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Thursday, September 13, 2001

Latest

Updated E

## Reports bring sweep of river

### Six armed men wearing camouflage allegedly stopped boats

By **Jim Hannah**  
The Cincinnati Enquirer

**COVINGTON** — Officials closed a bridge and searched 17 miles of the Ohio River Wednesday after six armed men dressed in camouflage were reported stopping boats and a mysterious black duffel bag was found on a beam of the Taylor Southgate Bridge.

The FBI confirmed that in the aftermath of Tuesday's deadly terrorist attacks, the incident was enough for law-enforcement officials to conduct a sweep of the Ohio River from the western Interstate 275 bridge to the eastern I-275 bridge.

Riverboats, docks and floating restaurants were checked for bombs and to make sure they were not sabotaged.

Nine Tristate bridges, including train trestles, were inspected. This included Covington Police checking for the possibility of bombs in sand bags left behind by construction crews on the Brent Spence bridge.

Water intakes along the Kentucky shore, which provide Cincinnati with most of its drinking water, were examined to make sure water supplies were not contaminated.

"We wanted to make sure all the bridges were intact, nothing was put in water intakes or anything planted in facilities along the river," said Kenton County Emergency Management Agency Director Ed Burk, who coordinated Wednesday's river sweep from his office in Covington.

On Wednesday morning, officials decided to do a sweep of the river after they learned six men wearing Coast Guard jackets and camouflage and armed with gunshad stopped one pleasure craft and two commercial towboats about 1 a.m.

The armed men, operating out of a boat, stopped the pleasure boat near Ludlow and told the operators that they

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Survey



had to turn back because the Ohio River was closed. Two tugboats, operated by McGinnis Inc., were stopped near the Riverbend Music Center.

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The search involved the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, the Coast Guard and the FBI.

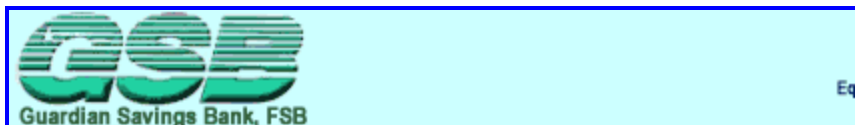
Mr. Burk said the only thing searchers uncovered was a black duffel bag hanging from the catwalk of the Taylor Southgate Bridge. The bridge was closed from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. as the Cincinnati bomb squad removed the bag. It was empty.

In response to this incident, the Boone County Sheriff's Department has stationed armed deputies on water-rescue craft. Lt. Jack Banks said deputies will patrol the Ohio River for an undetermined amount of time.

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