



With Hoover gone,  
the bureau's independence  
becomes an issue

# A NEW G-MAN SHAKES THE FBI

The image of the old man does not erase easily: J. Edgar Hoover, director of the FBI for half a century—the whole span of its existence—totally a lawman and no part of a politician; crotchety, tyrannical but incorruptible and wholly devoted to the idea that his bureau should remain independent of any administration. U.S. Presidents feared him and he feared none.

Now, for the first time, the FBI is in the hands of another man. In his first five months, Acting Director Louis Patrick Gray III has shaken things up at the bureau, abandoning Hoover's outdated rules and regulations and shelving a raft of old-line Hoover loyalists. But Gray is not a lawman and has no experience in law enforcement. An ex-navy captain turned lawyer, he has strong political ties to Richard Nixon. After the election, if Nixon wins, he would like to become the FBI's permanent director. But in this election year, Gray's association with the President has brought the bureau perilously close to the political arena and risked the involvement that Hoover so sedulously avoided. Hoover might or might not have chosen to make his agents the principal investigators in the Watergate affair, or have them look into possible improprieties in the wheat sales to Russia. But if he had, the cry that it is absurd to expect the administration to investigate itself would hardly have been raised, such was his own and his bureau's reputation for total independence. It is no fault of Gray's that he has no such shield. But the situation is a powerful argument for those who believe that the next permanent head of the FBI, before everything else, should be a lawman without political strings. For a look at Gray and the changes he has made in the FBI, see the following pages.

After five months as head of the FBI, Acting Director Patrick Gray still feels the presence of J. Edgar Hoover.

by ROBERT G. HUMMERSTONE

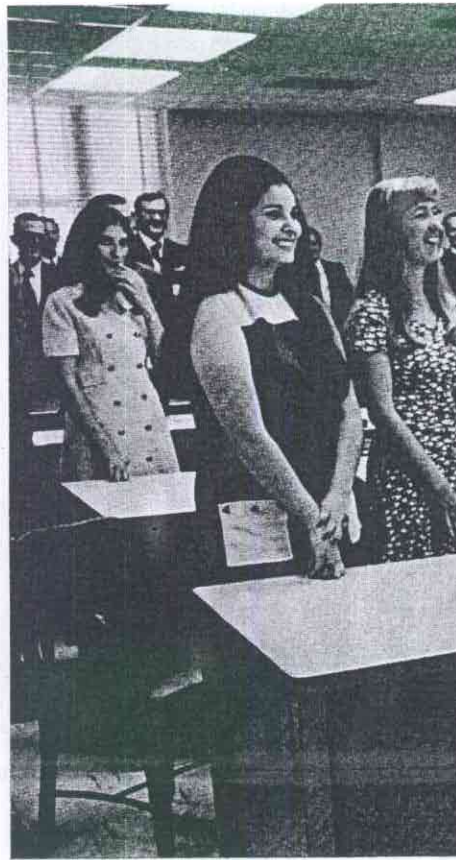
When Patrick Gray, 56, sat down in J. Edgar Hoover's big, carpeted office last May, he faced two extremely delicate and difficult tasks. He had to overhaul the FBI without seeming to tarnish Hoover's legacy. And beyond that, he had to gain control of the bureau armed with only a limited mandate.

Something obviously had to be done. Hoover was 77 when he died and even those who admired him most knew that he had stayed on too long. The considerable accomplishments of his earlier years in building the bureau were being obscured by a number of petty fiascos like the Kissinger "kidnap" plot trial, which collapsed in court, the embarrassing loss of FBI files from the Media, Pa. office and the near-whimsical dismissal or transfer of a number of capable agents because of imagined disloyalty to Hoover. The bureau was coming under increasing fire from citizens who claimed that its spying had extended to lawful political activities of blacks, students and the antiwar movement, and who were worried about its potential metamorphosis into a secret police agency. And Hoover himself had become enmeshed in countless squabbles with other law enforcement officials. Says one associate who worked closely with Hoover for years: "As he got older, he lived more and more in the past. He was always talking about the Dillinger case or Ma Barker."

