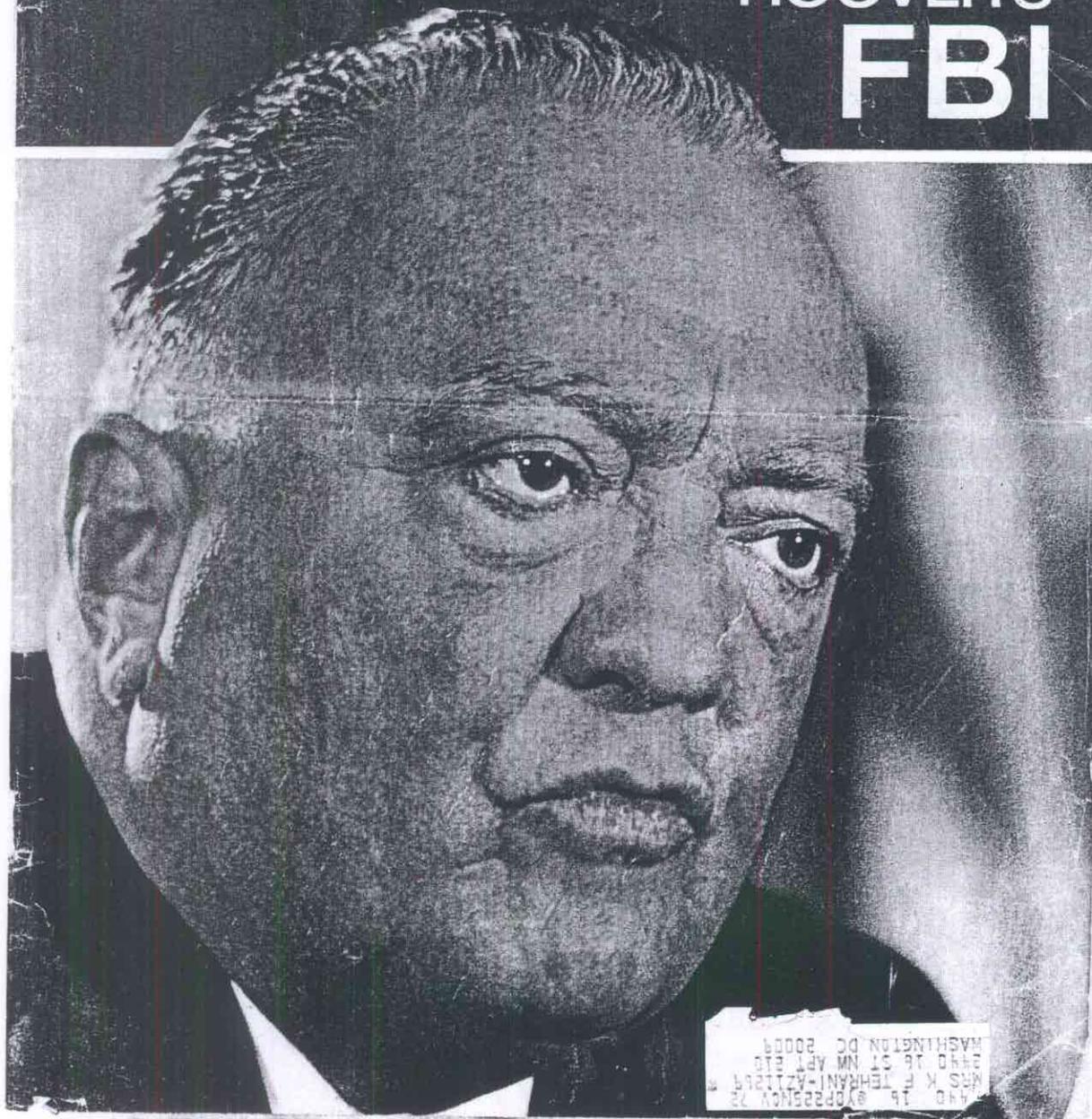


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About this issue

JAMES PHELAN has worked closely with the FBI on many occasions during his 25 years as an investigative reporter. He recently spent two months in Washington studying the FBI today, and during this period had occasion to fire a shotgun on the Bureau's skeet range. No one got hurt except the author, who repeatedly missed the target and emerged with a badly bruised shoulder. But Phelan was impressed by the FBI's efficiency. "On the day I left Washington," he says, "I took an agent's raincoat by mistake. The Bureau nabbed me before I got eight blocks from the Justice Department." . . . To cover the bizarre case of a woman accused of murdering her husband and two other persons, reporter DAVID WEBER shuttled between Mexico City, Kansas City, and Independence, Mo., a distance of 3,500 miles. PETE HAMILL, who collaborated on the article, has had 18 pieces published in *The Post*. . . . In this issue assistant *Post* fiction editor Ann Bayer appears with her first published short story. Cover photograph by FRED WARD.



