

## TESTIMONY OF THOMAS J. KELLEY

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### Summary

In his remarks describing the performance of the Secret Service before, during, and after the assassination, Inspector Thomas Kelley displayed a passive approach to Presidential protection. Before the assassination, the Secret Service's Protective Research Section took notice of specific threats from white right-wing groups, KKK member Joseph Milteer, and various Cuban sources in Chicago and Miami. Kelley could not confirm that the full details of these threats reached all the Secret Service agents in Dallas or, later, the Warren Commission. Pleading lack of resources, Kelley explained Secret Service dependence on other agencies for intelligence-gathering and presidential protection along motorcade routes. The Secret Service allowed publication of the details of the motorcade route and yielded to White House staffers who insisted on the removal of the plexiglass bubbletop from the President's limosine. During the moment of the assassination, Secret Service agents, according to the Zapruder film, took several seconds to respond, and the driver of the limosine lingered until the shooting stopped. Kelley saw no connection between this performance during the assassination and the late-night drinking of his agents before the Dallas motorcade. The passive approach that characterized pre-assassination behavior of the Secret Service continued into the subsequent investigations. For example, Kelley described himself as the guest of the Dallas Police Department, and therefore he was not in a position to insist on a tape recorder during his questioning of Oswald. The Secret Service did not point the FBI in the direction of its leads in the Cuban community after relinquishing Secret Service control of the investigation. Although the Secret Service had information on threats involving rifles being fired from tall buildings, none of this caused any change in plans or preparations for the motorcade, nor did the information improve Agency performance. According to Kelley, the Secret Service strategy was simple and direct: remove protectees from dangerous situations. Kelley's testimony suggested that the Secret Service emphasized reaction to events rather than aggressive anticipation of danger.

**INSPECTOR THOMAS J. KELLEY RECEIVED HIS LL.B. FROM GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL. KELLEY SERVED AS SECRET SERVICE LIASON TO THE WARREN COMMISSION.**

- 323-329 Organizational chart of Secret Service (Nov. 1963); circumstances of Kelley's interrogation of Oswald; Secret Service had no prior information on Oswald; agents drinking the night before the assassination did not violate any rules; driver of President's limosine had no formal training in evasive driving.
- 329-337 Threats received by Secret Service prior to the assassination involved Chicago Cubans, Cubans in Miami, and white right-wing groups; Secret Service only evaluates intelligence gathered by other agencies; Secret Service in charge of interrogating Marina Oswald learned of her support for Castro; Secret Service decided there was no plot to kill the President; Secret Service supplied some, but not all, of its documents to the Warren Commission; Secret Service made no connection between Milteer threat, Cuban threat, and Oswald.
- 337-350 Performance of agents at the moment of assassination; FBI did not focus on Cuban conspiracy developed by Secret Service; according to Kelley, Secret Service did not hold anything back from the Warren Commission; Secret Service policy on checking buildings along a motorcade route; Secret Service lacked resources for adequate protection; dangerous "loners" and "nuts" make full protection impossible.
- 350-356 President Kennedy did not want agents riding the back of the limosine; bubbletop not placed on the limosine in Dallas; Oswald claimed to be a Communist but not a Marxist; there were no Secret Service agents placed at the School Book Depository; Zapruder film shows contrasting responses of Gov. Connally and the agents in the car behind the President's limosine.