

FBI File Publicity Perils Agents, Mitchell Says

BULLETIN
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Washington — Attorney General John N. Mitchell warned yesterday that disclosure of information in files stolen March 8 from an FBI office in Media, Pa., could endanger the lives of some federal agents and the security of the United States.

He urged anyone with copies of the records to neither circulate them further nor publish them.

The attorney general issued a statement after copies of the stolen FBI intelligence files were sent to Sen. George S. McGovern (D-SD) and Rep. Parren Mitchell (D-Md) by a group calling itself the "Citizens Commission to Investigate the FBI." Both congressmen returned the files to the Justice Department and condemned those who committed the act.

Mitchell's Statement

In his statement, Mitchell said:

"The Department of Justice is investigating the recent burglary of FBI records at its office at Media, Pa. . . . It appears likely that these records include information which would disclose the identity of confidential investigative sources and information related to the national defense.

"The department is attempting to determine which of the documents stolen may contain such information. Pending the speedy completion of such an investigation, the department urgently requests

that those who have received copies of the material not further circulate it or publish it.

Fears 'Serious Harm'

"Disclosure of this information could endanger the lives or cause other serious harm to persons engaged in investigative activities on behalf of the United States.

"Disclosure of national defense information could injure the United States and give aid to foreign governments whose interests might be inimical to those of the United States."

Documents Described

The Washington Post said today that the stolen records show the FBI keeps tabs on campus and black activist groups through informants ranging from switchboard operators to bank cashiers.

The newspaper reported it received a packet yesterday containing a cover letter, an "additional statement from the Citizens Commission to Investigate the FBI" and 14 FBI documents.

It said one document encouraged agents to step up interviews with dissenters "for plenty of reasons, chief of which are it will enhance the paranoia endemic in these circles and will further serve to get the point across there is an FBI agent behind every mailbox.

"In addition, some will be overcome by the overwhelming personalities of the con-

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tacting agent and volunteer to tell all—perhaps on a continuing basis," the Post reported the document read.

Justice Department sources, the Post reported, said there is no question the documents are copies of files stolen in the Media burglary.

The Post said one document indicated that black student groups on college campuses were to be under FBI surveillance. It said the memo from Director J. Edgar Hoover was dated Nov. 4, 1970, and said in part:

"Increased campus disorders involving black students pose a definite threat to the nation's stability and security and indicate need for increase in both quality and quantity of

intelligence information on . . . groups which are targets for influence and control by violence-prone Black Panther Party (BPP) and other extremists."

Phila. Panthers Mentioned

Other documents, the Post said, dealt with the Philadelphia Black Panthers, the National Black Economic Development Conference, and two peace group meetings. Several of the documents were dossiers on individuals not cited as belonging to organizations under surveillance, the newspaper reported.

One such individual, a professor in a Philadelphia area college, was watched by the local police chief, the Post said. In addition, it said, the college switchboard operator

agreed to furnish the FBI with a list of long-distance telephone calls to and from the professor.

Operator Denies Spying

The Post said the operator, in a telephone interview yesterday, denied she spied for the FBI and said she did not know the professor. The operator said the FBI agent who contacted her asked only if "certain professors" whose security he was checking were on campus.

The Post said another document dealt with the National Black Development Conference, the organization which in 1969 called on the nation's churches to pay reparations for racial injustices.

It said the document included a reproduction of the

BEDC checking account statement at a Pennsylvania bank. The Post reported the bank's cashier said in a telephone interview yesterday that he authorized release of the normally confidential information after the agent presented a court order or subpoena.