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FBI probed report Oswald 'definitely' was

By EARL GOLZ

Former FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover personally ordered his top aides to expedite an interview in May 1964 with a Dallas FBI agent who was reported to have said that accused assassin Lee Harvey Oswald was "definitely an FBI informant" and that files at the bureau in Washington "would prove this fact."

A Hoover assistant, C.D. DeLoach, at the informant report from Walter Jenkins, special assistant to President Lyndon Johnson, according to memos filed with FBI documents declassified last month.

Neither the Warren Commission nor J. Gordon Shanklin, special agent in charge of the Dallas FBI office in 1964, was told of the incident, which apparently was handled by Hoover's top aides.

The FBI has acknowledged its agents had contact with Oswald or his wife about four times before the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1963 but did not recruit him as an informant. The agency said it was interested in him because he had returned to this country in 1962 after defecting to Russia in 1959.

RESULTS OF the May 1964 interview with Will Hayden Griffin, the Dallas FBI agent referred to by Jenkins, were not released among the 40,000 pages of FBI documents made public last month.

An FBI spokesman told The News

"Will Griffin . . . knew the truth that Oswald was not an informant."

the statement as reported by Jenkins and said he is "convinced and always have been that he (Oswald) never was an informant for the FBI."

Griffin's name was blacked out in the two memos released last month but he confirmed he was the former New Orleans agent Jenkins referred to who was transferred to Dallas about 1960.

"He (Oswald) wasn't an informant because I knew the boys who worked with him and tried to work with him," Griffin said.

SHANKLIN SAID Griffin in 1963-64 was "handling applicant investigations" for clerical and other employment in the Dallas FBI office and was not involved in domestic intelligence work.

During the investigation after the

investigators and researchers for the House Assassinations Committee.

Griffin said he had never met Walter Jenkins but knew his brother, William R. Jenkins, who was an FBI agent in Amarillo in 1964.

Both Jenkins brothers told The News they could not remember the Griffin incident.

"I have no memory of any of that," Walter Jenkins said. "And if it was a serious matter that I really took seriously I would remember it, I think. It might have been some incidental thing that I really didn't believe and just passed it along."

ACCORDING TO A memo DeLoach wrote to another Hoover aide, Jenkins told DeLoach on April 29, 1964, that a friend whom Jenkins refused to identify had talked to the Dallas FBI agent who said he "assisted in the investigation of the Oswald case and that Oswald, prior to his murder, was definitely an FBI informant.

"The 'agent' stated that FBI files in Washington would prove this fact," DeLoach's memo said. "I told Jenkins that while I doubted very seriously that any of our agents had furnished this fact to his 'friend,' that at the same time we, of course, would make a check and find out if the description given this 'agent' fitted any of our people."

A second memo, dated May 4, 1964, was written by William A. Branigan, the FBI official in charge of the Oswald investigation, to William C. Sullivan,



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Hoover's initials were written at the end of the memo under the word "expedite" in his handwriting.

Two days after the May 4 memo one of Hoover's top aides, Alan Belmont, was scheduled to testify before the Warren Commission about the Oswald-informant question.

One of the commission questioning Belmont, Samuel A. told The News he was "absolutely told of the Jenkins report at t and had not learned of it afterw

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One of the commission lawyers questioning Belmont, Samuel A. Stern, told The News he was "absolutely not" told of the Jenkins report at the time and had not learned of it afterward.

EIGHT DAYS after Belmont testified, Hoover went before the Warren Commission and said he had "entire control of whether a man shall be an informant or shall not be an informant" of the FBI. He testified he "can most emphatically say that at no time was he (Oswald) ever an employee of

any of our agents" and that he had no affidavits stating whether they had any information he was ever an FBI informant.

Neither DeLoach, Branigan nor Clark could recall the DeLoach and Branigan memos about the Jenkins report when questioned by The News this week.

"Knowing Will Griffin, I doubt very seriously he ever made such a statement because he had better sense," DeLoach said. "And he also knew the truth that Oswald was not an informant."