The first changes Gray made were headline-grabbing but relatively superficial: agents would be allowed to grow moustaches and wear colored shirts, the ranks would be opened to women agents and more minority group members. He also began working on the encrustations that had grown up, and had to contend almost every step of the way with those who simply could not imagine the bureau being run by anybody but Hoover. Gray made a number of gains, but it was not until he went head to head with Wesley Grapp, the most powerful of Hoover's old guard, that his dominance was established.

Grapp, the longtime boss of the Los Angeles office, had no use for Gray or his ideas and had countermanded Gray's orders liberalizing dress and conduct standards for agents. Grapp

Washington FBI Bureau Chief Robert Kunkel tried to cover up an embarrassing incident. Gray had him transferred.



## To gain control, Gray had to bust up



L.A. Chief Wesley Grapp, a Hoover favorite, challenged Gray's new rules. In a showdown, Gray forced Grapp out.

had a reputation among agents as an unforgiving disciplinarian and was known as the "Little Tyrant" to Hoover's "Big Tyrant." To be disciplined by him was known as being "Grapped upon." He had also bugged his office telephones, contrary to regulations, and involved himself in a potentially messy controversy over \$265,000 in loans from local banks. For these and other reasons Gray wanted him out. Grapp resisted and, in a final desperate move to keep his job, had influential friends—including Los Angeles's Cardinal McIntyre and wealthy Republican contributor Henry Salvatori—intercede with the White House. It did no good and ultimately Gray got his way.

Gray has demonstrated the same combative, damn-the-torpedoes aggressiveness and openness on a number of occasions. Last July, against the advice of his top aides, he addressed a hostile group of 800 young government summer interns, fielded their questions and left to a standing ovation. Hoover never would have risked being embarrassed. Similarly, when the Committee for Public Justice, a group of liberal professors and other prominent people interested in law enforcement, held a two-day conference on the FBI at Princeton last winter, Hoover refused to attend, comparing the group to a "hanging judge." After Hoover's death, Gray met privately and cordially with the three conference sponsors.

He has also revitalized the atrophied lines of communication within the bureau. He will, he says, tolerate a certain amount

of constructive dissent within the ranks, and he has made attempts to introduce diverse opinions from the outside. He brought his Special Agents in Charge—his bureau chiefs around the country—to Washington recently for a brainstorming session, something that Hoover never did. "I've tried to open the windows and raise the shades," he says. "I want to stimulate and stir all this talent."

Patrick Gray lives by the established American verities. He works hard. He attends mass nearly every morning and wears an American flag pin in his lapel. "He is probably the most patriotic individual I've met," says an old friend, intending the highest sort of compliment. He even exercises hard, three times a week in the Justice Department gym. And the verities have done well by him. The son of a struggling railroad worker, Gray grew up in St. Louis and Houston. He delivered newspapers as a boy and from as early as he can remember wanted to go to Annapolis. He played football and lacrosse and boxed at the Naval Academy, then spent a year and a half on the battleship *Idaho* before switching to the submarine service, where he spent most of his 20 years in the navy. He made five patrols in the Pacific in World War II, and three more in the Korean War. The navy then sent him to George Washington University for a law degree, and when he retired as a captain in 1960 he began a successful practice in New London, Conn. He had a reputation for being well prepared and a stickler for detail. His sense of loy-



## the old guard

alty to the navy remained strong, and he often defended sailors in civilian courts. When the submarine *Thresher* was lost in 1963, he took charge of the legal problems, settling many crew members' estates without charge to the widows.

Gray's sense of family loyalty is also strong. He is close to his four grown sons, two of them his wife's by her first marriage to a navy pilot killed at Okinawa. When Gray and his wife, Beatrice, 49, built their hillside home at Stonington, near New London, five years ago, they designed it to accommodate her parents; Gray would not consider having them live alone in old age.

Gray has known Nixon since 1947, when they met at a Washington party. He worked in Nixon's 1960 presidential campaign under Robert Finch, and was called back for the '68 campaign. After Nixon's election, the then Secretary Finch named Gray as his executive assistant at HEW. In 1970, Gray moved over to the Justice Department to run the civil division, and was nominated by Nixon to take over as deputy attorney general when Richard Kleindienst left that job to become attorney general. Before that could happen, Hoover died.

