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JFK ASSASSINATION SYSTEM

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Record Number 157-10011-10078

MAJOR SUBJECTS TO BE COVERED IN THE
TESTIMONY OF HOWARD J. OSBORN

February 17, 1975

Background of Mr. Osborn

See the written statement submitted to the Commission by
Mr. Osborn dated February 11, 1975.

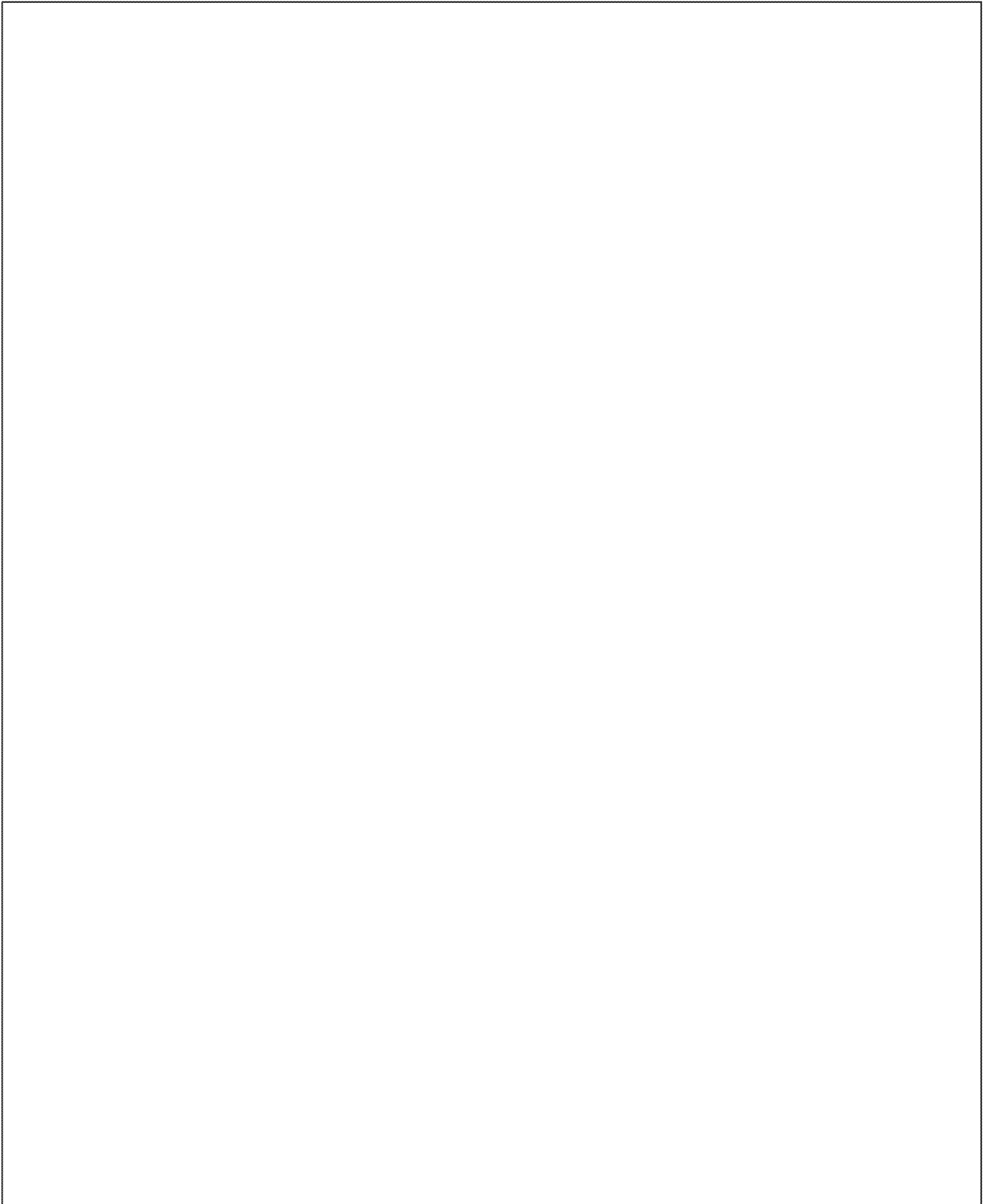


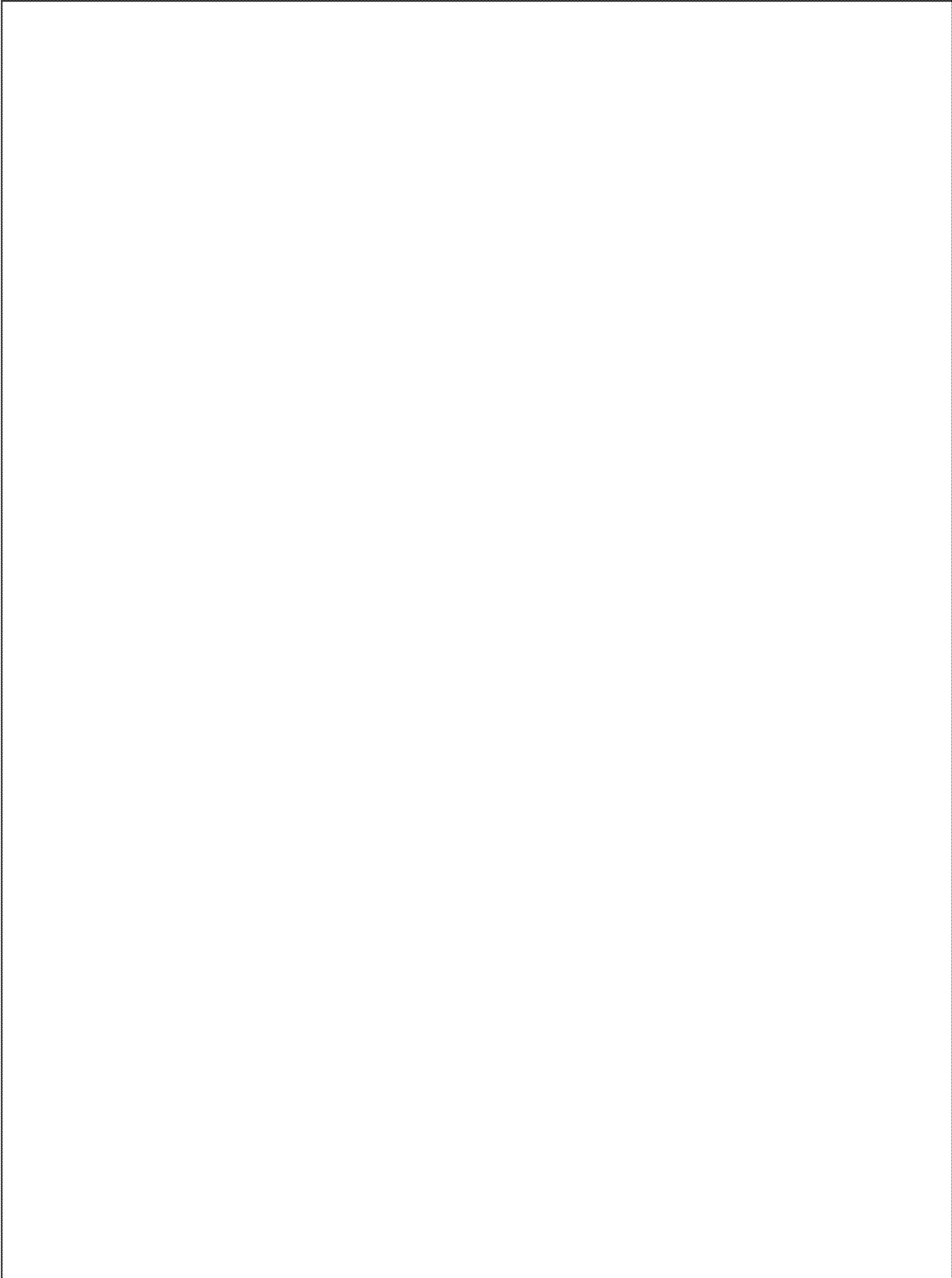
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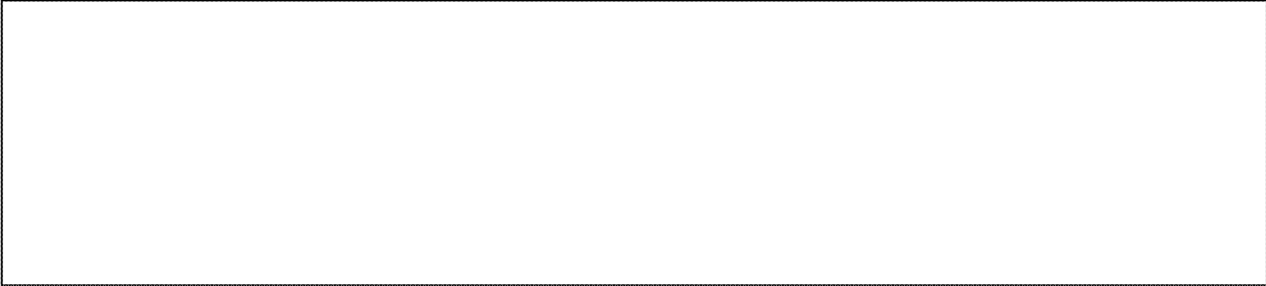




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COMMISSION ON CIA ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE UNITED STATES

Washington, DC 20500

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Chairman

David W. Belin,
Executive Director

John T. Connor
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Lane Kirkland
Lyman L. Lemnitzer
Ronald Reagan
Edgar F. Shannon, Jr.

February 13, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILE

FROM: ROBERT OLSEN

SUBJECT: Summary of an Interview of Howard Osborn, conducted on February 10 and 11 in the offices of the Commission by Mr. Robert B. Olsen

Present throughout the interview, which was conducted from 2:00 pm to approximately 5:30 pm on February 10 and from 12 noon until 2:45 pm and from 4:45 pm to approximately 8:00 pm on February 11, was the attorney for Mr. Osborn, Jack Debelius.

Mr. Osborn appeared voluntarily at the request of the Commission staff. At the outset, Mr. Debelius raised a series of questions:

1. He asked us to supply an outline of the authority of the Commission. He was handed a copy of the Executive Order creating the Commission and spelling out its duties and powers.
2. He asked whether the Commission had subpoena powers, and he was advised that it did not.
3. He asked whether the Commission had power to grant immunity to witnesses, and he was advised that the Commission does not have such power.
4. He asked what liaison has been established, or will be established between the Commission and the various Senate and House Committees which will be investigating the CIA and other intelligence activities. He was told that the Commission expects to establish such liaison, but that none of the ground rules or arrangements have yet been agreed upon.
5. He asked whether Mr. Osborn would have an opportunity to review the transcript of any recorded testimony that he may give to the Commission or to the Commission staff. He was told that the Commission staff had agreed upon a policy of allowing any witness to examine the transcript of his own testimony.
6. He asked whether Mr. Olsen had been cleared for security and whether Mr. Osborn was free to reveal all levels of classified information in the course of the interview. He was advised that such a clearance had been obtained for Mr. Olsen and that Mr. Osborn was free to answer fully any questions put to him within the scope of the responsibilities of the Commission.