James Phelan

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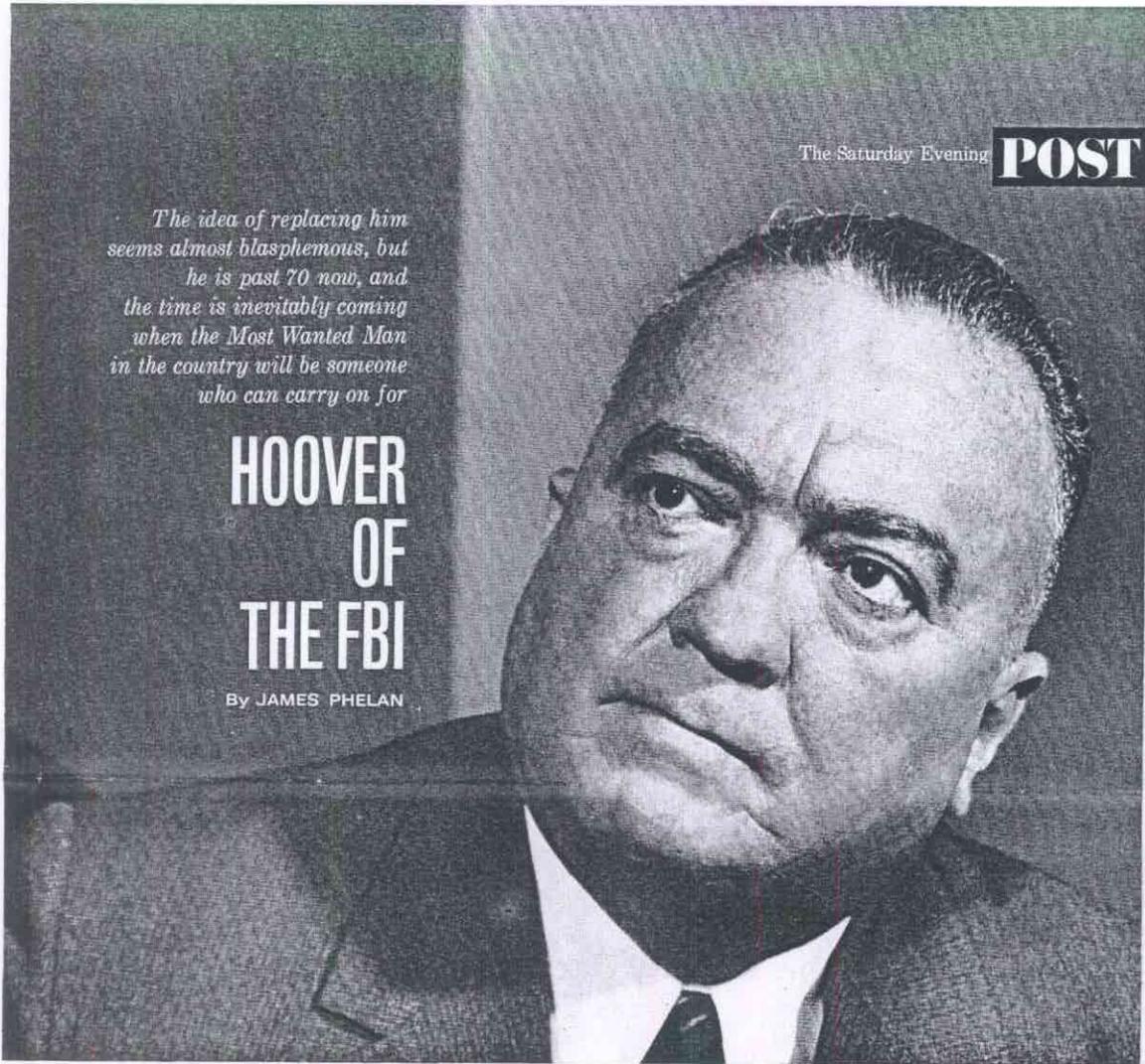


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The idea of replacing him seems almost blasphemous, but he is past 70 now, and the time is inevitably coming when the Most Wanted Man in the country will be someone who can carry on for

HOOVER OF THE FBI

By JAMES PHELAN



When the White House last winter denied a report that J. Edgar Hoover was going to be removed as FBI director, television's raffish *That Was the Week That Was* observed: "President Johnson has declared that he does not intend to replace J. Edgar Hoover. However, J. Edgar Hoover has not disclosed whether he intends to replace President Johnson."

Some FBI men were outraged. The day after the show an outsider found a group of agents in the Bureau's Washington headquarters grousing about "that crack at the director," but he argued that the satirical line was actually complimentary. "There isn't anyone else in Washington," he said—"not McNamara or Justice Warren, or even the Vice President—that it could have been written about."

Hoover is indeed a political phenomenon. In 41 years as FBI director, he has become an American institution almost as solidly rooted as the Washington Monument. Since the dim, distant days of Calvin Coolidge, while the Presidency changed hands six times, his standing as the one indispensable government official has gone unchallenged.



Even television has made its contribution to the picture of Hoover as a public institution of rock-like permanence. *That Was the Week That Was*, source of "that crack about the director," left the air last spring; this fall ABC is introducing a series called *The FBI*, which is unlikely to treat the director disrespectfully. The show's producer is Quinn Martin, who has already made Eliot Ness famous in *The Untouchables*. Martin is an unabashed admirer of Hoover, whom he recently met for the first time.

"Hoover is a star in his own right," Martin said. "I felt much as I did when I met Cary Grant—that this was a special person." Always sensitive about its reputation, the FBI is watching the project closely. Recently it ruffled a few feathers by running background investigations on some of the actors considered for the cast, but a man from the Bureau explained: "It would hardly be proper to have a Commie or a man with a criminal record playing an FBI agent."

Thus the legend continues: Presidents and TV shows may come and go, but J. Edgar Hoover endures. Even Hoover is human, however, and the man behind the legend can't run the FBI indefinitely. Now approaching 71, he inevitably is approaching the end of his service. He will probably pick his own time to step down, but he has made no plans to do so. "My health is good," he said on his 70th birthday last January 1. "The President has expressed confidence in me. I enjoy my work and feel completely competent to carry out all the demands of my job."

