



TREASURY DEPARTMENT
UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF

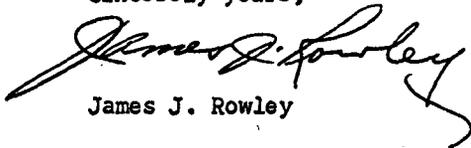
April 9, 1964

Mr. J. Lee Rankin
General Counsel
President's Commission on the
Assassination of President Kennedy
200 Maryland Avenue, N. E.
Washington, D. C. 20002

Dear Mr. Rankin:

Attached are our answers to the series of questions dealing with Secret Service protective activities during the Dallas trip which were enclosed with your letter of March 24, 1964.

Sincerely yours,



James J. Rowley

Attachment

COMMISSION EXHIBIT 1021

1. Protective Research Area.

Question:

a. Can you state more specifically than in the Rowley Report of December 18, 1963, the criteria employed in determining whether to list an individual in the PRS general files; in the "trip file"; in the "album"?

Answer:

The criteria in effect prior to November 22, 1963, for determining whether to accept material for the PRS general files were broad and flexible. All material is and was desired, accepted, and filed if it indicated or tended to indicate that the safety of the President is or might be in danger, either at the present or in the future. In these answers references to protection of the President also apply to members of his family and to the Vice President. There are many actions, situations, and incidents that may indicate such potential danger. Some are specific, such as threats; danger may be implied from others, such as membership or activity in an organization which believes in assassination as a political weapon. All material received by PRS was separately screened and a determination made as to whether the information might indicate possible harm to the President. If the material was evaluated as indicating some potential danger to the President -- no matter how small -- it was indexed in the general PRS files under the name of the individual or group of individuals to whom that material related. Much of this material, upon investigation, has been evaluated as not pertaining to an individual potentially dangerous to the Presiden

Individuals who are catalogued in the "trip index file" (a 3 x index card file) are only those evaluated as dangerous pending investigation or after investigation, but who do not meet the requirements for hospitalization or prosecution. Each field office has a file on each of these individuals if they are known to reside in or frequent the area covered by the field office. The individuals in the "trip index file" are of two main categories: (1) people whose mental condition does not warrant their being committed to an institution, or who have been declared competent by mental institutions and released but who, nevertheless, have made statements or exhibited behavior indicating that they are believed by PRS dangerous to the President; (2) individuals who have not committed any specific crimes for which they could be prosecuted, but who belong to or are active in organizations believed dangerous to the life of the President or who possess attitudes or proclivities which have been evaluated as dangerous to the life of the President.

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The "album" is a looseleaf booklet containing a number of cellophane envelopes in which are placed photographs and descriptions of subjects who are considered unusually dangerous or whose tendency to travel makes their whereabouts uncertain at any specific time. This album is kept up-to-date by PRS. A duplicate of the "album" is also on file in the office of the White House Detail, and special agents are instructed to become familiar with these potentially dangerous individuals, who might appear at any time or place.

Question:

b. Were all three files checked before the Texas trip? Are the "trip index file" and the "checkout control box" cards (mentioned in the Bouck memorandum of December 3, 1963) the same as the "trip file" and the "album"? How many names were in the trip file and the album?

Answer:

The "trip index file" is the same as the "trip file". It contained approximately 100 names on November 22, 1963, covering the United States and certain foreign countries. Prior to the President's trip to Dallas, it was checked and no person was listed in the Dallas area.

The "check-up control box" is, as its name indicates, a control device and not a file. It contained approximately 400 cards with names of persons whose activities were still being evaluated or whose activities were subject to frequent checks. Only the names of persons whose activities have been evaluated as dangerous are in the trip-index file. Since they are frequently checked up on, they are also in the "check-up control box" or an active investigation is in progress. In addition to these names, the check-up control box also contains the names of other individuals who are considered potentially dangerous and who are being checked but whose activities have not been evaluated as sufficiently serious to warrant their being included in the trip-index file. The "check-up control box" was checked prior to the President's trip to Dallas, and the names of no Dallas individuals regarded as dangerous were in the box.

The PRS general files are not organized on a geographic basis. As indicated above, they contain the names of many individuals whose activities are not considered dangerous to the President. They are not designed for checking in connection with Presidential trips, and they were not checked.

The album (described in the answer to Question 1 (a)) contained approximately fifteen (15) names of individuals on November 22, 1963.