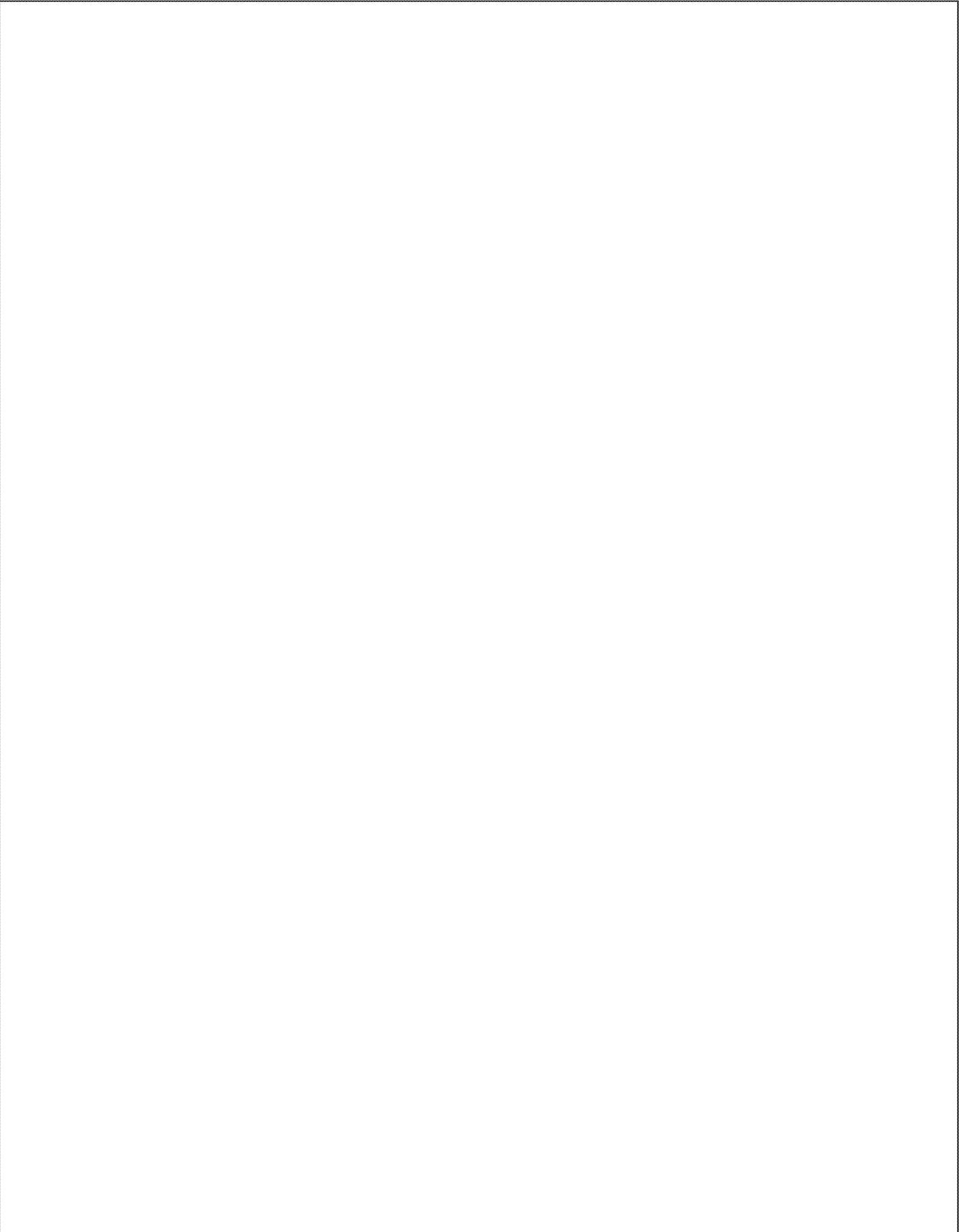
Mr. Debelius stated that he had carefully reviewed his own situation as a former employee of the Office of Security within the CIA and that he had concluded that there was no prospect that he would be called as a witness either by the Commission or by any Congressional or other committee. Hence, he did not feel that there would be any conflict in his representation of Mr. Osborn under the canons of ethics applicable to the legal profession.

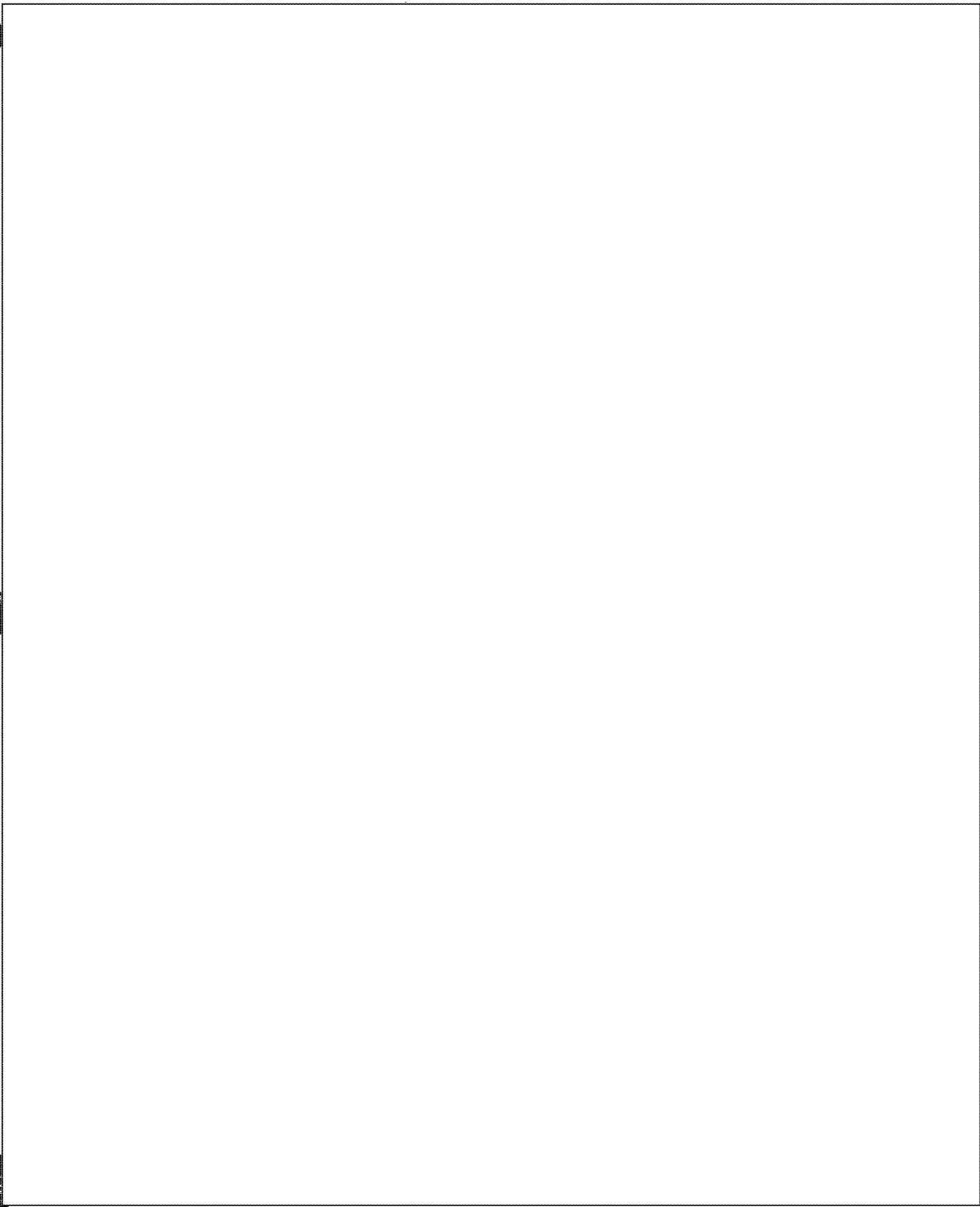
Background of Mr. Osborn

Howard Osborn graduated from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute in 1940 and shortly thereafter entered the military service. After World War II he was briefly with Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, and then joined the Central Intelligence Agency in late 1947. He served in various assignments within the United States and Europe prior to September 1963, including assignment as Assistant to the Inspector General and positions within the Directorate of Plans. In September 1963 he was named Deputy Director of Security. At that time the Director of Security was Rob Bannerman. On July 1, 1964, he was named Director of Security, and he continued in that position until early March 1974 when he applied for disability retirement and went on sick leave. He was retired on disability on December 31, 1974, having not returned to work since going on sick leave on March 8, 1974. He states that he had no involvement whatever with Agency activities after March 8, 1974.