Lyndon Johnson has done much more than express confidence in Hoover; last year he publicly certified the FBI chief as a sort of one-man national resource. In a White House ceremony, the President not only waived mandatory retirement at 70 for Hoover; he made the exception eight months before the event. "The nation cannot afford to lose you," said the President.

When Hoover does turn in FBI badge No. 1, the White House and the nation will face some knotty problems. These will be all the more difficult because there are no precedents or guidelines, a fact which the President doubtless had in view when he recently established a national crime commission. There was no FBI, in its present form, when Hoover took it over back in 1924. In its golden era, during the 1930's, the Bureau was a small, flexible, fast-moving organization with a handful of sharply defined laws to protect—laws dealing with major crimes such as kidnaping. Today nearly 200 federal laws are under the Bureau's jurisdiction, including some as unrelated to its original work as those regarding misuse of the Red Cross symbol. Thirty years ago Hoover knew each of his 600 agents by name and always knew what case each of them was working on. Today the FBI has almost twice that many employees in its New York City office alone, and 10 times as many agents altogether.

The Bureau's rise as a vast, powerful, federal agency has been caused largely by the need for a central security and intelligence agency to protect the nation from the threat of subversion and espionage from abroad. But by its very nature such an agency's powers are susceptible to misuse; and the FBI is no exception. Under Hoover, the dangers inherent in the FBI's powers, in the clandestine nature of many of its operations, and in potential abuse of its vast secret files, have been dealt with largely by delegating all responsibility, in trust, to Hoover.

The immediate problem, when Hoover retires, will, of course, be to find a new FBI director. No newcomer from outside the Bureau would have the whiplash authority and automatic obedience that Hoover commands, and he has groomed no successor inside the Bureau, despite his expressed wish that he be replaced from the ranks. On the

contrary, his own preeminence has inhibited the men below him, with the result that he is surrounded by highly competent organization men schooled in administering his policies and decisions, but almost wholly lacking in public identity and standing. Despite the size and importance of the FBI, there are few Americans who can even name any member of its staff other than its jut-jawed chief.

Though some critics deride the FBI's "cult of personality," Hoover is the subject of a widespread combination of awe, respect and adulation much like that accorded the late Gen. Douglas MacArthur. Like MacArthur, Hoover has an Olympian air that makes him seem somehow larger than life-size; he exercises vast powers in a profession that baffles and enormously intrigues ordinary men; and he has effectively equated his name with success. Millions of Americans firmly believe that Hoover is the FBI, and they accept his authoritarian rule as uncritically as they accepted MacArthur's military judgment.

This public approval makes itself evident in ways no politician ignores. Whenever Hoover becomes enmeshed in controversy, a flood of mail supporting his position cascades into the mail room of the Department of Justice. Switchboards in newspaper and magazine offices light up with indignant complaints when he is criticized in print. The House subcommittee that examines his budget has not turned him down on a money request for years, and it has been decades since he came under serious fire from the floor of Congress.

The public respect Hoover commands is all the more unusual in view of his personality. An almost Victorian figure in a permissive era, he has been described by columnist Murray Kempton as "our one unflinching reservoir of conventional morality." In a time of ferment, questioning, and national self-examination, he remains a man who knows unerringly what is right—God, Country and Duty. In a nation that demands accessibility of its heroes, he is almost as remote as a Tibetan lama. This prompted Art Buchwald to suggest, in one of his more successful spoofs, that there is no J. Edgar Hoover, and that he is simply an invention of the *Reader's Digest*, a notion which the FBI greeted with frosty silence. He shuns the instruments of instant mass communication—television cameras, panel shows, and the like—as energetically as other Washington officials court them. Although he is constantly in the news, he generally communicates with the public only through a smooth-running FBI division called "Crime Records." He does frequently see individual journalists, editors and publishers, however, and he has developed an effective technique for avoiding the give-and-take of the usual interview. When he is not sure of his visitor, he launches into a monologue that ends only when the allotted time is up. Since Hoover is not the sort of person one interrupts, he thus restricts the interview to subjects he wishes to discuss. "Some of those newsmen," he explains, "ask unfair questions."

One writer who was recently granted an hour with Hoover carefully drafted 12 questions for him. Escorted to Hoover's office by an agent—who carefully took duplicate notes on the interview—he sat down, asked his first question, and for the next two hours was treated to a discourse that flowed from one subject to another without pause. In remarkable detail Hoover reconstructed his favorite cases, topped by his personal capture of Alvin (Creppy) Karpis in 1936 in New Orleans. ("After we got him in our car, no one knew where the Federal Building was, and Karpis volunteered to direct us. He'd just cased the place for a possible holdup.") He ranged over his appointment as director, his theories on how to season young agents ("On a tough case, I favor putting some

*'Madison Avenue lost
a genius when Hoover went into
law enforcement.'*

green agents in the key spots along with experienced men."), his ideas about courage ("Fear is a protection, panic isn't."), newspapers ("*The New York Times* is the most anti-FBI paper in the country."), teen-aged criminals ("I'd rather go up against a criminal in his thirties; they won't take the rash chances that teen-agers will."), civil-rights problems in the South ("Some spots, like Alabama, don't know the Civil War is over, but I have high regard for Governor Johnson of Mississippi. He backed me up."), and the Bureau's famous "Ten Most-Wanted" program ("We catch them so fast I told my men they must be putting paties on the list. I said I want the tough ones."). At the conclusion of the discourse, Hoover gave the writer a brisk handshake, and the agent escorted him out—with 11 of 12 questions not only unanswered but unasked.

