

Doubts Cast on FBI Role in Jean Seberg Case

Newly released internal documents cast doubt on the precise role the Federal Bureau of Investigation played in 1970 in discrediting the late Jean Seberg, an actress involved in leftist political activity.

A story last fall reported that the FBI had "admitted" spreading gossip that Seberg had "become pregnant by a member of the Black Panther Party."

The new material shows that through the use of wiretaps, the FBI obtained information in early 1970 strongly suggesting that Seberg had been impregnated by a Black Panther Party official.

In April 1970, the Los Angeles office of the FBI proposed to FBI headquarters that this information be leaked anonymously to gossip columnists in Hollywood. Headquarters ap-

proved the proposal in principle but suggested a two-month delay to avoid compromising the wiretap.

There is no evidence in the new documents that the proposal was carried out by the FBI, although the material in question appeared in a gossip column in Los Angeles in May 1970.

William Webster, the FBI director, said an internal investigation had not established that the FBI was the source of the leak.

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