this fellow Rubenstein. . is a very shady character. . has a bad record. . street brawler. . fighter. . and that sort of thing. . and in the place in Dallas if a fellow came in there and couldn't pay his bill completely. . . Rubenstein would beat the very devil out of him. . and throw him out of the place. . He was that kind of a fellow. . . he didn't drink. . . didn't smoke. . . boasted about that. . he is what I would put in a category of one of these "ego-maniacs" . . . likes

JEH

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to be in the limelight. .he knew all the police. .in that White-like district where the joints are. .and he also let them come in, see the show, get food. .liquor and so forth. That's how I think he got in to police headquarters. Because they accepted him as kind of a police character hanging around police headquarters and for that reason raised no question. .of course he never made any moves. .as the pictures show. .even when they saw him approaching. .this fellow. .and got up right to him and pressed his pistol against Oswald's stomach. .neither of the police officers on either side make any move to push him away or grab him. .it wasn't until after the gun was fired that they then moved. .now, of course, that is not the highest degree of efficiency. . .secondly, the chief of police admits that he moved him in the morning as a convenience and at the request of a motion-picture people who wanted to have daylight. .he should have moved him at night. .but he didn't. .and, those derelicts in that phase. . .but so far as tying Rubenstein and Oswald together, we haven't yet done so. .there have been a number of stories come in. .we've tied Oswald into the Civil Liberties Union in New York, membership into that. .and, of course, this Cuba Fair Play Commission. . .Committee. . .which is pro-Castro and dominated by communism. .and financed, to some extent, by the Castro government.

BJ

How many. . .how many shots were fired?

JEH

Three.

LBJ

Any of them fired at me?

JEH

No. All three at the President. .and we have them. Two of the shots fired at the President were splintered. . .but they had characteristics on them so that our ballistics experts were able to prove that they were fired by this gun . . .the third shot which hit the President. .he was hit by the first and the third . . .second shot hit the Governor. The third shot is a complete bullet. .and that ruled out of the President's head. . .it tore a large part of the President's head off. . .and, in trying to massage his heart at the hospital . . .on the way to the hospital. . .they apparently loosened that and it fell on to the stretcher. And we recovered that. And we have that. And we have the gun here also.

LBJ

Were they aiming at the President?

JEH

They were aiming directly at the President. There is no question about that . . .this telescopic lens which I've looked through, it brings a person as close to you as if they were sitting right beside you and we also have tested

JEH

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the fact that you could fire those three shots... were fired.. within three seconds. There had been some story going around in the papers and so forth that there must have been more than one man... becauseno one man could fire those shots in the time that they were fired. We've just proved that by the actual test we've just made..

LBJ

How did it happen they hit Connally..

JEH

Connally turned... to the President.. when the first shot was fired... and I think in that turning.. it was where he got hit.

LBJ

If he hadn't turned.. he probably wouldn't have got hit?

JEH

I think that is very likely.

LBJ

Would the President 've got hit the second one?

JEH

No, the President wasn't hit with the second one...

LBJ

I say, if Connally hadn't been in his way?

JEH

Oh, yes.. yes... the President would no doubt have been hit..

LBJ

He would have been hit three times...

JEH

He would have been hit three times... on the fifth floor of that building, where we found the gun, and the wrapping paper in which the gun was wrapped... had been wrapped... and upon which we found the full fingerprints of this man Oswald.. on that floor, we found the three empty shells that had been fired and one shell that had not been fired... in other words, there were four shells apparently and he had fired three, but didn't fire the fourth one. He then threw the gun aside and came down... at the entrance of the building.. he was stopped by police officers and some manager in the building told the police officers, 'well he's allright.. he works there.. you needn't hold him.' They let him go. That is how he got out. And then he got on a bus, busdriver has identified him and went out to his home... and got hold of a jacket.. that he wanted for some purpose... and came back downtown.. walking downtown.. and the police officer who was killed.. stopped him... not knowing who he was and not knowing whether he was THE man.. but just on suspicion

JEH
Contd

..and he fired of course and killed the police officer. ... Then he walked...

LBJ

You can prove that?

JEH

Oh, yes, oh, yes, we can prove that. Then he walked about another two blocks and went to the theatre and the woman at the theatre window, selling the tickets... she was so suspicious..the way he was acting.. She said he was carrying a gun... he had a revolver at that time... with which he had killed the police officer... he went into the theatre and she notified the police and the police and our man ^{down there} went in there and located this particular man. They had quite a struggle with him... he fought like a regular lion.. and he had to be subdued, of course, and was then brought out and, of course, taken to police headquarters... but.. he apparently had come down the five flights of steps --stairway -- from the fifth floor... so far as we've found out the elevator was not used... although he could have used it... but nobody remember whether it was or whether it wasn't.

LBJ

Well your conclusion is that. (a) he's the one that did it ... (b) the man he was after was the President (c) he would have hit him three times except the Governor turned. .

JEH

I think that is correct.

LBJ

(d) that there is no connection between he and Rubey... that you can detect now and (e) whether he was connected with the Cuban operation... with money you're trying to...

JEH

That's what we're trying to nail down now... because he was strongly pro-Castro... he was strongly anti-American.. and he had been in correspondence, which we have... with the Soviet Embassy here in Washington... and with the American Civil Liberties Union and with this Committee for Fair Play to Cuba. We have copies of the correspondence, so we've got him nailed down in his contact with them. None of those letters, however, tells of any indication of violence... or contemplated assassination. They were dealing with the matter of a visa for his wife to go back to Russia.. there... now there is one angle to this thing... that I'm hopeful to get some word on today.. this woman, his wife, had been very hostile. She would not cooperate, speaks Russian and Russian only. She did say to us yesterday down there that ^{if} we could give her assurance that she would be allowed to remain in this country, she might cooperate. I told our Agents down there to give her that assurance ... that she could stay in this country, and I sent a Russianspeaking Agent into Dallas last night to interview her so that we've got her now and whether

JEH

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she knows anything or talks anything... I, of course, don't know and won't know... till....