Half-shielded from the press as he is, Hoover is both one of the most widely recognized and one of the least-known American celebrities. He is frequently described as curt, terse, businesslike, but in fact he has an old-fashioned courtliness, an excellent raconteur and possesses considerable personal charm when he chooses to exercise it. He has a strong streak of sentimentality, and likes children (when they are well-behaved), the music of Lawrence Welk, and the poetry of Rudyard Kipling and Robert Service.

Hoover's top associates in the Bureau, accustomed to the familiar questions of writers seeking the man behind the public figure, have a collection of anecdotes they dole out. These deal with his dogs, his fondness for gardening, his delight in practical jokes—such as placarding his host's neighborhood with fake FBI WANTED posters on the eve of a party—and his well-known pursuit of racetrack winners, with a self-imposed limit of two-dollar bets. Pressed beyond these familiar stories, they fall silent.

Hoover's remoteness has not impaired the hero worship he inspires and probably has heightened it. This adulation is readily apparent to anyone who has visited his headquarters in Washington. In its austere corridors hang row upon row of plaques, scrolls and engraved resolutions—114 in all—extolling Hoover's virtues and achievements in superlatives that almost exhaust the language of praise. These tributes, rendered by a wide variety of organizations ranging from the U.S. Senate to the Friendship Bible Class of Memphis, are not a lifetime's collection but the harvest of a single day, May 10, 1964, when Hoover observed the 40th anniversary of his appointment. Besides the 114 plaques and scrolls, the occasion—referred to, down in the anonymous ranks of the Bureau, simply as "The Fortieth"—brought a flood of telegrams, letters, memorabilia and gifts, and was climaxed by the White House ceremony at which Johnson waived the retirement rules and publicly proclaimed Hoover irreplaceable.

Whoever eventually takes over the FBI will find Hoover's fingerprints all over the agency, from top to bottom. To a degree unmatched by any other federal agency, the FBI has been shaped, dominated and controlled by one man. A bachelor, he has lavished on the FBI the pride and possessiveness that a stern father bestows on his family. Hoover lives quietly in a seven-room house on 30th Place near Rock Creek Park. It is tended by a live-in couple, but Hoover himself does most of

the gardening, pattering about in slacks and short-sleeved sport shirts. He is driven to work each morning in a bulletproof Cadillac by a Negro FBI employee who doubles as receptionist at his office. He usually disembarks a mile or so from the Justice Department Building and hikes on in with his longtime crony, Associate Director Clyde Tolson. He dines every night at the same table in the Mayflower Hotel, and Washington's belles scratched him off their lists decades ago, convinced that they could not compete with the Bureau for his affections. He has poured a lifetime of labor into setting the FBI's goals, disciplining its behavior, imposing his own personal mores and standards on it, and burnishing its reputation.

"When Hoover went into law enforcement," says a Washington reporter, "Madison Avenue lost a genius." The FBI legend is as well known to the American public as the saga of Davy Crockett or Paul Bunyan. It is made up of some epic deeds, enhanced by shrewd press-agentry, partly originating in the Bureau and partly the gratuitous work of a hero-hungry press. From the gunning down of John Dillinger, the solution of the Lindbergh kidnaping case and the swift wartime roundup of Nazi saboteurs, down to the unraveling of the great Brinks robbery and the swift capture of the Sinatra kidnapers, the feats of the FBI have been told, retold, simplified, and buffed to a high gloss. The only trouble is that the saga is so crowded with success stories there is scarcely any room left for even the smallest error.

The FBI legend-building at times has taken on a faintly Orwellian quality, in which history is touched up after it has happened. The best-known account of the Bureau, Don Whitehead's *The FBI Story*, is a case in point. Hoover blessed it in a foreword as "an accurate portrayal of the record," but it contains only one brief passage in which the FBI is pictured as erring, a trivial case where agents arrested the wrong man in a car theft (he was released within 24 hours). A much more spectacular error is relegated to the *Notes* section. That was the "Little Bohemia" fiasco, where FBI agents cornered the Dillinger gang in a Wisconsin resort, lost them, and shot up a careful of innocent citizens by mistake, killing one and wounding two. This tragedy was blazoned in the press at the time, but over the years it faded from Bureau-blessed accounts, until only the glamour of the Dillinger guntdown remained.

The FBI's Crime Records division relentlessly keeps tabs on books and articles critical of Hoover and of the Bureau. Within hours of a news magazine's recent story that Hoover had failed to write a note of condolence to Robert Kennedy on the death of John F. Kennedy, the division had dug out, photocopied, and distributed copies of Hoover's note of condolence. The division can spot the source of an unfavorable story—and often produces a rebuttal—within a matter of minutes. "That's from the Cookbook," an agent will say, referring to Fred Cook's derogatory *The FBI Nobody Knows* and reaching for a telephone. "Let me get an agent in here who knows all the facts about that incident." The writer is shortly provided with an entirely contradictory version of the event. "The FBI is one of the most efficient agencies in Washington," says a Capital newsmen. "In some offices you have to wait days for information. At the FBI you get an answer inside a half hour—assuming, of course, that it is a question Hoover wants answered."

The director discourages, with considerable vigor, writers who chip away at the FBI legend instead of building it up, although he cites a critical press as a vital check and balance. A few years back, New York *Herald Tribune* columnist John Crosby took Hoover to task for ineffectiveness against organized crime. Instead of replying to Crosby, the FBI chief wrote a bitter letter to

Crosby's editor, assailing the column as "degrading to the code of the journalistic profession," and hinting that Crosby had "an ulterior purpose in mind." More recently an agent named Jack Levine quit the FBI and a little later tried to get back in. When Hoover refused to rehire him, despite a series of letters from Levine praising the Bureau without stint, the rebuffed ex-agent suddenly began attacking Hoover, the FBI, its training methods, its accomplishments. The Chicago *Daily News*, which published an interview with Levine, promptly received a letter from FBI Associate Director Clyde Tolson accusing Levine of having disregarded national security. Invoking the security of the United States to offset the grouching of a disgruntled ex-employee struck many people as something of an exercise in overkill.

