

**Break-in, Gossip Orders Alleged**

## **FBI Denies Informer's Charges**

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The FBI has denied reports that a one-time informer was told to commit break-ins or pass on gossip about members of Congress.

"These allegations are fabricated and completely false," the FBI said Friday in a statement. It was responding to charges made by the former informant, Earl Robert Merritt Jr., reported by Jack Anderson and Les

Whitten in their syndicated column and used by a Washington radio station.

"As a matter of fact, Merritt was specifically advised on several occasions that he was not to engage in any illegal activities in his efforts to get information....," the FBI statement said.

Published and broadcast reports have linked Merritt's purported actions to instructions from FBI agents

William Tucker and Terry O'Connor. The FBI said it decided the agents must be defended against the repeated allegations.

WRC Radio said Merritt confirmed that he committed break-ins and spied on antiwar activists and radical groups as an informer for Washington police, the Treasury Department and the FBI.

Anderson and Whitten said

both the FBI and Washington police asked Merritt to pick up whatever gossip he could about a long list of House and Senate members.

The FBI said Merritt voluntarily became an informer in October, 1971, and was paid on a "C.O.D."—cash on delivery—basis for information furnished until June, 1972, when the relationship ended because certain information was not reliable.