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New Or

FBI paid N.O. pair

By JACK DAVIS

A New Orleans couple posing for the past few years as radical activists actually have been paid informants for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which also sent one of them on intelligence gathering trips to foreign countries, including China.

They are a husband and wife in their 30's who recently moved from their Metairie home to a new residence in a Southwestern city. Their identities and location are being withheld because they, the woman's parents and the FBI claim their lives and their families' lives would be put in danger by publication of the information.

In a telephone interview yesterday,

the man was asked whether he and his wife were the unnamed couple described in a New York Times article Sunday about the FBI dispatching American citizens to gather information outside the United States. The article also quoted the woman as saying they had worked in penetrating leftist political organizations in Louisiana and elsewhere.

"I guess so," replied the man, explaining that they had given information to the Times reporter John Crewdson on the condition that their identities and location would be kept confidential.

However, when asked specifically whether he had been an undercover operative for the FBI, he said, "I'm not

going to admit that right now. I'm not going to say yes or no."

He also declined to comment on whether he is now connected with the FBI, whether the FBI helped with the move from New Orleans or whether the FBI had arranged for his wife's 1971 trip to China.

Joseph Sylvester, special agent in charge of the New Orleans FBI office, came to the States-Item yesterday to request strongly that the names of the informants be kept secret. He said the FBI had received information about threats against their lives recently, but would not say whether this was a consequence of the Times report.

The man, however, said threats had

to be 'Red activists'

been made since the Times report appeared. "As a result of Crewdson's article, I've received a couple of threats. . . . Somebody evidently thought I was involved in something."

Sylvester would not comment on the couple's relationship to the agency, except to say that they were "loyal Americans who furnished us with information."

Asked whether they were paid to provide the information, he at first said they were paid only expenses. Later he said he would have to check records to determine if they were paid.

The Times report said the New Orleans couple had described themselves as having worked almost full time for

the FBI, and an FBI official in Washington was quoted as saying the woman was a paid informant.

The woman's mother said that the two "have been employed in government for five years." Asked for more information, she said, "I think you'd better talk to the FBI."

Sylvester said he had received a phone call from the woman's parents shortly after they had been told by a reporter that a story describing the couple's activities would be published.

Joseph A. Burton, a Tampa, Fla., antique dealer, said in national news reports this week that he had posed as a Marxist in order to infiltrate revolutionary groups here and abroad. He said his

activities were similar to that of the New Orleans couple.

His disclosures about FBI intelligence gathering outside the United States—in which the New Orleans woman was involved—came after the FBI failed to reply to a letter he wrote asking if his work outside the country was proper and legal.

In a long conversation yesterday, the New Orleans man seemed preoccupied with saying that he had not done anything illegal while participating in radical activities. . .

"At no time was any law broken," he said. "At no time did I ever engage in

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THIS IS WHAT OSWALD DID IN NEW ORLEANS FOR DE FBI
LIKE THIS OTHER PEOPLE, IN THIS REPORT., TO SEE
THE CUBANS FOR CASTRO....

Mestres Peña

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THE STATES-ITEM

NEW O

FBI paid 'activists'

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any entrapment activities . . . or illegal surveillance . . . nor did I ever incite anything."

He said that the belief among New Orleans activists that he had tried to persuade people to smuggle guns to the American Indian Movement group occupying Wounded Knee, S.D., in 1973 was based on a misunderstanding of his actions.

He said he had flown to Wounded Knee on a commercial airline at the request of a group, most of whose members belonged to the Communist Party in the United States.

He said that when he arrived, they instructed him to call others around the country and people he knew in Louisiana to ask for aid to be sent to the occupied town, including things that might be needed in an anticipated battle with federal law enforcement agents. He said a number of others were involved in this "telephone soliciting."

Asked whether he had led people to believe that guns were being requested, he replied, "There were a number of people calling around the country asking for guns. . . . I was very careful about how I worded things, to not incite a riot."

He said he had been involved with members of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War in preparing to disrupt a New Orleans demonstration by the American Nazi Party.

Reached in Tampa by telephone, Burton said he had set up a sham Maoist group called the "Red Star Cadre," as a front for his FBI work. He said it was financed and controlled by the FBI.

Burton said he came to New Orleans several times between May, 1972, and July, 1974, to meet with members of the "Red Collective," which described itself as a Maoist group here.

The New Orleans man said he and his wife were Red Collective members.

Burton said he could neither confirm nor deny that the Red Collective was an FBI-controlled organization.

According to the Times, Burton said he was accompanied on two trips to Canada by the New Orleans woman.

The New Orleans man had been arrested twice at radical demonstrations here several years ago, and is remembered by local activists as frequently carrying a camera and getting involved in factional disputes with other activists.

Yesterday he described himself as unemployed, having been laid off recently by the electronics firm for which he worked after the move from New Orleans. He described his wife, who attended high school and college here, as a

housewife, "until she finds a job."

He disputed the accuracy of a paragraph in the Times story, which quoted the New Orleans couple as saying they received an average of about \$16,000 a year from the FBI for their undercover intelligence work.

"I never received \$16,000 from the FBI," he said. Asked if he had received more than that amount, he said he could not comment.

Asked if he owns the suburban house listed in his name and which the couple vacated late last year, he said, "I guess so."

Declining to describe exactly his sources of income in recent years, he said he made money on a number of small businesses and from investing his wife's savings.

The woman's mother said the couple's government work was motivated by their belief that they were serving "a very worthy cause." She said revealing anything about their activities would be a threat to national security, adding that Communists in the United States are much smarter than the press believes.

The New Orleans woman described in the Times story was quoted as saying she spent four weeks in China in 1971 with a delegation of radicals, one of the first groups of Americans allowed into that country after President Nixon announced there.

The woman said she reported to the FBI on her traveling companions and gave detailed observations of Canton, Shanghai and Peking, where she was introduced to Premier Chou En-lai, according to the Times.

"I feel like I've put my life on the line for a good cause," the Times quoted the woman as saying, "and I don't feel like that all ought to go down the drain because someone wants to make a sensational story."

"I spent a month in China, wondering if I was ever going to go home again, wondering if they were ever going to find out what I was doing," the quote continued.

The woman also said she had made "four or five" trips into Canada, according to the Times.

A former high FBI official was quoted in the Times as saying the agency has "no right to run operations in a foreign country—that's the CIA's jurisdiction."

He said the late FBI director J. Edgar Hoover "wanted to outscop the CIA. He wanted the FBI to come back with valuable information which he would give to the President over his signature, so he would get the glory"—according to the Times.

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