

Memos Show How the FBI Tried to Smear an Ex-Agent

Washington

Newly released memos show that J. Edgar Hoover's FBI tried to discredit an ex-agent, who had written critically of the bureau, by slipping material to a TV talk-show and looking into the possibility of printing 1000 copies of a bad review of the man's book.

FBI files on the campaign to counter critical writings by William Turner of San Francisco show that the bureau's Los Angeles office provided background material to talk-show host Joe Pyne before the former agent appeared on television in 1968.

A bureau informant said he felt that Pyne used the FBI material to "pretty well discredit Turner."

Files on the FBI's Turner campaign were released under the Freedom of Information Act. American Citizens for Honesty in Government, a group backed by the Church of Scientology, gave the documents to UPI last week.

In 1970, the bureau cheered a Washington Star review that panned Turner's new book, "Hoover's FBI: The Men and the Myth." The bureau urged "that" 1000

copies of the book review be prepared in reprint form."

There was no indication in the FBI memos whether the bureau ever got around to reprinting the review and, if so, what was done with the copies.

Turner, telephoned yesterday at his San Francisco home, called the campaign "a waste of taxpayers' money... a squandering of investigative time."

"What it boils down to is, they couldn't stand criticism," the 52-year-old former agent said. "They couldn't stand having their act exposed."

Turner, among the first of a series of ex-agents to write books about the bureau, sued the FBI last year, accusing it and top officials of harassment and of violating of his constitutional rights.

All FBI agents sign a pre-employment agreement not to divulge information obtained as a result of their work with the bureau, but no ex-agent has been prosecuted for a violation.

The FBI said Turner, an agent for 10½ years, was dismissed in

1961 for "lack of truthfulness, accuracy and responsibility required of an FBI agent, and for showing of poor attitude towards the FBI and Director Hoover."

But Turner said he was fired because he asked Congress to investigate the FBI. "They said I was a disruptive influence," he said. "If you write letters to Congress, I guess you are."

An FBI memo of Mar. 16, 1965, said the bureau had learned that Turner was trying to sell an article to Playboy Magazine. Two days later, a second memo said Playboy "will have nothing to do with the Turner article."

A memo of August, 1965, said that Richard Auerbach, president of the Ex-Agents Association in Seattle, phoned Turner and told him that his writings were hurting retired FBI men who relied on the bureau's image to get good jobs.

John Mohr, then the FBI's No. 2 man, scrawled at the end of the memo that he had suggested the conversation and hoped it would "shut Turner up."

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