

FOUR

LBJ's Tool

AFTER JOHN F. KENNEDY was killed in Dallas, Lyndon Johnson lived in fear that he too would be assassinated. I was told by his Secret Service guards (many of whom hated Johnson's imperious attitude toward them) that after LBJ became president he usually rode slumped down in his limousine with his head below the window. When he flew anywhere in Air Force One there were always two or three fighter planes flying a couple of thousand feet above the president's plane, ready to dive down if another plane flew too close.

If Jack Kennedy's death shocked and worried Johnson, it also made him warier than ever of Bobby and Teddy Kennedy. Johnson believed that both surviving Kennedy brothers had presidential ambitions, and as president he saw himself as their natural enemy and acted accordingly. Threatened by Bobby in particular, he was afraid that there would be a groundswell of support for Kennedy's nomination as vice-president at the Democratic convention in Atlantic City where LBJ, an "accidental president," sought the unanimous support of his party. Johnson wanted to choose his own running mate, and Bobby Kennedy was definitely not on his list of possible choices.

Since Johnson felt he had to protect himself against any last-minute surprises from the Kennedy camp, he turned to the FBI for help. He asked Hoover for a special security team of a dozen or so agents to be headed by Cartha D. ("Deke") DeLoach, Courtney Evans's successor to the job of White House liaison. Ostensibly the agents would be there to guard against threats to the president, but this security force was actually a surveillance team, a continuation of

the FBI's surveillance keeping track of K

With the help of a trip Kennedy Luciano, the Amer Italy by the federal Kennedy in a restaurant was com approached Kennedy to return to the United States, an agent, who knew the subject, reported the report as an excuse to organized crime. And found out who was opposed to been.

In 1965 Johnson had come to Johnson a Kennedy family nominate Morris DeLoach, LBJ v FBI investigation of the Kennedy investigation of the Kennedy investigation of the Supreme Court much. The worst had an average of mediocre judges many of them put clear. But a few disrespected, stories began him unqualified for the White House, ground as proof. It raised Teddy Ken

nation. Johnson had no concrete reason to dislike Morrissey; he only wanted to make Kennedy look bad and Morrissey's nomination presented him with the opportunity to do so.

Johnson and Hoover had their mutual fear and hatred of the Kennedys in common—and more. As neighbors in Washington since the days when Johnson was a senator from Texas, they had been frequent dinner guests in each other's homes. They remained close when Johnson served as vice-president, but there was a change in their relationship when LBJ became president. The director was over sixty-five by that time, past retirement age for federal employees, and he stayed in office only because of a special waiver which required the president's signature each year. That waiver put Hoover right in Johnson's pocket. With that leverage Johnson began to take advantage of Hoover, using the bureau as his personal investigative arm. His never-ending requests were usually political, and sometimes illegal. There was absolutely nothing Johnson wouldn't ask of the FBI, whether or not it fell within the bureau's jurisdiction. And Hoover hot-footed it to Johnson's demands. The few times he let LBJ down, it was simply because the bureau lacked the capacity.

Whenever the occasion arose, President Johnson would use the FBI against the press. As an example, on 15 March 1965, LBJ called the bureau and said he was damned disturbed about a story published by the *Washington Evening Star* saying that the president was going to appoint Kermit Gordon (then the director of the Bureau of Budget) to be secretary of the treasury. Johnson made it clear he was very displeased that this had been leaked to the press and said he was going to put a stop to it.

The president told us to "discreetly" find out who leaked the story. We said we'd do what he asked. He reminded the bureau that we had done this before for him and obviously we had good press contacts. What we did not tell President Johnson was that it was the FBI who had leaked the information to the *Star* in the first place. This was a calculated policy designed to get the press obligated to the FBI so that we could subsequently use them! What we did tell LBJ was that the FBI would not and could not leak any such information because

we did not know Mr. Gordon was under any consideration, a patent lie. We had had the tip early from one of our countless highly placed sources of information.