Gray's administrative technique at the FBI still smacks of the navy skipper. He relies on a great deal of personal contact with subordinates; he likes to compare it to the close relationship of a submarine crew that leads to mutual dependence and respect up and down the line. Gray's military habit of

mind raised serious doubts in an associate from HEW days. He remembers Gray counseling against those in the Nixon administration who wanted to ignore a certain portion of the Civil Rights Act. "But once the White House made a decision, even though it was contrary to the law, Pat would try to go along with it," says Gray's former associate. "It was in the good old navy tradition."

The major impact of Patrick Gray has been on the morale inside the FBI. Quinn Tamm, executive director of the International Association of Chiefs of Police and an ex-agent, praises Gray's accomplishments in this area: "Gray has replaced an operation run by fear with an operation of understanding and help. The morale at the FBI has improved tremendously." And an agent still in the FBI wrote to a friend on hearing of Grapp's fall: "When the letters go in now, they aren't kissed off as a 'disgruntled employee.' I think Gray will be great for the bureau."

**W**hen Hoover died, the public had the image of a smooth-running, efficient anticrime machine. In reality, the famed bureau was in many respects a highly inefficient, outdated bureaucracy, too often staffed at the top by sycophants and subject to Hoover's whims. Every act of every agent was judged on what it would do to the image of the FBI, often in the most petty way. Agents, for example, were forbidden to drink coffee on duty, lest it appear that they were wasting time. As a result, Special Agents in Charge would spend valuable hours patrolling coffee shops near their field offices. One ex-agent recalls seeing as many as 20 agents jump-

Wearing a sombrero presented by the office staff, Gray banters with FBI employees in El Paso. The occasion was one of a series of visits he is making to meet the agents who man the bureau's outlying field offices.

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# He wants the job and will fight for it

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ing up, en masse, leaving raincoats and unpaid bills and racing out the back door as an SAC came in the front.

Nitpicking was the order of the day. One agent who misspelled the name of an assistant director in a memo to Hoover was transferred from Washington to Los Angeles. Weight-height rules—because Hoover wanted G-men to look good to the public—were enforced inflexibly. One big-boned ex-football player, unable to shed a last few pounds, was repeatedly transferred around the country until he left the bureau, despite a letter from his doctor that he was already at a healthy weight. Another new agent was chastised for being bald—baldness was apparently not Hoover's image of the FBI—and the head of the Administrative Division was criticized for hiring the agent.

Hoover's puritanical view of sex permeated the bureau. One agent was warned by his boss that he could be fired for reading *Playboy* magazine because Hoover considered *Playboy* readers to be "moral degenerates." In San Francisco several years ago, some agents threw a going-away party for a co-worker. Someone invited a go-go dancer. When an informer reported it to headquarters, an investigation was launched and each man attending was questioned. Of the 140 or so agents at the party, 130 claimed to have been in the tiny men's room at the time the dancer performed.

Hoover would punish a man who failed to report a violation just as severely as the violator himself. This led to sneaking, lying and mistrust among the agents. If an agent got into trouble, he might bargain his way out by incriminating others. "It was nightmarish," says one former agent. "Yet there was a great fraternal bond among the men. They worked together and they suffered together." But informers, known as "submarines," were everywhere. Hoover often rewarded these men with promotions, with terrible effects on morale.

Another sure way up was flattery. To win favor, one special agent had a rug made for Hoover, with the initials JEH on it. Another, knowing the director's love of peaches, would have five gallons of fresh peach ice cream made at the end of the California peach season, then have an agent fly it, packed in dry ice, to Washington. This cost taxpayers two seats on the airplane—one for the agent, one for the ice cream.

