

Secrecy Cloaks Mystery Building Near Capitol

By Ronald Kessler
Washington Post Staff Writer

An unmarked building about a block from the Capitol has long been an object of suspicion and mystery on Capitol Hill.

Some aides to senators and congressmen believe it is an FBI monitoring operation directed at telephones and offices in the nearby Senate and House office buildings. They cite its proximity to the Capitol and the shroud of secrecy around it.

Two reporters who called at the building at 215 Pennsylvania Ave. SE yesterday were barred from entering by three men who confirmed it is a government installation but referred further inquiries to the Justice Department.

An FBI spokesman later said of the three-story facility, "The FBI occupies space at that address for its translation section." He declined further comment.

And despite the suspicions, all evidence yesterday indicated the building is in fact used both for translation and for breaking foreign intelligence and gamblers' codes. The FBI's interest in foreign

intelligence stems from its surveillance of foreign embassies in this country.

Neighbors, including many who work for senators and congressmen, report the building, once a car dealership, is lit 24 hours a day, and cars drive inside through special doors at odd hours of the night, honking first, they say.

No sign identifies the building, and no telephone is listed for that address. Its first-floor windows are frosted, making it impossible to peer in, and the front and back doors are kept locked.

Despite the aura of mystery, one Senate aide who lived near the building said yesterday, "It always struck me that it wasn't a very well kept secret; everyone who lived in that neighborhood knew there was something going on there, and it was either the FBI or the CIA, but no one knew for sure."

Other workers at the Capitol take a more sinister view. Another Senate aide, who also declined to be quoted by name, said of the building yesterday, "It's widely believed on the Hill to be some kind of

proof, however. "Why else would the FBI lease expensive space so close to the Capitol?" the aide asks.

A House aide said his office checked with the FBI several years ago because of similar suspicions and was told the operation was of "no consequence," although the nature of it was not disclosed.

A former FBI employee who worked at the building some 10 years ago said that as far as he knew it was used for breaking foreign intelligence and gamblers' codes as well as translating foreign intelligence. He said the more secretive work was done in a vault the size of a large room on the third floor. No wiretap equipment was in evidence, he said, although agents frequently look recording devices with them when they left the building.

A reporter's check last spring determined that employees at the building are listed with the FBI as being in the "cryptanalysis" section. Cryptanalysis is breaking of

Other information indicates a computer is housed at the building, and couriers make periodic trips between the back entrance and the Justice Department.

Letters addressed to the building frequently refer to it as "FBI Annex," and telephones at the building are connected to the main FBI switchboard in the Justice Department. Many workers at the building appear to fit the archetypical image of the FBI man—tall, wearing dark suits and sunglasses, and occasion-

ally carrying barely concealed revolvers—while others are older, bearded men who look more like college professors.

Mandel Named To Party Group

ANNAPOLIS (AP) — Gov. Marvin Mandel was named Monday to a committee of five Democratic governors who will meet with congressional leaders and mayors to discuss national policy and legislation. The meeting will be held in Washington on April 22.

The governor was named to the committee by Gov. Robert Scott of North Carolina, chairman of the Democratic governor's caucus.

An outgrowth of the recent caucus of Democratic governors in St. Louis, Mo., the meeting was agreed to and arranged by Democratic National Committee Chairman Lawrence F. O'Brien at the request of the Democratic governors.

The five-member committee of governors will represent the entire caucus of 29 Democratic governors.

