

FBI Break-IN Reported In Newsman's Hotel Room

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Washington

Agents of the FBI entered the Washington hotel room of a reporter in 1959 to search his belongings for clues to his news sources and for evidence of impropriety in his personal life, according to a well-placed source with direct knowledge of the operation.

The source, who described the entry as one of numerous "bag jobs," or surreptitious entries, carried out by FBI agents in the post-World War II period, said it was ordered by J. Edgar Hoover, the late FBI director, because of his concern over an investigation of the bureau then being conducted by the New York Post, for whom the reporter then worked.

The agents involved, who reportedly were attached to the bureau's Washington field office, were instructed to hunt for information about FBI officials or employees to whom the reporter might have been talking, or for "signs that he might have had a female in the room or was drinking heavily," the source recalled.

"The fellow was clean as a whistle," the source continued. "I don't think they found anything that was worthwhile."

He added that a "full-time" surveillance of the man, carried out at Hoover's direction by Washington field agents "all over the city," also failed to produce any compromising information or clues to his sources.

An FBI spokesman, informed of the source's account of the hotel-room entry, said he would have no comment and referred to remarks made by Clarence Kelley, the FBI director, at a recent news conference.

Last Monday, Kelley provided the first official acknowledgement that FBI agents, as had long been rumored, had conducted a number of break-ins and "surreptitious entries" in the postwar years, including some at foreign embassies in Washington.

But he emphasized in response to a newsman's question that he knew of none that had not been carried out to secure "information relative to the security of the nation" or to obtain unspecified "foreign intelligence" materials.

The source, who asked not to be identified, said that he was providing details of the 1959 entry to illustrate the incompleteness of Kelley's knowledge of the subject of FBI break-ins.

In October, 1959, the New York Post published a 12-part series on Hoover and the FBI that, according to an introduction by Dorothy Schiff, the publisher, was based on the year-long investigation over which Hoover reportedly had expressed concern.

In her introduction, Mrs. Schiff disclosed that Robert Spivack, then the newspaper's Washington correspondent, had told her of information he received from an unnamed source that Mrs. Schiff herself had been placed under investigation by the FBI after the Post began to look into Hoover's administration of the bureau.