Hoover's prickliness about the Bureau's good name has had some salutary internal effects. It unquestionably has been a major factor in the FBI's remarkable record of rectitude and incorruptibility. Where other agencies have suffered through their scandals, and instances of corruption in police departments are commonplace, there has never been a known case of influence-selling or bribe-taking in the FBI. This record accounts for much of the esteem the public accords the Bureau; its admirers often comment, "They can't be bought." Hoover is fond of saying, "No one man built the FBI's reputation, but one man can tear it down."

His intense concern with an image of perfection, however, has side effects that plague both Hoover and the men under him. He has polished up such a shining picture of success that the public has come to expect consistent Superman performances from the FBI. Much of his troubles in the civil-rights struggle in the South grow out of the contrast between the FBI's human performance and the public's concept of the Bureau as omniscient, omnipotent, infallible.

For years, in his annual reports, congressional testimony, press releases, and speeches, Hoover has abetted the notion that FBI cases result in a remarkable rate of convictions. The publicized rate consistently hovers over 96 percent. In his 1964 testimony before the House appropriations subcommittee, Hoover declared, "Convictions were obtained against 96.1 percent of the persons brought to trial." In 1961 the figure was 96.6 percent; in 1959 it was 97.4 percent. These figures, while accurate, can mislead unwary readers into concluding that when the FBI goes after a wrongdoer, it almost invariably nails him. The FBI's "96 percent convictions" does not apply to the total number of investigations it has conducted, but only to the number of persons apprehended by the FBI and then taken to trial, and it reflects the care that the Justice Department exercises in deciding which cases it will prosecute.

In the civil-rights category, the FBI does not even publish statistics on the percentages of persons tried and convicted, but the rate is certainly nowhere near 96 percent. In the past five years, barely one tenth of one percent of the FBI's civil-rights investigations—not cases tried—have resulted in convictions:

Year	Investigations	Convictions
1960	1,398	1
1961	1,813	0
1962	2,085	2
1963	2,692	6
1964	3,340	5

With the widespread violence that has racked the South, 14 convictions in five years is a meager harvest for justice. Considering the FBI's reputation as the relentless avenger of wrongs, many Negroes ask why it produces such poor results in the South. "All we ask," N.A.A.C.P. Director Roy

Much of the FBI's fame rests on its spectacular cases in the 1930's.

Wilkins has said, "is the kind of diligence the FBI shows in solving kidnappings and bank robberies." Martin Luther King commented, "You can't explain to a Negro how it is that a plane can be bombed and its pieces scattered for miles and the crime can be solved, but they can't find out who bombed a church."

Any fair appraisal of the FBI's record on civil rights in the South should take into consideration the Bureau's limited jurisdiction, the roadblocks thrown up by hostile segregationists—and often southern law officials—and the refusal of many southern juries and judges to convict whites accused by Negroes.

"The FBI has taken some beatings about civil rights that it doesn't deserve," says a Justice Department spokesman. "Few people really understand the limited nature of its powers. It has no legal authority to enter a state simply to forestall possible violence. It can't provide protection to individuals. It isn't a national police force."

"The low rate of convictions in civil-rights cases in no way reflects the amount of work the FBI has done in the South. The Bureau has put in thousands of man-hours on a single case, and then seen it washed out by a southern jury. Its investigation of voting violations often requires months of tedious examination of county records—none of which shows up in the conviction statistics. But there are hundreds of thousands more Negroes registered for the vote in the South today than there were in 1960. Behind these statistics is a lot of unpublicized work by the Bureau."

When Negro leaders began to prod Hoover on the FBI's performance, they hit a sore nerve, helping touch off the famous press conference of last November 18. In a single, magnificently irascible session, Hoover criticized, among others, the Justice Department, under which he serves; Congress, for delegating new jobs to the Bureau against his wishes; and the current Nobel Peace

Prize winner, the Rev. Martin Luther King. King had identified four northern-born FBI agents in Albany, Ga., as Southerners, prompting Hoover to describe the Negro leader as "the most notorious liar in the United States."

Understandably, Hoover's statement added weight to the Negroes' distrust of the Bureau, which was already under fire because of the scarcity of Negro agents in the ranks of the FBI. For years the Bureau fended off questions on the subject by asserting that it kept no records on a racial basis. Last year this policy was suddenly reversed, and an FBI official revealed that there were 29 Negro agents—and that the number was shortly due to reach 50, as a result of an active recruitment program.

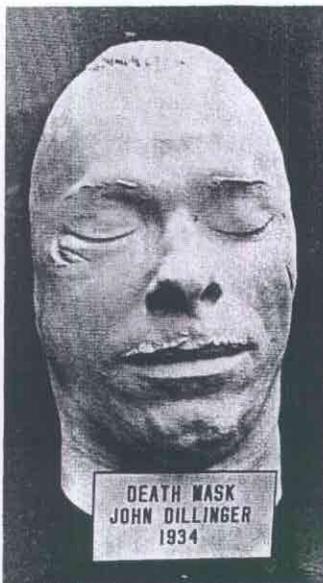
A prospective G-man must be either a lawyer or a graduate accountant with three years' experience; at least 23 years old; no less than five feet seven inches; a citizen; a male, and not color-blind. An applicant who has cleared these low hurdles undergoes a comprehensive investigation reaching back to his childhood. If he is a compulsive gambler or a heavy drinker, a deadbeat or delinquent in his income taxes, he is dropped. He may not have a police record, except for minor slips like traffic violations, and there had better not be too many of them.

