UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : FILE (100-10461) DATE: 2/28/64

FROM : SAC, SHANKLIN

SUBJECT: LEE HARVEY OSWALD, aka
IS - R - CUBA

At 2:15 PM today, Mr. ROSEN, Assistant Director, called and stated that they want Attorney MELVIN BELLI interviewed tonight if at all possible. Mr. ROSEN advised as follows:

On 2/25/64, Mr. DICK BERLIN and KINGSBURY SMITH, General Manager and Editor respectively, Hurst Publications, advised the Bureau that an unnamed Hurst reporter, described by BERLIN as very reliable, had been told by MELVIN BELLI, Attorney for JACK RUBY, that OSWALD was an FBI informant. BELLI also told this reporter that although he would not care to comment so much regarding RUBY's connection with the FBI, he knew from reliable sources that RUBY had been an informant for eight weeks, and OSWALD an informant of the FBI for thirteen weeks. BELLI also told this reporter that RUBY informed on gamblers and people of low character, and that OSWALD was a security type informant. SMITH advised that this Hurst reporter has a tape recording of BELLI making these allegations.

Mr. ROSEN instructed that I should immediately arrange to personally interview BELLI concerning these allegations. When he is interviewed, he should be advised that we want to get all the facts the first time in this matter, and tell him to either put up or shut up. Sutel results immediately. If anything unusual comes up, give Mr. ROSEN or Mr. SULLIVAN a call on this.

Mr. ROSEN suggested that in contacting BELLI, we ought not to say "put up or shut up", but to ask him for the facts upon which he bases his conclusion; that we won't get anywhere with BELLI by trying to scare him. The Bureau wants to get the facts, and we would like to put him up or keep him quiet, but that doesn't mean we should approach him on that basis.

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We should not attempt to contact BELLI while he is in court or in connection with the presentation of the case, and therefore what we should do is when he is away from there, so there will be no connection between the two, contact him on the side and tell him this information has come to us. We want to approach him directly on it. Don't disclose the source. Merely state information has come to our attention that he has said so and so, and we have been reliably informed.

As far as RUBY is concerned, we don't have to tell him that RUBY has never been an informant of FBI. Find out what he knows. Find out what he knows about OSWALD. That is the strongest case first. After you make a flat denial, he may say on the RUBY case, this man has told him you have been in touch with him, and we can say, "Yes, we have", but we can tell him he has never been an informant. The question is going to be how to talk to him.

It was agreed that I should not go to BELLI's hotel room and that he should not be invited to the Dallas office, but that I should try to arrange a meeting elsewhere with BELLI on neutral territory. Mr. ROSEN suggested that I get word to BELLI through an Agent that Mr. SHANKLIN would like to talk to him on a matter of interest to him, if he could at his convenience and he would like to do this aside from the FBI and aside from interference with the proceedings which are presently going on.

I advised that I would send someone over to try to set up a meeting tonight if convenient to BELLI and if at all possible, and if not, sometime tomorrow.

Handled 2/28/64