

U.S. Probes Charge Of FBI Alert on JFK

By Barry Sussman

Washington Post Staff Writers

The Justice Department is investigating charges that the FBI was warned that an attempt would be made to assassinate President Kennedy in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963, according to an FBI spokesman.

The charges focus on a report first made in 1968 that a message warning of such an attempt was sent from FBI headquarters in Washington to Southern FBI field offices in the early morning hours of Nov. 17, 1963.

The source of the charges is William S. Walter, a 33-year-old bank official in Morgan City, La. Walter reportedly was a security clerk on the midnight to 8 a.m. shift in the FBI's New Orleans office at the time of the assassination and was in the office when the warning was teletyped in.

Harry Maynor, special agent in charge of the New Orleans office at that time, denied there was such a message of warning.

Walter, in a televised interview on CBS last night, was said to have been alone in the office when the message came in. He said he made a copy of the message, and quoted it as saying that "a militant revolutionary group may attempt" to assassinate the President during his visit to Dallas. Walter said that FBI offices in New

Orleans, Mobile and Dallas acknowledged receipt of the message.

Late last night he told The Post that at least six or seven people in the New Orleans FBI office had seen the message.

He said last night that the New Orleans FBI office must have acted on the information in the teletype. "You just don't ignore something like that. They would have sent some kind of communication back. I never did see it," he said.

FBI Director Clarence M. Kelley said yesterday that the charges had been looked into in 1968 and again during the past month but that no evidence has been developed, CBS reported. Kelley said 53 FBI agents had been interviewed, according to the network.

On Monday, a day before the CBS report, FBI press spokesman Tom Harrington told a Washington Post reporter that the assertion has been referred to the Justice Department to be investigated along with other matters concerning FBI actions in connection with incidents at the time of the Kennedy assassination.

The new investigation was sparked by the news a month ago that FBI officials had destroyed a letter sent to an FBI agent by Lee Harvey Oswald, the man the Warren Commission concluded acted alone in the slaying of Kennedy.

House and Senate panels also are looking into the FBI and Dallas.

One of the first to learn of Walter's charges apparently was Mark Lane, a long-standing critic of the Warren Commission. Lane told The Post last week that he had spoken to Walter in January, 1968, while Walter was a student at Tulane University in New Orleans. Lane quoted Walter as saying that upon receipt of the teletype from Washington, he called the special agent in charge of the New Orleans field office and that he was instructed to "call FBI agents in New Orleans who maintained contact with various informants."

Lane said he prepared an affidavit after his interview with Walter and gave a copy

to Jim Garrison, the New Orleans prosecutor who was then conducting his own investigation of the assassination. Lane also said that he wrote an article about the alleged warning but that it drew virtually no public attention at the time.

In addition, Lane said Walter told him of another FBI teletype, received after the assassination, directing "agents who had conducted interviews regarding the assassination of President Kennedy to examine those interview reports to make sure there were no conflicts contained within them," Lane said Walter told him.

According to Lane, Walter said that "agents were ordered to resolve the conflicts, prepare new reports and destroy the old ones."

Walter did not discuss such a second message in his CBS interview. Last night Walter told the Post that he felt that the knowledge of these teletype messages would not have furthered the investigation of the assassination but would hurt the FBI. He said it was understandable that the FBI has not found any such teletypes in its files. "The theme of the FBI is that you don't embarrass the bureau," he said.

On Monday, the special agent in charge of the New Orleans FBI office in 1963, Harry Maynor, denied that advance warning or instructions suggesting that records be destroyed had been received in his office.

Maynor, now the security chief for General Telephone & Electronics in New York City, said in a telephone interview that he had no "recollection along those lines, nothing similar to that happened . . . I can say it is incorrect."

Asked if he were denying the thrust of the report and the specifics as well, Maynor said, "That's right."

New Probe Into 'Lost Warning' on JFK

By BARRY SUSSMAN

Washington Post

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Washington to Southern FBI field offices in the early morning hours of Nov. 17, 1963.

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Probe Began Last Month

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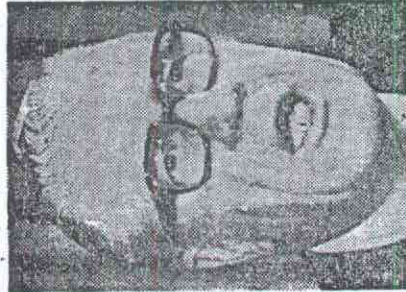
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CLARENCE M. KELLEY
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