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Bullet That Hit Blackman Home Seen by Police as a Random Shot

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WASHINGTON, March 6 — Officials investigating a shooting incident at the home of Associate Justice Harry A. Blackmun of the Supreme Court last week told him almost immediately that they believed the shot was fired randomly or at a distant target and was not aimed at him, a police spokesman said today.

Detective Tom Bell of the Arlington County police force in Virginia said agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation had determined soon after they arrived at Justice Blackmun's apartment in Rosslyn, Va., that the bullet that shattered a window of the apartment last Thursday night was probably a random shot, "possibly from Georgetown," a few hundred yards across the Potomac River, which divides Virginia and the District of Columbia.

No one was injured in the incident, which was not disclosed to the public until Monday.

The shooting has been widely linked in the news media to threats that Justice Blackmun has received in the past from anti-abortion extremists because he wrote the Supreme Court's majority opinion on abortions in 1973, when it ruled that women have a constitutional right to obtain abortions.

Identical Death Threats Cited

The F.B.I. said Tuesday that it was looking into identical death threats mailed to Justice Blackmun, another Supreme Court Justice and to Senator Alfonse M. D'Amato, Republican of

New York.

Bureau officials have declined to name the other Justice, but they said the threatening letters did not mention the abortion issue. Senator D'Amato, who said Tuesday that the letter had a New York postmark and that it arrived at his Washington office last Thursday, has taken a strong stand against a liberal abortion policy.

United Press International said the second Justice who received an identical letter was Associate Justice Lewis F. Powell Jr.

The F.B.I. has acknowledged that, based on ballistic studies, the bullet that struck Justice Blackmun's apartment may have been fired accidentally. The bullet, fired from a 9-millimeter weapon, broke a window of the Blackmun's third-floor apartment about 11 P.M. Thursday and lodged in a chair.

The ballistic investigation, completed within hours after the incident, was said to have traced such a steeply descending trajectory from the Blackmun's window to the chair that the shot would have had to have traveled a distance too great to have been aimed.

Lane Bonner, an F.B.I. spokesman, said the four-day delay in disclosing the incident was the result of a request by the bureau that the shooting remain unreported by local law-enforcement authorities in Virginia, and was routine in cases involving national leaders while still under investigation.

