

SECRET DOCUMENTS ON THE ASSASSINATION OF U

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CIA RELEASES OSWALD FILE
BY JIM WOLF

WASHINGTON, MAY 13, REUTER - THE CIA ON WEDNESDAY RELEASED SECRET DOCUMENTS ON THE ASSASSINATION OF U.S. PRESIDENT JOHN KENNEDY WHICH IT HOPES WILL CLEAR IT OF SUSPICIONS OF COMPLICITY BUT RESEARCHERS SAID THE NEW MATERIAL LEFT ALL THE CONSPIRACY QUESTIONS UNANSWERED.

THE 34 DOCUMENTS RELEASED BY THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY WERE THE FIRST OF WHAT COULD SOON BECOME A VAST FLOW OF INFORMATION RELATED TO THE 1963 ASSASSINATION TO BE MADE PUBLIC IN COMING MONTHS.

PETER EARNEST, A CIA SPOKESMAN, SAID THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MATERIAL WAS THAT IT SHOWED THE TOTALITY OF WHAT IS CONTAINED IN AGENCY RECORDS UP TO THE TIME OF THE ASSASSINATION. SO I THINK THIS SHOULD PUT TO REST A LOT OF THE SPECULATION ABOUT THE AGENCY'S KNOWLEDGE OR INVOLVEMENT WITH OSWALD PRIOR TO THE ASSASSINATION, HE SAID.

BUT HAROLD WEISBERG, AN AUTHOR OF SIX BOOKS ON THE KENNEDY ASSASSINATION, SAID:
THE MOUNTAIN OF LABOUR PRODUCED A
MOUSE.:

WEISBERG, WHO SAID HE HAS FILED MORE THAN A DOZEN LAWSUITS SEEKING ASSASSINATION-RELATED MATERIAL, WONDERED WHY THE WARREN COMMISSION, WHICH INVESTIGATED THE KILLING, HAD NOT RECEIVED THE MATERIAL RELEASED ON WEDNESDAY.

THE PRESIDENTIALLY APPOINTED COMMISSION, HEADED BY SUPREME COURT JUSTICE EARL WARREN, CONCLUDED THAT LEE HARVEY OSWALD ACTED ALONE IN THE ASSASSINATION. THE DEFUNCT HOUSE ASSASSINATIONS COMMITTEE SAID IN A 1979 REPORT THAT EVIDENCE POINTED TO A SECOND GUNMAN.

EARNEST, THE CIA SPOKESMAN, DECLINED TO COMMENT ON WHICH DOCUMENTS HAD GONE TO WHICH ASSASSINATION REVIEW COMMISSION.

ON TUESDAY CIA DIRECTOR ROBERT GATES ANNOUNCED THE VOLUNTARY RELEASE OF WHAT HE SAID WERE ALL CIA FILES ON OSWALD COMPILED BEFORE THE ASSASSINATION. THE PACKET, MADE PUBLIC AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES, CONTAINED 34 SANITISED DOCUMENTS, 12 OF WHICH ORIGINATED WITH THE CIA.

GATES SAID A PUBLIC AIRING OF WHAT INVESTIGATORS KNOW SHOULD FREE HIS AGENCY OF SUSPICIONS -- REVIVED BY HOLLYWOOD IN THE FILM JFK: -- THAT IT WAS PART OF A CONSPIRACY TO KILL KENNEDY IN DALLAS.

DOCUMENTS RELEASED ON WEDNESDAY SHOWED THAT U.S. AGENTS TRACKED OSWALD BEFORE THE ASSASSINATION, BUT THE CIA COULD NOT
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IMMEDIATELY PUT ITS HANDS ON A RECENT PICTURE OF HIM.

A CIA MEMO DATED OCTOBER 23, 1963, ASKED THE U.S. NAVY TO SEND TWO COPIES OF ITS MOST RECENT PHOTOGRAPH OF OSWALD. WE WILL FORWARD THEM TO OUR REPRESENTATIVE IN MEXICO, WHO WILL ATTEMPT TO DETERMINE IF THE LEE OSWALD IN MEXICO CITY AND SUBJECT ARE THE SAME INDIVIDUAL, :: THE MEMO SAID.

THE PICTURE REQUEST GREW OUT OF AN OCTOBER 1, 1963, VISIT TO THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN MEXICO CITY. ONE OF THE CIA DOCUMENTS DESCRIBES A PERSON WHO IDENTIFIED HIMSELF TO THE SOVIET EMBASSY OFFICIALS AS

LEE OSWALD :: AS BEING SIX FEET (1.8 METRES) TALL WITH AN ATHLETIC BUILD, NOT A DESCRIPTION THAT MATCHED OSWALD'S SHORTER, SLENDER PHYSIQUE.

THE QUESTION OF WHETHER SOMEONE POSED AS OSWALD IN A CONTACT WITH SOVIET OFFICIALS BEFORE THE ASSASSINATION REMAINS A MATTER OF KEEN INTEREST TO RESEARCHERS.

THE MATERIAL IN THE FILE RELATES TO THE PERIOD WHEN OSWALD, A FORMER MARINE CORPS RADAR TECHNICIAN FAMILIAR WITH U-2 SPY FLIGHTS, DEFECTED TO THE SOVIET UNION IN 1959, REDEFECTED TO THE UNITED STATES IN 1962 AND TRAVELLED TO MEXICO A FEW MONTHS BEFORE THE ASSASSINATION.

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES SAID ONLY FIVE OF THESE DOCUMENTS APPEARED TO BE ADDITIONS TO THOSE ALREADY IN THE OPEN FILES OF THE WARREN COMMISSION.

EIGHTEEN DOCUMENTS ORIGINATED IN THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, STATE DEPARTMENT OR THE OFFICE OF NAVAL INTELLIGENCE. THE FOUR OTHERS ARE PRESS CLIPPINGS.

MARY FERRELL, A DALLAS-BASED RESEARCHER WHO HAS INDEXED THOUSANDS OF GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS ON THE ASSASSINATION, DISMISSED THE LATEST RELEASE AS INSIGNIFICANT.

I THINK THEY'RE JUST TRYING TO SHUT US UP AND KEEP US BUSY DECIDING WHAT THEY HAVEN'T DONE, :: SHE SAID BY TELEPHONE.

THE CIA'S FILES ON THE ASSASSINATION CONTAIN 250,000 TO 300,000 PAGES, INCLUDING 33,000 ON OSWALD -- MOST OF THEM RECEIVED FROM OTHER AGENCIES AND COMPILED AFTER THE KILLING.

CONGRESS IS CONSIDERING LEGISLATION THAT WOULD CREATE A FIVE-MAN PANEL TO DECIDE WHICH FILES SHOULD BE MADE PUBLIC.

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