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Jack Ruby gunned down Lee Harvey Oswald, the accused assassin of President Kennedy on Nov. 24, 1963, amid a Dallas police escort.

FBI Papers Detail Hunt For Ruby-Oswald Link

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By John Diamond
Associated Press

The FBI questioned nearly 1,000 people in the weeks following the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy but found no link between Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby, the man who murdered Oswald.

FBI documents released yesterday by the National Archives indicate that the possibility of a conspiracy, in which Ruby was sent to kill the accused assassin, was exhaustively explored. The archives released 28 boxes of FBI papers as part of the government effort to open the books on the Kennedy assassination.

The documents include a 1923 evaluation of "Jacob Rubenstein"—as Ruby was known in his youth—describing him as "disobedient and quick-tempered"; Ruby's polygraph chart, indicating he probably was telling the truth when he denied a conspiracy; and photos of striptease acts at Ruby's Dallas nightclub.

More than any other single event, the shooting of Oswald by Ruby in the basement of the Dallas jail on Nov. 24, 1963, two days after the Kennedy assassination, triggered public suspicion of a conspiracy.

Much of the material made available to reporters, researchers and assassination buffs already has been open to the public through the FBI reading room. But portions of some documents previously blacked out or omitted from the public record were included in yesterday's archives release.

After the Oswald slaying, the FBI put together 150 pages of notes on interviews with the Dallas police officers who witnessed the shooting.

FBI records illustrate the bureau's ability to invade the most private corners of a person's life, including correspondence between a defendant and his lawyer. A month after Ruby was convicted, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover informed the Warren Commission that "a confidential source" provided the bureau with copies of letters from defense attorney Joe H. Tonahill to Ruby describing a strategy for appeal.

The FBI tried to learn if Ruby had any ties to organized crime. But most of the documents indicate it concluded Ruby was a small-time operator who was "never able to cultivate" the friendship of key people in organized crime or law enforcement.