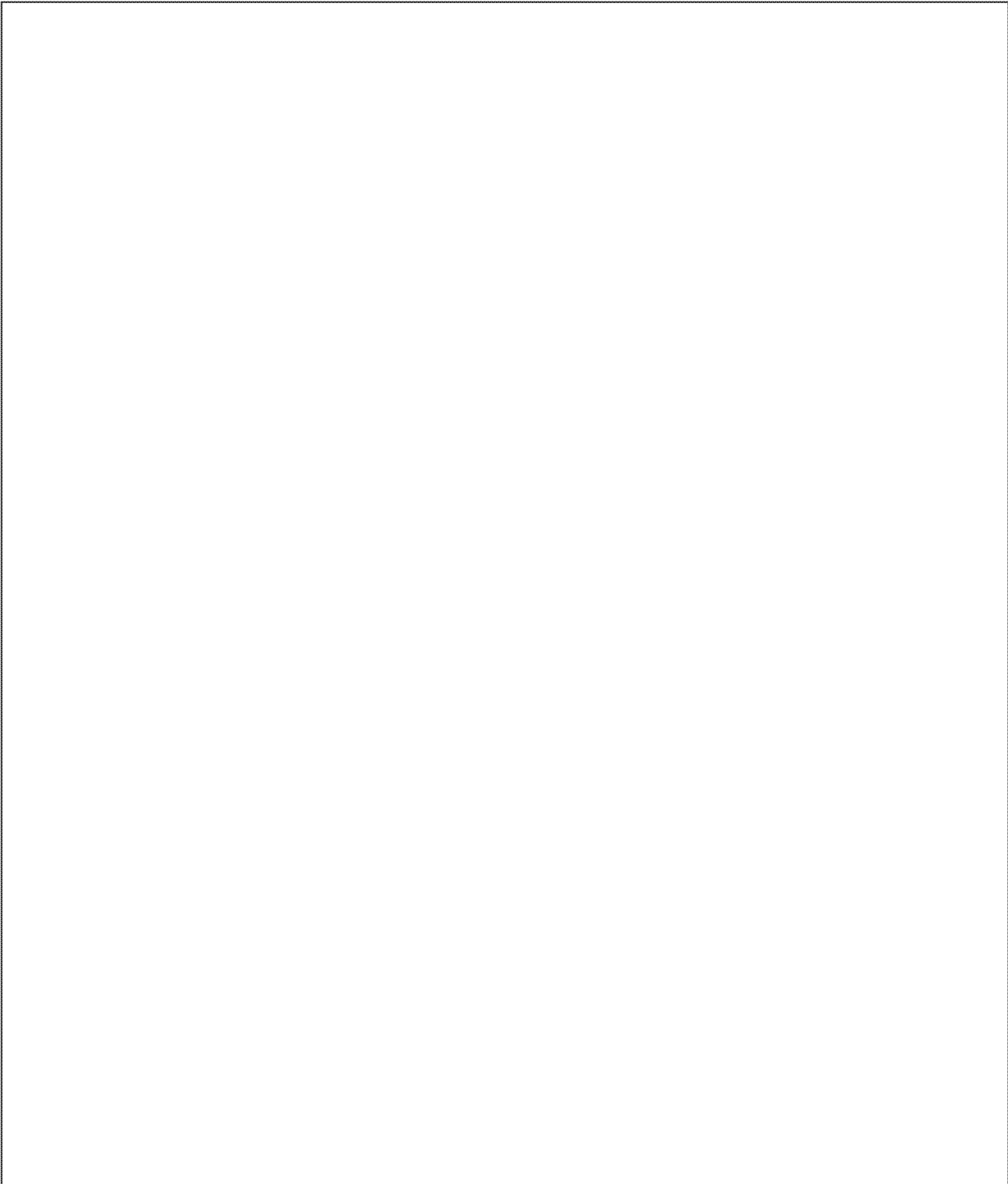
Activities of the Office of Security

The Office of Security provides guards and security personnel to protect the physical facilities of the Agency. It has responsibility for overall security measures for all CIA installations, both in the United States and in foreign countries.

