

TESTIMONY OF FARRELL DOBBS

The testimony of Farrell Dobbs was taken at 11:45 a.m., on April 17, 1964, at the U.S. Courthouse, Foley Square, New York, N.Y., by Messrs. J. Lee Rankin, general counsel and Wesley J. Liebeler, assistant counsel of the President's Commission. Farrell Dobbs was accompanied by his attorney, Rowland Watts.

Farrell Dobbs, having been first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

Mr. RANKIN. In this examination, Mr. Dobbs, we are proceeding in accordance with the procedures that the Commission has set out and by reason of the Executive order of President Johnson No. 11130 and the joint resolution of Congress No. 137.

The examination will be done by myself, J. Lee Rankin, general counsel for the Commission. Mr. Liebeler is associated with me in that regard.

You are entitled to a 3-day notice of this examination. I assume, since you are willing to come here, you are willing to waive that 3-day notice and proceed with the hearing at this time; is that right?

Mr. DOBBS. That's right.

Mr. RANKIN. You are also entitled to have your counsel here, as you have, and during the examination, if he has any objection to any questions or wants to have a recess so that he may talk with you, of course, he may. At the close of your testimony, if there is something that he would like to examine you about so as to clarify anything that you said or give you an opportunity to correct or to change it, that is provided for, too. Do you have any questions before we start?

Mr. WATTS. Mr. Rankin, I think that it should show on the record that this is a voluntary appearance, that Mr. Dobbs volunteered what information he had and offered to come if you chose to have him.

Mr. RANKIN. Yes; we wish to have that on the record.

Did you produce the information that was requested of you?

Mr. DOBBS. Yes; I turned it over to Mr. Watts, and he forwarded it to you.

Mr. RANKIN. Do you have from the Militant files the 4-month introductory subscription blank stamped September 17, 1962?

Mr. WATTS. Yes; we offer it.

Mr. RANKIN. Will you mark that as Exhibit 1.

(Marked Dobbs' Exhibit No. 1.)

Mr. RANKIN. Do you have the 4-month renewal blank stamped May 28, 1963?

Mr. WATTS. Yes; we offer that.

Mr. RANKIN. Mark that Exhibit 2, please.

(Marked Dobbs' Exhibit No. 2.)

Mr. RANKIN. Do you have the Addressograph plate for Lee H. Oswald?

Mr. WATTS. Yes; we offer that.

Mr. RANKIN. Mark that Exhibit 3, please.

(Marked Dobbs' Exhibit No. 3.)

Mr. RANKIN. And from the Pioneer Publishers' files—I failed to ask you for the change of address notice postmarked June 12, 1963, and November 12, 1963. Do you have those?

Mr. WATTS. Yes; I offer them.

Mr. RANKIN. Mark those Exhibits 4 and 5 respectively.

(Marked Dobbs' Exhibits Nos. 4 and 5.)

Mr. RANKIN. Do you have from the Pioneer Publishers' files an order for the Teachings of Leon Trotsky and a cash memo dated May 8, 1962, indicating that 25 cents had been received?

Mr. WATTS. Yes; we have that, and with them is a carbon copy of a letter from Pioneer Publishers, dated September 28, 1963, and a canceled envelope postmarked January 2, I believe, 1963, to Pioneer Publishers from Lee Oswald, and we offer all of those.

Mr. RANKIN. Thank you.

Mr. WATTS. In addition, from Pioneer Publishers, we have a letter from Lee Oswald with a date January 1, the year not identified, ordering "The Coming American Revolution," "The End of the Comintern," and "The 1948 Manifesto

of the Fourth Internationale," indicating that 35 cents is enclosed and requesting the English words of the song "The Internationale," and attached is a receipt or a cash memo of Pioneer Publishers, indicating that 35 cents was received.

Mr. RANKIN. Mark that No. 7.

(Marked Dobbs' Exhibit No. 7.)

Mr. WATTS. We also have a carbon copy of a letter dated April 26, 1963, to Mr. Oswald, setting forth the English words of The Internationale. I believe that is all we have from Pioneer Publishers.

Mr. RANKIN. Do you have any document from the files of the Socialist Workers Party?

Mr. WATTS. Yes.

Mr. RANKIN. Will you describe those, please?

