

JFK Doctor's Files Rifled in 1960

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NEW YORK, May 2—

Burglars apparently attempted to steal medical records pertaining to John F. Kennedy in July, 1960, before he was nominated for president, it was learned today.

The office of one of his doctors was successfully entered, and his files rifled, whereas a double-door system foiled an attempted entry several days later at the office of a second doctor who was treating the Democratic nominee.

The break-ins came to light in the wake of news that two Watergate scandal figures employed by the White House are alleged to have broken into the office of the psychiatrist of Daniel

Ellsberg, a defendant in the Pentagon Papers case.

Some person or persons broke into the office of Dr. Eugene J. Cohen, who was treating Sen. Kennedy for Addison's Disease.

Dr. Cohen's office was then, and is now, in the heavily patrolled Manhattan House, at 260 East 66th Street in New York.

Dr. Cohen discovered, the following morning, that his files had been rifled, many of them strewn about his office and the adjoining reception area. Entry was gained through a window that faced onto a balcony.

Dr. Cohen reported the attempted theft to the 18th Precinct of the New York Police Department, which sent two detectives to investigate. The two never took fingerprints, according to Dr. Cohen.

The two policemen immediately knew the thief or thieves were looking for a particular patient's records, said Dr. Cohen, because no file cabinets belong to any of the six other doctors sharing the suite were touched, nor were any valuables (or anything else) taken.

In particular, the cabinet housing files of patients whose last names begin with K was in total disarray, and the lock had been broken.

"I think we know what they were after," said Dr. Cohen. "After the police were here for just a few minutes, they said, 'Holy Cow, who do you take care of?'"

It turns out the thieves were unsuccessful because Dr. Cohen had filed his records on Sen. Kennedy under a pseudonym. Further, it was a non-Irish pseudonym.

"There was no question what they were after," says Dr. Cohen, who adds that he immediately phoned Sen. Kennedy's secretary, Evelyn Lincoln, to let her know what had happened and to tell her "everything was safe."

Several days later, according to the doctor, thieves attempted to gain entry to the office on 14th Street of Dr. Janet G. Travell, who was treating Sen. Kennedy's back.

The thief or thieves successfully broke through the first door of Dr. Travell's office but could not break open a second door to reach it. Dr. Travell also reported the incident to police.

"It looked like a real professional job," said Dr. Cohen. "This building has its own internal police force. The idea of even breaking in, well, it'd take professionals."