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The Government as Snooper

The senators who investigate domestic spying, if they dig deep enough, will find gossip about prominent Americans squirreled away in filing cabinets all over Washington.

Not only the FBI and the CIA but the Secret Service, National Security Agency, Internal Revenue Service and armed forces collect choice tidbits about famous people.

We have had access to these forbidden files, which are stuffed with memos, reports and clippings on citizens who have committed no crimes.

Read singly, these files seem merely another dreary example of bureaucratic excess. But examined in larger lots, they provide an intriguing case-by-case study of just how far the government has intruded into the private lives of Americans. The persons from whose files we actually cite material have consented to our use of the material to illustrate the kind of claptrap that is in the files.

There is an FBI file on Gerald Ford, for example, if it hasn't been discreetly destroyed since he moved into the White House, and there are files on members of Congress.

The FBI also follows the affairs, sexual and political, of film personalities, athletes and other celebrities as avidly as the fan magazines. Facts are on file about the private lives of Marlon Brando, Paul Newman, Zero Mostel, Rock Hudson, Joe Namath, Joe Louis and Muhammed Ali.

The agent reporting on Jane Fonda's visit to an Indian reservation to drum up support for the Indians who took over San Quentin noted suspiciously that her hair was "disheveled."

Life for Eartha Kitt, according to the CIA, is *c'est si bon*. A Secret Service memo on the songstress notes: "NSA also advised that this subject was observed on January 18, 1968 at Washington National Airport talking

with Stokely Carmichael." The NSA was established to break foreign codes and to monitor foreign broadcasts, not to spy on American citizens.

Comedian Groucho Marx once stated—and immediately retracted it—that "the only hope this country has is Nixon's assassination." And Tony Randall during the heat of the 1968 campaign referred to Lyndon Johnson as a "murderous bastard." Both comedians wound up on the Secret Service list of potential assassins.

When Dr. Benjamin Spock, whose book on child care has helped millions of Americans raise their children, planned a visit to Australia, the FBI had his itinerary.

The dirt that government gumshoes

pick up on people is also freely exchanged between federal offices. On the FBI's distribution list, for example, is the White House, State Department, Army, Navy, Air Force, Defense Intelligence Agency, CIA, Secret Service and NSA.

FBI memos in our possession show that reports on the late labor agitator Saul Alinsky were routinely forwarded to the Navy and Air Force. And as late as March 1971, reports on black leader Ralph Abernathy were going to the Air Force, Naval Investigative Service and the Army's Military Intelligence Group.

We have written dozens of columns about the government's practice of spying on prominent Americans. As

evidence, we have obtained actual excerpts from FBI folders, Secret Service records and other government files.

We will be happy now to lay our evidence before the Select Senate Committee, which has now been established to investigate domestic spying.

We have crusaded for years to stop the government from spying on citizens who have committed no crimes and are guilty of no more than exercising their constitutional guarantees of free speech, assembly and petition. The government excesses have come perilously close to police-state methods.

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