Mr. WATTS. We have a letter dated August 12, 1962, signed Lee H. Oswald to the Socialist Workers Party, asking for information concerning the nature of the party and expressing an interest in finding out all he can about the program. We have a coupon dated as having been received October 31, 1962, signed Lee H. Oswald, indicating that he would like to join the Socialist Workers Party, and we have a carbon copy of a letter dated August 23, 1962, apparently in answer to the first letter, thanking Mr. Oswald for his request for information and indicating that a pamphlet concerning the Socialist Workers Party was being enclosed and inviting further inquiry if he had any more questions.

Mr. RANKIN. The last material you have described, Mr. Watts will be marked Dobbs' No. 9.

(Marked Dobbs' Exhibit No. 9.)

Mr. WATTS. We have, in addition, a letter dated September 1, 1963, signed Lee H. Oswald. Attached to it is what appears to be its envelope from New Orleans, postmarked August 31, 1963. This letter requests information concerning SWP representatives in the Washington-Baltimore area and states that Mr. Oswald expects to be moving into that area in October. That is all I have.

Mr. RANKIN. Thank you. The last letter and envelope are marked Dobbs' Exhibit No. 10.

(Marked Dobbs' Exhibit No. 10.)

Mr. RANKIN. Mr. Dobbs, do you have some occupation at the present time?

Mr. DOBBS. I am secretary of the Socialist Workers Party.

Mr. RANKIN. Have you been in that position for some time?

Mr. DOBBS. Since 1953.

Mr. RANKIN. Did you have some correspondence with Lee Harvey Oswald?

Mr. DOBBS. We have nothing in our files other than what we have turned over to you. I might add that I feel certain that we would have responded to his—the coupon that he sent indicating a desire to join the party. It's not surprising we wouldn't have kept a file copy, because our interest in cases of this kind is an established thing. It is our policy not to take anybody into membership in the party unless we have a branch of the party in the area where they are resident. In such case we would—we would have replied to him to that effect. We would have suggested to him that he interest himself in the circulation of The Militant and Socialist literature and would have expressed a desire for continued fraternal contact with him on that basis.

Mr. RANKIN. Do you recall having seen Dobbs' No. 1 at some time?

Mr. DOBBS. I recall that only in the sense that I assisted in the search of the files after November 22 to find everything we could.

Mr. RANKIN. Will you describe to the Commission what happened at that time, what you did? Did you do something to try to find out if there was any contact or communication between your organization and Lee Harvey Oswald?

Mr. DOBBS. Yes. I received a telephone call from one of the newspaper reporters asking me if Oswald had ever been a subscriber to The Militant. I told him not to my knowledge. I then, however, went and checked the files, discovered he had been, and with that I decided to check every file that I could, and find whatever information was in the files, and get it together.

Mr. RANKIN. About when did you do that?

Mr. DOBBS. This would have been done, I believe, about Monday following the assassination. I think it was on Monday morning I received the call.

Mr. RANKIN. What kind of a search was made at that time; can you describe that for the Commission, please?

Mr. DOBBS. Yes. We went through all the files that we had, and, well, I guess that is about all I can say.

Mr. RANKIN. Who do you mean by "we."

Mr. DOBBS. Myself and members of the organization who work as my voluntary office assistants, and I cooperated with the people in charge of The Militant business office, and the Pioneer Publishing business office.

Mr. RANKIN. And how complete was that search?

Mr. DOBBS. We made it as thorough as we could, to our best knowledge. We have given you everything we had in the files.

Mr. RANKIN. As a result of that search, you discovered Dobbs' No. 1, did you?

Mr. DOBBS. Yes.

Mr. RANKIN. That is a subscription for the 4 months' introductory subscription of The Militant—

Mr. DOBBS. Yes, that is correct.

Mr. RANKIN. By Lee Harvey Oswald, or Lee H. Oswald?

Mr. DOBBS. Yes, that is correct.

Mr. RANKIN. It is a practice in taking these depositions, Mr. Dobbs, for the counsel that is examining to initial whatever exhibits are presented, and also for the witness, so that it can be recognized as official.

(Witness complies.)

(Document marked Dobbs' Exhibit No. 2.)

Mr. RANKIN. Did you at that time also discover Dobbs' No. 2?

Mr. DOBBS. Yes.

Mr. RANKIN. And what is that?

Mr. DOBBS. It is a renewal of the trial subscription, and it is stamped May 28, 1963.

Mr. RANKIN. Will you kindly initial that too?

(Witness complies.)

(Addressograph plate marked Dobbs' Exhibit No. 3.)

Mr. DOBBS. Yes.

