

# The Washington merry-go-round

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With LES WHITTEN

WASHINGTON — Members of Congress have raised an almighty howl over the FBI's practice of keeping files on them. But what they don't know is that one of their own committees also collected derogatory information on Senators and Congressmen.

The Senate Internal Security Committee not only maintained folders on Capitol Hill figures but leaked juicy tidbits from the folders to right-wing publications.

Staff members "chortled with delight" when their material appeared in print, witnesses have told us. The victims of these smears, invariable, were liberal legislators whom the staff didn't like.

Sources with access to the committee's secret files recall seeing folders on the following Members of Congress: Rep. Bella Abzug, D-N.Y., Ark., Sen. Jacob Javits, R-N.Y., Sen. Birch Bayh, D-Ind., Rep. Ronald Dellums, D-Calif., ex-Sen. William Fulbright, D-Ark., Sen. Jacob Javits, R-N.Y., ex-Sen. Tom Kuchel, R-Calif., ex-Sen. Howard Metzenbaum, D-Ohio, the late Sen. Wayne Morse, D-Ore., and Sen. Charles Percy, R-Ill. Files were also kept on several others.

Last spring, whispers about the Senate Internal Security Committee's titillating files reached the Senate Rules Committee, which polices the other committees. Chairman Howard Cannon, D-Nev., confronted the veteran chief counsel, Julian Sourwine, behind closed doors.

Did the staff maintain derogatory files on Members of Congress, Cannon demanded. Sourwine solemnly denied the existence of any such files.

After he got out of the hearing, witnesses report, he rushed back to his committee hideaway and began systematically to purge the derogatory material from the files. The witnesses claim "up to 40 folders" were pulled from the filing cabinets.

The folders on some lawmakers were filed under their own names; others were filed under the names of their home states. For the most part, the folders contained derogatory newspaper clippings.

Of course, the Internal Security Committee also kept files on hundreds of other people, including such celebrities as songstress Eartha Kitt, actress Jane Fonda and the late Martin Luther King. There was a particularly thick folder, say our sources, on myself.

We asked Chairman James Eastland, D-Miss., about the spying on his colleagues. This would be a violation of the traditions of the Senate, which Eastland has always respected. "It was not done with my knowledge," he declared firmly. "I wouldn't have permitted it."

Sourwine denied the whole thing. "We have never kept investigative files on any Senators," he said. The Senate

Rules Committee can learn the truth, of course, by putting the staff members under oath.

Footnote: We have also established that the Senate Internal Security Committee sometimes issued as its own work reports that were actually written by the CIA and the FBI. Reports castigating security risks, both real and imagined, were slipped to the staff usually on plain paper by both agencies. Then the committee would publish them, with only minor changes. Again, Eastland told us: "I know nothing about that."

WASHINGTON WHIRL — After three attempted crash-ins at the White House, the Secret Service is worried that someone might use stolen weapons in an assault. The helicopter used in one of the attempts, for example, was stolen from nearby Fort Meade, Md. Yet at Andrews Air Force Base, even closer to the White House than Fort Meade, a secret Air Force inspection has turned up serious breaches of security in ammunition storage areas. Corrections were made within days after the report was submitted... A few nights ago, a chauffeur-driven government limousine pulled up to a tennis club in the Washington suburbs. Out stepped Deputy Attorney General Laurence Silberman, who played a few hours of tennis and then climbed back into his limo. It was warmed up and waiting for him. A Justice Department spokesman explained that Silberman puts in a "long day" and doesn't have time to drive home for his car before playing tennis... After President Ford's State of the Union address, Vice President Nelson Rockefeller cracked to friends that he had heard about a hundred presidential speeches, but this was the first time he had sat through an address watching the back of the President's head...

CORRECTION: In a recent column, we listed Rep. Dominick Daniels, D-N.J., as one of the Congressmen who uses a secret fund to finance his newsletter. Our typist inadvertently copied the wrong line from the Congressional Directory. It should have been Congressman George Danielson, D-Calif., whose name appears below Daniels' listing. Our apologies to Daniels, who doesn't publish a newsletter because the cost is too high... With the opening of each new Congress, the Members play a game of "musical offices." The senior Congressmen are entitled to take their first pick, which starts a chain reaction. For example, Rep. William Widnall, R-N.J., refused to vacate his offices until the last minute. He kept Rep. Delbert Latta, R-Ohio, waiting, who kept Rep. Richard White, D-Tex., waiting, who kept Rep. Walter Flowers, D-Ala., waiting, who kept Rep. Les Aspin, D-Wis., waiting, who kept Rep. Jim Blanchard, D-Mich., waiting.