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# Mobster's charges put the FBI on the defensive

## Many demanding answers on the handling of Bulger, Flemmi

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GLOBE STAFF

In 1981, as Jerry Angiulo and Larry Zannino yapped their way into prison by waxing nostalgic about their criminal exploits, the two aging Mafiosi agreed that whenever they needed someone killed, they could always rely on "Whitey" and "Stevie."

"I'll tell you right now," Angiulo explained, as an FBI bug recorded every word, "if I called these guys right now they'd kill any [expletive] body we tell 'em to."

Zannino positively gushed over Whitey and Stevie.

"These are nice people," he said. "These are the kind of people that straighten a thing out."

That is, kill anyone the Mafia tells them to.

Whitey and Stevie were James J. "Whitey" Bulger and Stephen "The Rifleman" Flemmi, who, besides being considered by

their peers to be the best hit men in town, were working as informants for the FBI.

Just how a pair of reputed killers were retained as FBI informants for some 20 years — an arrangement that precluded the FBI's building a case against them — is the subject of ongoing hearings in the Boston courtroom of US District Judge Mark L. Wolf.

Last week, Flemmi, who says the FBI

double-crossed him by causing his arrest, claimed the FBI gave him and Bulger carte blanche to engage in any criminal activity short of murder, and that the FBI tipped them off about an impending indictment in January 1995 so they could get away. Bulger did; Flemmi didn't. And now Flemmi is talking, making life very uncomfortable for the FBI, jeopardizing a series of organized crime prosecutions, and pressuring the fed-

eral government to explain why it made deals with some gangsters and not others.

At the urging of defense lawyers for Flemmi and alleged Mafia boss Francis P. "Cadillac Frank" Salemme, who want racketeering charges against the pair of reputed gangsters and the fugitive Bulger dismissed, Wolf has been forcing the FBI and US Justice Department to disclose their relationships with mobsters who were used covertly to trap others.

But it isn't just a very perturbed federal

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