Mr. RANKIN. Will you please initial that?

Mr. DOBBS. Yes.

(Witness complies.)

(Document marked Dobbs' Exhibit No. 4.)

Mr. RANKIN. Do you recall at that time discovering Dobbs' No. 4?

Mr. DOBBS. Yes.

Mr. RANKIN. What is that?

Mr. DOBBS. It is a notification of change of address sent by Lee H. Oswald and stamped "Received" on June 17, 1963.

Mr. RANKIN. Will you please initial that?

Mr. DOBBS. Yes (witness complies).

(Document marked Dobbs' Exhibit No. 5.)

Mr. RANKIN. Then did you discover at that time Dobbs' No. 5?

Mr. DOBBS. Yes.

Mr. RANKIN. That is also a change-of-address notice?

Mr. DOBBS. It is a change of address notice from Lee H. Oswald stamped "Received" November 14, 1963.

Mr. RANKIN. Changing the address from New Orleans back to Dallas?

Mr. DOBBS. Yes.

Mr. RANKIN. Will you kindly initial that?

(Witness complies.)

(Document marked Dobbs' Exhibit No. 6.)

Mr. RANKIN. Do you recall receiving Dobbs' No. 6?

Mr. DOBBS. Yes.

Mr. RANKIN. What does that consist of?

Mr. DOBBS. A cash receipt for 25 cents received from Oswald.

Mr. WATTS. Correction, Mr. Rankin. It is not really a cash receipt; it is a cash office memo.

Mr. RANKIN. Thank you. Is that correct?

Mr. DOBBS. That is correct, yes, under date of August 31, 1962. And the second item is an order blank requesting a book, The Teachings of Leon Trotsky, signed by Lee H. Oswald, stamped "Received" August 28, 1962. A third item is a letter under date of September 29, 1962, to Lee H. Oswald from Pioneer Publishers, acknowledging receipt of the order and indicating that the book ordered is out of print and that he will be given a 25-cent credit on the money he sent in.

Mr. RANKIN. The last item is the envelope?

Mr. DOBBS. The last item is an envelope postmarked Dallas, Tex., either January 2 or January 21, it is difficult to discern, 1963, with Oswald's name in the upper left-hand corner.

Mr. RANKIN. Would you kindly initial that?

Mr. DOBBS. Each separately.

Mr. RANKIN. No, just the first one.

(Witness complies.)

Mr. RANKIN. Did you handle any part of the transactions involved in Dobbs' No. 6 yourself?

Mr. DOBBS. No, not personally.

(Document marked Dobbs' Exhibit No. 7.)

Mr. RANKIN. Will you examine Dobbs' No. 7 and tell us what it is, please?

Mr. DOBBS. An office cash memo acknowledging 35 cents received from L. H. Oswald, dated January 11, 1963, and a letter to Pioneer Publishers from Lee H. Oswald under date of January 1, 1963.

Mr. RANKIN. Will you initial that, please, Mr. Dobbs?

(Witness complies.)

(Document marked Dobbs' Exhibit No. 8.)

Mr. RANKIN. Will you examine Watts' No. 8 and tell us what that is.

Mr. DOBBS. It is a letter to Lee H. Oswald from Pioneer Publishers under date of April 26, 1963.

Mr. RANKIN. Will you initial that?

(Witness complies.)

(Document marked Dobbs' Exhibit No. 9.)

Mr. RANKIN. And Dobbs' No. 9, tell us what that is, please.

Mr. DOBBS. A coupon signed "Lee H. Oswald," received under date of October 31, 1962, in which he indicates, by placing a check in an appropriate place, that he would like to join the Socialist Workers Party.

Mr. RANKIN. That is what you have referred to in your prior testimony when you said that you would have responded to it in the way you have described if you knew that there was no organization in that locality?

Mr. DOBBS. That is correct.

Mr. RANKIN. Was there a Socialist Workers Party organization in the Dallas area at that time?

Mr. DOBBS. No, no; there was not.

Mr. RANKIN. You haven't discovered any copy of a communication to Lee Harvey Oswald along the lines that you have described, have you?

Mr. DOBBS. No, sir; I have not.

Mr. RANKIN. But you know it is a standard practice, and that is the way you would have responded?

Mr. DOBBS. That is correct.

(Document marked Dobbs' Exhibit No. 11.)