The investigation is so thorough that few who pass it wash out in the subsequent training course, at the FBI Academy at Quantico, Va. For 13 weeks the trainees live an almost monastic life while they are schooled in marksmanship, self-defense, investigative techniques, fingerprinting, report writing, the giving of court testimony and other G-man skills. They are subjected from the outset to the tight discipline and rigid code of behavior that follow them later as full-fledged agents. They do their own housekeeping, and can get yanked back in from the training grounds to remake an untidy bed. They stow all their valuables on open shelves; in all its years the Academy has never had a theft. They eat together in an austere dining hall that has a large signboard bearing the texts of Catholic, Protestant and Jewish prayers.

The training emphasizes the practical; neophytes learn investigation by working on reconstructions of past Bureau cases. There is intense practice on both ends of a gun, at marksmanship and karate-swift techniques of disarming a gunman. One of the first things they learn is never to stick a gun in a thug's back or chest where he can reach it; the trademark of an FBI agent holding a man at bay is a peculiar crablike crouch that enables him to frisk a suspect while he keeps his own gun out of reach. They are taught how to develop an intangible "stance of authority" in making an arrest, to encourage wrongdoers to surrender quietly. They are also schooled in handling those who won't, by practicing "come along" holds on the supervisor of the firearms range. He is "Big George" Zeiss, who stands six feet five inches and weighs over 220 well-muscled pounds.

In the firearms training they are taught to shoot to kill. Bureau policy is never to shoot unless a life is endangered, and never to fire a warning shot. Agents are trained to shoot for the abdomen as the most effective way to prevent a return shot; it doubles the man over, while a fugitive shot in the heart may still fire back once by reflex action. This training—and the wide publicity given to it—has strongly deterred armed resistance in FBI manhunts. In the Bureau's history, only 19 agents have been killed—none in the past eight years.

As a new member of J. Edgar Hoover's team, the agent gets \$8,981 a year, with the prospect of inching up to a top of \$16,981, if he lives long enough and does not trip over a network of rules and regulations that Hoover has developed over the years. He is subject to call 24 hours of the day, and must keep his office informed of his whereabouts, even



off duty. He can be assigned anywhere the Bureau decides to send him, on the shortest notice. He is bound by a strict code of conduct, much of it spelled out, some unwritten tradition. He may not accept any gift, gratuity or reward, or use a government car for any purpose except official business, or leave his 638-page Bureau manual lying around for anyone to read.

There is even a uniform of sorts. FBI agents wear conservative suits and subdued ties and socks; they are expected to look like everyday, respectable businessmen, not Nero Wolfe or James Bond. They are also well advised not to behave like James Bond; a few months ago a veteran agent was quietly fired when he admitted having Bonded with a neighborhood woman. Growing a moustache is discouraged but not explicitly forbidden; there is at least one western individualist who sports one. There are no bearded FBI agents, however. Beards have a connotation of the beatnik, and the thought of a beatnik FBI agent boggles the mind. An agent is forbidden to drink on duty; Hoover himself will not even sip a sherry at a diplomatic luncheon. "An agent may have one drink in the evening, or maybe two," says Hoover. "If he goes beyond that, he is playing with fire." Hoover himself has one drink in the evening, and occasionally two.

Some of Hoover's prejudices tend toward the autocratic. There are, for example, no fat FBI agents. About eight years ago, when Hoover found that his natural stockiness had edged up to pudginess, he went on a diet and slimmed down by about 20 pounds. Shortly thereafter the FBI instituted a weight-control program, and all agents were instructed to bring themselves within the limit set by an insurance-company chart. Grimly, 6,000 agents dieted, exercised, and steamed themselves down to conform with the new ideal, and jokes about "making the weight" are still a standard topic of conversation whenever a handful of agents congregate.

One stubborn rebel, a burly ex-football star, created a crisis when he leveled off at five pounds over the chart's ideal. He then obtained a statement from his doctor that his weight was medically proper, chart or no chart, so the Bureau could hardly declare him officially "out of condition." But Bureau regulations are regulations. The agent and his extra five pounds were "put on the bicycle," an FBI term for a series of rapid transfers from one undesirable post to another, and eventually the agent biked right on out of the FBI and became a professional ski instructor.

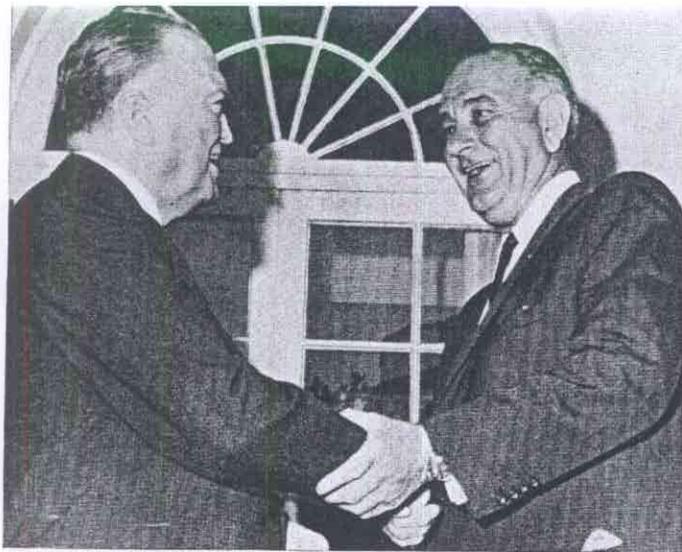
Overtime is also the subject of some wry joking inside the Bureau, and recurrent publicity outside it. In 1964 agents averaged 12½ hours of overtime per week. By government rules, they were paid for only six hours of this. The other six and a half hours a week was so-called voluntary overtime, called "VOT" in Bureauese. In Hoover's view, VOT represents a donation by his agents to the national treasury.

