

# Thefts Prompt FBI To Close Some Offices

By George Lardner Jr.  
Washington Post Staff Writer

The FBI is planning to close some of its 500 resident-agent offices in hopes of preventing any more embarrassing burglaries.

Tighter security was ordered by FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, who is said to have been furious over the theft of more than 1,000 FBI

documents from the Media, Pa., office March 8.

The FBI had no comment on the proposed closings and apparently no final decision has been made on which ones will be axed.

According to one account, the 76-year-old Hoover was so annoyed by the nationwide publicity over the Media raid that he initially wanted all of

the FBI's suboffices closed. But Justice Department sources predicted that less than a third will be shut down. At many others, however, stricter security measures will be put into effect.

According to local police, the burglars forced their way into the Media office through an unused door by pushing aside a file cabinet that normally blocked it on the inside. The resident agent in charge was subsequently suspended without pay for 30 days and transferred to Atlanta.

The FBI is also understood to have dispatched a team of inspectors to check on the security of all its offices, big and small, as a first step in preventing a recurrence of what Justice Department officials have called "a new peacenik tactic."

Copies of 31 of the documents stolen in the Media raid have been mailed to various newspapers and members of Congress. Responsibility for the theft has been claimed by a group calling itself "The Citizens' Commission to Investigate the FBI," but no arrests have been made.

With 8,400 agents, the FBI maintains 59 field offices or regional headquarters in major cities in the United States and Puerto Rico, along with 11 "liaison posts" in foreign countries.

Reporting to the field offices, in turn, are some 500 "resident agencies" or suboffices scattered throughout the nation to provide wider geographic coverage and a ready response to cases requiring investigation.

Some suboffices are one-man operations, with resident agents operating at times out of their own homes. Others keep more than a dozen FBI men at work. Whenever possible, the FBI sets up shop in a local Federal building or post office, but in some small



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**FBI Director Hoover: Furious over stolen documents.**

towns, such as college communities, the offices are in commercial buildings that are more difficult to guard.

The FBI has maintained approximately 500 suboffices for at least nine years, with their locations varying more often than their number.

The closings, it was understood, will depend on the FBI's assessment of the need for a local office and the cost of guarding it adequately. Some, it was said, will "just be told to put more locks on their doors."

Regional headquarters generally have plenty of locks already. The FBI's Los Angeles bureau, for example, is on the top (17th) floor of the Federal

building where a guard is always posted at the main entrance to the building.

Visitors find their handbags, briefcases and other packages searched on entering. And upstairs, the public entrance to the FBI office consists of a double door with two locks opening onto a reception room with nothing more than two desks.

Justice Department officials have complained that the documents stolen in the Media raid and made public by the self-styled Citizens Commission were carefully plucked out of context to make the FBI look bad and to create the impression that it uses police-state tactics.