

Latest Charges

Ex-L.A. FBI Chief Faces 'Bug' Rap

LOS ANGELES — (UPI) — The former chief of the FBI office here, already demoted once in a mustache conflict, faces another demotion to the bottom of the agency ladder, a suspension and an official censure, the Los Angeles Times reported today.

The Times said it had learned that acting FBI Director L. Patrick Gray has proposed the severest punishment possible, short of outright dismissal, for Wesley G. Grapp for violating the bureau's rules in installing wiretaps and bugs in his own offices.

Grapp was not available for comment and his whereabouts were not known. He was recently demoted from head of the Los Angeles FBI office to agent in charge of the much smaller El Paso, Texas, office, but has not yet reported for duty there.

Stripped of Rank

Now Gray has sent Grapp a letter saying he would be stripped of his rank as a local office chief, at \$36,000 a year, and reduced to an ordinary special agent, at a maximum of \$24,362 a year, and sent to the Minneapolis bureau after a 30 day suspension.

Grapp, reportedly on close terms with former FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover before Hoover died, clashed with Gray over the relaxation of the bureau's strict dress code. Gray, on a visit to the Los Angeles office,

personally told agents they could grow mustaches, wear their hair a bit longer, and could wear colored shirts instead of the white ones mandatory under Hoover.

When some of the agents began to grow mustaches, the FBI said, Grapp ordered them to shave, saying he was in charge of the office, not Gray.

Grapp was demoted to head of the El Paso office for the manner in which he refused to carry out a policy change order, Gray said.

Office Bugged

The latest proposed punishment is for another offense. The FBI said Grapp had equipped the office with electronic devices to record telephone conversations, and discussions in the office, "in violation of FBI policy."

Gray said Grapp contended he had permission from Hoover to install such equipment, in connection with an FBI quarrel with Trans World Airlines. Hoover was annoyed at one of the airline's captains for criticizing the FBI handling of a hijacking, saying the agents endangered the lives of his passengers. Gray quoted Grapp as saying Hoover wanted conversations with TWA executives recorded.

Gray said there was nothing in the FBI's records to show Grapp had such a dispensation from the rules, and even if he did, there was no authority for continuing to use the equipment.