

## Mystery Over Firing Of FBI Aide Deepens

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The mystery surrounding the abrupt dismissal of the FBI's second-ranking official deepened yesterday amid suggestions from several Justice Department sources that the action was unrelated to either of the two criminal investigations of the bureau now under way.

The official, Nicholas P. Callahan, 62, was discharged Friday by FBI Director Clarence M. Kelley. Kelley declined to elaborate on his motive, citing the Justice Department's "continuing investigations of various allegations" of wrongdoing concerning past and present FBI officials.

Callahan has not been available for comment since his dismissal.

**THE ALLEGATIONS** to which Kelley referred involve a series of burglaries and illegal break-ins conducted by FBI agents in recent years as well as the suspicion that some bureau executives may have accepted gratuities from private companies from which the agency bought a variety of equipment.

One well-placed Justice Department source said, however, that he knew of no evidence that Callahan had known of or approved the burglaries, and another equally well-informed

source said that department lawyers investigating the alleged kickbacks had not found any indication so far of financial impropriety by Callahan, who headed the bureau's purchasing division before Kelley promoted him to associate director in 1973.

This source said that some unrelated wrongdoing by Callahan, which he would not describe, had been uncovered in the course of the kickback investigation.

**THAT DISCLOSURE**, coupled with Kelley's refusal to explain his action on the ground that the Justice Department's criminal inquiry into some FBI operations was continuing, thus raised the possibility that a third area of illegal activity had come to the department's attention.

Callahan, whose career in the FBI spans four decades, had long been eligible for retirement with full benefits. One source said recently that he had been planning for some months to retire at the end of July.

No replacement has been named.

The FBI burglaries, which are being investigated by J. Stanley Pottinger, head of the Justice Department's civil rights division, were directed at members and leaders of a variety of radical political groups during 1972 and 1973.