

Subject of FBI Probe Assails

By Betty Medsger

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A Swarthmore College philosophy professor said yesterday that FBI surveillance of him last fall, as revealed in documents stolen March 8 from the bureau's Media, Pa., office, is an example of "the incompetence of the FBI."

Daniel Bennett, 40, denied that he and his wife were acquainted with Katherine Power, 21, or Susan E. Saxe, 20, both on the FBI's "Most Wanted" list for the murder of a Boston policeman.

The professor also said the FBI was wrong about the number of children and cars he has.

An FBI document that described surveillance of Bennett's family last year as involving a college switchboard operator, campus security officer, Media, Pa., police chief and local mail carriers was one of 14 documents received anonymously by The Washington Post, and by at least two other newspapers and two congressmen.

The documents came from a

group that calls itself the Citizens' Commission to Investigate the FBI. The group took credit for raiding the files of the Media, Pa., FBI office.

In an anonymous statement mailed Thursday in Philadelphia, the same group said it soon would make public lists of "FBI informers and provocateurs."

Following publication Wednesday by The Washington Post of portions of the documents, the Justice Department claimed that the thieves had "selectively" chosen the 14 documents it mailed to newsmen in an attempt to show "overzealousness" on the part of the FBI.

A Justice Department spokesman pointed to the three-page document on Bennett as an example, saying that other documents, also among the 1,000 documents stolen at the office, would have shown that the memo distributed was actually part of a packet of reports on the September, 1970, slaying of a Boston policeman during a bank holdup rather than sur-

veillance of the professor because of his political activities.

The memo, in addition to indicating that the FBI thought the two women might have contact with Bennett or his wife, also contains information about his political views, his "hippie" associates and a statement by a switchboard operator at Swarthmore College that Bennett is "generally regarded as a 'radical' . . ."

Bennett, a Stanford graduate who has studied at Oxford, pointed yesterday to "other errors" in the memorandum, which he said had been read to him by a Philadelphia reporter.

For instance, he says, he has one child, not two. He has both a Volkswagen station wagon and a Mustang car. The document refers to the station wagon and notes, "There are no other cars in the family and no other cars normally parked in their driveway."

Bennett, in a telephone call he placed to a Washington Post reporter from Los Angeles, where he is a discussion

leader at a meeting of the American Philosophical Association, said yesterday he believes he previously has been the object of FBI investigations as far back as the late 1950s.

The earlier investigations by agents, he speculated, related to his civil rights activities. While a professor at Brandeis University from 1963 to 1966, he was adviser to the school's Northern Student Movement, the Northern arm of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee when it was active in the South.

Agents have always questioned him about other persons, said Bennett, not about himself.

He said no person identifying himself as an FBI agent questioned him last fall about the whereabouts of the two women wanted in the Boston murder.

But he said agents and Springfield Township police reportedly did quiz students about the two women in November when they raided a stu-

'Incompetence'

dent house not far from the Bennett home.

Both Bennett and his wife have left their Swarthmore home. His address is now Marcus Hook, also near Philadelphia. He did not say where his wife lived, but indicated she was not living at the Marcus Hook home. He is now on sabbatical leave from Swarthmore.

He said yesterday that the FBI is "composed of half wits and Judasses who will spy on anyone for dough . . . they are not very competent."

Bennett confirmed that the document was accurate in stating that a leaflet calling for support of Philadelphia's Black Panthers was printed on equipment housed in his garage.

But he said the document is wrong in indicating that he should have obtained school administration approval to have Philadelphia Black Panther member Reggie Schell speak before his class.

"He was just speaking in my class—social and political philosophy. There was no need to get any approval," said Bennett.

The professor vowed he has used the campus phone system for the last time. "The hell with her," he said yesterday in reference to the switchboard operator whom the document says "will also confidentially furnish pertinent information regarding any long distance telephone calls made or received by Bennett."

The announcement that informers and provocateurs will be revealed by the thieves also says, "... it is the U.S. government which endangers these people, as it endangers the men it orders to Vietnam."

The three-paragraph statement concludes:

"In a few days, we will contact a first group of these previously undercover agents and suggest they cease their repressive actions if they have not already done so. We will then inform those individuals and organizations against whom these agents were operating. Following that, we will make the names of this first group of agents public."

Responding to the group's promise to release names of informers, a Justice Department spokesman said:

"I would assume no respon-

sible news media would print them. They should realize it would endanger the lives of those persons named, be possibly harmful to innocent persons and endanger the security of the country."

The Evening Bulletin in Philadelphia reported yesterday that Thomas F. Lewis, a resident agent in Media, Pa., when the thieves raised the office there, has been suspended by the FBI without pay for 30 days and transferred to Atlanta.

Lewis refused to comment on the action yesterday, as did FBI spokesmen here and in Philadelphia.