They are particularly dangerous and mobile individuals. All agents on the White House Detail were under standing instructions to be familiar with and to be able to recognize them. The individuals in the album were constantly being reviewed. None was located in the Dallas area.

Question:

c. According to the December 18 report, the FBI office in Dallas gave the local Secret Service the name of a possibly dangerous individual in the Dallas area, and the Dallas Secret Service office also conducted an investigation of persons connected with the disturbance during Ambassador Stevenson's recent visit to Dallas, and obtained the photographs of some of these individuals. Were the names of these persons added to the PRS files before or after the Dallas trip?

Answer:

The names of the individuals referred to the Dallas office and investigated by them were added to the Protective Research Section files as soon as reports on these were received in Protective Research. The individual, whose name was furnished to us by the FBI and the Dallas Police, was investigated by the Dallas office of the Secret Service prior to the Dallas trip. The subject was interviewed and a report had been submitted to PRS on November 13, 1963.

The anti-Stevenson pickets were identified and available photos were in the hands of security personnel at the Trade Mart. These names were added to the PRS files after the trip.

2. Liaison Activities.

Question:

a. At the time of the Texas trip what criteria were employed in determining what information coming to the attention of other activities of the Treasury Department should be furnished to the Secret Service?

Answer:

The requirements of the Secret Service have been discussed at Treasury law enforcement coordination meetings held throughout the country for many years. In addition, Secret Service lectures at the Treasury law enforcement officers' basic training school for many years have included material on the requirements of the Secret Service. As indicated above, prior to November 22, 1963, the Secret Service had a very general and broad criterion as to information which it desired. It is believed

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that all Treasury law enforcement agencies -- both at the supervisory and working levels -- were aware that the Secret Service desired any information indicating that a threat to the life of the President might exist.

Question:

b. At the time of the Texas trip what formal or informal liaison arrangements existed, with respect to Presidential protection, with other federal, state, and local law enforcement and intelligence agencies?

Answer:

At the time of the Texas trip, an experienced FBI agent was assigned as a liaison officer from the FBI to the Secret Service. This special agent had had this assignment for a number of years and was in almost daily contact with the White House Detail, the Protective Research Section, and/or Secret Service Headquarters. While no written directives existed between the Secret Service and the FBI concerning the requirements of the Secret Service, the Secret Service understood that any information coming to the FBI which indicated a threat to the safety of the President would be brought to the attention of the Secret Service. Such information has, over the years, been brought to the attention of the Secret Service regularly and in substantial volume. A similar informal arrangement existed with the State Department and the CIA, especially in the area of foreign travel.

With state and local law enforcement and intelligence agencies, there is a constant interchange of information concerning how protective responsibilities should be shared and what information is desired by the Secret Service. Personnel of Secret Service field offices lecture in many state and local training schools and are in constant contact with local enforcement officers, during which time our jurisdiction and interest in the protection of the President are frequently discussed. In addition, on the occasion of every trip specific liaison is established with local law enforcement agencies. (See description of advance preparations for Dallas trip in Secret Service report to the Commission, dated December 18, 1963.)

3. Particular Protective Measures.

Question:

a. ASAIC Kellerman has been quoted as saying that the security precautions employed in Dallas "were the most stringent and thorough ever employed . . . for the visit of a President to an American city." If this is true, what were the usual measures employed?

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Answer:

ASAIC Kellerman denies that he made the statement attributed to him concerning the security precautions employed in Dallas. The precautions taken for the President's trip were the usual safeguards employed on trips of this kind in the United States during the previous year.

Question:

b. What is the justification for the failure previously to develop a bullet-proof Presidential vehicle?

Answer:

Presidential vehicles with a limited type of bullet proofing have been used in the past. The last "bullet proof" car left the White House in 1953. It was not replaced because of cost and technical problems and because it was very doubtful that a President would ride in the type of car which could be produced.

Every President has desired to ride in an open car on many occasions. The practicability of an open "bullet proof" car was and is questionable. Even the use of a plastic bubbletop developed by industry at the request of the Secret Service was contingent on our ability to remove it on those occasions when the President wished to ride in an open car. The reluctance to use an odd looking car has been expressed by Presidents who have travelled in cars equipped with the "bubbletop". This reluctance was only overcome by the fact that it allows the President to be seen by more people who brave inclement weather to get a glimpse of him without unduly exposing him for extended periods to the same inclement weather.

