

FBI joins search for Hoffa; Bloomfield police step back

By ROBERT KIPPER

BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP—Most of the pressure and much of the work involved with investigating the disappearance of a national figure like James R. Hoffa was lifted from the shoulders of the township force Sunday with the official entrance of the FBI into the case.

Actually as many as 12 FBI agents had worked on the investigation in an unofficial capacity since the former Teamsters leader disappeared July 30. But it wasn't until 6 p.m. Sunday, when FBI director Clarence Kelley reported receiving "extortionate communications" on the case, that the FBI formally entered the investigation.

For the Bloomfield Township Police Dept., which has weathered all the strain and publicity of launching an investigation that has drawn attention from all over the country, this means the bulk of the work—and responsibility—has now switched to federal hands.

STATE POLICE and Detroit police, as well as police departments nationwide, will continue to join the township force in checking out the most

plausible leads that have continued to be telephoned to the township from all parts of the country.

And Bloomfield Lt. Curt Grenier will remain in charge of the local part of the investigation.

But the two Bloomfield investigators previously assigned full-time to the case have been switched to other assignments.

The other members of the force, who balanced chores related to the Hoffa probe with their routine duties as township officers, have returned to normal assignments.

As dispatcher Fred Harbrueger described it, for most of the local force it is "back to dog and cat complaints."

THE ENTRANCE of the FBI came as a relief to many local police officers and township staff, who by Monday had grown weary of the burden and sometime harassment of being at the center of the Hoffa probe, and as a blessing to the township budget, which felt the strain of the extra man hours required to launch the probe.

It cost the township \$1,500 in overtime to begin the Hoffa investigation, according to Township Supervisor

Home Case. Many local officers worked longer hours and a few nearly round-the-clock during the first hectic days of the investigation.

Supervisor Case also welcomed the lessening of the township's responsibility in the Hoffa case as an opportunity for the township to begin returning to business as usual, away from the glare of nationwide publicity.

RECALLING the past few days, Case said:

"If the whole township blew up and everyone was killed, we wouldn't get all the national attention we've had because of this."

"All we had was an abandoned car. There is no evidence of foul play and no blood stains or anything."

"We've had abandoned cars before, but never anything like this."

THERE WERE some jurisdictional problems to be worked out early this week between local and FBI forces. Lt. Grenier met with FBI agents to determine just where the township's responsibilities now begin and end.

Although Grenier couldn't be reached for clarification, Supervisor Case, who also serves as public safety director in Bloomfield Township, said Bloomfield Police will eventually be all but phased out of the investigation.

"We'll be involved if foul play is discovered within the township," said Case. "But essentially we will do less and the FBI will do more."

"Much of the pressure will be off Lt. Grenier."

ACCORDING to press reports, Jay Bailey, special agent in charge of the Detroit FBI office, said most of Detroit's 275 agents will be assigned to the case.

"The FBI sent a flood of people in this morning," Case said Monday.

AGREEING with Lt. Grenier's statements expressed last week, Case acknowledged that from the beginning the township police department knew other police authorities would have to be involved in a case of this scope.

"The FBI is trained in a different arena," Case said. "I don't think any local police chief will tell you his men could handle a case of this type on their own. The FBI knows people nationwide and has much wider contacts."

CASE WAS not alone in welcoming a decreased burden for the township in finding Hoffa.

Although many employees at the usually peaceful township hall agreed that the Hoffa case brought a great deal of excitement, most started to resent the attention and distraction after several days of it.

"Why did Hoffa have to pick Bloomfield Township?" said Clerk Deloris Little. "Why didn't he pick West Bloomfield or Bloomfield Hills for his meeting?"

"We have been so busy with telephone calls, reporters and television cameras. One of the girls in the police department did nothing else Friday but answer calls."

POLICE DISPATCHER Harbrueger added:

"All of this is frankly starting to get on everybody's nerves."

It was Harbrueger who was on duty last Thursday morning when Bloomfield Police were alerted to check out the parking lot of the Macchiusi Red Fox restaurant to see if Hoffa's car had been left there.

"I didn't think at the time that this case was going to be so nationwide," recalled Harbrueger. "I was about to go off duty and then the call came in and everything went boom."

Harbrueger estimated that the township has received more than 500 Hoffa-related calls since that first one.

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