

MEMORANDUM

February 12, 1998

To: Laura Denk

From: Ronald G. Haron

Cc: T. Jeremy Gunn
File 4.16.4 (FBI-36)

Subject: Review of Clyde Tolson Files (Follow-Up to FBI-36)

A. Introduction

On February 9-10, 1998, I reviewed certain files of FBI Associate Director Clyde Tolson at FBI Headquarters. This file, which is maintained in the FBI's Special File Room, has been assigned File No. 66-17404-95.¹ The individual documents are not serialized, nor are they cross-referenced to other FBI files. The Tolson file is composed of six sections spanning the time period from January 1965 to April 1972. We will need to obtain from the FBI an accounting for the absence of pre-1965 files. *The Tolson file is composed entirely of original memoranda, in chron order, from J. Edgar Hoover to Mr. Tolson and other high level FBI officials* (thus, it is in some sense an outgoing chron file for Hoover). The file has no external correspondence to or from Tolson, nor does it contain any outgoing memoranda of Mr. Tolson. The Tolson file is available in the FBI's Public Reading Room in redacted form; the redactions were made pursuant to exemptions to FOIA. I was able to compare the original Tolson records with the redacted versions.

There is very little material relating directly to the assassination of President Kennedy. The Tolson file covers a broad range of subjects from 1965 to 1972, including: the Dominican Republic; violence in the South; the Robert F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King assassinations; protection of the President (LBJ); the Pentagon papers; Kent State; the Yablonski murders; Vietnam; and FBI budget issues to name just a few.

¹ We should ascertain whether there are other records filed under HQ 66-17404 and whether they relate to Clyde Tolson's records.

B. Designation of Assassination Records

1. Section 1 (Jan. 1965 - Aug. 1965)

- No assassination records were identified in this section (there were May 19 and May 20, 1965 Hoover memos regarding retrieval of a letter from Jackie Kennedy to Lady Bird Johnson that had been obtained by an auctioneer, but this appears too remote; these are in the FBI reading room in redacted form)

2. Section 2 (Sept. 1965 - May 1966)

I recommend that the following be designated as assassination records:

- April 13, 1966 Memorandum from Hoover to Tolson, DeLoach, Callahan, and Belmont regarding LBJ's trip to Mexico City and issues regarding the use of a "bubble-top" versus open car (FBI reading room version is redacted).
- April 18, 1966 Memorandum from Hoover to Tolson, DeLoach, and Sullivan regarding Presidential protection in Mexico City (FBI reading room version is redacted).
- May 19, 1966 Memorandum from Hoover to Tolson, DeLoach, Gale, Rosen, Sullivan, and Wick regarding Presidential protection for LBJ's visit to Los Angeles (FBI reading room version is redacted).

3. Section 3 (June 1966 - November 1967)

I recommend the following be designated as an assassination record:

- August 23, 1966 Memorandum from Hoover to Tolson, DeLoach, Wick, Rose, and Sullivan regarding the claims of an individual that "the true story of the assassination had not been brought out" and that "shots were fired at the Vice President as well as at President Kennedy." (FBI reading room version is redacted and does not disclose the identity of the person making this claim; in my opinion, the document should be released in its entirety and the person's identity disclosed).

4. Section 4 (Jan. 1968 - May 1970)

There are several documents in this section which relate to the assassinations of Robert F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, which I have noted as *possible* JFK Act assassination records. Given the

interest (and perhaps suspicion) in Hoover's handling of the JFK investigation, Hoover's memos on the RFK and King assassinations might provide further historical context or insight into Hoover's handling of political assassination cases, which have been debated (*e.g.*, whether he dismissed conspiracy theories, whether he sought a complete investigation regardless of the consequences, etc.).

Such information as can be gleaned regarding Hoover's approach and views on the King and RFK assassinations may, by inference, tell us something about his handling of the JFK assassination. Such contextual information may take on added importance given that the FBI has identified no equivalent chron file for Tolson or Hoover for 1963-64. In addition, some of these Hoover memos reveal at least one possible contrast with the handling of the JFK case (For example, Hoover wanted the FBI to ensure the security of the Memphis jail in connection with James Earl Ray. Although speculation on my part, perhaps this was a reaction to prior history, *i.e.*, Oswald's being murdered while in the custody of Dallas authorities). Therefore, I have noted the following documents for consideration, but only the first one listed is clearly a JFK Act assassination record:

- June 5, 1968 Memorandum from Hoover to Tolson, DeLoach, Rosen, and Bishop. Hoover states that "[t]he President added that he was going to depend on me to keep him advised of developments in this matter [the RFK assassination] as I had done in 1963 incident to the assassination of the late President, John F. Kennedy." (FBI reading room version is *not* redacted).
- June 20, 1968 Memorandum from Hoover to Tolson, DeLoach, Rosen, Bishop, and Sullivan regarding both the King and RFK assassinations (FBI reading room version is redacted).
- July 12, 1968 Memorandum from Hoover to Tolson, DeLoach, and Rosen regarding the security of James Earl Ray in returning him from England and regarding security measures at the Memphis jail (FBI reading room version is *not* redacted).
- July 16, 1968 (12:55 pm) Memorandum from Hoover to Tolson, DeLoach, Rosen, and Bishop regarding security arrangements for transferring Ray from England to the United States (FBI reading room version is redacted).
- July 16, 1968 (1:12 pm) Memorandum from Hoover to Tolson, DeLoach, Rosen, and Bishop regarding transfer of James Earl Ray from England (FBI reading room version is *not* redacted).
- July 17, 1968 (10:45 am) Memorandum from Hoover to Tolson, DeLoach, Sullivan, and Bishop regarding the transfer of James Earl Ray from England (FBI reading room version is

Memorandum Re Tolson Files

February 12, 1998

Page 4

not redacted).

5. Section 5 (June 1970 - August 1971)

I merely note the following document relating to the RFK assassination, although it does not on its face qualify as a JFK Act assassination record:

- September 14, 1970 Memorandum from Hoover to Tolson, Sullivan, and Rose regarding the hijacking of a plane(s) to Amman, Jordan (FBI reading room version is redacted; the redacted portion relates to the RFK assassination).

6. Section 6 (September 1971 - April 1972)

No assassination records were identified in this section.