Each year Hoover proudly reports to the appropriations subcommittee a sizable saving in the form of more than 1,500,000 hours of unpaid work. Last year it amounted to \$11,462,798 worth, and each year it gets higher. "The trouble is that Mr. Hoover likes statistics and 'new all-time highs,'" said a former agent. "Voluntary overtime has become a Bureau institution. The district offices compete in reporting overtime, and if you're not contributing a fair share, you are given the feeling you're hurting the team. So you check in early or stay late, and if you haven't anything else to do, you shuffle papers."

The VOT issue is an example of the way Hoover identifies himself with the Bureau and vice versa, a process that he capsules as "I think of the FBI as a 'we' organization." Even at 70



Gesturing emphatically, a nattily shod Hoover accompanied FBI agent Melvin "Little Mel" Purvis on a walk in 1934, soon after Purvis had cornered John Dillinger outside the Biograph Theater in Chicago. "Little Mel" was one of the few agents ever to pierce the Bureau's anonymity barrier.



President Johnson, who waived retirement rules for Hoover, gives Bureau chief a warm welcome at the White House.

he works overtime himself. He has done it all his life, and it seems natural to him. In last year's Sinatra kidnaping, he did not leave his desk for almost 72 hours during the critical period, except for an occasional doze on an office couch. While he recognizes the hardships that the Bureau imposes on married agents, and professes a great admiration for stable family life, he puts the Bureau first. "I encourage agents to marry inside the organization," he says. "If they marry an FBI secretary or clerk, they get a wife who knows the demands the job puts on her husband. That can save trouble. If they don't have the dedication, they ought to get out."

Individualism, in the sense of one man's running with the ball on a big case, is discouraged. Hoover believes strongly in teamwork, and individual achievements are almost never publicized, even within the Bureau. An agent whose performance is outstanding is quietly rewarded with a commendation from his Special Agent in Charge, with a letter from the director, with a raise in pay grade, or with a one-line congratulation in *The Investigator*, the Bureau's monthly house-organ. *The Investigator* never tells why an agent is congratulated. A G-man who breaks a major case is simply listed alphabetically along with a clerk who may have devised an improvement in the filing system.

This policy of denying public recognition to individual agents has advantages as well as drawbacks. Human nature being what it is, an employee singled out for praise often becomes the target of envy, but the FBI has no such problems. This policy also spreads the sheen of the Bureau's successes evenly over all its agents, like the glaze on a ceramic jar. Since the public doesn't know who makes the big cases, the rookie who has not even tracked down a stolen car benefits from the feats of the old pros. When he flashes his badge and says "FBI," the suspect has no way of knowing that the agent didn't just finish knocking off a big espionage ring.

One of the rare agents who broke out of this anonymity was the late Melvin (Little Mel) Purvis, who ran John Dillinger to earth at the Biograph Theater in Chicago. The public's enormous fascination with the Dillinger case bathed Purvis in a glare of publicity, and for a while his name shone as brightly in the FBI as Hoover's. Shortly later Purvis left the FBI, cashed in on his fame in Hollywood, and organized a sort of junior G-man club called the "Melvin Purvis Law-and-

Order Patrol," subsidized by Post Toasties. Despite the eminence of the Dillinger case in FBI annals, Purvis is no Bureau hero. A recent inquiry at the FBI headquarters drew a shrug and the reply, "I don't know what happened to old Mel after he went Hollywood."

"It's the meshing of the cogs that makes the Bureau," says Hoover. He runs such a tight machine, however, that some cogs fail to mesh properly. Agents who quit the Bureau for better jobs get a cool "good luck" from Hoover and an invisible chalk mark against their names. "If they want to try the green pastures outside the Bureau, they can stay out there," says the director. "Often they find the pastures aren't so green and want back in. We get two or three applications for reinstatement a month. I turn them all down."

Agents who retire after the minimum 20 years are free to scurry into the green pastures. In Hoover's view they have earned an honorable discharge, and there is no intimation of disloyalty. Ex-agents hold many powerful positions in industry and government; among them are John Bugas, Ford vice president; Robert Mahan, who runs a problem-solving organization for such clients as Howard Hughes; Louis Nichols, vice president of Schenley Industries; James Rowley, head of the Secret Service; Arthur Cornelius, superintendent of the New York State Police; and Harvey Foster, an American Airlines vice president.

"After a few years you have to make up your mind whether you're an organization man at heart and you're going to settle in and go for that twenty-year retirement," says an ex-agent who now has a lucrative law practice. "The fear of 'embarrassing the Bureau' gets oppressive at times. Personally, I resented the requirement that you write a memorandum whenever you observed a violation of the rules. If a fellow agent goofed off, and you knew about it, you were held responsible if you didn't tag him out. I understood the reason for this. It kept the Bureau well disciplined, but it went against my grain. I didn't like the Big-Brother-Is-Watching-You atmosphere."

In addition to this informal policing, agents are subjected to periodic checkups by the Bureau's internal-inspection system. Both the field staffs and the Washington office are periodically gone over by inspectors who make a Marine drill instructor look like a doting mother. Woe to the agent who has drawn a case folder from the file and tucked it away forgotten in his drawer. Agents under inspection, which generally takes a couple

of days, can be identified at a glance. They have a stricken look, like a construction worker walking his first skyscraper beam in a heavy wind.

