

FBI Concedes Possibility Of Fooling Lie Detector

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The FBI conceded yesterday that the lie detector device can be fooled by alcohol, drugs and spies and might also be fooled by a couple of aspirins or too many cigarettes.

In a limited endorsement, however, three FBI officials did insist that the polygraph examination can be a useful investigative aid when properly used—although they do not consider the instrument good enough for screening their own personnel.

The officials presented their views on the polygraph to the Government Information subcommittee of Rep. John E. Moss (D-Calif.), who said at the end of the hearing that the testimony reinforced his view that there is "very little if any validity" in use of the polygraph.

Lying Discounted

In a 2½ hour hearing at the Rayburn Office Building, the FBI men also agreed that a lie is not so incriminating, since that every man has his own code which allows him to bend the truth now and then.

As Rep. Donald Rumsfeld (R-Ill.) put it, politicians are asked every day whether they plan to run for office, "and they don't perspire when they say 'No.'"

But throughout the hearing the three officials stuck to their opinion that in trained hands, the polygraph can help their agents break cases.

John P. Mohr, assistant to Director J. Edgar Hoover, said in a prepared statement that the FBI used polygraphs in only a tenth of 1 per cent of

its cases in the last fiscal year. Mohr said the FBI's position is that the polygraph is not a lie detector but "may indicate deception" on the part of a suspect.

Ruby's Questioner

The other FBI representatives were Assistant Director Ivan Conrad and Bell P. Herndon, a special agent supervisor who gave a polygraph examination to Jack Ruby in Dallas at the request of the Warren Commission.

After hearing the officials spell out for reporters the FBI's safeguards on and reservations about the polygraph, Moss said the Bureau uses the instrument "with the care that I feel it requires."

However, the three did not expand on Moss's assertion that effects may occur from heavy smoking, alcohol, aspirin, circulatory illnesses or other physical and mental factors. They did say that alcohol and drugs obviously have an effect, however, and that a trained man can twist the pattern of the test.

And if they could not answer these questions, Moss asked, could other persons in Government and private industry who regard the polygraph as a "precise instrument" answer them?

The California Congressman, who has been conducting a running battle to limit public and private use of the polygraph, declared that "I would absolutely refuse to submit to a polygraph examination for any purpose" and that he would seek the answers to his questions from experts in physiology.