

JOHN EDGAR HOOVER
DIRECTOR

Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.

LAH:RLC

March 14, 1938.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

An article prepared by Special Agent John
R. Welles on the subject of "Surveillance", previously
approved by the Executive Conference, has been edited
and is submitted herewith for approval.

Respectfully,

H. H. Clegg
H. H. Clegg.

Enclosure.

Mr. Nathan	.....
Mr. Tolson	.....
Mr. Bughman	.....
Mr. Clegg	.....
Mr. Coffey	.....
Mr. Crowl	.....
Mr. Egan	.....
Mr. Foxworth	.....
Mr. Glavin	.....
Mr. Harbo	.....
Mr. Hotal	.....
Mr. Lester	.....
Mr. McGuire	.....
Mr. Mumford	.....
Mr. Nichols	.....
Mr. Pennington	.....
Mr. Stouder
Mr. Tamm
Mr. Tracy
Miss Gandy

File

*Letter for
Mr. C. Connelley
3/21/38
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1cc of article sent*

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

APR 1 1938

DEF. DIV. CLEGG

Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.

BUREAU BULLETIN NO.

SECOND SERIES

Based upon an article prepared by a Special Agent of this Bureau, the following suggestions and data with reference to surveillances are being submitted for your information:

A surveillance is a close watch or a constant guard. Basically there are two types - one a stationary surveillance, and one a roving or mobile surveillance.

On stationary surveillances, it is usually necessary to obtain a room or a house. The closer one is to the point of surveillance the better, especially on night watches. In selecting a place, one should take into consideration the neighborhood, and when entering this neighborhood to take up the surveillance, the dress of the occupants of homes in that neighborhood and their styles, should be followed by the Agent. In some instances, Agents have endeavored to keep surveillances from a position located at some distance from the place of surveillance, by use of field glasses. This practice has been found very impractical except for a short period of time.

In selecting a room or house, consideration should be given to finding a location from which observation may be had of all entrances to and exits from the place under surveillance. The lighting at night should be taken into consideration, and also the conditions affecting the ability of the one conducting the surveillance to be in a position to not only watch the persons, but the cars and license numbers used by them.

A stationary surveillance, if it appears that it will extend over a period of 48 hours, should be handled by three men. Observation at night under lights, if diligently kept, will affect the eyes to a point where vision is blurred, and the senses are dulled; therefore, frequent shifts should be made by Agents, and where three men are conducting a surveillance, two hours on and four

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hours off seems to be the most practical. When on a surveillance, it should be remembered that practically all movements of criminals and their associates are eventually learned and reported, and if something is missed on a surveillance, it will become known and will reflect discredit on the Bureau.

It may be felt that a detailed log on stationary surveillances is unimportant and Agents may feel inclined to make notes only on those occurrences which seem to be important. On the contrary, an exact log is of primary importance, and notes should be made of everything which happens. A complete description of all cars and persons should be obtained, and in minute detail the way the persons under the surveillance are dressed at various times. All of these things might at the time appear useless, but we should consider the Agent who has been on a stationary plant and suddenly receives orders to follow an occupant of the place under surveillance. If he has logged the cars, habits, dress and peculiarities, it may mean the difference between success and failure. The real determination of an Agent becomes apparent through his actions when placed on a stationary plant for a long period of time. Most certainly it will show his disposition. For an active man to conscientiously keep a stationary surveillance means that he really has the interest of the Bureau deeply ingrained. If, when on such a surveillance, nerves become jangled and an inclination to relax is felt, the Special Agent in Charge should be consulted for temporary relief.

In surveillances it is imperative that the person being followed not know or learn he is under surveillance. Sometimes the person's place of habitat is known, and if he is lost, he can be picked up again by waiting in the locality where he lives. Of course, this is unsatisfactory in view of the fact that while he is out of sight, he is liable to make an important contact which would not be covered. Following a person calls for real diligence and ingenuity, as well as quick thinking on all occasions. If the person being followed is walking, the situation can be handled by two alert Agents. More than two may confuse the assignment. One should not begin feeling that the person he is following knows he is being followed, for in such a case the Agent enters the job with a complex which tends to make him act unnaturally. First, there should be obtained in the mind a complete description of the clothing the person is wearing, more especially the hat. Know every curve and dent in the hat and the angle at which it is worn. This is of primary importance in congested areas where at times you can see only the hat of the person you are following.

