

January 19, 1978

Files Reveal Ford As FBI Conduit On Probe Panel

By MIKE FERNLBER
UPI Staff Editor

WASHINGTON — Newly released internal FBI files undermine the public's assumption that the bureau and the Warren Commission worked in close cooperation to establish the whole truth behind the murder of John F. Kennedy.

Instead, the 58,000 pages of files which the FBI was forced to make public Wednesday tell of a jealous rivalry between the two over matters big and small and disclose that Gerald Ford, the House Republican leader at the time, volunteered his services as the FBI's informant on the Warren Commission's internal operations and disputes.

for the commission. Each accused the other of leaking material to the press. The commission suggested the slaying might not have occurred if the FBI had told the Secret Service all it knew about Lee Harvey Oswald.

Like the 40,000 pages released in December, the flood of new information added a wealth of details about the assassination and its investigation.

But nothing appeared to challenge the central finding of both the FBI and the Warren Commission: that Oswald, taking guidance from no one, killed Kennedy in Dallas on Nov. 27, 1963.

The files expose the personal scorn J. Edgar Hoover felt for Chief Justice Earl Warren and other critics, and his outrage at the commission's criticism of the bureau's operations.

Within days of the creation of the seven-man commission, Ford volunteered his services as the FBI's friend on the inside.

Ford went to Cartha DeLoach, assistant FBI director, and complained that "Warren was trying to run a 'one-man commission' by installing his own man as chief counsel."

Ford told of how he — acting as "a minority of one" — resisted Warren's effort to issue a speedy report affirming that no international conspiracy had existed to kill Kennedy. Hoover also fought pressure for such a preliminary report.

Ford indicated he would keep me thoroughly advised as to the activities of the commission." DeLoach said in a memo. "He stated this would have to be on a confidential basis."

"We have had excellent relations with Congressman Ford for many years. He has been given an autographed copy of the director's book, 'A Study of Communism,' and has been in touch with my office on numerous occasions in the past."

Hoover wrote in hand on the bottom of the memo: "Well handled."

The FBI refused to store evidence

FILES SHOW F.B.I. RIFT WITH WARREN PANEL

Newly Released Data on Inquiry Into President Kennedy Slaying Tell of Mistrust and Feuds

WASHINGTON, Jan. 18 (UPI)—Relations between the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Warren Commission were so bad that the bureau spied on the panel's investigation into the assassination of President Kennedy and the panel suspected the F.B.I. of concealing old links with Lee Harvey Oswald, newly released files disclosed today.

The feud, heightened by enmity between J. Edgar Hoover, F.B.I. Director and Chief Justice Earl Warren, led the bureau to rely on an informant, then Representative Gerald R. Ford, inside the panel and caused Mr. Hoover to complain that Chief Justice Warren had made a needless uncomplimentary remark about the bureau.

At another point, Mr. Hoover agreed to censor some material supplied by the Central Intelligence Agency about Oswald's movements in Mexico before giving it to the commission. Some members of the commission, in turn, questioned whether Oswald had been an informer for the bureau, although in the end they decided that he had not.

50,604 Pages Released

The hostility and discord underlying the inquiry into the Kennedy assassination came to light with the release of 50,604 pages of censored investigative files of the bureau and 8,150 pages of its memorandums to the Warren Commission.

Like the previous 40,000 pages released in December, the new ones corroborated the finding of the Warren panel that Oswald alone had killed President Kennedy and Jack Ruby alone had killed Oswald.

They showed that Mr. Hoover had recommended that finding to the commission about two weeks after the assassination of President Kennedy on Nov. 22, 1963, in Dallas. And, like the earlier files, they provide numerous details.

The new files show, for example, that Oswald's wife, Marina, locked him in the bathroom of their Dallas apartment in April 1963 when he began saying that he intended to kill Richard M. Nixon, whom he mistakenly thought to be in town that day. Mr. Hoover speculated that Mr. Nixon must have been confused with Vice President Johnson, who was in Dallas.

Numerous Leads Followed

The new materials also continue the account of the bureau's exhaustive pursuit of tips and leads, no matter how bizarre, from such informants as a mentally unstable woman in Cuba, a drunken Aztec Indian and a Bavarian cab driver.

They also show that Mr. Hoover and his men battled privately with anyone who challenged their competence or exclusive authority over the Kennedy investigation, calling Nicholas de B. Katzenbach, Deputy Attorney General, a liar, scoffing at investigations carried out by Texas officials and the New Orleans District Attorney, Jim Garrison, and battling with the Warren Commission over news leaks.

None of that, however, deterred the Warren panel from endorsing the finding of no conspiracy recommended to them by Mr. Hoover in his first report to the newly formed commission.