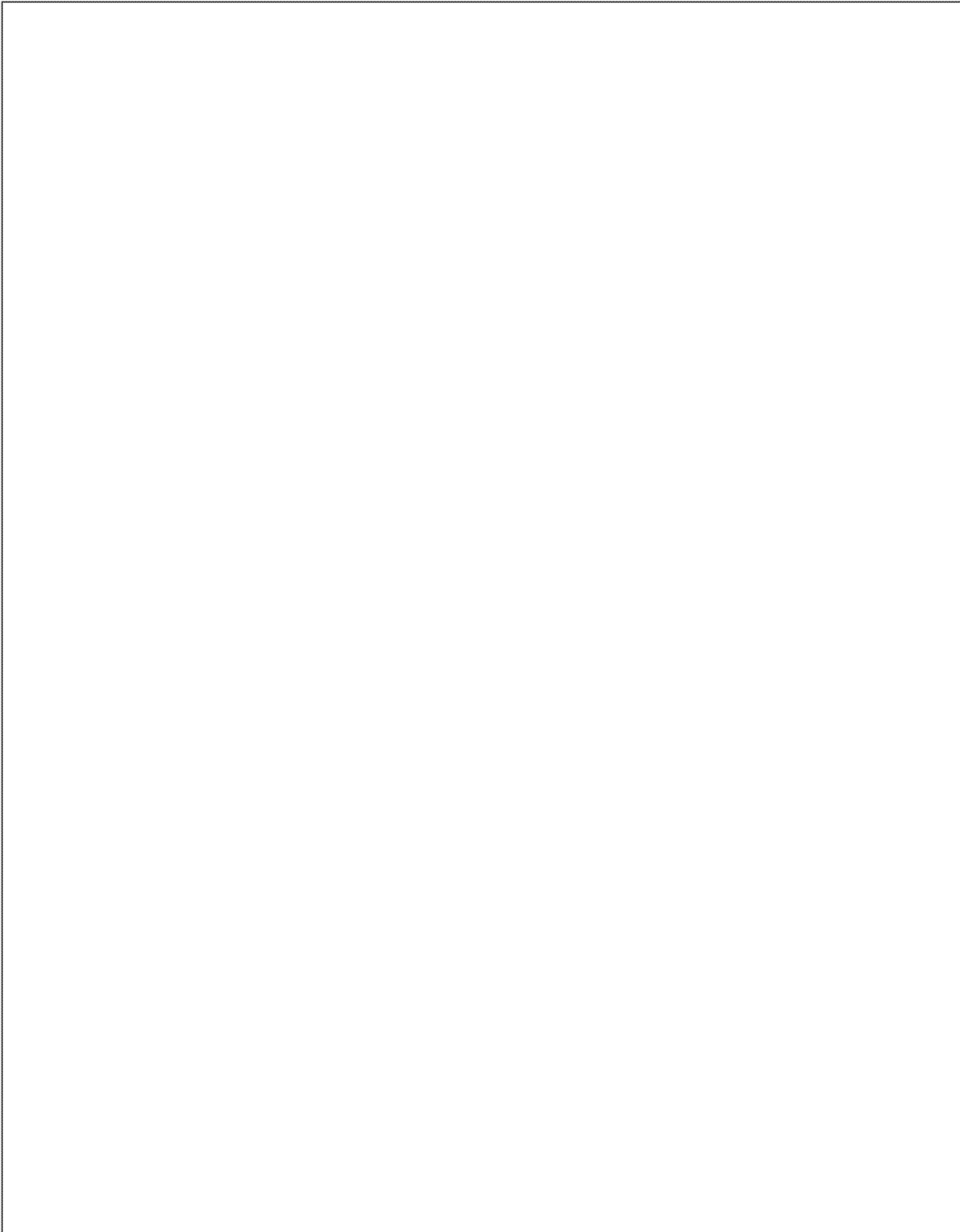




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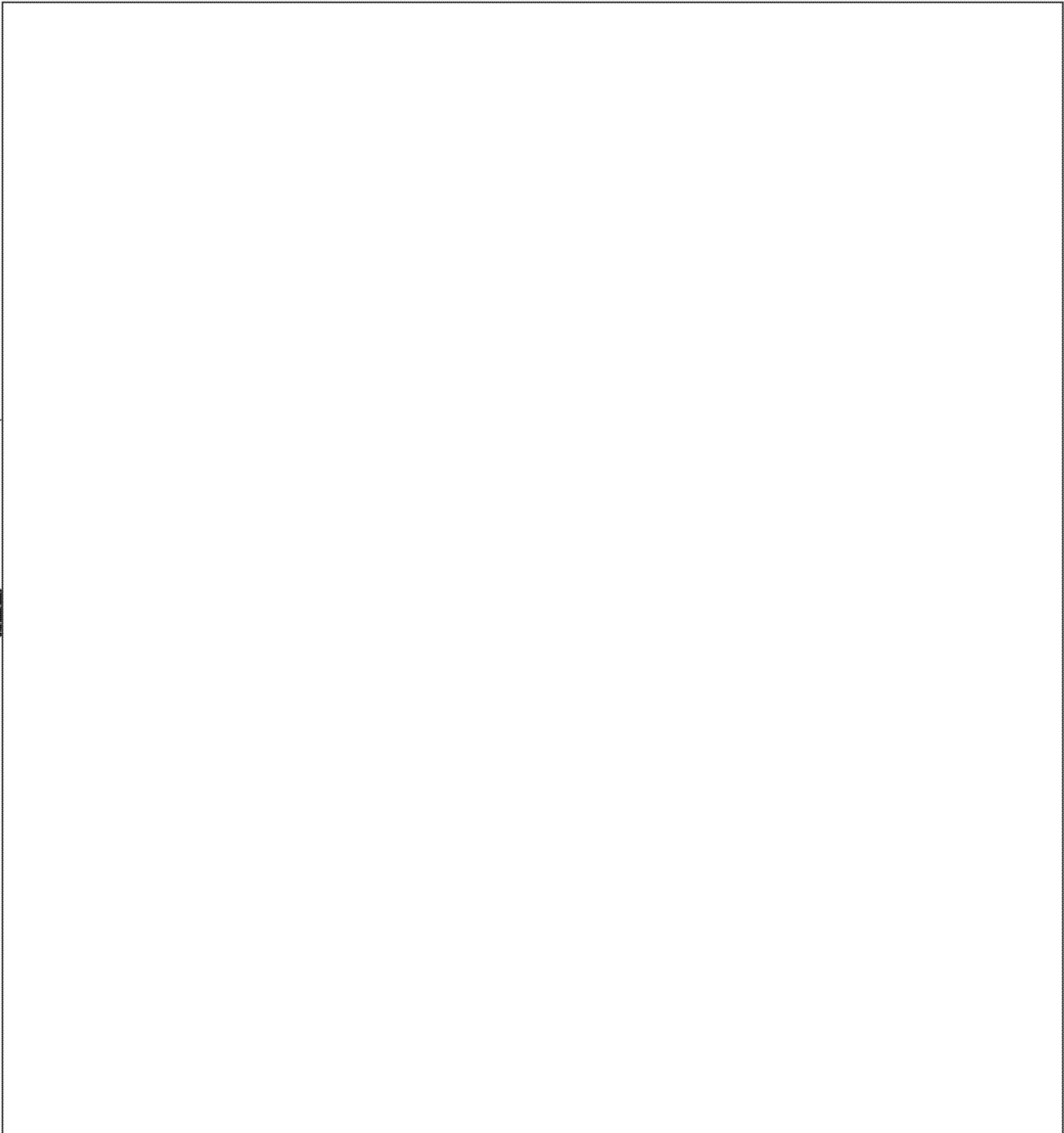


