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HOOVER CHARGES ROBERT KENNEDY AIDED WIRETAPS

F.B.I. Chief Says in a Letter
That Ex-Attorney General
'Was Briefed Frequently'

Texts of exchange of letters
will be found on Page 84.

By FRED P. GRAHAM

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J. Edgar Hoover has charged that all wiretapping and electronic eavesdropping carried out by the Federal Bureau of Investigation while Robert F. Kennedy was Attorney General was done with the approval of Mr. Kennedy.

In a letter from the director of the F.B.I. to Representative H. R. Gross, Republican of Iowa, Mr. Hoover broke his long silence over the bureau's eavesdropping and laid the responsibility directly to Mr. Kennedy, a Democrat who is now the junior Senator from New York.

Mr. Kennedy was at P.S. 305 in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn when the news of Mr. Hoover's letter became known, attending a meeting on redeveloping the area.

Asked for a comment, he replied:

"You can get a statement from my Washington office. I have nothing to say now."

Statement Issued

The Senator's office then issued a statement accusing Mr. Hoover of being "misinformed."

Attached to the Kennedy statement was a letter from Courtney A. Evans, the assistant director of the F.B.I., who acted as liaison between the bureau and Mr. Kennedy when he was Attorney General.

Mr. Evans said in the letter that Mr. Kennedy had not been told of electronic bugging because the bureau director had general authority to install hidden microphones without specific authorization.

Mr. Hoover's letter to Repre-

sentative Gross contradicted this statement.

"Mr. Kennedy, during his term of office [as Attorney General], exhibited great interest in pursuing such matters, and, while in different metropolitan areas, not only listened to the results of microphone surveillances, but raised questions relative to obtaining better equipment," Mr. Hoover wrote Mr. Gross.

"He was briefed frequently by an F.B.I. official regarding such matters," Mr. Hoover said.

Mr. Hoover attached a document signed by Mr. Kennedy,

in which the former Attorney General discussed the use of leased telephone lines in the operation of hidden microphones "in security and major criminal cases."

In a televised interview on the American Broadcasting Company's "Issues and Answers," last June 26, Mr. Kennedy was asked, "Did you authorize the F.B.I. wiretaps of gamblers' telephones in Las Vegas in '62 and '63?"

"No, I did not," Mr. Kennedy replied.

He said he had never authorized any wiretaps except in national security cases.

Mr. Hoover has been placed in an increasingly awkward position in recent weeks as a series of events have disclosed numerous instances of electronic surveillance by the F.B.I. in organized crime inves-

tigations over the last few years.

One such disclosure came to light on May 24 when the Justice Department disclosed in a memorandum to the Supreme Court that Fred E. Black Jr., a Washington public relations man, had been the subject of F.B.I. electronic bugging in a hotel suite here.

Court Demands Data

The Court demanded to know who had authorized the eavesdropping. In a supplemental memorandum signed by Solicitor General Thurgood Marshall, the Justice Department said, "The director [Mr. Hoover] approved installation of the device involved in the instant case." The memorandum said that Mr. Hoover had not been re-

quired by the then existing Justice Department policy to obtain the Attorney General's permission before authorizing the use of a hidden microphone, or bug.

Wiretaps, which involve the interception of telephone calls, are not used by Federal agents without the express consent of the Attorney General, and then only in national security cases, the Marshall memorandum explained.

Last Monday, Mr. Gross wrote Mr. Hoover observing that Mr. Kennedy had implied in statements that he had not authorized some of the bugging in organized crime investigations. Mr. Gross asked if the F.B.I. had documents to show that Mr. Kennedy had approved the use of bugging, as well as wiretapping.

Mr. Hoover's response, Dated Dec. 7, was released by Representative Gross in Jackson, Miss., where he was visiting his brother, E. L. Gross.

To the letter Mr. Hoover attached a document described as a letter with the name of the addressee and part of the text deleted.

Request for Cooperation

Dated Aug. 17, 1961, the letter appears to be a request for cooperation in leasing telephone lines in New York City for use in electronic surveillance.

In recent disclosures of electronic bugging by the F.B.I. in Las Vegas, Miami and Kansas City, Mo., leased telephone lines were used to carry the sounds picked up on hidden microphones to monitoring rooms in offices of the F.B.I.

Mr. Hoover also attached a letter from Herbert J. Miller Jr., who was the Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Criminal Division under Mr. Kennedy. In the letter to Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr., dated May 25, 1961, Mr. Miller answered the North Carolina Democrat's questions about the extent of electronic eavesdropping.

Mr. Miller said he had

checked with the F.B.I. and had been told that at that time the bureau had 87 bugs in operation, both in internal security and organized crime investigations.

Mr. Hoover added in his letter to Representative Gross that he had discussed electronic surveillance with former Attorney General Nicholas deB. Katzenbach on Aug. 30, 1965, in which he outlined the same eavesdropping policy that he had discussed with other Attorneys General in the past.

Mr. Katzenbach, who is now Under Secretary of State, was in his office this afternoon but declined to comment. END.