Dated Dec. 7, 1963, it said: "The F.B.I. has made an exhaustive investigation into whether Oswald may have conspired with or been assisted by any person, foreign or domestic, in carrying out this dastardly act.

"No evidence has been uncovered indicating that any person, including Dallas nightclub owner, Jack Ruby, was involved with Oswald in the assassination of President Kennedy."

Mr. Hoover recommended that early finding privately to the commission even though, just days earlier, he had quashed a Justice Department recommendation that the Government make a similar statement officially to head off public unrest.

Finding Reconfirmed

Then, five days before the Warren report was issued in September 1964, Mr. Hoover reconfirmed his finding and stated, in a note for his own files, "we have left no stone unturned."

The rivalry between the F.B.I. and the commission stemmed in part from the leak of Mr. Hoover's original report to the press, with each side accusing the other, and from the suspicion of members of the Warren Commission that Oswald had been acting as an F.B.I. spy while he was in the Soviet Union from 1959 to 1962.

The files show that the bureau had somehow obtained the transcript of a confidential emergency meeting the Warren panel held on Jan. 22, 1964, to discuss, in the words of an F.B.I. analyst, "information to the effect Lee Harvey Oswald was a bureau informant in Russia."

The discussion shows that members of the commission felt that the bureau would not admit that Oswald had been an undercover agent, the bureau's review said, thereby undermining the commission's confidence in the investigation by the bureau.

The bureau's memorandum said that Mr. Hoover eventually convinced the commission that Oswald had not been an informant or agent of the bureau and was never paid any money by the bureau.

Ford's Role Described

Mr. Ford's role as a trusted bureau informant within the panel was described in a series of memorandums filed by a deputy of Mr. Hoover, Cartha DeLoach, in December 1963, when the commission had just been formed.

On Dec. 12, Mr. DeLoach said that Mr. Ford then a Republican Representative from Michigan, had called him to his office in the strictest confidence; expressed displeasure at the way Chief Justice Warren was running the inquiry and indicated that "he would keep me thoroughly advised as to the activities of the commission, on a confidential basis.

One week later, on Dec. 19, Mr. DeLoach said that Mr. Ford had briefed him on a private commission meeting the day before at which the panel discussed the news leak of Mr. Hoover's confidential Dec. 7 progress report.

There was no criticism of the bureau at the meeting, Mr. DeLoach reported. There were no allegations made by anyone, including the Chief Justice, he went on, that the bureau had leaked portions of the report.

How FBI Spied on Warren

Washington

The FBI spied on and resented the Warren Commission's Kennedy assassination work, and the commission, in turn, suspected Lee Harvey Oswald had been an FBI agent, newly released files disclosed yesterday.

The nearly 60,000 pages of FBI assassination files show the bureau considered then-Representative Gerald Ford as its informant inside the Warren panel, and that J. Edgar Hoover kept a bitter feud going with Chief Justice Earl Warren on grounds his commission lacked confidence in the FBI.

Hoover was insulted and infuriated by an early Warren Commission belief — apparently cleared up quickly — that the FBI had sent Oswald to Russia as an agent in 1959; by its accusations the bureau was leaking information to the press; and by its conclusion the FBI should have told the Secret Service what it knew about Oswald before John F. Kennedy went to Dallas.

Calling the final Warren report "seriously inaccurate in so far as its treatment of the FBI is concerned," the director lamented in one staff memo:

"The bureau will never live this down and will (be) viewed as a second rate outfit henceforth."

"We could not arrest every crackpot without creating a police state," Hoover said in another defensive rebuttal of allegations his men were derelict in not protecting Kennedy from Oswald.

Described himself as "outraged" at the Warren Report's criticisms, on that score, Hoover took his gripe right to President Lyndon B. Johnson and noted in a file memo dated Oct. 20, 1964:

"The president stated that he was sympathetic with my views and that he intended at an early date to find the opportunity to publicly reaffirm his faith and confidence in the FBI and its director."

Railing at critics who ranged from Warren to Justice Department officials and such conspiracy theorists as comedian Dick Grego-



J. EDGAR HOOVER
'Outraged' at criticisms

ry, Hoover made plain he took great pride in the FBI's Kennedy probe and its fast conclusion — only days after the killing — that Oswald acted alone, without conspirators from Cuba or anywhere else.

"We have left no stone unturned in this particular phase of our investigation," he said, in a file note, concerning the bureau's findings that Oswald had no Cuban connection whatsoever.

At a point early in the assassination probe, when the nation was assuming the FBI and the commission were working hand in glove, Hoover refused the panel's request that it maintain the commission's evidentiary exhibits.

The hostility and discord underlying the Kennedy assassination probe came to light with the release of 50,604 pages of censored FBI investigative files and 8150 pages of its memos to the Warren Commission.