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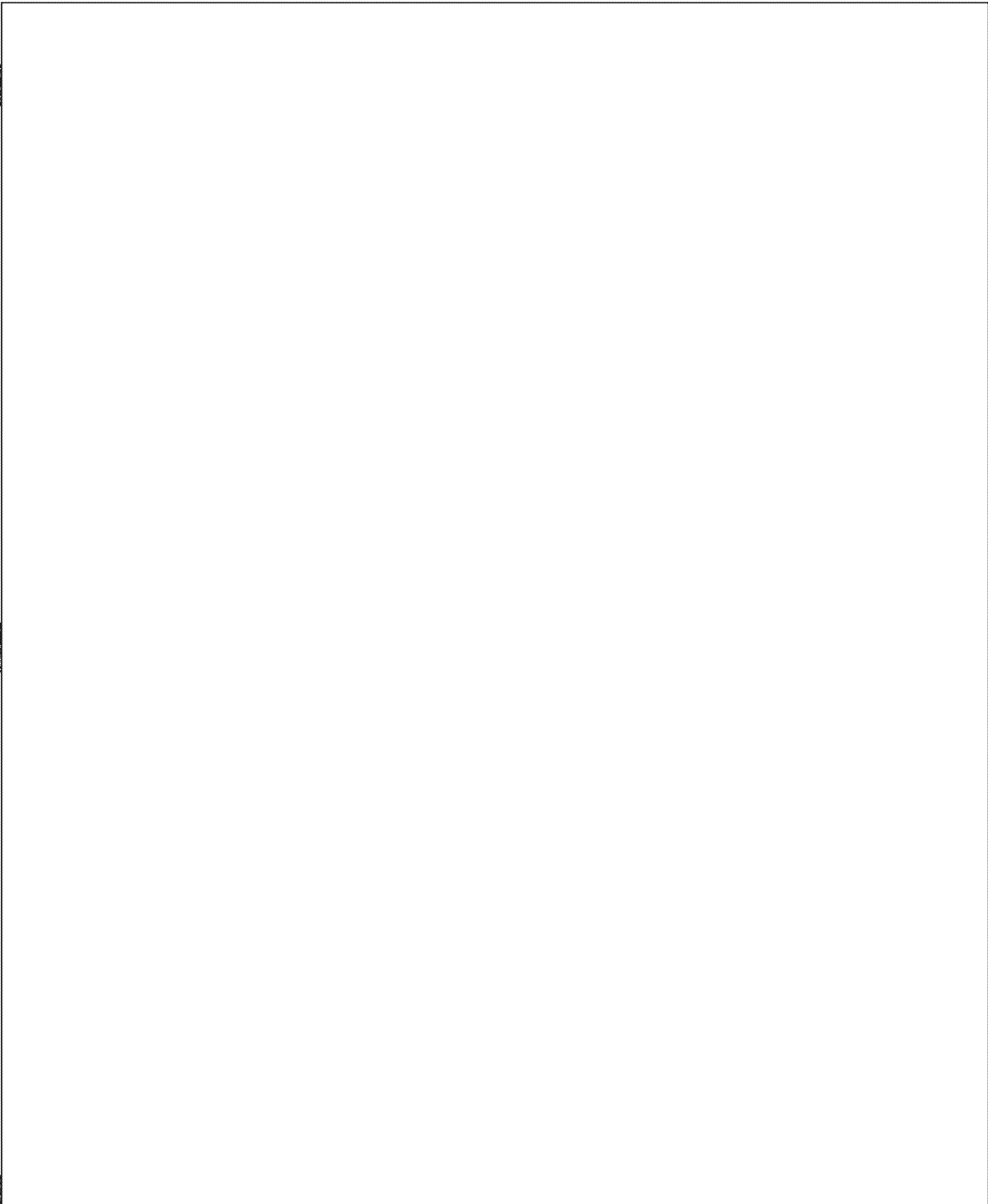


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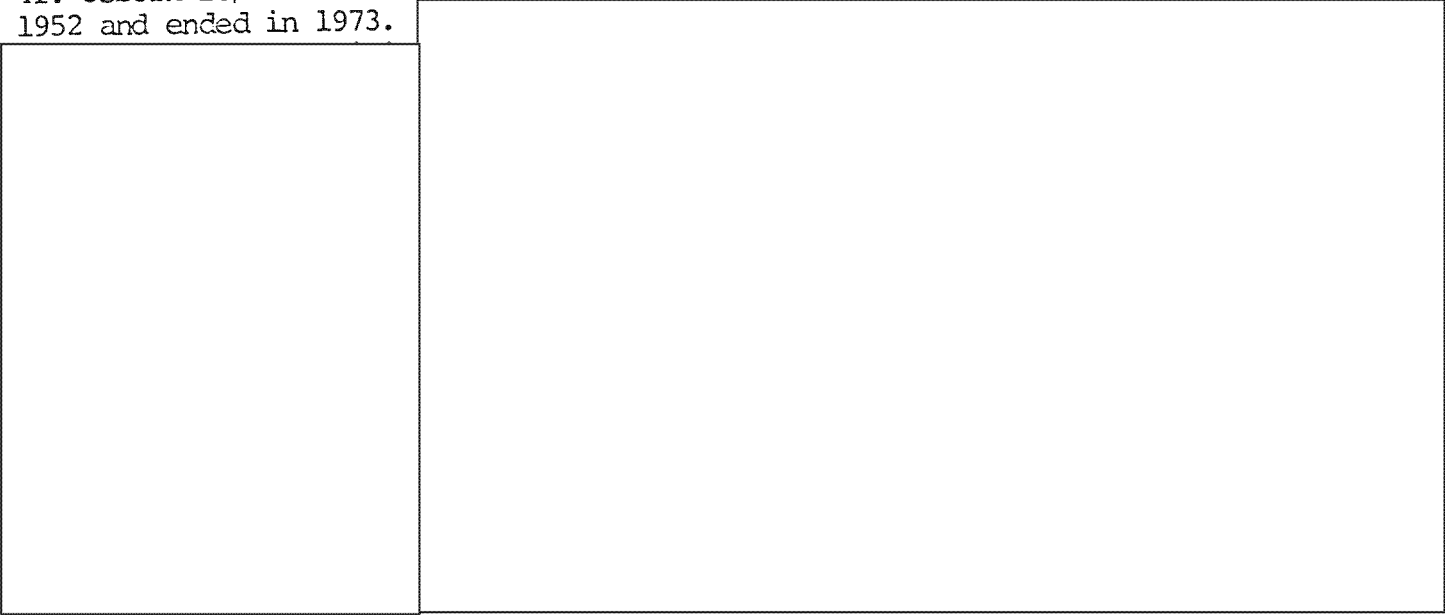
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Mail Intercepts

Mr. Osborn reports that a mail intercept program in New York City began in about 1952 and ended in 1973.



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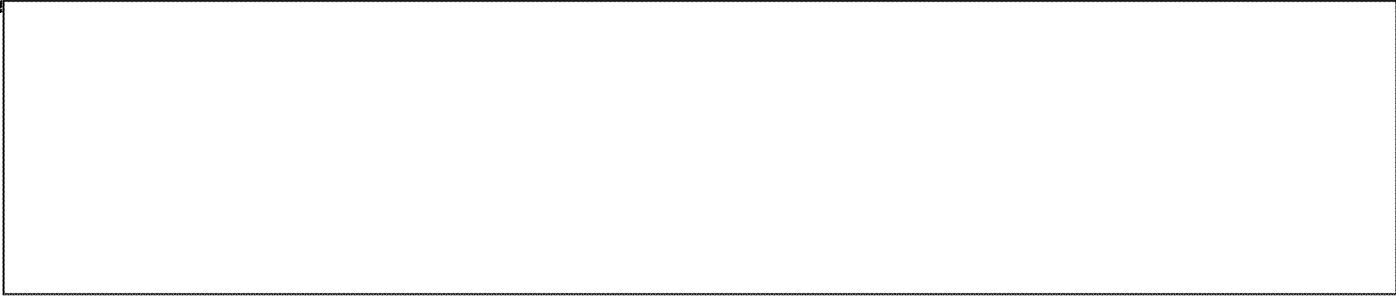
Mr. Osborn is also acquainted with the fact that from 1969 to 1971 the project of mail surveillance occurred from time to time in San Francisco. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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The Nosenko Affair

Nosenko was a KGB agent who defected to the United States in Switzerland in the early 1960's.



