

PANEL FINDS F.B.I. USED JOURNALISTS AS ITS INFORMERS

Agency Is Also Said to Have Had Network in Schools and Charitable Funds

REPORT DUE NEXT WEEK

But the Document Will Not Reveal the Names of Any of Confidential Sources

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WASHINGTON, April 22 —

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has maintained a network of confidential informers inside major news organizations, universities and charitable foundations, according to documents and other evidence obtained by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

Sources familiar with the panel's report on domestic intelligence operations, to be made public next week, said, however, that none of the news reporters or other confidential sources would be named in the 350-page document.

The bureau's practice of using journalists as sources of information was continued at least through the end of 1973, the sources said, and may have extended beyond that. The F.B.I. is understood to have expressed concern to the Senate panel that, if any of the individuals were named in its report, they would "dry up" as providers of information.

Exclusive Information

It was toward the end of 1973 that the Central Intelligence Agency stopped using foreign correspondents of major American news-gathering organizations as part-time collectors of intelligence.

One of the sources said that while, in many instances, journalists were simply recipients of exclusive information provided by bureau agents for use in news articles, in other instances it appeared that reporters had also provided the bureau with unpublished information that they had picked up in the course of their jobs.

It was known previously that the F.B.I. had a "mass media program" under which it supplied sensitive and sometimes personal information on public figures to reporters who were considered "trustworthy." But it was not known that reporters

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were giving information to the bureau.

The F.B.I. has uniformly resisted the disclosure by the Senate committee and other investigative bodies of the names of any of its informers, on the ground that such publicity might endanger their reputations, careers or even their lives.

In its inquiry, the Senate panel agreed to a request by the bureau that its investigators not talk with reporters who were informers.

One source familiar with the investigation said that the bureau had declined to allow the Senate panel's staff to interview the reporters in question, and that Attorney General Edward H. Levi had supported the bureau's position after a protest from Senator Frank Church, the Idaho Democrat who heads the select committee.

One of the journalists whose names were provided to the Senate committee by the bureau said in a telephone interview today that he had been called by an individual purporting to represent the Church panel with a request for an interview about his alleged F.B.I. affiliation.

The journalist said that, upon checking, he discovered that the caller was not a member of the Senate committee staff but had been acting as "an intermediary" for the committee, and that he, the journalist, had reported the incident to the F.B.I., which was investigating it.

Although F.B.I. officials reportedly characterized the journalists in question as "confidential sources" when requesting that their names be deleted from the Senate's report, one source said, there was no evidence that any of them were on the bureau's payroll.

A spokesman for the bureau said that it would have no comment on any information obtained by the intelligence committee before the release of the domestic intelligence report, which is scheduled for Monday.

The bureau's sources within universities and foundations, the source said, acted chiefly as suppliers of information that became available to them through their jobs, but in some cases took active roles at the bureau's request.

The source said that in one instance a foundation executive had attempted to deny grants to organizations that the bureau considered unacceptable and to obtain, at the bureau's behest, the dismissal of individuals employed by funded organizations.

Criticism for Congress

The Church committee's report is expected to contain evidence that bureau agents bugged at least 14 hotel rooms occupied by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., principally to get information about his personal activities and not because of any suspected Communist influence within his civil rights organization.

Although the F.B.I. cited suspicions of such influence in seeking authorization from Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy to place wiretaps on telephones used by the civil rights leader, no such authorization was required for the hotel room bugs.

The room listening devices, picked up, among other things, evidence of Dr. King's sexual activities, and the source said that F.B.I. documents in the committee's possession made it clear that the devices had been installed for precisely that purpose.

The Church report, sources said, will also level criticism at members of Congressional panels with responsibility for overseeing the F.B.I.'s activities for keeping secret information about some of the bureau's more questionable actions.

The sources pointed out, for example, that F.B.I. officials, including J. Edgar Hoover, the bureau's former director, had kept the House Appropriations subcommittee with authority over the F.B.I. budget informed "in detail" of its cointelpro operations.

Cointelpro—for Counterintelligence Program—was a broad F.B.I. effort to confuse and disrupt a number of radical political organizations in this country, chiefly through the dissemination of anonymous information and misinformation. The program was ended by Mr. Hoover in 1972.

One source said that information in the Church committee's possession showed that the Appropriations subcommittee, headed by the late Representative John J. Rooney, a Brooklyn Democrat, knew far more about the workings of cointelpro than did any of the Attorneys General under whom Mr. Hoover served, except for William P. Rogers, who left that post in 1961.