

FBI files on JFK probe unveil a hostile Hoover

WASHINGTON (AP)—“It sounds like a lot of poppycock to me,” said J. Edgar Hoover.

That was the FBI director's judgment when the Warren Commission asked the bureau to determine the exact speed of the presidential motorcade at the moment John F. Kennedy was assassinated.

When commission counsel J. Lee Rankin complained that the FBI had omitted pertinent information in some of its reports, Hoover replied tartly:

“I want you to know that I feel our reporting procedures in this matter are completely logical and sound . . . This bureau from the beginning of this investigation has developed and reported all available and relevant facts and it will continue to do so.”

And when Deputy Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach asked about the progress of the FBI investigation, Hoover scribbled on an internal memo, “If they will

leave us alone we will meet our responsibilities.”

The documents show the FBI tried to limit the size of the commission's investigative staff and mounted a successful campaign to block appointment of Warren O'neary, a former Assistant Attorney General, as chief counsel to the commission.

A top aide to Hoover, Courtney Evans, drew up a memo that Abe Fortas, a Washington lawyer and confidant of Johnson, had urged the President not to create a special commission.

“Fortas' argument to Johnson was that for the President to announce the formation of such a commission would merely suggest that there was evidence of something other than Oswald alone killing Kennedy and thus building up public speculation,” Evans wrote to A.H. Belmont, a top FBI executive.

“Fortas' second argument to President Johnson was that the formation of such a

commission would cause a reflection on the FBI,” Evans said. “Fortas, of course, is no friend of the bureau and there would appear some obvious, underhanded motive in his using us in his argument, although we don't know what this is.”

When then-U. S. Ambassador to Mexico Thomas C. Mann tried to pursue a possible Cuban connection to the assassination, he was described in a memo by Hoover as “one of those pseudo-investigators, a Sherlock Holmes.”

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