

Dallas DA 'at arm's length'

is get in an argument with a

— Dist. Atty. Henry Wade

probably them trying to discredit somebody," but he added that "the last thing I want to do is get in an argument with a dead J. Edgar Hoover."

The files of the Warren Commission, which in the past few years have been declassified from the National Archives, verify that Wade's funds for informants were strictly monitored as Hoover claimed, which perhaps was one factor on the commission's determination that Oswald had no accomplices in the assassination in the fall of 1963.

Apparently shortly after Hoover learned of the remarks Wade was reported to have made, the word went out from headquarters that the district attorney was questioning the bureau's position on Oswald and that contacts with him were to be correct but severely limited.

Rankin orders for the Dallas file

peared highly concerned about how the conduct of the district attorney's office would affect the credibility of the FBI's emerging conclusion that Oswald and Ruby were not involved in a conspiracy and did not know each other. The major problem was how to appear cooperative without giving the local officials ammunition to create what the FBI felt was an inflammatory situation.

"Asst. Dist. Atty. William Alexander has stated that the state presentation would 'make no effort to correct the impressions' a jury may receive that Oswald and Ruby were part of a Communist conspiracy," a memo dated Jan. 9, 1964 from top FBI official Alex Rosen

said. "He inferred that he felt a jury would be most likely to convict and give Ruby a substantial sentence with the belief there was an Oswald-Ruby connection."

But in a handwritten message at the bottom of the memo Hoover personally authorized limited cooperation rather than leaving it up to the Warren Commission for fear the bureau would be blamed for withholding information and evidence.

"I see in this endless delays upon the part of Rankin in reaching a decision," Hoover observed. "The Texas authorities will blame the FBI for hedging — not Rankin."

Wade's remarks about Oswald enraged Hoover

By BOB DUDNEY 12/10/77

Times Herald Washington Bureau
WASHINGTON — Statements made by Henry Wade about Lee Harvey Oswald so infuriated J. Edgar Hoover that a background check into the district attorney's FBI years was ordered and Dallas agents were told to keep him "at arm's length."

The late FBI director also told J. Lee Rankin, chief counsel to the Warren Commission, that Wade "grossly distorted" the possibility that the assassin of President Kennedy might be an informant unknown even to FBI headquarters, and that his testimony "would not hold water," according to newly released FBI files.

Hoover disputed Wade's assertion, as recounted in a private meeting with Rankin, that as an FBI agent stationed in South America during World War II the bureau kept no records of funds given to informants. The implication,

ing any trace.

The Wade testimony apparently fueled the suspicion — which lingers to this day among those with well-honed senses of conspiracy — of Oswald's government connections that Hoover was trying desperately to dispel. The result was a deep chill between the FBI and the prosecutor's office which has never been publicly detailed.

"I told Mr. Rankin that I most certainly could say that at least for the last 20 years I know Mr. Wade's statements would not hold water," Hoover wrote in a memorandum of his conversation with the chief counsel. "Every cent is strictly accounted for and the identity of every informant is known."

After the meeting with Rankin, Hoover apparently moved immediately to get a full briefing of Wade's career as an FBI agent in 1941-42 because in the Jan. 31, 1964, memo to top FBI officials he observed that he had found fault

Hoover ordered FBI to keep

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"He (Rankin) stated Wade advised the commission that he had left the bureau with a good record and that, in fact, the bureau had endeavored to dissuade him from leaving," Hoover wrote. "The summary on Wade ... does not substantiate this last statement."

The memorandum then stated that after Wade left to enter the service "he sought reinstatement, stating he had made a mistake in resigning," but that an FBI request that his draft deferment be terminated had already gone through.

In an interview Friday, Wade said he was at a loss to understand the statement. "I know they would have taken me back, as far as I can tell," Wade said. "On the day I was sworn into the Navy I got a telegram from the FBI saying permission to enter the service was denied because they wanted me in the FBI."

Hoover also voluntarily sent a statement affirming his admirable public service in the FBI during one of his political campaigns in later years, Wade added.

"In addition to the matter of Wade's leaving, the FBI memorandum also sheds light on the subsequent Warren Commission inclusion of Wade's informant payroll records in its mass of documents, an incident that appeared to make little sense at the time.

"I would like now to have a further analysis of exactly how Wade operated and how monies were paid to him as well as a listing of the funds supplied him and what disposition he made of them," Hoover instructed.

"Wade has certainly grossly misinterpreted to the (Warren Commission) the manner in which the bureau operates its informants and it is the desire of the commission and most certainly that of

*'The last thing I want to do
dead J. Edgar Hoover'*

myself to have this clarified and the record set straight."

Wade speculated the whole matter had resulted from garbled communication between Hoover and Rankin since he recalled nothing of the statements concerning FBI methods in paying informants and never felt Oswald worked for any government agency.

"I think Mr. Hoover's right about that," Wade said. "There must have been a misunderstanding because they didn't just send us money to buy information any way we liked. We had to account for it, no question about that."

Wade surmised that the bureau research on his FBI background "was

Shivering