Hoover had chosen "Deke" DeLoach, a man who at times seemed to be Hoover's protégé and at other times seemed to be almost a son to the director, to act as FBI liaison to Johnson when he served in the Senate. DeLoach's relationship with Johnson continued into the White House where, much to Hoover's chagrin, DeLoach became a member of Johnson's inner circle. DeLoach and his family visited with the Johnsons at Camp David and at the LBJ Ranch, and eventually DeLoach obtained a direct line to LBJ's White House from his bedroom.

Because his advanced age put him in such a precarious position, Hoover literally turned the bureau and all its resources over to DeLoach and Johnson to use as they saw fit, and he found himself very much in the back seat, almost a captive of the president and his FBI liaison. He couldn't do a damned thing about it either, even if he had wanted to, which I doubt. All Hoover wanted was to stay on as director, to avoid retirement. Appearances were maintained, however, and Johnson, through DeLoach, treated Hoover with kid gloves and was always careful to see that the attorney general, Hoover's nominal boss, did the same.

For instance, early in 1965 DeLoach told Hoover that the president wanted Hoover to know in confidence that he had called both the attorney general and deputy attorney general into his office and had specifically instructed them that they were to get along with the director and the FBI. The president, DeLoach said, told the attorney general that the director's advice should be sought, particularly on future appointments in the department, and especially the assistant attorney generalship of the Criminal Division. The president had also instructed the attorney general to initiate luncheons or regular meetings to which he should invite Hoover. DeLoach told Hoover that Johnson was sure that Attorney General Katzenbach would not be around very long and that he hoped the FBI could put up with him for the time being.

I first became aware of Deke DeLoach when he was working as liaison to the CIA. Although we had never met—we worked in different divisions—I had heard about him from some former FBI people who were working for the CIA. The word was around that DeLoach was consciously driving a wedge between the two agencies. Hoover was jealous of the CIA's power and he had been bitterly disappointed when the new agency was formed to dominate the field of worldwide intelligence. DeLoach played on that jealousy by hint-



Cartha "Deke" DeLoach, Hoover's liaison man to the LBJ White House. Wide World Photos

ing to Hoover that the CIA was planning to extend its field of operations to the United States. To Hoover, that was like waving a red flag in front of a bull, and he was furious when he heard it. My CIA contacts saw through DeLoach's game and came to me in alarm to discuss the ever-widening gap between the two agencies. They asked if I could do anything to remove DeLoach from his liaison job, but I didn't have the authority.

DeLoach once acted as liaison between the CIA and me when I was asked to give a speech to fifteen hundred or so CIA employees. Accompanied by three men from the CIA, DeLoach himself drove me to the building opposite the Lincoln Memorial where the CIA

held many of its meetings. When we arrived at 6:30, no one was there. The speech was scheduled for 7:00. By 6:45, when not one other person had shown up, I began to get very nervous. DeLoach told me to calm down, that the CIA was so disorganized that everyone else was probably late. At five minutes to seven, when we were still alone at the hall, DeLoach went to use the phone. He came back cursing the CIA, insisting that they had given him the wrong information—I actually had been scheduled to speak in the auditorium of the HEW building, where a full house was waiting impatiently for the speaker to arrive. The CIA men and I were full of apologies when we finally arrived at the right place at 7:15, but not DeLoach. "Couldn't help being late," he told the anxious CIA delegation who met us at the door. "It couldn't be avoided. We were working on an important espionage case."

DeLoach and I did not work together, but we knew each other rather well, enough for him to make a personal request. Somehow he had heard that I enjoyed browsing in bookstores, and he asked me if I would buy some books for him. I asked what kind of books he wanted—novels? biography? history? "All of them," he answered, "just as long as they look good and are written on serious topics." He went on to explain that he wanted the books not to read but to display in his home to impress his guests. I did send him some books, mostly used but in good condition, and he sent me grateful memos.

Although DeLoach was the number three man in the FBI before me, there was never really any competition between us. If we disagreed, it was because I felt he was giving my friends a raw deal, not me. For instance, I didn't like the way he treated an associate of mine named Arbor Gray. As the bureau's resident expert in the "dangers of communism," I was swamped with offers of speaking engagements. DeLoach hoped to lighten my load by taking over some of those engagements, but Hoover turned him down so I picked Arbor for the job. I was still breaking Arbor in when I brought him with me to speak to a group in New Jersey. I planned to handle one phase of a subject and let Arbor handle another. Our points of view dovetailed beautifully, and thanks to Arbor we gave a marvelous talk. But DeLoach wrote a memo to Hoover saying that one of his cronies from the American Legion (DeLoach held many high posts in the Legion,

including national vice-commander and chairman for public relations) hated Gray's speech and that DeLoach therefore had to recommend that Arbor Gray retire from the lecture circuit.