Next, note the way the person walks and carries his shoulders; what kind of a hair cut he has; whether his ears are large and whether they stick out from his head or are close set; his approximate height, as well as whether the person is wearing glasses. All this can be obtained from a rear view. If the person is carrying any package or article, or if there is anything peculiar about his clothes or walk, make a mental note of it.

In congested areas, one Agent should be on each side of the street, and both should have the person under surveillance in view. If the person under surveillance stops, a good pretext appears to be for one Agent to cross the street, shake hands with the other as though they have not met in some time and engage in conversation. Two persons conversing are not as conspicuous as one person standing alone. If the person under surveillance turns back, the Agent following should pass him and keep going forward. The second Agent should cross the street and follow the person while the first Agent crosses to the opposite side of the street, following on that side. If the person under surveillance enters a building, one Agent should follow him in and learn at least where he is going, and if possible, whether he contacts anyone. If entering the building appears impractical, both Agents should keep watch on exits and entrances for the person to reappear. If it is impossible for both Agents to watch all exits, each Agent should take an exit, but in view of the other, each using a pre-arranged signal for notification when the person leaves the building. Notes should be kept on all buildings entered and descriptions of all persons contacted. Should the person being followed merely nod or speak to someone he passes, a note should be made of that person. There will, of course, be times when it will be desirable to follow some person whom the man being followed contacts. It will generally be known in advance if this is desirable, and of course, it would require additional Agents following the same basic procedure. Where the person followed is really "hot" and is known to be trying to avoid being followed or trying to learn whether he is being followed, there are three principal pitfalls to avoid. In each instance it would be well for the Agent to let the person under surveillance make a second move. One pitfall is when this person enters a building. An Agent should not rush in immediately after him, but should wait to see if he does not just go inside, pause, and then come out. The second pitfall is vacant lots. In coming to a vacant lot, it is better to see if the person does not walk around this lot to note whether anyone is following him. The third pitfall is where the person being followed jumps in

a taxicab. The cab number, if any, should be obtained and the license number also. One should not rush frantically into the street and flag another cab. It is not unlikely the person being followed will get out of the cab or will merely go a block and then get out. Bear in mind that it is imperative that the person being followed shall not know he is being followed.

In keeping persons under surveillance, an investigator should avoid peeking around corners, hiding behind telephone poles and light posts, and looking sideways from under a hat at the person being followed. If this person stops and retraces his steps, the investigator should not hurriedly look at a display window and start looking at some article which it is not natural for him to consider purchasing.

Quick movements always attract attention. If the person doubles back, it is best to pass by in a natural manner, and depend on the other Agent until again the surveillance can be normally resumed. In following a man in a southern city where there were few people on the street, and it is customary to speak to strangers, an Agent confronted a man who doubled back on him, and as they met, they spoke to each other. Later, under correct conditions, the person was asked whether he had ever seen the Agent before, and he said he was positive he had not, and in talking to him it appeared he had no idea he had been followed. There have been several instances where Agents have felt sure they had been identified and, out of curiosity and a desire to bolster confidence, have later talked to the person and asked him if he saw anyone following him at any time, and suspected he was being followed. In almost every instance, a negative answer has been received.

It will probably be gathered that surveillances, either of the stationary or roving kind, are as difficult to properly perform as any undertaking an Agent encounters. It allows no letdown, calls for ingenuity, needs a man who has confidence in his ability to act naturally under unnatural conditions, has persistence, and is alert at all times. It is like a game. In a baseball game, with a man on first base and one on third base, with one out, the player has in mind what to do in case the ball comes to him on the ground or in the air, and what should be done if the ball should go to some other member of the team. On a surveillance, an Agent should at all times have in mind what the person followed may do, and as in a ball game, have his own move planned to meet the situation as it arises.

Very truly yours,

John Edgar Hoover,
Director.