

Columnist Wins FBI Fight

Kraft Data to Be Destroyed

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Attorney General Edward H. Levi has ordered the FBI to destroy all its records of what was learned from 1969 electronic and physical surveillance of columnist Joseph Kraft.

In a letter to Kraft's attorney, Levi said the 115-document file on Kraft "did not indicate that Mr. Kraft's activities posed any risk to the national interest." Kraft said he was satisfied by the Attorney General's action and was no longer considering filing suit because of the

Nixon administration surveillance.

The Kraft file contained "all kinds of inaccuracies," including identification of French statesman Jean Monnet as a woman, according to informed sources.

"Most of what came back was gossip," one source said.

The file contained transcriptions of conversations overheard on a bug placed in Kraft's Paris hotel for four or five days in June, 1969, and a summary of those conversations in a letter sent by former FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover to

White House counsel John D. Ehrlichman in July, 1969.

A second letter, from FBI assistant Director William Sullivan to Ehrlichman in November, 1969, summarized a physical surveillance of Kraft in Washington that Ehrlichman had requested. It also contained mostly gossip, including such news as that Kraft had met with the Polish ambassador, according to informed sources.

According to court and congressional records, Ehrlichman ordered White House staffers to tap Kraft's

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Georgetown home phone in late May, 1969, as part of a program to track news leaks from the National Security Council (NSC).

At about that time, Kraft had written a column, summarizing President Nixon's Vietnam peace efforts, which referred to "secret hawks" in the White House.

Earlier in May, the FBI, at Nixon's direction, had begun tapping government aides and reporters whose names were supplied by Henry A. Kissinger, then head of the NSC staff.

Kraft speculated in Senate testimony last year that his phone tap was not handled by the FBI in order to keep it secret from Kissinger, who was a friend.

One source said yesterday that Kraft's tap was undertaken to check whether Kissinger was a source of leaks.

When the tap on Kraft's home showed that the columnist was out of town, it was removed.

Shortly thereafter Sulli-

van went to Paris and arranged for the French security agency to bug Kraft's hotel room.

In the first week of November, 1969, Ehrlichman contacted Sullivan and asked that physical and electronic surveillance of Kraft be initiated in Washington. That request came at about the same time the FBI concluded a two-month wiretap of CBS reporter Marvin Kalb.

The Kalb wiretap had been requested by the President through then Attorney General John N. Mitchell. Reports on it were to be sent to Ehrlichman.

In Kraft's case, however, the Attorney General twice refused to approve the wiretap.

One report on the physical surveillance was sent to the White House before Hoover ended it after Mitchell failed to authorize a tap.

After the surveillance was disclosed during Senate Watergate hearings, Kraft and his attorney entered into negotiations with a series of Attorneys General,



JOSEPH KRAFT
... dropping suit idea

holding out the threat of a lawsuit if they were unable to learn the facts about the Watergate hearing, Kraft tap.

Two other subjects of Nixon wiretaps, Morton Halperin and Anthony Lake, filed civil lawsuits against

government officials seeking payments for damages. Kissinger yesterday gave a deposition in the Halperin case.

Kraft, on the other hand, wanted no money, but rather a public statement that the tap on him was improper, sealing or destruction of the records, and establishment of published guidelines for national security wiretapping to prevent similar incidents from taking place.

In his letter to Kraft's lawyer, Lloyd Cutler, Levi wrote that he could not comment on the "legality of past conduct by former officials," but that under "current standards" the tap undertaken on Kraft "would not be authorized."

Last week, the Ford administration sent Congress a bill that would require court warrants for all national security electronic surveillances undertaken inside the United States.

In his letter, Levi wrote that "discovery of episodes such as [Kraft's] contributed

in no small degree to the corrective measures now being put in place."