Presidential vehicles must be maneuverable; they must have quick pick-up, power, and speed. Technical problems in building an engine capable of moving the tremendous weight required by bullet proofing have heretofore been very difficult. With the recent development of exotic metals, some of these problems have now been alleviated. There has also been the further problem of developing a bullet proof bubbletop acceptable to the President. A bullet proof bubbletop which can be removed is not feasible now nor in the near future. Here again, the weight necessary for the building of a bullet proof bubbletop has been a deterrent.

Since the assassination, with a crash program instituted at our request by the Department of Defense, we are hopeful that solutions can be developed to the weight, the power, and the armor problems. There can be no certainty that the resulting vehicle, with a permanent bubbletop, will prove acceptable to the President for regular use.

Question:

c. Had the Secret Service ever suggested to a President that an agent ride at all times in the passenger section of the Presidential car, as in a jump seat? Would this have constituted an important added safety factor?

Answer:

On some occasions, during the Truman and Eisenhower administrations in particularly dangerous situations, the Secret Service requested and was permitted to have an agent ride in the passenger compartment with the President. However, Presidents in the past have made it clear that they did not favor this arrangement, and the Secret Service has therefore suggested this practice only on extraordinary occasions. While this arrangement would be an important added safety factor, the desired privacy of the President and his guests has militated against its routine use.

Question:

d. Had the Secret Service ever suggested to a President that agents ride at all times on the running boards or rear steps of the Presidential car? Would this have constituted an important added safety factor?

Answer:

It is not practical for agents to ride the running boards or the steps of the Presidential car at all times. As the speed of the car increases it is dangerous and difficult to stay on the car and still be effective as a screen. When the speeds are slow, the considerations concerning the use of this type of screen are similar to those set out in the answer to 3(c). The indiscriminate use of a screen would provide an important added safety factor; but Presidents, including the late President Kennedy, have preferred not to be constantly ringed by agents and cut off from the public. Accordingly, screening is employed only when the agent in charge believes the potential danger inherent in a specific situation requires it.

Question:

e. What formal or informal instructions did the agents in the motorcade have regarding emergency procedures for a contingency such as that which actually occurred in Dallas?

Answer:

The Secret Service has consistently followed two general principles in emergencies involving the President. All agents are so instructed. The first duty of the agents in the motorcade is to attempt to cover the President as closely as possible and practicable and to shield him by attempting to place themselves between the President and any source of danger. Secondly, agents are instructed to remove the President as quickly as possible from known or impending danger. Agents are instructed that it is not their responsibility to investigate or evaluate a present danger, but to consider any untoward circumstances as serious and to afford the President maximum protection at all times. No responsibility rests upon those agents near the President for the identification or arrest of an assassin or an attacker. Their primary responsibility is to stay with and protect the President.

Beyond these two principles the Secret Service believes a detailed contingency or emergency plan is not feasible because the variations possible preclude effective planning. A number of steps are taken, however, to permit appropriate steps to be taken in an emergency. For instance, the lead car always is manned by Secret Service agents familiar with the area and with local law enforcement officials; the radio net in use in motorcades is elaborate and permits a number of different means of communication with various local points. A doctor is in the motorcade.

Question:

f. Is it true that the response to the Dallas emergency developed on the spot without advance precautions such as having a doctor ride in the motorcade in a car close to the President, or having nearby hospitals on an alert status? Was it not dangerous to have taken the President and Vice President to the same location, particularly when there were closer sites of possibly greater safety to the Vice President such as the Dallas Police Headquarters?

Answer:

Response to the Dallas emergency developed on the spot. As indicated in the answer to 3 (e), the Secret Service believes that, because of the variety of emergencies which can develop, the best procedure is to have appropriate basic rules and basic equipment. Then, when an emergency develops, the experienced agent in charge can act as the situation dictates.

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In Dallas, the President's physician, as a member of the President's staff, was assigned to a car in keeping with the usual procedure of assigning staff member positions in the motorcade.

The Secret Service has not followed the practice of having army hospitals on an alert status. In view of the situation as he saw it at the time, the agent in charge did not consider it dangerous to take the President and Vice President to the same location. If there had been an indication of danger at the hospital, appropriate steps would have been taken. It should perhaps also be noted that considerations other than security are relevant to a decision as to whether the Vice President should remain with or near a disabled President in an emergency situation.

Question:

g. At the time of the assassination, did the Secret Service have a policy with respect to the distribution of important persons throughout the vehicles of the motorcade?

