

# FBI Agents Told: Don't Talk to Lawyers Yet

By MARGARET GENTRY

WASHINGTON (AP) — FBI agents under investigation for allegedly committing burglaries have been ordered not to talk to their lawyers about their case until the lawyers are cleared to receive secret government information.

Justice Dept. sources have confirmed that its civil rights division is investigating at least 20 FBI agents allegedly involved in intelligence-gathering burglaries during the past five years. The probe involves possible violations of the civil rights of American citizens.

[The New York Times reported today that the investigation could ultimately involve hundreds of agents and officials of the bureau's intelligence division.]

The FBI agents were given the instructions about their lawyers in a teletyped message from FBI headquarters last Friday, according to Jack B. Solerwitz, an attorney representing some of the FBI men.

The restriction suggests that the Justice Department probe involves break-ins which the FBI considered sensitive national security matters.

"My clients have been told they are the targets of an investigation of surreptitious entries," Solerwitz said in an

interview yesterday.

He declined to say how many of the agents he represents or to identify them. But some are assigned to the FBI's New York office, he said.

Solerwitz said department investigators telephoned the FBI men at their homes during the weekend of June 12 to inform them they were under investigation and that they would be advised of their right to keep silent and to retain an attorney.

"The Justice Department has made it clear to these agents that they will not be provided counsel" by the government, he said. Under current policy, the department refuses to provide lawyers to defend employees in criminal investigations.

The FBI message June 18 instructed the agents not to disclose details of the case until their attorneys get security clearances. Solerwitz said he doesn't know how long it will take to get the clearance. Such clearances normally are processed through the FBI and the department.

Solerwitz said he has concluded from conversations with the chief prosecutor that the investigation will reach into the supervisory ranks of the FBI.

"I have no doubt their investigation would not terminate with these agents," he said. "Any prosecutor would go higher."