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U.S. Takes No Action In Snooping on Nader

By Morton Mintz

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The Justice Department has concluded that criminal prosecution is not warranted in the Ralph Nader-General Motors snooping case.

Additional investigation "would provide no useful function," Assistant Attorney General Fred M. Vinson Jr. said in a letter to Sen. Abraham A. Ribicoff (D-Conn.).

Nader is the author-lawyer whose targets of criticism have included the 1960-63 GM Corvairs. After he had testified in February before Ribicoff's Senate Subcommittee on Executive Reorganization it developed that a private eye firm, hired by GM through a middleman, had tried to check "all facets" of Nader's life, including "his politics, his marital status, his friends, his women, boys, etc."

On March 22 the Subcommittee held a hearing to find out, as Ribicoff put it, if there had been a violation of the law making it "a crime to harass or intimidate a witness before a congressional committee."

GM President James M. Roche testified that the inquiry into Nader and his affairs—of which he had not known, and for which he apologized—was undertaken for reasons "wholly unrelated to the proceedings of this Subcommittee and Mr. Nader's connection with them."

GM's position was that the investigation was instituted to determine Nader's connection with Corvair litigation.

The letter from Vinson, dated June 1, was in response to an inquiry from Ribicoff, dated March 8 and is an exhibit in the just-published record of the hearing.

Another exhibit in the hearing volume reprints handwritten notes to Richard G. Danner, a Washington lawyer who hired the detective firm for GM, from Eileen Murphy, a GM lawyer.

"Does he drink?" she asked about Nader. "He has nervous habit of sniffing or else he had pneumonia on the day of his press conference Jan. 6, 1965 . . ." she commented.