

FBI and political spying

By Frank Van Riper
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WASHINGTON — William C. Sullivan, an assistant FBI Director until his ouster by the late J. Edgar Hoover in 1971, has been secretly interviewed by the Senate Watergate Committee in connection with an alleged FBI spy operation.

The operation was believed ordered by the White House to investigate prominent Democrats during the 1972 presidential campaign, informed sources told the N.Y. News.

The Sullivan interviews, undertaken over the past several weeks by committee member Sen. Lowell P. Weicker (R-Conn.), reportedly have elicited a number of "solid leads" from the onetime FBI official. Sources said Sullivan has implicated former Assistant Attorney General Robert C. Mardian in the alleged White House dictated spy plot against the Democratic party.

Mardian is the former head of the Justice Department's Internal Security Division. He was first mentioned during the Senate Watergate hearings by James W. McCord, who told the panel on May 18 that Mardian gave him the go-ahead to receive confidential Justice Department reports on protests and other activi-

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ties while he was security chief for the Nixon reelection campaign.

Sullivan was unavailable for comment.

For several months, Weicker has conducted an investigation of what he believes is illegal FBI interference with the 1972 presidential race. It was learned that he has written committee chairman Sam J. Ervin (D-N.C.) urgently requesting Sullivan's "FBI activities . . . undertaken to affect the climate or outcome of the 1972 presidential campaign."

Sources reported that Sullivan, who has more than 30 years experience with the FBI, has been reluctantly talking to Weicker, hinting strongly that the committee should do all it can to secure the confidential files of the FBI's "Division Five," the Internal Security Division.

These same sources reported that the committee has tried for months to pry loose the sensitive files, only to run into a bureaucratic brick wall. Weicker reportedly is convinced that the files also include detailed FBI reports on wiretaps of newsmen and National Security Council officials undertaken in connection with the Pentagon Papers case surveillance.

Last May 14, then Acting FBI Director William Ruckelshaus disclosed that the sensitive files on the bugging of reporters and national security council officials had been found in the White House safe of John D. Ehrlichman. It was further revealed that the files had been sent to the White House in 1971 by Sullivan, then an assistant FBI Director.

Sullivan told the N.Y. News then that Hoover had once threatened to disclose the taps and that then Attorney General John A. Mitchell had been "petrified" by the prospect.