General

Mr. Osborn states categorically that the Office of Security has never to his knowledge:

- conducted any audio surveillance, telephone taps, physical surveillance or personal investigation of any member of Congress or public official;
- maintained any file for political or other improper purpose of any such congressmen or public official;
- pulled any file for examination for purpose of checking up on any such member of Congress or public official.

Mr. Osborn states that he does not recall any instance during his career with the CIA to which any particular activity of the Agency was examined in the specific light of Section 403 of the National Security Act of 1947; i.e., he does not recall any assessment of a proposed or ongoing activity from the standpoint of whether it was improper as a "police", "law enforcement", or "internal security" function.

Impression

Mr. Osborn impresses the interviewer as being honest, intelligent, and dedicated to the interests of the United States and its people. His memory appeared to be in error in some details, but considering the wide range of the interview and the time period involved, coupled with the wide breadth on responsibilities and the number of personnel under his supervision in the Office of Security, this is to be expected.

There is one area in which the interviewer was doubtful concerning the complete candor of Mr. Osborn. That was the area of his knowledge concerning the

[REDACTED]

Feb. 11, 1975
Ostern

STATEMENT

Mr. Vice-President, Governor Reagan, distinguished members of this Commission. I am here willingly at your invitation; I shall answer all of your questions fully and candidly.

My federal service has extended over a 32 year period, 27 of those years were spent with the Central Intelligence Agency. I am proud of my service with the C.I.A., and I am proud of the thousands of dedicated men and women with whom I worked in the C.I.A. I retired from the C.I.A. on December 31, 1974, after having been on sick leave from March 8, 1974, until the date of my retirement. My last ten years of active service with the C.I.A. were spent as the Director of Security. I was responsible to the Director C.I.A. and to other senior C.I.A. officials for personnel security and for the security and protection of classified information, data and installations, both in the United States and abroad. During my tenure as Director of Security, I served successively under Mr. John A. McCone, Admiral William Raborn, Mr. Richard Helms, Mr. James R. Schlesinger and Mr. William F. Colby.

I am aware of allegations given recent prominence by the news media that C.I.A. conducted improper activities in the United States. Since my departure from active status in March, 1974, I have had no access to Agency files or records with which to verify or refute such charges. I can assure the members of this Commission my full cooperation but it is possible that my recollection of dates and details may be imprecise or unclear without access to particular files and records of the C.I.A. To

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the best of my knowledge and belief, all of the actions and activities in which I participated, or which I directed are recorded and documented in C.I.A. files.

At all times, while serving as Director of Security I acted with the knowledge and approval and at the instruction of the Director of C.I.A., and in many, if not most instances, with the knowledge and approval of other senior Agency officials in the chain of command. I should like to emphasize that Security in the Agency is a service and support function and its activities are not self-generated. Among other services, the Office of Security provided guidance and assistance to employees with personal problems; it provided support to other Agency components upon authorized request and performed tasks and special inquiries assigned to it by the Director of C.I.A. The Director of C.I.A. was empowered and directed by the National Security Act of 1947 to "protect intelligence sources and methods". By virtue of and extension of that authority, those actions and activities within my purview were designed to prevent potential penetration of the Agency by hostile intelligence services, afford protection to the Agency's domestic installations and to determine the sources of unauthorized disclosure of classified and sensitive intelligence information to public media.

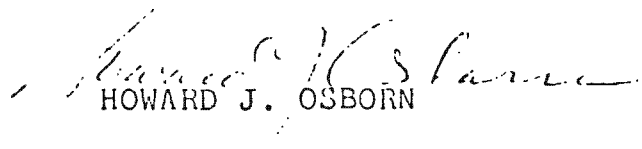
While I am not now privy to precise statistical data, I believe the United States Government Agencies involved in intelligence activities can document the fact that the number of hostile foreign intelligence representatives in our country has increased significantly in the last ten years. One of their prime targets is the United States Intelligence Community.

Any investigation and review of C.I.A., or any other element of that community should be made within that context.

After many years of service in the security field, I can fully understand the extreme sense of frustration among the United States Government officials regarding unauthorized disclosure of classified information. It is devastating to read the contents of a highly classified document disseminated in the intelligence community and then a day or two later, to read the same information ad literatum in the press. I believe most firmly in freedom of the press, but I believe also that there should be a sense of responsibility accompanying such freedom; that sense of responsibility seems often to be buried or absent in the publication of classified information which could endanger our national security.