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EARL WARREN
Suspicious of FBI role

sion about two weeks after the Nov. 22, 1963, Kennedy murder in Dallas. And, like the earlier files, they illuminate the nation's greatest murder probe with rich tidbits of detail.

The new files recall, for example, that Oswald's wife, Marina, locked him in the bathroom of their Dallas apartment in April of 1963 when he began ranting about his intention to kill Richard Nixon, whom he mistakenly thought to be in town that day. Hoover speculated the Oswalds must have mixed Nixon up with Vice President Lyndon Johnson, who was in Dallas.

Washington

Interrogation of Lee Harvey Oswald ended just 11 minutes before he was shot to death, and the postal inspector who conducted the probe concluded Oswald never would have confessed to killing John Kennedy, records showed yesterday.

"Oswald at no time appeared confused or in doubt as to whether

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San Francisco Chronicle 9

★ Thurs., Jan. 19, 1978

Warren Commission

How Hoover Found Sartre

Washington

J. Edgar Hoover typically began an FBI inquiry in June, 1964, when he read a newspaper report that the famous French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre had joined the "Who Killed Kennedy Committee."

The clipping identified Sartre only as an author.

Hoover promptly scribbled a memo:

"Find out who Sartre is."

New York Times

ties of the commission on a confidential basis."

One week later, on December 19, DeLoach said Ford briefed him on a private commission meeting the day before at which the panel discussed the news leak of Hoover's confidential December 7 progress report.

Other documents show Hoover successfully blocked Warren's first choice for commission chief counsel.

The Warren panel, in turn, challenged the FBI's performance on some occasions including the leaking allegations and the Oswald suspicions.

United Press



WARREN
of FBI role

After the Nov. 22 murder in Dallas. Earlier files, they contain the nation's greatest rich tidbits of

Recall, for example, the wife, Marina, in the bedroom of their home in April of 1963. In talking about his assassination, Richard Nixon, who thought to be a Hoover speculator, must have mixed up Vice President Hubert H. H. who was in Dal-

The new materials also continue the saga of the FBI's exhaustive pursuit of tips and leads, no matter how bizarre, from such informants as a mentally unstable "mystery woman" in Cuba, a drunken Aztec Indian and a Bavarian cab driver.

More ominously, however, they show Hoover and his men warred privately with anyone who challenged their competence or exclusive authority over the Kennedy probe, calling Deputy Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach a liar, scoffing at investigations carried out by Texas officials and New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison and battling with the Warren Commission over news leaks.

None of that, however, deterred the Warren panel from endorsing the no-conspiracy finding recommended to them by Hoover in his first report to the newly formed commission.

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The FBI-commission rivalry stemmed in part from the leak of Hoover's original report to the press, with each side accusing the

other, and from the suspicion of Warren Commission members that Oswald had been acting as an FBI spy during his sojourn in the Soviet Union from 1959 to 1962.

The files show the FBI somehow obtained the transcript of a confidential "emergency meeting" the Warren panel held on Jan. 11, 1964, to discuss, in the words of an FBI analyst, "information to the effect Lee Harvey Oswald was a bureau informant" in Russia.

"The discussion shows that members of the commission felt the bureau would not admit that Oswald had been an undercover agent," the FBI review said — thereby undermining the commission's confidence in the bureau's investigation.

The FBI memo said Hoover eventually convinced the commission "Oswald was not an informant or agent of the FBI ... and was never paid any amount of money by the FBI in any regard."

Ford's role as a trusted bureau informant within the panel was described in a series of memos filed by Hoover deputy Cartha DeLoach in December 1963, when the commission had just been formed.

On December 12, DeLoach said Ford, then a Republican congressman from Michigan, had called him to his office "in the strictest confidence," expressed displeasure at the way Warren was running things and "indicated he would keep me thoroughly advised as to the activi-

Oswald Hung Tough in Questioning

of Lee Harvey Oswald at 11 minutes to death, and who conducted the killing. Records showed

time appeared as to whether

or nor he should answer a question," postal inspector H.D. Holmes said in a report dated Dec. 17, 1963.

"On the contrary, he was quite alert and showed no hesitancy in answering those questions which he wanted to answer, and was quite skillful in parrying those questions which he did not want to answer.

"I got the impression that he had disciplined his mind and reflex-

es to a state where I personally doubted that he would ever have confessed."

Holmes was assisted in the interrogation by Dallas police captain Will Fritz with FBI and secret service agents present.

Questioning began about 9:25 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 24, 1963, and ended at 11:10 a.m., the report said. Oswald was shot by Jack Ruby at

11:21 a.m. as he was being transferred from Fritz' office in police headquarters to the county jail.

During the questioning, Holmes said, Oswald emphatically denied having any knowledge of the Kennedy shooting, and said he was taken into custody just because he had "popped a policeman in the nose in a theater on Jefferson Avenue" during his capture.

United Press