Mr. RANKIN. Mr. Dobbs, we have what has been marked as Dobbs' No. 11, which purports to be a copy, photocopy, of a carbon of your response as of November 5, 1962, to Mr. Oswald's letter. Will you examine that and see whether or not it is?

Mr. RANKIN. I would like to correct the record to show that this is a type-written copy of the original, apparently not the carbon.

Mr. WATTS. Clarify that. You are saying that it is a typewritten copy of the original of the letter—

Mr. RANKIN. Purportedly.

Mr. WATTS. Purportedly received by Mr. Oswald?

Mr. RANKIN. Yes.

Mr. LIEBELER. Off the record.

(Discussion off the record.)

Mr. RANKIN. Will you first respond, Mr. Dobbs, to whether or not this Dobbs' No. 11 appears to be a typewritten copy of a letter that you wrote to Lee Harvey Oswald in response to his inquiry about the Socialist Workers Party?

Mr. DOBBS. Yes, it appears to be the type of letter I would have written.

Mr. RANKIN. Do you understand that we are going to secure the original and submit it to you to see if it is in fact the letter that you did write, and if you find that it is, then it will be offered as a part of this deposition?

Mr. DOBBS. Yes.

Mr. RANKIN. Will you initial now Dobbs' No. 9, please?

(Witness complies.)

Mr. WATTS. Mr. Rankin, in his responding he did not get past that coupon.

Mr. RANKIN. Yes. Will you describe the balance of Dobbs' No. 9? I understand you completed with the coupon but not the other two pieces.

Mr. DOBBS. The second item is a letter from Lee H. Oswald, addressed apparently to the Socialist Workers Party and marked "Received" under date of August 13, 1962, in which he requests information about the nature of the party and its policies. The third is a letter to Lee H. Oswald from the Socialist Workers Party under date of August 23, 1962, indicating that a pamphlet is being enclosed for him entitled "The Socialist Workers Party—What It Is, What It Stands For."

Mr. RANKIN. I asked you whether or not the Socialist Workers Party had any organization in Dallas. What is the fact in regard to Fort Worth and New Orleans at that time?

Mr. DOBBS. No, we had no organization anywhere in that area.

(Document marked Dobbs' Exhibit No. 10.)

Mr. RANKIN. Will you examine Dobbs' No. 10 and tell us what that exhibit consists of.

Mr. DOBBS. A letter signed "Lee H. Oswald" to the Socialist Workers Party, dated September 1, 1963, stating that he would like to know if he could get in direct contact with SWP representatives in the Washington, D.C.-Baltimore area.

Mr. RANKIN. Will you please initial that?

Mr. DOBBS. Right on the envelope?

Mr. RANKIN. That is right.

(Witness complies.)

Mr. RANKIN. I notice that Dobbs' No. 9 refers to a Sherry Finer signed on the letter, copy of which is dated August 23, 1962.

Mr. DOBBS. Yes.

Mr. RANKIN. Who is Sherry Finer?

Mr. DOBBS. She is one of the volunteer assistants that helps me occasionally with office work.

Mr. RANKIN. And No. 11 is a typewritten copy of the original, purportedly an answer to Lee Harvey Oswald that we have already referred to, and you have said you thought it would be the type of letter at least that you would write in answer?

Mr. DOBBS. That is correct.

Mr. RANKIN. And we have said that we would get the original and submit it to you for your examination. If you find that the original is the original of Dobbs' No. 11 when it is submitted to you, will you then initial it and return it to us so we can make it a part of the record here?

Mr. DOBBS. I will do so.

Mr. RANKIN. Thank you.

(Document marked Dobbs' Exhibit No. 12.)

Mr. RANKIN. I hand you Dobbs' No. 12 and ask you if you know anything about the person Bob Chester that purportedly signed the original of that letter.

Mr. DOBBS. Yes.

Mr. RANKIN. Who is that Bob Chester?

Mr. DOBBS. It is an associate of mine, works in collaboration with me, a day volunteer here in the party office.

Mr. RANKIN. Do you know anything about the blowups, reversal and reproduction work that he refers to there?

Mr. DOBBS. I can only assume that he would have written about—

Mr. WATTS. Excuse me. You should answer what you know, Farrell; and if you want to express an opinion, it is all right, but make it very clear whether or not you have any knowledge.

Mr. DOBBS. Would you ask me the question again; perhaps I did not understand.

Mr. RANKIN. I am interested in your knowledge about that material that is referred to in the letter, the blowups and reproductions and the other things that are referred to in the first paragraph.

