

Spy Cases Broken Suddenly by FBI

By Drew Pearson
and Jack Anderson

There's something peculiar about the sudden rash of spy cases that the FBI has broken this summer, at least one of which upset a plan to persuade a Russian scientist to defect to the United States.

In this particular case, John Huminik, the American scientist who played the role of a double agent in giving "sanitized" information to a Russian scientist, complained bitterly about the abrupt action of the FBI in arresting the Russian.

He was so disturbed that on Sept. 11 he wrote the FBI this confidential letter:

"I get a telephone call which, in effect, says there will not be any drop on the 20th of September, no new passports, no chance to see if Valentin (Revin) will work for us; only a guillotine end to all the work we put into this thing. I would not have been disturbed if we tried to defect him and failed, or if I had been consulted about the required rapid ending. I do feel that after working at this thing as intensely and with all the sincerity as I have, that some last comment would have been sought. . . .

"For example," continued the American double agent,

"I could have immediately sought Valentin and suggested that we have a serious discussion regarding his career; and if for the smallest reason he would have cooperated, then we would have helped tighten our overall security tremendously. If for some political reason it was necessary to throw someone out, then perhaps another Russian could have been selected for a trip home."

Headlines vs. Evidence

J. Edgar Hoover, however, apparently more interested in publicity than winning over a Russian convert, ordered the arrest of Valentin A. Revin, Soviet science attache who was implicated.

In two other spy cases, the FBI had the situation under control for five to seven years, and the G-men were doing an excellent job when they got orders from J. Edgar Hoover to make arrests.

William Whalen, a retired Army colonel, had been under FBI surveillance for seven years while allegedly selling information to the Russians. The G-men knew all that he was doing, and since he had retired from the Army there was no chance of his giving information of any present value to the Russians. In cases such as this, it is customary to postpone arrest indefinitely in order to catch other Rus-

sians who might seek out the American suspect.

However, the Justice Department had been forced to make an admission before the Supreme Court on May 24 that the FBI had placed an electronic listening device in the Sheraton Carlton Hotel suite of Fred Black, the Washington lobbyist convicted of tax evasion. This eavesdropping, highly embarrassing to Attorney General Nicholas deB. Katzenbach and to Solicitor General Thurgood Marshall, automatically killed much of the case against Black.

On June 13 the Supreme Court asked the Justice Department for more details, and there followed a vigorous discussion inside Justice.

FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, who participated in the discussions, put up a strong, sometimes bitter argument against any admission that the FBI had engaged in wholesale eavesdropping. However, Attorney General Katzenbach overruled Hoover.

Headlines vs. Evidence

Katzenbach has now been demoted to a No. 2 position in the Cabinet as Under Secretary of State and there has been speculation as to whether Hoover may have had an indirect hand in getting Katzenbach out of the Justice Department.

In the argument inside the

Justice Department, Katzenbach finally ruled that he must tell the truth about Hoover's wiretapping; so a memo was prepared on July 12 for submission to the Supreme Court on July 13.

On July 12, the day this memo was prepared, Lt. Col. Whalen was arrested. This made front-page headlines favorable to the FBI all over the Nation.

On July 13, the same day Solicitor General Marshall was giving the embarrassing wiretap revelation to the Supreme Court, Hoover made spy headlines again.

This time he ordered the arrest of two Czechs, Jiri Opatrny and Zdenek Pisk, who had been watched in connection with contacts they had made with Frank J. Mrkva, a State Department courier of Czech ancestry.

None of these cases were as important, nor were so many golden opportunities passed up as in the more recent case of double agent John Huminik.

In his case it can be revealed that Huminik was in contact not merely with Valentin Revin, the Soviet scientist, but with two other Russians still in the United States—Vladimir P. Boutenko and Vladimir M. Zorov—as will be revealed in an early column.