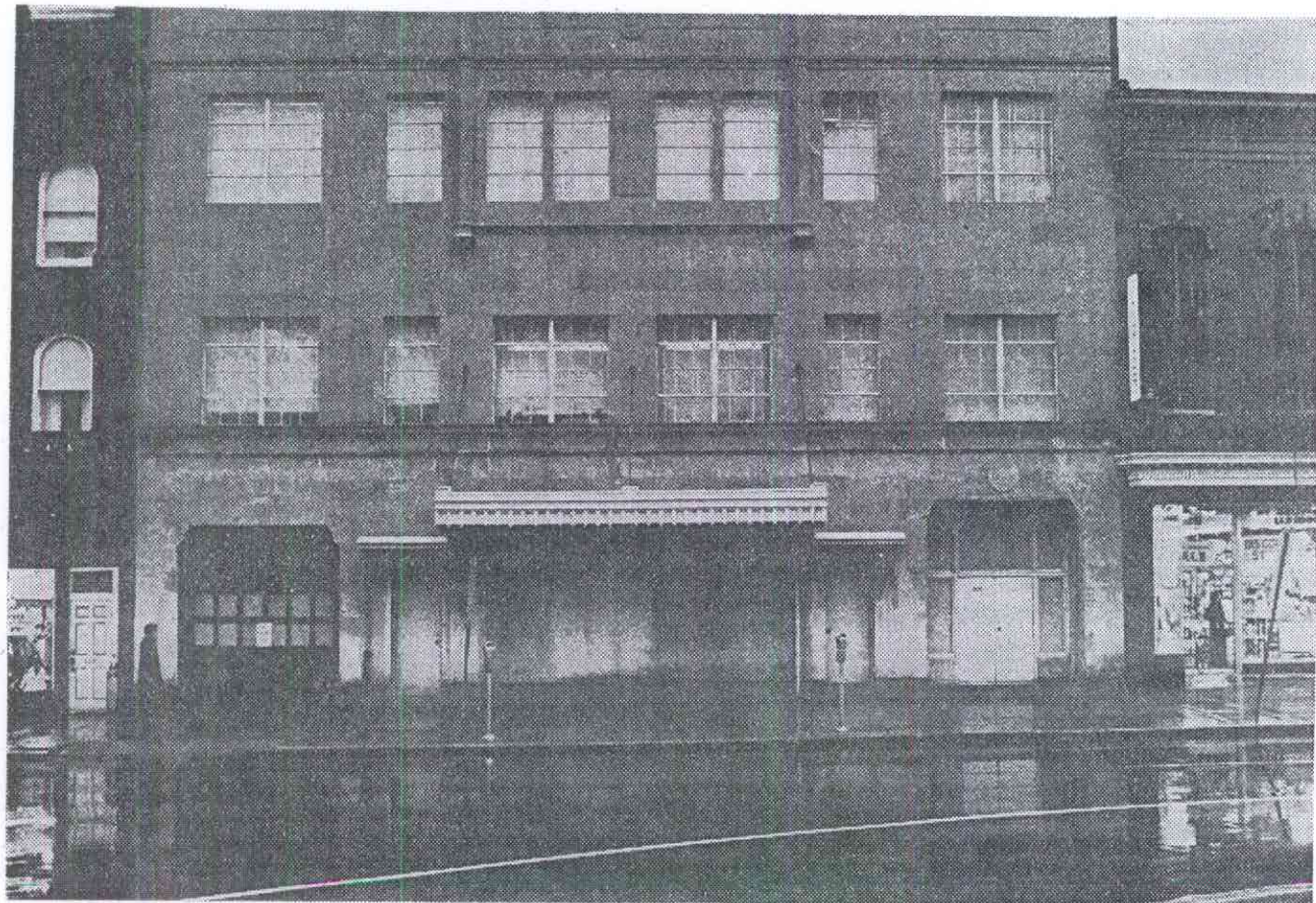
Australian State

Boycotts S. Africans

PERTH, Australia, April 6.—The state government of Western Australia today decided to boycott a tour by the South African cricket team next year in protest against South African racial policies.

State Premier John Tonkin said.

His decision follows a similar move to boycott the tour by the state government of South Australia.



By Ellsworth Davis—The Washington Post

FBI says this building at 215 Pennsylvania Ave. SE, near the Capitol, is used by its "translation section."