Mr. DOBBS. So far as I can perceive, it refers to a technical process. I wouldn't know anything beyond that.

Mr. RANKIN. And you don't know whether there was anything of that kind; at least you did not find it when you made the search?

Mr. DOBBS. I have no indication of such information in our search.

Mr. RANKIN. Mr. Chester is still with your organization?

Mr. DOBBS. He is.

Mr. RANKIN. And you don't recall this Exhibit No. 12 or the original or copies or anything of that kind?

Mr. DOBBS. No; I do not.

Mr. RANKIN. You did not find it when you made your search?

Mr. DOBBS. That's right.

Mr. RANKIN. Would you kindly make a search to see if there is such a letter and such materials in your files?

Mr. DOBBS. Yes; we will look for that.

Mr. WATTS. Mr. Rankin, you are requesting Mr. Dobbs to make a further search to see if he can find the letter and reproductions referred to; is that correct?

Mr. RANKIN. Yes, both; and if he does find them, to forward them to us so they can be incorporated after they are initialed as a part of the record in this deposition.

(Document marked Dobbs' Exhibit No. 13.)

Mr. RANKIN. Mr. Dobbs, do you recall seeing Dobbs' No. 13?

Mr. DOBBS. No; I do not.

Mr. RANKIN. Do you recognize the signature?

Mr. DOBBS. Yes; that would have been one of my associates that helps me in volunteer office work.

Mr. RANKIN. And you recognize the stationery, I suppose?

Mr. DOBBS. Yes; that appears to be on our letterhead.

Mr. RANKIN. When you made a search of the files, you did not find any letter like Dobbs' No. 13?

Mr. DOBBS. No; I did not.

Mr. RANKIN. Did you have any information as to whether or not such a letter was sent?

Mr. DOBBS. No, no. I would assume, in view of the fact that it does appear to be an official party letterhead, that the letter would have been sent, but we would not have kept a file copy of it.

Mr. RANKIN. I see. And you do recognize the signature?

Mr. DOBBS. Yes.

Mr. RANKIN. Would you kindly initial that, please.

Mr. DOBBS. (Witness complies.)

Mr. RANKIN. Do you have any recollection of any other correspondence or communications of any kind?

Mr. DOBBS. No; I do not, sir.

Mr. RANKIN. With Lee Harvey Oswald?

Mr. DOBBS. I do not.

Mr. RANKIN. You will note that Dobbs' No. 13 refers to a communication from Lee Harvey Oswald of March 24, presumably 1963. Do you recall ever having seen that?

Mr. DOBBS. No; I do not, and obviously it was not in our files or we would have included it in the material we turned over to you.

Mr. RANKIN. While you are making further search for this last item, would you kindly make another search to see if you do have any copy of Dobbs' No. 13 and also the letter from Lee Harvey Oswald of March 24?

Mr. DOBBS. That's referred to here?

Mr. RANKIN. Yes.

Mr. DOBBS. Yes. We will make a recheck.

Mr. RANKIN. We should also like that clipping that is referred to as being enclosed with Mr. Oswald's letter, if you find it.

Mr. DOBBS. Yes.

Mr. RANKIN. I was not quite clear, Mr. Dobbs, about your response in regard to that. Is that the type of letter you would not expect to have a copy of in the files?

Mr. DOBBS. Yes.

Mr. RANKIN. Because it is a general form that is followed? Is that the reason?

Mr. DOBBS. Yes. The reason—I can explain to you, however, our basic procedure in matters of this kind. We receive quite a few inquiries, and we have more or less an established policy of reply along the lines I have indicated to you, so we do not keep an accumulation of the—all the letters received and all the replies sent. As I told you, our office work is done essentially by volunteer help. We are a small organization with meager resources, and we have to adjust our proceedings accordingly.

Mr. RANKIN. Do you have any knowledge of any collaboration, association or combination of any of the people in the Socialist Workers Party, Pioneer Publishers, or The Militant, with Lee Harvey Oswald and his action in connection with the assassination of President Kennedy?

Mr. DOBBS. None whatever. So far as I know, nobody in any of the categories mentioned by you ever knew anything about him other than the written material that we have made available to you.

Mr. RANKIN. With your position in connection with these organizations, would you have such material? Would such information be available to you if it existed?

Mr. DOBBS. Yes. If anybody in the organization would know, I would know. I am the central executive officer of the party.