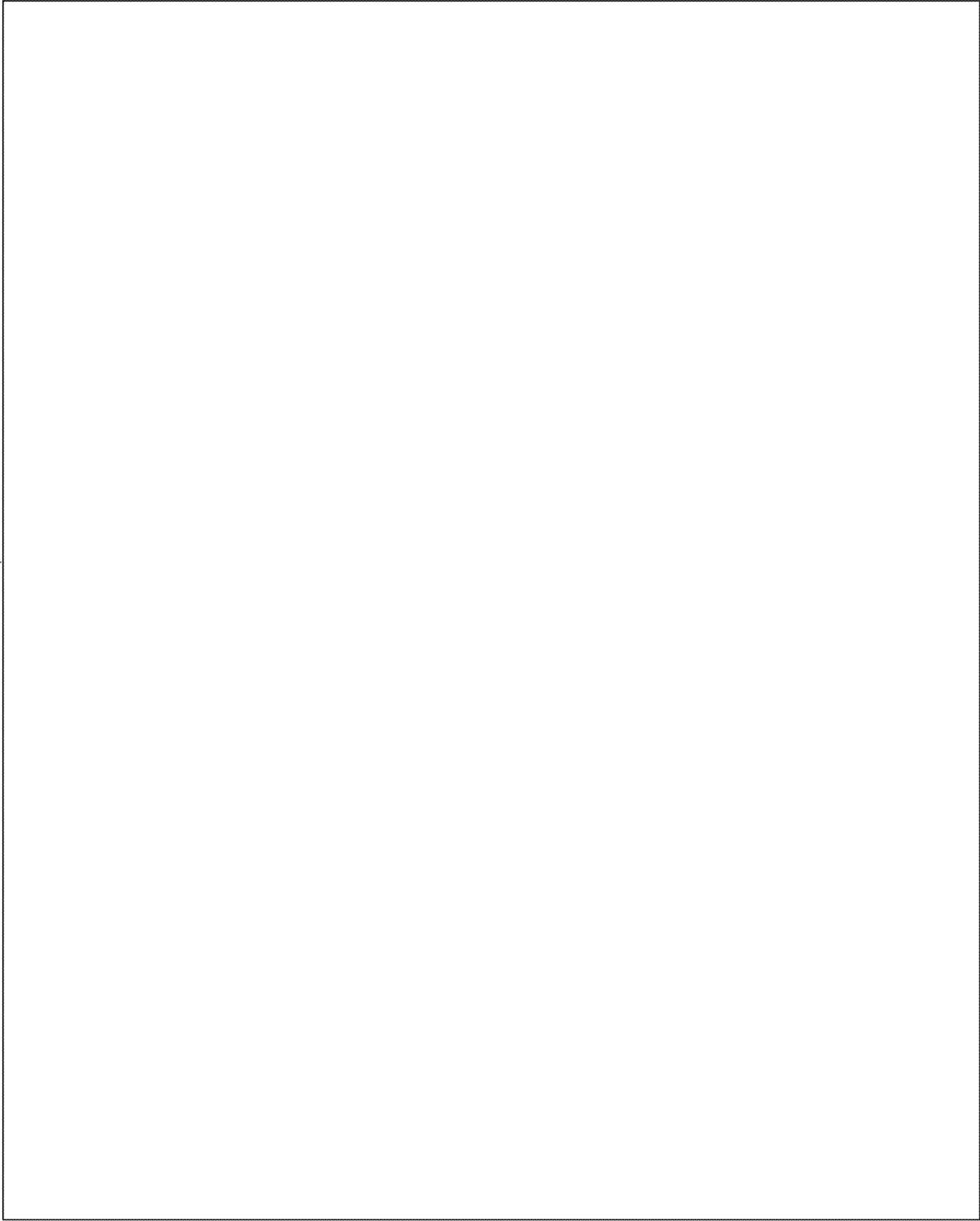
I welcome the opportunity to appear before this Commission and to assist it in acquiring facts relevant to its investigation. In the course of developing such facts, I am hopeful the Commission will look at the possible consequences of the Agency's failure to act even if the Commission should find fault with individual conclusions or judgments made by Agency officials.

I shall endeavor to answer all of your questions and I shall put aside my citizen's shield against self-incrimination. That decision is based on my desire to assist the Commission to the full extent of my ability and for the equally cogent reason that I do not believe that any action I performed was unlawful or in derogation of my duties to the United States Government.


HOWARD J. OSBORN

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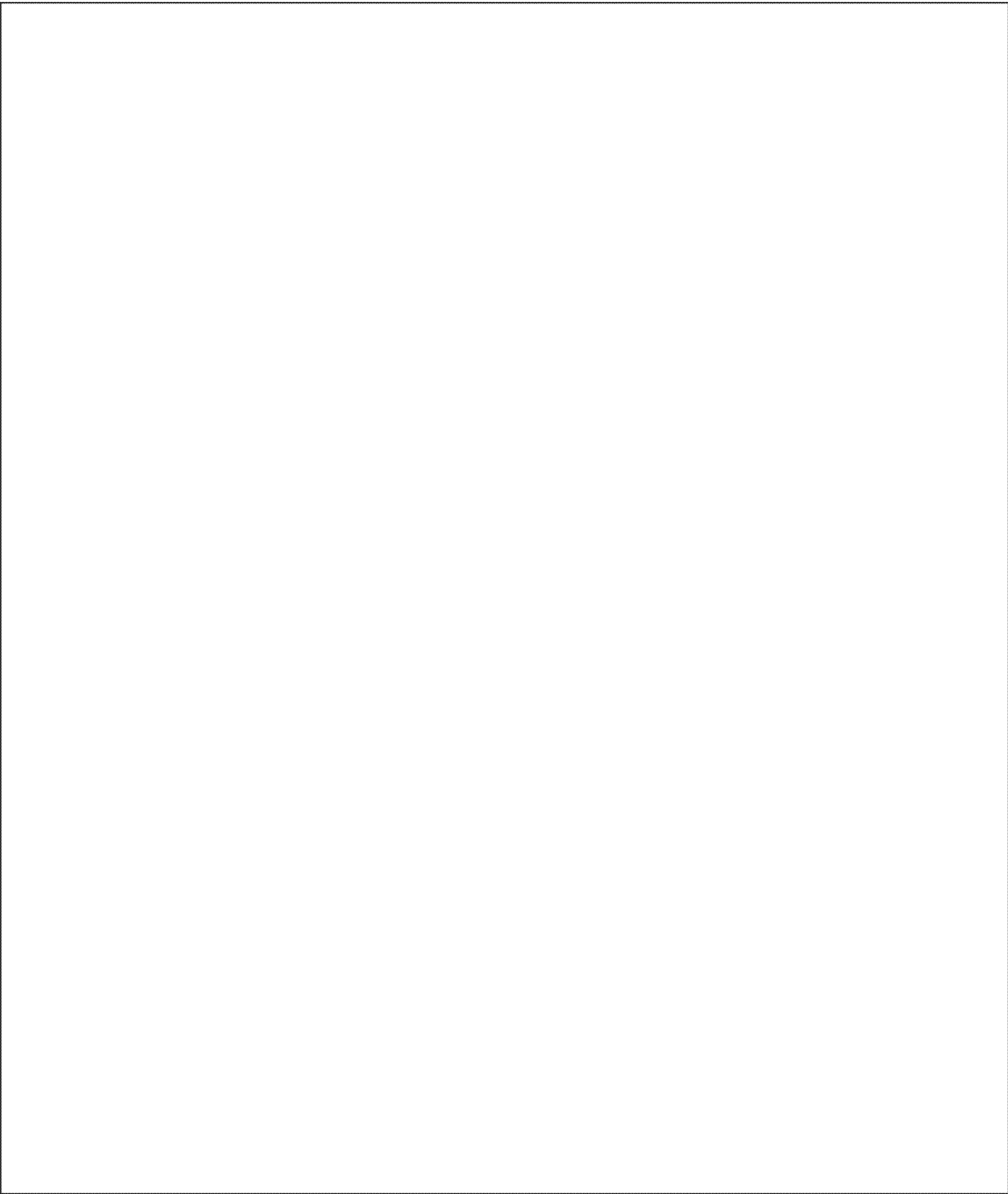
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