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A MODEST PRO.

Here's What You Can

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Acting Director

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Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Gray:

I was glad to read of your new policy encouraging the exchange of ideas between the press and the FBI and I thought that rather than attempt to arrange an appointment, I'd simply send you this letter containing some of my own thoughts on the Bureau.

Who am I, you might well ask, to advise you on how to run what some regard as the most sophisticated intelligence agency in the world? Let me concede at the outset that my own raw, unevaluated file on the FBI is probably no more accurate than your own raw, unevaluated file on me. Oh, I've written a book on the Justice Department and the FBI under Robert F. Kennedy. I attended last fall's Princeton Conference on the FBI co-sponsored by the Committee for Public Justice. I'm a regular Sunday night viewer of Efram Zimbalist Jr. and "The FBI," and I take the FBI tour in Washington every chance I get.

But it is only because after all this research I have concluded that there are no outside experts on the FBI—in the sense that there are experts on such nonsecret Government agencies as State, the Pentagon, the Bureau of the Budget — that I am presuming to write you now.

My own six-point program for the Bureau is not inconsistent with much of this agenda but it is, I hope you will agree, much simpler to grasp and therefore should be easier to implement.

Briefly, the Bureau should: Change its name, shred its files, drop Zimbalist's option, teach a course in what I call Bureauspeak, give away the new FBI building and hire some Nader's Raiders. I'll elaborate.

CHANGE THE BUREAU'S NAME: Lest you think this a radical step, please recall that J. Edgar Hoover changed the name in 1935 from the old Bureau of Investigation to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. I recognize that there is much good-will still attached to the name "Federal Bureau of Investigation" and to the initials "FBI," but Efram Zimbalist's good works notwithstanding, all radicals, most liberals, and students of government of all political persuasions will tell you there is a lot of bad will, too, especially in academic and ghetto communities.

"The Bureau should change its name, shred its files, drop Zimbalist's option, teach Bureauspeak, give away its new buildings and hire some Nader's Raiders."

My own preference for a new name would be the National Police Force. I favor having a NPF rather than a FBI mainly because as Prof. Arthur Miller of the George Washington Law Center pointed out a few years ago, we've already got a national police force, so my thought is by calling it that we might be more on guard against its abuses.

SHRED THE FILES: I don't know how many files you keep, but like many civilians who were encouraged by your announcement that henceforth agents needn't be male, shirts needn't be white and hair needn't be short, I was puzzled by your assertion to Robert M. Smith of The New York Times, a couple of days after you were appointed, that "none of you guys are going to believe it— but there are no secret files. There are just general files, and I took steps to keep their integrity . . ."

Aside from the files FBI leaks and Jack Anderson finds, I don't know of any nonsecret FBI files. I assume you are not yet ready to let every citizen — or any unauthorized citizen, for that matter — read the FBI files. If that's so then the files are what most people would call, perhaps naively, secret.

WHILE THIS PROPOSAL might strike you as funny, I trust you agree with me that the dissemination of data — true or untrue — from FBI files is anything but a laughing matter. Under current FBI procedures some 60 million arrest records (as distinguished from convictions) are routinely made available to local law enforcement agencies on request, and these agencies in turn make them available to banks, potential employers, credit agencies and others, with devastating impact on the lives of millions of innocent people.

Should file-shredding not meet with immediate enthusiasm among your advisers, you might therefore want to consider a more conventional proposal for beginning to bring the files under some sort of control.

excerpt from article in today's NYT Magazine.

POSAL TO THE FBI:

Do With Your Agency



L. Patrick Gray 3d

DROP ZIMBALIST'S OPTION: I am a great fan of Zimbalist and "The FBI" which I, along with 40 million other Americans, have watched regularly since September of 1965 when the program made its debut. And I know from a posthumously-published article by J. Edgar Hoover in TV Guide, that the FBI has script approval "to guard against . . . unnecessary violence, promiscuous conduct, 'blue prints' for committing crimes and other offensive material," but I nevertheless feel that the image Zimbalist projects has given the American people the wrong idea about the FBI. For one thing he never follows up a false lead and for another he always gets his man.

