

# Secrecy

## FBI agents work behind locked doors in Troy

By SUZIE MARKS

Security and secrecy surround the FBI office in Troy's Northfield Plaza. The suite number is omitted from the building directory. Only visitors with appointments are welcome.

Once at the third floor office, a visitor's strong knock is needed to get the receptionist to open the securely locked door.

Inside, she clarifies a visitor's name and affiliation before offering him a seat.

In the waiting room, the familiar red, white and blue FBI insignia hangs over the receptionist's desk. "Fidelity, Bravery and Integrity," the emblem says.

The telephone rings, the receptionist doesn't answer it. Agents answer their own phone calls, she says.

A glimpse of the hallway reveals a row of locked individual offices. Men in trench coats, just like in the movies, roam the hallways.

Supervisor of the office is Rob Langford. Another FBI emblem hangs over his desk. Maps and aerial views of Oakland County dot his walls.

Getting Langford to talk about his job as a federal investigator is a difficult chore. Even his wife is in the dark about his cases, he says.

"She can't know anything about the work we're doing," he says in a thick Alabama dialect. "It's sometimes frustrating because I come home from work upset about something and I can't talk about it to her. But most FBI wives understand."

LANGFORD'S JOB is supervising the Oakland County FBI agents. The state's main office is in downtown Detroit, and his office on Crooks Road monitors activities in Oakland County.

"Oakland County is a very challenging place to work," Langford says. "There is a lot of money out here and the cases are becoming more difficult and complicated."

White collar and organized crime are prevalent in the county, the supervisor says. The lure of making money without taking personal risks is a characteristic of white collar crime, he

adds. Computerized fraud is increasing, probably because of advanced technology, he admits.

"There are also light jail terms in white collar crimes," the FBI man said. "A bank robber could get up to 20 years where a bank teller who embezzles gets off on probation."

Only recently, has the FBI become so involved with cracking organized and white collar crimes, Langford said. Because large amounts of money are lost annually in white collar crimes, the FBI has diverted its interests from chasing interstate bank robbers and fugitives to cracking organized crime existing within legal businesses.

"Seventy per cent of our work is in these newer areas," he says.

THE JOB OF tracking down bank robbers has been turned over to local police departments. Now the FBI agents concentrate on complicated cases that might take several years to solve. On an average case, it takes one to two years before enough information is collected for indictments to be issued, Langford said.

A case is closed, he added, when a witness refuses to testify so there can't be any prosecution.

What about the Thelma case?

"That's still open, and someday we're going to solve that," he answers. Agents spend most of their time reviewing records, conducting interviews and watching suspicious persons. Only a small percentage of their time is taken by undercover work, Langford says.

Tips come from anonymous letters, phone calls, police, bankers or employees. Occasionally, a case is blown open after one person is questioned and, for some personal reason, tells the other persons involved that the FBI is on their tails.

"PEOPLE USUALLY cooperate with us. But even if they inform others that we are questioning them we still usually have enough information about the criminal act to go ahead," he explained.

Changes in records is common once

a business discovers it is under investigation, he says. "When a business knows we're investigating it, the people may destroy their original records and make a different set of them that are changed," he adds.

Langford wouldn't discuss cases he has worked on during his 10 years with the investigating division. He only shared his first experience.

Just out of the U.S. Marines, he decided to work for the FBI. He completed FBI training in Virginia and

was sent to Houston. His first assignment was to catch a bank robber who escaped from prison. He smiles when he says he caught him after several months, after the interrogating of the robber's girlfriend.

Patriotism lured Langford to the FBI.

"I enjoyed the Marine Corps and always respected the FBI. I am a flag waving individual and met a couple of agents who impressed me," he said.



### Philip B. Thomas, Inc.

Started in business, 1949, in Farmington

Specializing in Personalized Custom Designing & Creative Styling of Jewelry

We are proud to announce  
**ROBERT F. WILLIAMS**  
has joined our staff

Authorized Dealer:  
Citizen Watch  
RESTRING  
JEWELRY • REPAIR  
REMOVING  
WATCH • CLOCK REPAIR  
478-9050

Mon-Sat 9:30-5:30  
CLOSED WEDNESDAY

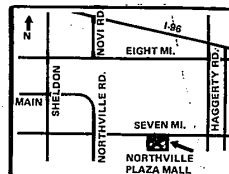


## NORTHVILLE PLAZA MALL

West Seven Mile Road.

