

Jack Anderson's Washington Merry-go-round

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—With Les Whitten

WASHINGTON — The FBI, without technically telling an untruth, has led the public to believe its agents took part in more than 238 criminal housebreakings. The actual figure is well over 1,000 and may surpass 2,000.

These "black bag" jobs, as the late FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover called them, were employed principally against suspected spies, organized crime figures, foreign diplomats and a few dangerous revolutionaries.

But Hoover also sent his agents to burglarize the premises of law-abiding U.S. citizens whom the old FBI curmudgeon simply disliked.

Confidential FBI memos, obtained by the Senate Intelligence Committee, acknowledge that the "black bag" jobs violated the criminal laws the FBI was supposed to enforce. Yet we have learned from FBI sources that Hoover, although sworn to uphold the laws, personally sanctioned more than 1,000 of the break-ins.

Not until 1967 did Hoover take steps, in a self-serving memo turned up by the Senate probers, to end the break-ins. Even then, we have learned, it wasn't his own idea but pressure from then-Atty. Gen. Ramsey Clark that brought the change.

The figure of 238 "surreptitious entries," as the burglaries were politely called, first appeared in an FBI memo to the Senate committee on Sept. 23, 1975.

The memo accurately but cagily reported that the 238 housebreakings were perpetrated against 14 "domestic subversive targets" during the 1942-68 period. But a careful reading shows the bureau left a hedge. Almost in passing, the memo indicates the figure is "incomplete," based as much on the memory of agents as on actual data. Indeed, Hoover purposely destroyed many of the records dealing with the

break-ins, presumably to eliminate documentary evidence of the FBI crimes.

From our internal sources, however, we have ascertained that some top FBI officials believe the 1,000-to-2,000 figure is a "conservative estimate" of the total housebreakings. These include not only burglaries to get information but break-ins to install bugging devices.

One source said the housebreakings go back far beyond 1942 and never terminated completely in 1968. Under FBI chief Clarence Kelley, however, the bureau has scrupulously followed legal procedures.

The Senate Intelligence Committee, meanwhile, has pushed the FBI hard for more complete break-in figures. The committee will release a report shortly showing the confirmed housebreakings totaled slightly less than 1,000. Our higher figures, however, came from indisputable FBI sources.

In defense of the past practice of breaking and entering, the FBI said this technique was used only "to obtain secret and closely guarded organizational and financial information" or to plant electronic equipment in the most "highly selective" cases.

Footnote: Those who believe in law and order had better demand that it begin with the government. A lawless government is far more dangerous than any lawless individual. Yet in spite of the clear evidence that the FBI, CIA and other agencies engaged in illegal acts, the Senate Rules Committee led by Chairman Howard Cannon, D-Nev., voted against strong oversight of these agencies.

CHAUFFEUR'S COMPLAINT: The former secretary of Rep. Phillip Burton, D-Calif., a member of the powerful House leadership, has accused him of

requiring her to chauffeur him around at all hours until it broke her health.

Mrs. Nina-Ann Coleman, 51, also claims she had to pay more than \$15,000 from her own pocket for gasoline, repairs, insurance and a succession of cars since 1967 to keep up with Burton's 12-hour days.

In a confidential claim submitted to the Labor Dept. for disability payments, the former secretary charges that she was pressed into service as a chauffeur not only for the congressman but for his wife, a movie star, union friends and other colleagues.

She ferried Mrs. Burton to the market, to clothing stores and to parties, she filed papers allege. On one occasion, Mrs. Coleman picked up a Burton aide at Dulles Airport, she said, but later discovered he had submitted a voucher for the trip and had chiseled \$20 out of the taxpayers. The staff member, Maurice Shean, vigorously denies the charge.

On the way home from another airport pickup, according to Mrs. Coleman, the cigarette smoke in her car was so thick, it precipitated an asthma attack. A statement from her doctor adds that she was so affected by the smoke she had to be hospitalized.

Her husband, in another signed statement, said she became "a slave to her office," leading to two separations before she was fired by Burton earlier this year.

Responding to the Labor Dept.'s request for comment, Burton said Mrs. Coleman's illness had made her irritable, nervous and absent from work about two months a year since 1974. He conceded to us that she had driven him a great deal but said he had reimbursed her for some trips.

In any case, he said, chauffering, "was part of her job responsibility and her pay reflected" the added responsibility.