

could hear what was being said in an adjoining room on an espionage case we had, they couldn't do it, and we finally had to turn to the CIA for help. When we were working on the Pentagon Papers case, we wanted to know whether photocopies we were holding as evidence were copied from an original document, from an original photocopy, or from a photocopy of a photocopy. The lab couldn't give us a satisfactory answer so we had to turn to the Xerox Company for help. The FBI Lab couldn't even come up with a simple "peephole"—a device which, when attached to a car under surveillance, would allow us to follow that car electronically when we couldn't follow it visually—that would stick to the bottom of a car. Once again I had to turn to the CIA for help.

Deciphering codes was one of the lab's major functions, but most of my men learned the hard way to take any codes that were giving them problems to the National Security Agency if they wanted results.

An old college friend of mine, a brilliant scientist who became a world-famous microbiologist, once told me that he could develop an unbreakable code by using bacteria. When he explained his theory to me I couldn't understand a word of it, and when he asked me to put him in touch with the head of the FBI Lab I did so, but I doubted whether the FBI scientists could understand my friend either. The men who were working in the FBI Lab as agent-examiners were for the most part former special agents who were chosen for their lab assignments after years in the field because they had once majored in biology or physics in college. Few of them have continued their education or updated their degrees, and therefore very few are aware of recent scientific developments. They are laboratory technicians, not research scientists.

I put my friend, the microbiologist, in touch with Donald Parsons, who headed the lab at the time. After their meeting, my friend told me that he could tell by Parsons's blank expression and by the questions he didn't ask that Parsons had gotten as little out of the theory as I had. "Don't you have a scientist up there?" he asked me. My friend finally gave his code concept to the CIA.

Why was the lab such a disaster? Starting from the top, neither of the two men who held the post of assistant director in charge of the

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