LBJ

Where did he work in the building? On this same floor?

JEH

He had access on all floors..

LBJ

But where was his office?

JEH

Well, he didn't have any particular office. He would ~~amit~~... order came in for certain books... and some books would be on the first floor.. second floor.. third floor.. and so forth..

LBJ

But he didn't have any particular place he was stationed?

JEH

No, he had no particular place where he was stationed... at all. He was just a general packer of the requisitions that came in for school books for the ... from the Dallas schools there and therefore he had access... perfectly proper access to the fifth floor and to the sixth floor. Usually most of the employees were down on a lower floor...

LBJ

Did anybody hear... did anybody see him on the fifth floor or?

JEH

Yes, he was seen on the fifth floor by one of the workmen there before the assassination took place... he was seen there.. so that..

LBJ

Did you get a picture of him? Shooting?

JEH

Oh, no. There was no picture taken of him shooting.

LBJ

Well what was this picture that that fellow sold for \$25,000..

JEH

That was a picture taken of the parade and showing Mrs. Kennedy climbing out of the back seat... you see there was no Secret Service man standing on the back of the car... usually, the Presidential car, in the past has had steps on the back next to the bumpers... and there's usually been one on either side standing on those steps at the back bumper... and whether the President asked that that not be done... we don't know. And the bubble-top was not up. But the bubble-top wasn't worth a damn anyway because it is made entirely of plastic and much to my surprise, the Secret Service do not have any armored cars.

LBJ Do you...do you have a bullet-proof car?

JEH Oh, yes I do.

LBJ You think I ought to have one?

JEH You most certainly should have one...most certainly should have. Because ...I have one here...we have one in New York...we use it for different purposes. I use it here for myself and if we have any raids to make or have to surround a place where anybody is hidden in, we use the bullet-proof car on that because you can bullet-proof the entire car...including the glass... but it means that you...that the top has to remain up..you can never let the top down...and it looks exactly like any other car but I do think you ought to have a bullet-proof car and..but I was surprised the other day when I made inquiry...all that I understand that the Secret Service has had ...has had two cars with metal plates underneath the car..to take care of a hand grenade or bomb that might be thrown out and rolled along the street ...well, of course, we don't do these things in this country...in Europe that is the way they assassinate the heads of state or with bombs. They've been after General DeGualle, you know, with that sort of thing but in this country, all of our assassinations have been with guns and for that reason I think very definitely, I was very much surprised when I learned that this bubble-top thing was NOT bullet-proof in any respect and that the plastic ..the top to it was down, of course, the President had insisted upon that so that he could stand up and wave to the crowd. Now it seems to me that the President ought to always be in a bullet-proof car. It certainly would prevent a thing like this ever happening again. It doesn't mean..you could have a thousand Secret Service men on guard and still a sniper can snipe you from up in the window...if you are exposed, like the President was. But he can't do it if you have a solid top, bullet-proof top to it...as it should be.

LBJ You mean, if I ride around in my ranch, I ought to be in a bullet-proof car?

JEH Well, I would certainly think so... Mr. President, it seems to me that that car down at your ranch there..the car that we rode around in when I was down there...I think it ought to be bullet-proof. I think it ought to be done very quietly. ...there is a concern ..I think, out in Cincinnati, where we have our cars bullet-proof...I think we've got four, one on the West Coast, one in New York, one here ...and I think it can be done quietly without any publicity being given to it or any pictures being taken of it..be handled Properly...but I think you ought to have...at the ranch there..it is perfectly

JEH
Contd

easy for somebody to get on to the ranch...

LBJ

Think those entrances all ought to be guarded though, don't you?

JEH

Oh, I think by all means... I think by all means. I think you've to recognize... you've got to almost be in the capacity of a so-called prisoner ... because without that security, anything can be done. Now we've gotten a lot of letters and phone calls over the last three or four or five days ... we got one about this parade the other day... that they were going to try to kill you then... and I talked with the Attorney General about it ... I was very much opposed to that marching... the White House..

LBJ

Well, Secret Service told them not to... but the family felt otherwise..

JEH

That's what Bobby told me.. but when I heard of it, I talked with the Secret Service and they were very much opposed to it... I was very much opposed to it because it was even worse than Dallas ... you know... walking down the center of the street..

LBJ

Yes... yes.. that's right.

I noticed

JEH

And somebody on the sidewalk could dash out.. /even on Pennsylvania Avenue ... I viewed the procession coming back from the Capitol, and while they had police assigned along the curbstone.. looking at the crowd... when the parade came along, the police turned around and looked at the parade... which was the worst thing to do... they also had a line of soldiers but they were looking at the parade.

LBJ

Well, I'm going to take every precaution I can and I want to talk to you and I wish you'd put down your thoughts on that a little bit... you're more than the head of the Federal Bureau... as far as I'm concerned... you're my brother and personal friend.. you have been for 25 to 30 years.. so I don't want.. I know you don't want anything happening to your family...

JEH

Absolutely NOT.

LBJ

So you just... I've got more confidence in your judgment than anybody in town so you just put down some of the things you think I ought to have and I won't involve you or quote you or get you in jurisdictional disputes or anything.. but I'd like to at least advocate them as my opinion.

JEH

I'll be very glad to indeed. I certainly appreciate your confidence.

LBJ

Thank you Edgar. Thank you.

JEH

Fine. Thank you.