

Demotion, Not Firing, For Agent Involved In Illegal FBI Break-ins

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WASHINGTON (AP) — An FBI agent accused of authorizing illegal surveillance against the radical left-wing Weather Underground will be demoted, instead of fired, because he cooperated in federal investigations into the FBI break-ins.

FBI Director William H. Webster said Friday that he had rescinded his original decision last month to dismiss the agent, who was identified by sources as Horace Beckwith.

Beckwith, a supervisor at bureau headquarters in Washington who formerly was with the FBI's New York field office, will be demoted to a street agent and will be transferred to an FBI field office that has not been determined, said a source who asked not to be named.

Beckwith could not be reached for

comment. His attorney, Brian P. Gettings, said Beckwith "looks forward to returning to a field office to become a street agent again. He hopes to be able to justify the faith the director has shown in him."

Sources who asked not to be named said Beckwith's salary will be cut about \$4,000 a year.

Without mentioning a name in a report to Attorney General Griffin B. Bell, Webster said he decided not to fire the agent after discovering that a Justice Department official who took part in the investigation of the break-ins said Beckwith's cooperation "had been crucial to the department probe."

Webster said that by demoting the agent, rather than firing him, it will be "an incentive to others to cooperate with legitimate administrative inquiry."