

Anderson Aide Arrested By FBI--Indian Papers

Washington

The FBI yesterday arrested Les Whitten, an associate of syndicated columnist Jack Anderson, and three Indians on a complaint of receiving and possessing government property.

Anderson said Whitten and Hank Adams, an Indian lawyer, were arrested as Adams prepared to return three boxes of stolen Bureau of Indian Affairs documents to the FBI. Adams, a Sioux, was counsel for Indians who occupied bureau offices for six days last November.

PAPERS

The others arrested were identified by the FBI as Daniel Pigeon of Whittenberg, Wis., and Allison Cerri of Silver Spring, Md.

Anderson told reporters that Whitten had never possessed any of the estimated 2000 pounds of official papers taken by Indian demonstrators at the bureau. However, Whitten has written stories from the documents, Anderson said, and Whitten had looked at them and handled them.

At an appearance before a



AP Wirephoto

LES WHITTEN
One of four seized

U.S. magistrate, Whitten and Adams were charged with unlawfully receiving and concealing three cardboard boxes of stolen government documents. Both were released on their own recognizance and a preliminary hearing was set for February 15.

JURY

No charges were placed against Pigeon or Cerri. But, they were summoned to

appear tomorrow before a federal grand jury investigating the case.

After his release, Whitten said, he went to Adams' apartment as a newspaper reporter: "I wanted to get an exclusive story."

Adams said that since last November he had been periodically and quietly returning to the FBI some documents and artifacts which the Indians had taken.

HELPING

Whitten said Adams was taking the three cartons to the Bureau of Indian Affairs for later return to the FBI, and he was helping by writing an FBI agent's name on the cartons — the agent whom Adams was dealing with — and then by sharing the burden of carrying the cartons to Adams' car.

Adams said he had asked Whitten yesterday morning to go along with him to "cover some aspect of the quiet nature in which these documents were periodically and ultimately all going to be returned, without advance press notice."

He said he had an appointment at the Bureau of Indian Affairs with staff investigators from the House Appropriations Committee and apparently intended to turn the three boxes over to them, for later transfer to the FBI. Adams confirmed he had received these three boxes of documents the night before in a shipment which was picked up at the bus station. He said they came from one of the Dakotas.

REACTION

Anderson said in a statement that Whitten was arrested and thrown into jail, "an outrageous violation of the First Amendment, for doing his job as a reporter."

"He stole no documents," Anderson said. "He is guilty only of writing the story of the stolendocuments. The story, of course, has been highly embarrassing to the government.

"It's a story of how the government cheated and defrauded and neglected the Indians in violation of their treaty rights. We will continue to write this story."

Associated Press