When the director showed me DeLoach's memo I defended Arbor's performance, and as soon as I got back to my office I ran a check on the legionnaire who complained about the speech. I found out that he owed money everywhere and that he had been found psychologically unfit to serve in the army and was discharged. I reported my findings to Hoover and all hell broke loose, but when the smoke cleared Arbor Gray was back on the lecture circuit and DeLoach never mentioned it again. No other complaint was lodged against Gray.

DeLoach was happy in his job as liaison man to Lyndon Johnson's White House, and he did his best to keep Johnson happy by doing whatever the president asked. He asked a lot. When Johnson was running for president against Senator Barry Goldwater, he asked DeLoach to have our agents go through the files to see if the FBI had anything he could use against any members of Goldwater's staff. DeLoach passed the word to Hoover, who, as always, was glad to oblige, and he sent whatever information we came up with (it wasn't much) straight to the White House.

Johnson's objections to Goldwater were political, but his attitude toward Senator William Fulbright, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, was more personal. Johnson didn't like Fulbright, and he sincerely believed that the senator was playing into the hands of the enemy when he voiced his objections to LBJ's Vietnam policy. Through DeLoach, Johnson ordered Hoover to assign a few FBI agents to monitor Fulbright's televised Senate committee hearings and analyze what was said for any signs of Communist influence. It was absurd, but we did it.

Johnson was almost as paranoid about the Communist threat as Hoover was, and, through DeLoach, LBJ ordered Hoover to post an FBI lookout near the Soviet Embassy in Washington to observe visitors. The president insisted that a record be kept of any senator or congressman who entered the embassy, no matter what his mission. DeLoach explained the president's feelings to Hoover in March

of 1966. The president, said DeLoach, spoke of the harassment being given his policies by Senator Fulbright. Johnson said that there were only about six senators who formed the nucleus of the opposition, including Fulbright, Morse, Bobby Kennedy, Gruening, Clark (Pa.), and Alken (Vt.). All of these men, Johnson had learned from the FBI, had either had dinner at the Soviet Embassy or lunches or private meetings with the Soviet ambassador prior to the beginning of their heavy opposition to the president's policies. As for Fulbright, DeLoach told Hoover, LBJ said that he "doesn't know what the smell of a cartridge is—he's a narrow-minded egotist who is attempting to run the country." The president said that what Bobby Kennedy was trying to do was to bring embarrassment to the administration and fame and publicity to himself.

Later that same month DeLoach told Hoover that LBJ wanted the director to discuss the embassy visits during a network television appearance the president planned to set up for him. LBJ said that Hoover might want to subtly work in the "fact" that there was considerable espionage going on and that certain Iron Curtain embassies were attracting many prominent legislators and leaders of the United States into doing their bidding. The president added that this would refer to Fulbright and Morse who, he felt, on the Vietnam issue, were definitely under control of the Soviet Embassy.

Johnson didn't limit his paranoia to senators and congressmen with possible Soviet connections, though. He wanted the FBI to keep an eye on every senator and congressman who opposed his policies, whether they were Republicans or Democrats, whether they leaned to the left or to the right. He wanted anything our agents could dig up on them that might prove embarrassing or politically damaging. He leaked the information we sent to him on Republicans to the press himself, but he was reluctant to attack members of his own party and supplied whatever damaging information he had on the Democrats to Everett Dirksen, the leading Republican in the Senate.

Johnson also wanted the FBI to keep a close watch on his critics in the press. For instance, in April of 1965 DeLoach told Hoover of Johnson's instructions regarding Robert Pierpoint, the White House correspondent for CBS. According to DeLoach, Jack Valenti had

Wm Sullivan's "The Bureau"
De Loach