

HAL HUMPHREY

# Twin Faces of J. Edgar Hoover

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In 1958 the FBI's J. Edgar Hoover had an editorial in the bureau's house of organs excoriating the glorification of crime in movies and TV as "an affront to the national conscience."

One year later the Desilu studios and producer Quinn Martin launched The Untouchables, a TV series with more crime, violence and sadism per film foot than anything attempted before.

This fall, on the same ABC network which carried The Untouchables, we find the same J. Edgar Hoover and the same Quinn Martin joining hands to produce a TV series called The FBI.

I consider this a fine piece of irony, and it will be amusing to see how the Messrs. Hoover and Martin compromise what one must assume are their different philosophical approaches to crime and violence on TV.

Producer Martin already has told Variety's Hollywood TV correspondent Dave Kaufman that he must have "dramatic license" and that the FBI has agreed. The statement was provoked by Martin's discovering there have been only 13 FBI agents shot in 32 years. In a TV series dealing with crime such a low casualty rate, even among the good guys, is unheard of—a fact that spurred Martin's request for dramatic license, which undoubtedly will be translated into corpses.

Stories reportedly in the works for the series, which is being done at Warner Bros., are a bank robbery, Com-



Quinn Martin

munist investigations, kidnapping, private armies, espionage, syndicate crime and a psychopathic youth who kills girls with long hair.

## No Civil Rights Theme

When asked by Kaufman if there would be a civil rights story, Martin replied no because the series deals only with closed cases, and added, "I wouldn't shy away from it, but I don't think a political discussion on the FBI's role in civil rights would be entertaining."

How will Martin keep the entertainment quotient of the TV series at the necessary pitch and still prevent Hoover from looking foolish on his well-known stand against excessive violence and crime in our TV programs?—that is the question.

The network and the sponsors of The FBI (Ford and Alcoa) naturally will insist upon enough "action" to keep the series' rating high, yet Hoover is bound by his past criticism of TV violence to see that his FBI does not become a contributor to that violence.

One New York TV critic already has censured Hoover for putting his seal of approval and cooperation to the TV series and questions the ethics of the move.

Even the American Civil Liberties Union became interested when it heard an FBI clearance was required of any actor appearing in the series. The ACLU and the Screen Actors Guild have been assured that only the regular stars and others directly connected with it have been checked through the FBI files to determine that they were never Communists or otherwise subversive.

## Politics No Factor

Political colorations are not a factor once the Commie hurdle is passed. Efrem Zimbalist Jr., who plays the lead FBI agent, was an active campaigner and speaker for Republican candidate Barry Goldwater in 1964.

Producer Martin calls himself a "liberal Democrat" and after visiting FBI headquarters in Washington and the Academy at Quantico, Va., he said, "I wanted to find out for myself if its (the FBI's) people were as right-wing as I'd been hearing . . . well, I explored and I found them apolitical . . . and a great outfit . . ."

No one can say there isn't any pre-season interest in the FBI series. Probably more has been said and written about it than any other new series for the coming fall, a fact which already must be causing some concern on the part of Ed Sullivan and Walt Disney, whose shows will be on opposite Hoover's.

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