

Kelley Admits Receiving Apartment Furnishings

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FBI Director Clarence M. Kelley admitted yesterday that two sets of plywood drapery valances and a portable cabinet were constructed by the bureau's special exhibits section and installed in his apartment shortly after he took office in 1973.

Kelley said the valances were made "without my knowledge" and that the cabinet is FBI property which he plans to return when he leaves office.

He also disclosed that on "a few occasions" his private automobile was delivered to a garage by FBI personnel for repairs.

In addition, Kelley added, he has received some gifts from FBI subordinates and

is "prepared to make restitution for any of such gifts which are not clearly permitted" by federal regulations.

Kelley's admissions came after The Washington Star reported yesterday the Justice Department is investigating charges that free interior decorating services were provided to the director by the exhibits section, which is responsible for building models of crime scenes for use in court trials. The Star said that these services included construction of the valances and custom cabinets for Kelley's apartment kitchen.

These allegations came in the midst of a Justice Department investigation into

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whether FBI officials had, over the years, engaged in such "abuses of power" as the misuse of bureau funds and property for private purposes.

There have been widespread reports that personnel and material from the exhibits section were used for such functions as building the front steps at the late FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover's home and performing repair and maintenance work for Hoover and other bureau officials.

On Aug. 13, John P. Dumphy, a 28-year bureau veteran who had headed the exhibits section, resigned from his \$37,800-a-year post and pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor charge of unlawfully taking lumber that was government property for his own use.

In his detailed statement yesterday, Kelley recalled his collaboration with Attorney General Edward H. Levi in establishing the joint Justice Department-FBI task force that is conducting the "abuses of power" probe.

"My instructions to the bureau personnel in the task force was for them to leave no stone unturned in investigating all actions of bureau employees and officials who fell within the scope" of the investigation. "This included Clarence M. Kelley," he added.

"Several weeks ago I was interviewed by representatives of this task force and voluntarily furnished information to them which indicated that two sets of valances had been made by the exhibits section for the living room of my apartment and that these valances were installed by bureau personnel.

"My wife had originally asked me to obtain valances for windows in the apartment. Without my knowledge, the valances were ordered from the exhibits section. I did not learn until later that they had been made in the exhibits section.

An assessment is being made as to the cost of the

valances, and I fully intend to pay for them," Kelley said. FBI sources estimated their value at \$30 to \$40.

The sources said Kelley, arriving in Washington at a time when the FBI was in turmoil, found himself caught up full-time in trying to tackle the bureau's problems.

In addition, his wife, Ruby D. Kelley, was ill with cancer. Mrs. Kelley died last Nov. 10 at the age of 62.

On their arrival, the Kelleys took an apartment in Bethesda. The sources said Kelley, concerned about his wife's illness and unable to devote much time to personal affairs, asked his driver, Thomas Mouten, to assist Mrs. Kelley with the problems of resettlement in the apartment, including helping with her request for the valances.

Give the atmosphere that had prevailed in the FBI for years, the sources said, it was possible that Mouten, an FBI agent who had served for years under Hoover assumed that the new director wanted decorating services provided by the bureau and the job wound up being referred to the exhibits branch almost as a matter of routine.

"It's a stupid thing, but I can see how it could happen" said one former FBI official. "In view of the bureau's past history of carrying water for Hoover and providing special privileges and services for other executives it could have happened quite naturally."

"Here he was with his wife with cancer," the source said. "He probably came in one day and said, 'Gee I won't have time to get all these moving problems straightened out. My wife needs valances.' And all kinds of guys would fall over themselves to say 'Hey boss, don't worry. We'll take care of that.'"

A valance is a wood or metal frame that runs across the top of a window and sometimes is covered with fabric matching or complementing draperies.

In his statement, Kelley denied that custom cabinet had been made for his kitchen. He said he had asked for a cabinet for use in the apartment in which he could store bureau papers and stationery.

"A small portable cabinet was constructed by the exhibits section and placed in my apartment," he said.

"This is the only cabinet that I am aware of that was built for me by the exhibits section.

"I consider this cabinet and its contents to be bureau property which will be returned when I leave the bureau," Kelley added.

He also said he voluntarily told the task force interviewers of having his car driven to a private garage by FBI personnel and of having received gifts of an unspecified nature from FBI executive and persons on his office staff.

The gifts, he said, were given to him on occasions such as Christmas and anniversaries. He said he is considering whether he should "make restitution" for any of these gifts. Kelley added that in July he "ordered that the giving of gifts to superiors from subordinates be in strict conformity with the code of federal regulations.

Washington Post staff writer Warren Brown contributed to this article.