

Burnings, burglaries, assaults

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FBI accused of rampant law.

Wildcat News-Journal 7/11/76
The following article was written by Nicholas M. Horrock and is based upon reporting by him and John M. Crewdson.

New York Times Service

WASHINGTON — Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation committed widespread acts of unauthorized lawlessness, including the burning of automobiles, assaults and illegal wiretapping, while conducting internal security investigations in the last five

years, law enforcement sources said yesterday.

These sources, who are deeply familiar with the FBI's domestic security operations, said they believed the Justice Department's present investigation of alleged burglaries by agents would uncover other wrongdoing, because techniques of harassment and illegal investigation methods were used by the same agents who were committing the burglaries.

These sources said that agents risked doing such things as rough-

ing up antiwar radicals or placing illegal wiretaps — called "suicide" or "wildcat" taps by agents — because they were under "tremendous pressure" to halt bombings and catch fugitives in the early 1970s.

Militant antiwar activists at Queens College in New York City were one target of illegal and unauthorized electronic surveillance, these sources said.

Clarence M. Kelley, director of the FBI, said in a statement to The New York Times yesterday that

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he had "no information indicating that these allegations are true."

"However," he continued, "as in all allegations by bureau employees, this will be looked into and if evidence is found to substantiate the allegations, actions will be taken against the employees involved."

"It is hoped that anyone having such information will come forth, because without their assistance

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Did it become the federal bureau of intimidation?

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the investigation is much more difficult," Kelley said.

Agents placed illegal "wildcat" telephone taps and electronic bugs, the sources said, after bureau orders specifically forbade such activities, because these were often the best methods of getting intelligence on militant leftists.

The burning of cars and assaults on radical leftists were efforts to disrupt antiwar activity, these sources said. The Times has received a report of two car burnings in the New York area, but other sources could not confirm these particular acts.

The cars were set afire with "Molotov cocktails" made from glass bottles filled with gasoline.

This was done in such a manner as to appear to have been an attack by another extremist group. Cars were also disabled to strand suspects during a surveillance, these sources said.

Agents, the sources said, sometimes "roughed up" radical antiwar figures to frighten them or to disrupt a demonstration or protest. Earlier, FBI sources had told The Times that there was at least one kidnaping of a radical for the same reason.

These activities were never officially sanctioned by the bureau, the sources said, again adding that they believed field supervisors knew of the activities.

These sources said the main use of burglaries in 1972-1973 was to try to locate fugitives of the Weatherman organization.