Mr. RANKIN. You are satisfied that no one had such an association with Lee Harvey Oswald from those organizations?

Mr. DOBBS. Absolutely so.

Mr. RANKIN. Do you know of any other communications, either orally or in writing, between any of those organizations and Lee Harvey Oswald, other than what has been produced here?

Mr. DOBBS. No; I do not.

Mr. RANKIN. We have some information, Mr. Dobbs, that when Lee Harvey Oswald was about 16 years of age, he communicated with the Socialist Party of America and the Socialist Call. I would like to know whether or not those have any relationship with the organizations that I have just described that you have some connection with?

Mr. DOBBS. No, sir; it is an entirely different organization. Our organization didn't come into being until 1938.

Mr. RANKIN. And these organizations, the Socialist Call and the Socialist Party of America, were not predecessors of your organization?

Mr. DOBBS. No.

Mr. RANKIN. Or associated in any way?

Mr. DOBBS. No.

Mr. RANKIN. Do you have any knowledge of any conspiracy or association with Lee Harvey Oswald by anybody with regard to whatever he did in connection with the assassination of President Kennedy?

Mr. DOBBS. No; I do not, and I would add that it's a matter of historic record, long established, that our organization's philosophy is opposed to individual acts of political terrorism.

Mr. RANKIN. Do you have any additional information beyond what you have supplied here that might be of assistance to the Commission in regard to the assassination of President Kennedy?

Mr. DOBBS. No; we do not. We have sought voluntarily to provide you everything we have in the spirit of giving you whatever cooperation we could, and we have given you all the information we had.

Mr. RANKIN. And that includes anything, either oral or in writing?

Mr. DOBBS. Correct.

Mr. RANKIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Dobbs.

TESTIMONY OF JOHN J. ABT

The testimony of John J. Abt was taken at 9:30 a.m., on April 17, 1964, at the U.S. courthouse, Foley Square, New York, N.Y., by Messrs. J. Lee Rankin, general counsel, and Wesley J. Liebeler, assistant counsel of the President's Commission.

John Abt, having been first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

Mr. RANKIN. Will you state your name?

Mr. ABT. John J. Abt.

Mr. RANKIN. Where do you live?

Mr. ABT. 444 Central Park West, New York City.

Mr. RANKIN. You are a practicing attorney in the city of New York?

Mr. ABT. I am.

Mr. RANKIN. How long have you been practicing law?

Mr. ABT. A long time, Mr. Rankin, since 1927. You do the mathematics.

Mr. RANKIN. You have been informed, I am sure, that Lee Harvey Oswald, after his arrest, tried to reach you to request that you act as his counsel. I don't know how you were informed, but I have seen it in the newspapers. When did it first come to your attention?

Mr. ABT. May I tell you the story, Mr. Rankin? Perhaps that is the simplest way.

Mr. RANKIN. Yes.

Mr. ABT. On Friday evening, the 22d, my wife and I left the city to spend the weekend at a little cabin we have up in the Connecticut woods. Sometime on Saturday, several people phoned me to say that they had heard on the radio that Oswald had asked that I represent him, and then shortly after that the press—both the press, radio, and TV reporters began to call me up there. I may say we have a radio but we have no TV there. And in the interim I turned on the radio and heard the same report.

I informed them—and these calls kept on all day and night Saturday and again Sunday morning—I informed all of the reporters with whom I spoke that I had received no request either from Oswald or from anyone on his behalf to represent him, and hence I was in no position to give any definitive answer to any such proposal if, as and when it came. I told them, however, that if I were requested to represent him, I felt that it would probably be difficult, if not impossible, for me to do so because of my commitments to other clients. I never had any communication, either directly from Oswald or from anyone on his behalf, and all of my information about the whole matter to this day came from what the press told me in those telephone conversations and what I subsequently read in the newspapers.

Mr. RANKIN. Mr. Abt, did you learn that Lee Harvey Oswald was interested in having you represent him apparently because of some prior connection of yours with the American Civil Liberties Union?

Mr. ABT. No. My assumption was, and it is pure assumption, that he read about some of my representation in the press, and, therefore, it occurred to him that I might be a good man to represent him, but that is pure assumption on my part. I have no direct knowledge of the whole matter.

Mr. RANKIN. You have told us all that you know about it?

Mr. ABT. Yes. I may say that I have had no prior contact with Oswald, knew nothing about him, did not know the name, and this request came as something entirely new and surprising to me when it came.