

# FBI Informer Ran for School Post in Indiana

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INDIANAPOLIS, Ind.—The FBI has confirmed that a 22-year-old student who ran unsuccessfully for election to the Indianapolis School Board was a paid FBI informer at the time.

The informer, Stephen H. Cooper, now 25, says he ran for the school board in May, 1972, as a candidate for a front organization of the Young Socialist Alliance with the knowledge and encouragement of the FBI so he could gain prestige with leftist groups, principally the YSA and the Student Mobilization Committee.

FBI officials in Washington recently confirmed Cooper was a paid FBI informer from January, 1972, to April, 1973, when he was dropped because he revealed his role as an informer to a columnist for the Indianapolis News. The FBI did not discuss Cooper's specific activities.

Cooper claims the FBI told him to try to organize antiwar demonstrations in Indianapolis, to lure dissidents into the open, to infiltrate an underground newspaper, the YSA, the Student Mobilization Committee and other antiwar groups, and to attend the 1972 Republican National Convention in Miami Beach to report on possible plans for violence.

Cooper filed as a candidate for the school board race in April, 1972, running as an independent. He was teamed with George Yarbrough Jr., then 18, an Indianapolis youth also involved with YSA. Cooper said Yarbrough was not an FBI informer and Yarbrough says he did not know Cooper was working for the FBI.

"The YSA was involved with running people for public office," Cooper said, "and the FBI encouraged me to run be-

cause it would place me in a better position with the YSA and other radical groups.

"If I had not been with the FBI I don't think I would have run for the school board, although I think George Yarbrough would have," he said.

Both Cooper and Yarbrough finished far out of the running in the election, but it is possible their presence on the ballot ruined one candidate's chances of election.

A school desegregation suit was pending in Indianapolis at the time and the election was primarily fought between two slates of candidates, the strongly anti-busing Committee for Neighborhood Schools (CNS), and a more moderate slate called the Non-Partisans for Better Schools (NPBS).

The CNS swept all of the board seats in the election. One of the NPBS candidates, Robert D. DeFrantz, came within 1,600 votes of defeating Constance R. Valdez, who received the lowest vote total of the successful CNS candidates.

DeFrantz said he feels he probably would have been re-elected to the board had either Cooper or Yarbrough not been on the ballot since they picked up most of their votes in inner-city precincts where

the NPBS was running strongest.

Cooper said he was initially hired for \$250 a month by the FBI to report on dealers of hard drugs, but was soon asked to provide information on leftist political activities.

"The implication was made that if I cooperated with the drug thing, a possible marijuana selling charge involving me and another informant could be dropped," Cooper said.

Cooper said, "I gave them surface information mostly. It was the kind of thing they could have gotten any place. I think I really got involved in this thing just to see how the FBI spies on citizens. I still consider myself a movement person."

According to Cooper the YSA did not have any strength at the time he was an FBI informer. "I would say there were about five active members here in Indianapolis and maybe 17 in Bloomington, on the Indiana University campus. Yarbrough, also a former member of the YSA, agreed with Cooper's figures, although he said there were a few other people who came to YSA meetings but did not identify themselves as members.