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A Liar and a Snooper Rewarded

It turns out that a state department security officer who was allowed to resign a year ago after he was caught lying to the Senate internal security subcommittee has landed back on the government payroll as a \$17,000 trial examiner for the Federal Communications commission. The Washington establishment takes care of its own.

The man thus rewarded is John F. Reilly, former deputy assistant secretary of state for security, who in that capacity drew a salary only \$1,000 more than he gets in his new post.

Reilly and some of his state department associates instituted a campaign last year to dismiss Otto F. Otepka, the department's chief security evaluations officer. Otepka had strongly protested the appointment of state department employes on an "emergency" basis, without security clearance, to a departmental committee which was to pass on potential appointees to United Nations jobs.

In the course of studying state department security lapses, the Senate subcommittee summoned Otepka, who testified that he would not have granted security clearance to some of the members of the departmental panel who were commissioned to pass on the fitness of those appointed to U. N. The subcommittee then called Reilly, who denied that Otepka had warned him of the presence of security risks in the department.

In his turn, Otepka prepared a statement for the subcommittee, containing some documents which did not jeopardize national defense in any manner, in order to prove that he had informed Reilly of the security risks. The United States Code specifically authorizes any federal employe to furnish information sought by congressional committees and protects all such informants from reprisal.

Nevertheless, the state department was exercised at the fact that its sloppy security procedures had been brought to the

attention of the subcommittee. It thereupon, in defiance of the law, dismissed Otepka from his post as security evaluator and put him on the shelf. He was charged with "misconduct," but the department hesitated to fire him until the election was out of the way.

Reilly and two other state department officials, David I. Belisle and Elmer Dewey Hill, were called by the subcommittee and asked directly whether they had tapped Otepka's phone. At first they flatly denied that they had. Only after Sen. Thomas J. Dodd of Connecticut took the floor of the Senate and said that he had proof to the contrary did Reilly and his associates send letters to the subcommittee changing their testimony about the tap.

They resorted to elaborately evasive phrasing, Reilly referring to a "feasibility survey" to determine whether Otepka's conversations could be "intercepted." Hill did get around to admitting that Reilly wanted him to "eavesdrop" on conversations. Reilly and the others also admitted that they had neglected to inform the committee that they regularly snooped thru Otepka's "burn bag"—the receptacle in which discarded classified documents are placed to be destroyed by burning—in order to get evidence that he was cooperating with a committee of Congress.

Sen. Dodd said that Reilly and his colleagues, having committed perjury, then proceeded to commit further perjury when recalled by the subcommittee. He called their testimony "the most dismal performance ever witnessed of evasion, double-talk, and misrepresentation by high government officials," stating that thruout the Otepka case the state had chosen to chase the policeman instead of the culprit.

And still the game goes on. While Otepka is subject to dismissal from the government for loyal and patriotic service, his opposite, a liar and a snoop, is welcomed back into the clan and given a plush post in the bureaucracy.