

# 2 Ranking Aides Retire From FBI Intelligence

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By Warren Brown  
Washington Post Staff Writer  
Two high-ranking FBI intelligence officials, who played leading roles in the bureau's domestic spying program, retired quietly last Friday.

The retirements of W. Raymond Wannall, 57, assistant director of the Intelligence Division, and William A. Branigan, 59, chief of the espionage section of the Intelligence Division, became known publicly Wednesday.

Their unannounced departure prompted rumors that they left because of a "shakeup." However, they and the bureau denied such speculation.

The bureau's domestic intelligence program has been the target recently of congressional investigations and sharp criticism from the General Accounting Office.

After an 18-month study, the GAO, Congress' investigative arm, charged last month that the FBI's intelligence investigations often were initiated with inadequate information and, as a result, frequently flopped.

Also, Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho), chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, said his unit had found evidence of criminal activity—stemming from domestic spying—on the part of the FBI and the Central Intelligence Agency.

Church said the bureau had opened mail illegally, provoked riots, and engaged in break-ins and other criminal acts in its counterintelligence program (COINTELPRO), which lasted from 1954 to 1971.



W. RAYMOND WANNALL  
... cites family reasons

The program was designed to discredit, harass and disrupt right- and left-wing organizations, anti-Vietnam war groups and civil rights organizations.

Wannall and Branigan said yesterday the criticism had nothing to do with their decision to retire. They said they left because of family and financial reasons.

"You put an awful lot of yourself into the bureau . . . It's been a good life. But it's time that I devote more of myself to my family," said Wannall, who served with the FBI nearly 34 years.

Branigan said, "I had always planned to retire on

my 35th anniversary, which would have been July 12, 1976," he said.

Branigan and Wannall said they decided to retire before March 1 to take advantage of increased retirement benefits that would have been lost after that date.

Currently there is no mandatory retirement age for FBI employees. But beginning in January 1979, bureau personnel will have to retire by age 55, and FBI spokesman said.

Wannall conceded that "there were some things about COINTELPRO that were actually a little on the foolish side." But he said such activity was "only a very small part" of the program. He said there were 2,470 COINTELPRO projects, of which 10 per cent "were of a questionable nature."

"I don't think the general public has lost confidence in the FBI as such," Wannall said. "I do think that the integrity of the FBI has been damaged by the news stories. But I'm hopeful that, in the future, these things will be put to rest," he said.