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FBI Is Said to Have Paid Bonuses for Burglaries

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FBI agents were given bonuses for conducting successful burglaries, according to an FBI source who said he approved many of the illegal break-ins.

The bonuses ranged from \$50 to more than \$250 and were paid from a confidential fund used to pay informants, the source said.

FBI Director Clarence M. Kelley last week confirmed that FBI agents conducted "surreptitious entries," or burglaries, to obtain "information relative to the security of the nation."

With some exceptions, Kelley said, the practice stopped in 1966.

An FBI source has told The Washington Post that dozens and sometimes more than 100 break-ins were conducted by FBI agents each year.

While most of the break-ins were conducted in cases involving domestic or foreign security, many were conducted in ordinary criminal cases, the source said.

With each bonus, he said, the late FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover sent a letter of

commendation to agents who had conducted burglaries that produced useful information, but the letters did not mention the burglaries.

Burglaries were not conducted "willy-nilly," the source said. "The basic question was can we get the information anyway? If you couldn't, you'd go ahead," he said.

On some occasions, the source said, local police appeared at the wrong times and caught FBI agents in burglaries. However, "we told them we had a major operation going and it was in the best interests of the country," the source said. Usually, he said, the police retreated.