No wonder many Americans, conditioned to such high expectations, are impatient with an agency that accused the Rev. Philip Berrigan of a kidnap plot it couldn't prove, and has yet to bring to justice the vandals who broke into the FBI office in Media, Pa., more than a year ago, on March 8, 1971.

TEACH BUREAUSPEAK. I was pleased to read that as a result of a new facility on the Marine Corps Base at Quantico, Va., the FBI will now be able to graduate 2,000 local, county and state law enforcement officers annually.

I am sure you are aware that former New Haven Police Chief James F. Ahern is not alone in feeling that the Bureau ought to get

out of the local law enforcement training business and that others feel the Bureau's training of its own agents, with all of that emphasis on firearms and target practice, is a mistake in an organization which is and ought to be involved in few if any shoot-outs.

The foreign language, which I call Bureauspeak, is the language of the FBI. It is a language rich in ambiguity and, despite its surface similarity to English, deeply involved in a grammar and vocabulary of its own. Throughout the early sixties, Justice Department attorneys would receive FBI reports that would attribute information more or less as follows: "T-1, a usually reliable informant says . . ." or "T-12, an informant who has proved reliable in the past, reports . . ." or "T-6, an informant of unknown reliability, says . . ." or "T-63, an informant who is not available for re-interview, says . . ."

MY FAVORITE EXAMPLE of Bureauspeak is a piece of paper your predecessor got Robert Kennedy to sign, authorizing the leasing of telephone lines from the New York Telephone Company (Specially leased telephone lines are sometimes used to transmit conversations picked up by hidden microphones.)

In subsequent years, Hoover tried to use the piece of paper to "prove" that Kennedy knew about the FBI's illegal bugging practices. But what is interesting about the transaction for the student of Bureauspeak is not whether RFK knew the significance of what he was signing, but rather the way in which the language of ambiguity works.

GIVE AWAY THE NEW FBI BUILDING. LBJ once had the idea that he was going to McNamarize the civilian departments, so he ordered each of them to institute the Program Planning and Budgeting System (PPBS) to tell them how their money was being spent in terms of the goals.

Hugh Nugent, who was sent by the Justice Department for a year's study at Harvard to master the fundamentals of PPBS, came back and tried to apply what he had learned, but today he recalls, "The over-all picture we finally came up with Ramsey Clark refused to believe because he found it unacceptable.

"Internal Security had the smallest budget of any of the Department's seven divisions and yet it seemed to be getting the largest percentage of the Department's resources. Civil Rights, which Ramsey thought was most important, was way down there. And Anti-Trust, which had the largest budget in the Department, was last!

HIRE SOME NADER'S RAIDERS. It is not generally known but for years the FBI has solved the problem of who will watch the

watchers by having the watchers watch themselves.

Nobody, for instance, asks the FBI how it spends its confidential funds, how much it pays informers or what sorts of reward money are available for information. Back in 1964 when, after a long search, the FBI finally found the bodies of the three murdered civil rights workers, a Justice Department aide asked a local FBI agent how they found out where the bodies were buried.

"We found them," he was told, "as the result of a routine search." Since the "routine search" involved blowing up an earthen dam in which the bodies turned out to be buried, many informed observers believe the rumor that before blowing up the dam the FBI had reason to believe the bodies were inside, and that they had paid \$25,000 for the information.

Just how routine such payments are the American public has never been told, mainly because the FBI budget has not been itemized and Congress has never asked. Cynics may attribute the FBI's success in getting its budget through Rep. Rooney's Appropriations Subcommittee intact for more than 20-years-running partly to the fact that FBI agents themselves do much of the investigating of the appropriation requests before Rooney's committee.

As for Nader's Raiders, I guess eventually they'll be around whether you want them or not. But my hunch is if you make the reforms I've suggested and manage to pull them off without sacrificing J. Edgar Hoover's most valuable legacy — independence from partisan politics — you'll have nothing to worry about.

Yours cordially,
Victor S. Navasky

P.S. When I called the Justice Department a few weeks ago to ask about the timing of FBI tours, I was told, "That's FBI. You have to call EX 7-3100." When I asked could they please transfer me since I was calling from a phone booth, I was told, "We don't connect with the FBI." Perhaps you can do something about that.