Answer:

The Secret Service does not have a policy with respect to the distribution of important persons throughout the vehicles in the motorcades except that we would oppose any attempt to place the President and the Vice President in the same car.

Question:

h. To what extent did the Secret Service control or supervise the issuance of press credentials for the Texas trip and the Dallas sit?

Answer:

The Secret Service did not supervise the issuance of press credentials on the Texas trip. Credentials of the White House press are issued by the Protective Research Section at the request of the President's Press Secretary. The White House press work closely around the President and are known to the Secret Service. Local press credentials are issued by the local committee which acted as host for the President's sit. The Secret Service requested that these be issued only to bona fide local working press.

4. Supervision of Secret Service.

Question:

a. Describe the supervisory chain of command for the Secret Service in the Treasury Department at the time of the assassination. Did any of the individuals supervising the Secret Service have any technical qualifications in the area of, or associated with, Presidential protection?

Answer:

The head of the Secret Service is the Chief, who is selected from the career ranks of the Secret Service by the Secretary of the Treasury, subject to approval by the Civil Service Commission. The present incumbent in the Office of the Chief is James J. Rowley, who was appointed on September 1, 1961. Prior to his appointment as Chief, Mr. Rowley, for the previous 15 years, was the Agent in Charge of the White House Detail. In that position he had direct responsibility for Presidential protection.

The statute which gives the Secret Service its authorization to provide protection for the President is 18 U.S.C., Section 3056, which reads in part as follows:

"Subject to the direction of the Secretary of the Treasury, United States Secret Service, Treasury Department, is authorized to protect the person of the President of the United States, the members of his immediate family, the President-elect, the Vice President or other officer next in the order of success to the office of President, and the Vice President-elect; protect a former President, at his request, for a reasonable period after he leaves office; . . ."

The Secret Service is a bureau of the Treasury Department and, as such, is under the general direction and supervision of the Secretary and the Under Secretary of the Treasury. The Chief of the Secret Service reports to the Secretary through an Assistant Secretary whose duties include the direct supervision of the Secret Service, the Bureau of the Mint, the Department's Employment Policy Program and who also represents the Secretary on various inter-agency committees and working groups.

On November 22, 1963, the Secretary of the Treasury was Douglas Dillon; the Under Secretary was Henry H. Fowler; the Assistant Secretary who directly supervised the Secret Service was Robert A. Wallace; James J. Rowley was Chief of the Secret Service. Chief Rowley had spent

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more than 26 years in the field of Presidential protection; the other three officials in the supervisory chain of command did not have technical qualifications in the area of, or associated with, Presidential protection.

Question:

b. Prior to Dallas, had either the Secretary or the Assistant Secretary discussed the appropriate relationship between the Secret Service and the President, with the President?

Answer:

The Secretary, the Under Secretary, and the Assistant Secretary responsible for the Secret Service discussed appropriate relationships between the Secret Service and the President with the Chief of the Secret Service, but only the Chief of the Secret Service had direct discussions with the President on this subject.

Question:

c. Prior to Dallas, had either the Secretary or the Assistant Secretary ever been asked by the Secret Service to intervene with the President to urge that a risk not be run?

Answer:

Neither the Secretary, the Under Secretary, nor the Assistant Secretary responsible for the Secret Service intervened with President Kennedy to urge that he not run a particular risk. The Secret Service had been instructed to bring problems of Presidential protection to the attention of the Assistant Secretary in order to receive policy guidance, or the Under Secretary or the Secretary if they thought an appeal to the President would be advisable. Numerous situations involving Presidential protection policies were brought to the attention of the Assistant Secretary and appropriate action taken. No specific appeals to the President were requested by the Secret Service. However, in 1962, when Congress enacted legislation authorizing Secret Service protection for the Vice President, the Secret Service requested the Secretary to speak to the Vice President about how the arrangements would be handled. The Secretary did speak to the Vice President. Protection was then provided by the Secret Service on a basis satisfactory to the Secret Service.

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Question:

d. Prior to Dallas, to what extent did the President and the White House staff direct the activities of the Secret Service by instructions to agents, rather than to their Treasury Department superiors?

Answer:

The White House staff customarily deals directly with the Chief or the Special Agent in Charge of the White House Detail of the Secret Service on matters involving Presidential protection since virtually every movement undertaken by the President involves problems of protection. The White House staff provides the Secret Service with information on the President's movements but normally does not direct the activities of the Secret Service concerning Presidential protection, nor do they normally contact the Secretary, the Under Secretary, or Assistant Secretary.

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