

F.B.I. - II

# Case of Man Who Stole for F.B.I. Is Closed but the Questions Linger

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DENVER, Jan. 9—Sometime in the summer of 1973, Timothy J. Redfearn gave an agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation a sheaf of documents that he said he had stolen from an office of the Socialist Workers Party here.

The agent, Boyd D. Adsit, did not believe that Mr. Redfearn had really stolen the papers and he placed them in the bureau's files.

Six months later, Mr. Redfearn, who by then had been working as a paid F.B.I. informant for nearly four years, broke into a Denver home where several party members lived and made off with more of its documents, and several hundred dollars worth of furnishings.

The informant again sent the documents to Mr. Adsit, writing that he had "removed" them from the house. The burglary had been reported to the police, and Mr. Adsit asked Mr. Redfearn whether he had been responsible for it. Mr. Redfearn said that he knew nothing about the burglary, and Mr. Adsit placed the new documents in the same file with those stolen earlier. The police listed the burglary as unsolved.

Early last July 7, Mr. Redfearn cut a padlock on the door of the Socialist Workers Party office and took four cabinets full of party files that the F.B.I. was interested in.

#### New 'Contact Agent'

Mr. Adsit had retired from the F.B.I. a week before, so Mr. Redfearn, who is 25 years old, showed the files to his new "contact agent," John V. Almon. According to more than 700 pages of grand-jury evidence and testimony made public here last week, Mr. Almon was "excited." He

told his supervisor, Frederick M. Volz, who telephoned F.B.I. headquarters in Washington to ask for guidance.

But the party had previously filed a civil lawsuit against the F.B.I., charging it with unconstitutional harassment, and under court orders the bureau had been forced to admit that its agents had burglarized the party's New York City headquarters nearly 100 times in the 1960's.

So the F.B.I. official in Washington told Mr. Volz not to accept the stolen files. When Mr. Almon told his young informant to take them away, he recalled, Mr. Redfearn was disappointed, and noted that the F.B.I. "didn't used to be so particular" about how it got its information.

For eight days, the Denver police investigated the latest party burglary without success. Then, for reasons still unclear, the F.B.I. decided to acknowledge that its informant had stolen the documents.

Mr. Redfearn was sentenced last week to a maximum of 10 years in the Colorado State Penitentiary. The grand jury that indicted him expired on Friday after issuing a statement that "no further indictments are anticipated" in the case.

The jury's action in releasing the normally secret record of its investigation is only one of the unusual aspects of the case.

The investigation is believed to be the first ever by a state grand jury looking into possible criminal activities on the part of F.B.I. agents. In addition, it was the first partial disclosure of Mr. Redfearn's activities that last August led Federal Judge Thomas P. Griesa in New York City to chastize the bureau publicly for having withheld information about those activities from the Socialist Workers' lawyers and his court.

Last week, inspired in part by Mr. Redfearn's history of illegalities, the Justice Department gave the F.B.I. new rules for its informants that will prevent such abuses in the future.

#### F.B.I. Agents Called In

R. Dale Tooley, the Denver District Attorney, summoned eight members of the F.B.I. office here, including Mr. Adsit, Mr. Almon and Theodore Rosack, the agent in charge, to testify before the grand jury. Some agents contradicted each other's testimony and, on occasion, even their own previous testimony, and the record of the F.B.I.'s involvement with Mr. Redfearn contains other unresolved discrepancies. But Mr. Tooley said in an interview that he had been unable to establish that the F.B.I. had directed Mr. Redfearn in the commission of any of the crimes, and so could not ask the grand jury to bring charges against any of the agents.

Mr. Redfearn, the son of a Protestant minister who holds a degree in philosophy from a Colorado state college, interspersed his thefts from the Socialist Workers Party with other burglaries carried out for his own benefit. In early 1975, for example, he confessed to a string of seven burglaries in the Denver area that had netted thousands of dollars in stolen property. He was not prosecuted after he promised the judge that he would no longer associate with known criminals.

The deferred prosecution is reflected in Mr. Redfearn's F.B.I. file, as is the fact that the bureau, which suspended him for one month as an informant, quickly reinstated him after he "expressed deep regret concerning his criminal activities."

But Mr. Almon, who became Mr. Redfearn's "contact agent" last April, told the grand jury that he had never read the informant's file and was unaware of the letters regarding "stolen" information that had been sent to Mr. Adsit, or of Mr. Redfearn's history as a burglar.