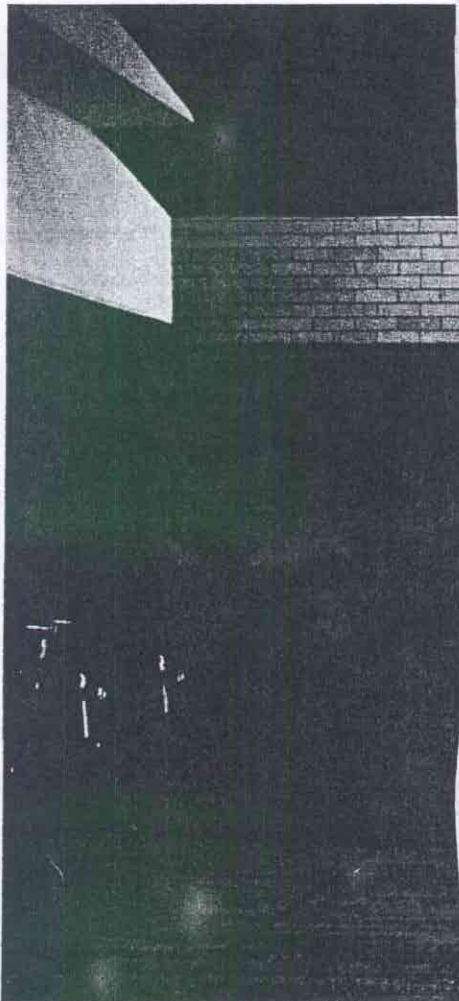
**H**oover could be vindictive, too. Infuriated at IBM for some small reason, he once ordered all IBM machines taken out of the bureau, and not long ago, after a TWA pilot criticized the FBI's handling of a skyjacking, he forbade all agents to fly on TWA.

Another problem for agents was "voluntary" overtime. Hoover insisted that all agents work a certain amount of overtime without pay, to demonstrate their dedication. Agents who fell below their office average could get in trouble. But, says one ex-G-man, "Hoover could never understand why every agent could not top the average."

While Gray has already made changes for the better in the working lives of his agents, there is no indication that he plans to tinker with the way the bureau did its job under Hoover. Gray promises "a continuation of the basic, fundamental policies of the FBI." He does, however, talk about drug abuse and crime—both organized and general—as if they were worthy of the same attention as subversives. Hoover tended to give almost total priority to the Red Menace. But the FBI's con-

troversial policy of surveillance of potential subversives, for example, will not change—even though legitimate dissenters might be included.

Past surveillance of radicals such as the Berrigan brothers, Gray feels, has been justified by the fact that grand juries brought indictments against them, even though most such cases failed in court. "Our job is not to determine whether they should be prosecuted," he says. "But when any individual breaks the law of the U.S. and the FBI has jurisdiction, we're going to investigate." In fact, Gray adds, continued surveillance of radical groups is justified even if they have only threatened to break the law. "The potential is there, the motivation is there. These people are virulently opposed to our constitutional society. Whether they have the capability or not is not for us to judge. We have to provide the intelligence about them."



A physical fitness buff, Gray works out regularly. A former colleague at HEW jokes: "Just knowing Pat, we thought we might get an order at any time to run around the block a few times."

On the other hand, Gray promises more vigorous efforts by the FBI to investigate charges of local police brutality, long a complaint of FBI critics who contend that the bureau has been less than zealous in civil rights matters. In the past, Gray says, local FBI agents have been called on to look into charges against the very police with whom they often worked. From now on, Gray says, the FBI will send in men from the outside for such investigations.

It irks Gray to have to answer charges that he himself is dangerously close to politics and that this unavoidably involves the bureau in an area that Hoover steered clear of for so long. Yet he has spoken in support of administration policies not directly related to law enforcement, such as national defense. And recently he said that it "strains the credulity" to believe that Nixon could have done a "con job" on the American people about the Watergate affair—this while the matter is still under investigation by his men. Gray also rejects the notion that the administration cannot effectively investigate itself. Nevertheless, his close association with Nixon does raise questions and some observers feel that it could stand in the way of his con-

firmation should he be nominated. Former Attorney General Ramsey Clark, a Democrat, is one of these. Despite his differences with Hoover, who called him a "jellyfish," Clark feels that Hoover was able to keep the FBI nonpolitical, and he doubts that Gray can. "The director," says Clark, "should be unquestionably independent, with public stature. Gray doesn't have that. He is purely and simply a close associate of the President's." Clark believes that Nixon should have named a well-known figure, who is indisputably above politics, and given him a permanent appointment. Others, like Quinn Tamm, feel there is some merit in having a new director who is not totally independent. He would be prevented, says Tamm, from developing an independent empire, as Hoover did: "Under Gray, the FBI will be part of the Department of Justice—and that's as it should be."

If Nixon is reelected, the probability is that Gray will be nominated for the post permanently. Gray makes no secret he would like it. If Nixon does nominate him, Gray says, "You can expect one hell of a confirmation fight." And Pat Gray sounds as if he is almost looking forward to it. ■

