

FBI Eye Says Eye Is on Him

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An FBI agent testified yesterday that his personal life was investigated by a suspect he had been assigned to investigate.

Richard Lee Bast, arrested on a six-indictment on Thursday, was accused at his arraignment in U.S. District Court yesterday of photographing the agent, Daniel C. Mahan, outside Mahan's home in suburban Sterling, Va. The government also said it had pictures of Bast taking pictures of Mahan.

Bast also was accused of hiring a private detective to make financial inquiries and credit checks on Mahan, in hopes of getting the agent in trouble with FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover.

The story of the investigator becoming the investigated was unraveled when Assistant U.S. Attorney John E. Drury asked a high bond on Bast because of the alleged harassment of Mahan.

Bast, the owner of a Washington exporting firm, is charged with sending an electronic device illegally through the mails and with illegal possession of and advertisement of electronic surveillance equipment.

The indictment is the first of its kind in the Washington area, and, in the case of the illegal advertising counts, is the first such prosecution of its kind in the country.

The indictment stemmed from a search of the exporting firm's office at 1404 New York Ave. NW last month by federal agents. Judge John H. Pratt yesterday released Bast on \$10,000 bond, half of what the government had asked.

In asking for the higher bond, Drury told Judge Pratt that last summer and fall,

agent Mahan was subjected to harassment by Bast and private detectives hired by Bast.

One such incident, Drury said, occurred in September when Mahan was standing in the front yard of his home. A car drove by, Drury told the judge, and its occupant began "snapping pictures of agent Mahan," Drury said, "At that time, agent Mahan was under surveillance."

Drury also told Judge Pratt that an FBI investigation showed that Bast hired a Fairfax private detective agency to make inquiries of Mahan's bank, and check his credit.

"This harassment, this investigation, this surveillance seems to be indigenous to the type of business that Bast involves himself in, Drury told the judge.

Bast's lawyer, Plato Cacheris, admitted that Bast photographed Mahan, saying, "Well, he was under investigation. He took a picture of the man that had been investigating him because he had been told that allegations were being made against him far beyond the reaches of this case."

However, Cacheris branded as "pure and simple rank hearsay" allegations that Bast harassed the agent, or intended to get him fired from the FBI.

Mahan recounted the September picture-taking incident, which he said included a conversation between himself and Bast.

"I made a comment to Mr. Bast. I told him how tall I was and how much I weighed. He said, 'Thank you very much,' and I said, 'You're welcome,'" Mahan testified.

At the end of the hearing, Judge Pratt ordered Bast not to have any contact with Mahan or any other government witness.