between Northville and Haggerty Roads

*Serving You is Our Business*



**George's Coiffures**  
42305 W. Seven Mile Rd. - Northville  
**348-9270**

**4-WEEK SPECIAL UNIFORM \$10.00 OFF**  
Ask for Drama, Dabbie or Fairouz  
Manicures Friday & Saturday

**OPEN CHRISTMAS EVE and NEW YEARS EVE**  
*We Do The Family OUR HOURS*

Mon. 9-9	Thurs. 8-9
Tues. 9-8	Fri. 8-9
Wed. 9-8	Sat. 8-6

**ATTENTION NON-OWNERS**  
**Free Litton Microwave Cooking School**

AT  
NORTHVILLE PLAZA MALL

**Thursday, Dec. 14th**  
**7 pm to 10 pm**

Answers Questions about  
All Aspects of Microwave Cooking

Your may obtain **FREE TICKETS**  
(A \$20 Value)  
in advance at our store  
Reservations Required

**Northville Vacuum & Appliances**

"Quality Products  
for Quality People"

FOR INFORMATION  
& RESERVATIONS  
**349-4766**

**Aruffo's** ESTABLISHED 1936  
CUSTOM FLOOR COVERING

**Carpet for Christmas!**

*a gift the whole family can enjoy*

- Remnants and rolls in stock
- Padding, tack strip, tapes for the do-it-yourselfer
- or use our carpet craftsmen
- 24 hour Binding Service

*BIGELOW	*MOHAWK	*TREND
*MASLAND	*BARWICK	*and More

**349-3010**

Hours: Mon., Thurs., Fri. 10-9; Tues., Wed., Sat. 10-6

**CHINA FAIR**  
RESTAURANT

**OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK**

**京華酒家**

Number One Chef from Hong Kong prepares to perfection Cantonese, Hong Kong, Mandarin, Japanese and American Cuisine

**349-0441**

Now Open  
Mon.-Thurs. 11 am-11 pm  
Fri. & Sat. 11:2 am-Sun. Noon-11 pm

*Dress for the Holidays*

See our Newest  
Selection of  
Holiday wear

**THE WATERMELON SEED**  
Maternity Fashions

*Northville Plaza Mall*  
42317 W. 7 Mile Rd.  
349-3940  
HOLIDAY HOURS  
Monday - Friday 10 am to 9 pm  
Sat. 10 a.m. to 6 pm/Sun. 12:5 pm

**For Hearth & Home**

**NOW ONLY \$9995**  
Antique Brass

**Shop Our Complete Fireplace Accessory Department**

- Tool Sets
- Baskets
- Log Holders
- Outdoor Log Crib
- Grates

**NOW ONLY \$19995**  
Antique Brass or Black & Antique Brass

**TOYLAND NOW OPEN!**

- Games
- Models
- Dolls
- & More!

**THESE CAN SAVE YOUR HEAT FROM THE COLD, CRUEL WORLD.**

They're Bennett-Ireland's beautiful, patented Protecto-Pane® glass fireplace enclosures.

Open your choice, and fully enjoy the fire's warmth, crackle, and aroma.

Shut it, and enjoy peace of mind with the fire safely contained. And heat can't escape up the chimney, so you save on heat bills.

- Energy-saving and safer.
- Easy to attach in minutes.
- 4 finishes to complement any room's decor.

See our full line of quality fireplace furnishings and accessories by Bennett-Ireland.

**LIVONIA HARDWARE**  
5 Mile at Farmington

**GA2-1155-937-1611**

OPEN DAILY 9 a.m.-9 p.m. SUNDAY 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

**ALL DIAMONDS ON SALE 20% off**

**•PENDANTS •EARRINGS •RINGS**

for Men & Ladies

**Michel's Jewelry**

*The Diamond Center*  
Quality at the Guaranteed Best Prices

NORTHVILLE  
Northville Plaza Mall  
W. Seven Mile  
348-9380

LIVONIA  
37665 W. Five Mile  
at Newburgh  
Chatham Village  
464-0333

OPEN 10 AM-9 PM MON-SAT 12-5 PM SUNDAYS

**X-C SKI WAXING SCHOOL**

•HOT WAXING •GLIDE WAXING  
•KICK WAXING •WAX REMOVAL  
•BASE PREPARATION •TIPS

**SAVE \$20**

Regular \$25.00  
ONLY \$5.00 With This Coupon  
Limited Enrollment

**MWC Sports**  
**349-5084**