

Fired Editor Denies Spying on Staff

Nashville

A copy editor fired from the Tennessean newspaper two weeks ago because of an alleged relationship with the FBI denied yesterday she was a paid informant for the bureau.

"I am not a member of any federal, state or foreign intelligence agency, either directly or indirectly," Jacque Srouji told reporters with her attorney present.

It was the first time since her dismissal became public on May 7 that Srouji, 32, commented on charges that she had "a special relation-

ship" with the FBI.

Tennessean Publisher John Seigenthaler said he fired Srouji on May 5 because it appeared "the rights and interests of at least two other members of the newspaper's staff were involved." He has refused to identify the two.

"I have never volunteered any information to the FBI on the Tennessean or any of its staff," Srouji said yesterday. "I have never been requested by the FBI, any of its agents, or any other federal, state or metro (Nashville agency) to obtain information about the Tennessean or any of its staff

members."

She acknowledged having one conversation last fall with an FBI agent about Tennessean copy editor Jerry Hornsby, who has been a member of the national committee of the Socialist Party, USA. She said she teasingly asked the agent over lunch whether the FBI was investigating "a certain Tennessean reporter."

Investigators for the House Small Business Committee's subcommittee on energy and environment said in Washington last week that FBI agent Larry Olsen, formerly in Nashville and now in Oklahoma

City, told them Srouji had a "special relationship" with the bureau.

She said it was common knowledge she has had a friendly relationship with some FBI agents.

Asked if she had been in contact with any FBI officials since May 7, Srouji first said, "No." But she and her lawyer, William R. Steltmeier, then said that they would like to change that to a "no comment."

The FBI would make no comment yesterday.

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