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Ex-Agent's Lecture on Bugging

Washington

An ex-FBI agent who specialized in black bag operations and bugging gave a House panel a lecture trip yesterday through what he called "the black arts."

William Turner told a Judiciary subcommittee hearing on legislation to tighten federal wiretap laws that "this area cries out for additional legislation."

Turner currently is a private investigator and writer on electronic surveillance subjects, living in San Rafael.

In his years with the FBI, Turner said he made hundreds of wiretaps on telephones and plants of microphone-transmitters.

Frequently, Turner said that the microphones had to be planted by breaking and entering an office or home. These were called "black bag" operations.

Turner said he took part in a 1957 break-in of the Japanese consulate in Seattle. The agent in charge, George Berley, was sent from Washington, he said.

Radioactive cobalt was used to outline the workings of the consulate safe lock, he said. The contents were removed, photographed, and replaced.

Turner told newsmen last summer that he participated in the break-in at the consulate. The FBI had no comment.

Turner said that while wiretaps must be authorized by the attorney general, microphone plants, which are equally as numerous, do not.

Since wiretap authorizations are accounted for, and microphone plants are not, the amount of activity acknowledged is deceptive, he said.

Turner said he wrote Congress in 1961, seeking an investigation of FBI surveillance, and was quickly fired by then-Director J. Edgar Hoover.

Turner said it was his opinion that current law may have curtailed surveillance, but that it continues all the same because enforcement is too difficult.

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