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Memos on Hoover's Concern With Press

Washington

FBI documents released yesterday show that the late FBI director, J. Edgar Hoover, was extremely concerned about news coverage of the investigation of the Kennedy assassination.

Hoover's concern was reflected in efforts to sway editorial opinion and efforts to find unnamed sources in news stories.

The FBI documents, which relate to the bureau's investigation of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, revealed that Hoover made an effort to persuade the Washington Post not to run an editorial and that the FBI thought its "many friends" in the news media could be used to put the agency in the best light or to attack its enemies.

Many contacts between journalists and the FBI are detailed in the 40,001 pages of documents, from newsmen providing tips to the FBI to the FBI probing for a journalist's sources.

"I thought no one knew this outside of FBI," Hoover wrote on a copy of one news story dated Dec. 3, 1963. "Certainly someone is doing too much talking."

Hoover said in a memo three days after the assassination that President Lyndon B. Johnson was upset by a possible Washington Post editorial calling for a presidential commission to investigate the Kennedy assassination.

"He asked if I could dissuade the Post from carrying the editorial and I told him, frankly, that I seldom read the paper, but would get word as to what is being done," the Hoover memo said.

But in another memo, written later the same day, Hoover said a conversation revealed that Russell Wiggins, editor of the Post, had refused to make a commitment that the newspaper would not run such an editorial.

The next day, the Post ran an editorial calling for a full federal inquiry into the assassination, but did not specifically mention a presidential commission.

In another memo, FBI official C. D. DeLoach suggested that a response could be made to an unfavorable column by the late Drew Pearson, which suggested the FBI should have kept tabs on Oswald during Kennedy's visit.

"Many of our news media friends have called me and the men in this office today concerning Pearson's unjust and unfounded remarks. These men offered to literally 'take Pearson apart' if we will just give them the go-ahead. They have volunteered to start an effective campaign against Pearson for his attack on the FBI," the memo said.

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JFK Death Probe

What Next Batch of FBI Papers Will Tell

Washington

The FBI still pursues "tips" on who killed President Kennedy and the second stack of assassination files, due out next month, will reflect that sort of endless, leftover gumshoe work, a bureau spokesman said yesterday.

Continued scrutiny of the first 40,000 pages of the FBI's Kennedy murder files, released Wednesday, divulged more intriguing but inconclusive tidbits of insight into the 1963 Dallas slayings.

Investigative memos show that the CIA assured the FBI Oswald was never "an informant in their organization," for example, and indicated that Warren Commission members were satisfied Lee Harvey Oswald could have fired the fatal shots from his sixth-floor window perch once they inspected the scene of the crime.

The files also depicted Oswald as a hostile, hermit-like Marine who read Communist literature behind locked doors in his barracks room, and Jack Ruby, his killer, as a tough Chicago street kid who might have run errands for Al Capone.

But nothing emerged to undermine the Warren Commission's finding that Oswald alone killed Kennedy for motives still unknown, and an FBI spokesman who has helped prepare the files for public release said the 40,000 pages due for release in January won't change that picture.

"I really don't think there are going to be any major new revelations from this new material any more than there were in the material just released," he said. "But, if this is your field, you'll find it interesting."

"Of course, the (conspiracy buff) people who make a business of this will dispute that. I understand some of them are already saying the true stuff is what was never written down."

"Well, there's not much you can do about that."

The initial files have already covered the most active, intensive period of the bureau's investigation. They run through September, 1964, when the presidential commission headed by Chief Justice Earl Warren concluded its probe and issued its findings.

The next 40,000 pages of assassination papers will bring the investigation up to date — apparently with activities increasingly devoted to checking out wild goose chase tips.

"If somebody jumped up out of a rose bush last month — or let's say last year, since these things are becoming more infrequent — and said he knows who did it, we check that out and that will be included in the material," the spokesman said.

"I'd say it will predominate to ..."

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