

Police Chief Calls FBI Wiretap Probe 'a Joke'

Washington

The FBI failed to investigate thoroughly illegal wiretapping by the Houston, Tex., Police Department despite notification by the city's police chief that his telephone had been tapped,

the chief said yesterday.

Chief Carroll M. Lynn called the agency's eventual investigation "a joke." Houston's former U.S. attorney, Anthony J. P. Farris, called the probe "less than thorough, less than ag-

gressive, less than comprehensive and less than enthusiastic."

Lynn and Farris testified before the House subcommittee on courts, civil liberties and the administration of justice, which oversees the FBI.

Lynn, who became Houston's police chief, on Jan. 9, 1974, said that since he began his investigation of wiretapping by the department, he and friends have been harassed.

After he disclosed the allegations to the agent in charge of the Houston FBI office, Lynn said, "He put every roadblock that was possible in front of me," and tried to talk Lynn out of filing a complaint.

Lynn said that ten days after he reported to the agent that he believed his office telephone was tapped, two agents and a telephone company employee arrived to investigate but they brought no equipment. The chief said he lent them a screwdriver, but the men did not inspect the lines, cables or switch boxes leading to his telephone.

Lynn also said that a former intelligence division supervisor, informing him of other wiretaps, said FBI agents took part in some wiretapping.



AP Wirephoto

CARROLL M. LYNN
Houston chief of police

An FBI spokesman said the bureau is investigating the allegations and that the charges "will eventually be brought to proper authorities." He would not name the authorities.

Lynn told the committee that interviews with members of the police department's communications division "revealed that use of wiretapping by the Houston Police Department had been going on since 1967 or 1968."

Subcommittee chairman Robert W. Kastenmeier (Dem.-Wisc.) asked Lynn why he thought the FBI had failed to uncover the wiretaps.

"Either they were totally aware of what was going on and approved of it or they were totally incompetent," the police chief said.

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