All the same, these inspections are part of the way in which Hoover has fashioned an *esprit de corps* that is both the envy of other law-enforcement agencies and a frequent source of irritation to them. Almost visibly, this spirit reflects Hoover's personal background, upbringing and ideals.

The virtues that are extolled in the 114 plaques that adorn the walls of FBI headquarters, in honor of The Fortieth, were discernible even in Hoover's early youth. As a boy, he was hardworking, strong-minded, disciplined, neat, possessed of a stern sense of duty, well-organized, pious, and devoted to his parents. By every account he was the ideal American youth; indeed, the magazine *American Boy* once devoted an unprecedented four-part series to his early days and upbringing. His father, Dickerson N. Hoover, was a Washington civil-service employee, of old American stock and British-German descent. His mother, Annie Scheitlin Hoover, whose forebears were Swiss, was a woman with an old-fashioned sense of discipline, who rewarded obedience and sternly but justly punished any straying. She was a powerful influence on her son, and she lived with him from the death of her husband in 1922 until her own death 16 years later.

At Washington's Central High School young Hoover acquired the nickname "Speed" for his brisk ways. He was the star of the debating team, and once effectively opposed the proposition that women be given the vote. Turned down for the football team because of his size, he joined the school cadet corps, where he quickly showed the leadership qualities he was to bring to the FBI. He became captain of Company A, a position of which he was so proud that he would wear his uniform to church, where he taught in Sunday school. "He used to count out the cadences for Company A in a voice you could hear throughout the school," a classmate later recalled. At graduation, where he was valedictorian, he commended his cadet company as "a rattling good military aggregation." In his Central High yearbook, some young prophet characterized him as "a gentle-



man of dauntless courage and stainless honor." He obtained his law degree at George Washington University in 1917 and became a \$1,200 a year clerk in the Department of Justice. "He had an exceptional capacity for detail work," recorded an early biographer. "He handled small chores with enthusiasm and thoroughness. He continually sought new responsibilities to shoulder and welcomed chances to work overtime." These traits were rewarded in 1924 when, in the wake of the Teapot Dome scandal, Attorney General Harlan Stone shook up the Justice Department. Young Hoover was glowingly recommended to Stone by Larry Richey, secretary to Herbert Hoover, then Secretary of Commerce (and no relation). Impressed with the young man's spotless record, the Attorney General named him Acting Director of the FBI and shortly elevated him to the post he has held ever since.

The agency he took over was a swampland of scandal and slovenly performance, rank with the corruption of the Harding Administration's Ohio gang. Star agent of this governmental Dogpatch was Gaston B. Means, one of the truly great con artists of all time. Hoover later sent Means to prison for bilking the late Evalyn Walsh McLean out of \$100,000 at the time of the Lindbergh kidnaping, under a pretext of recovering the child. Hoover rates bagging Means as one of the three most rewarding feats of his career, although he never recovered Mrs. McLean's money. Means, who died in prison, kept telling different stories about where he had stashed it, and had FBI agents busy for months digging up the countryside. Today Hoover recalls that he went to prison in person, dressed down Means, and demanded to know where the money was. "And dammit, Gaston," Hoover told him, "you stop lying about it." Means replied with one of the finest lines of his career. He clutched his heart, looked up at Hoover piteously, and replied, "This is the last straw, Edgar. You've lost faith in me!"

From Attorney General Stone, Hoover obtained authority to make appointments by merit and promotions on ability, and to run the Bureau free from political influence. Within six days of taking over, "Speed" Hoover was rousting out rogues

Many people fear future misuse of the Bureau's vast secret files.

like Means and tidying up the place with respectable replacements. Today the Bureau still operates under the same basic authority that Harlan Stone granted. The FBI is exempt from civil-service regulations, picks its men by Hoover's standards, fires them at his displeasure.

Hoover turned the ragtag little Bureau into a bigger and better "Company A" than the ambitious young Central High cadet captain ever dreamed of. He has counted off its cadences in a stern voice that has been heard through the entire profession of law enforcement, and has given law establishments everywhere a yardstick of incorruptibility. Law officers come from foreign countries to study the Bureau's operations, and American police vie for enrollment in the Bureau-run police training academy, since graduation gives an officer a kind of Ph.D. in crime fighting and often sends him quickly up the career ladder.

Hoover's elevation of the policeman's status from political spoilsman to trained professional may well rate as his major achievement. Nevertheless, his relations with police departments across the nation are not uniformly cordial. They tend to be good in smaller communities, which are highly dependent on the FBI for fingerprint and crime-laboratory service, and cool in the big cities.

The metropolitan departments are more independent, and many are headed by men as touchy as Hoover and as proud of their own Company A's. They complain, usually in private, that there is too much take and not enough give on the part of the FBI, particularly in major cases with a high publicity potential. "I have to button down my temper every time an FBI agent walks up to my desk," says a West Coast police intelligence officer. "I know he's going to want every-

thing I've got on a case, and I'm not even going to get the time of day." Hoover, with his vivid memories of Gaston B. Means, is wary of losing big cases through leaks of information to unreliable officers. When in doubt, his agents simply play it safe. Given a choice of offending a fellow lawman and risking Hoover's wrath, they choose the lesser evil.

Fear that corrupt police officers might tip off criminals under investigation also lies behind Hoover's long, bitter and effective fight against proposals for a national crime commission. Such proposals have been made by a number of seasoned crime-fighters, including the late Estes Kefauver and, when he was counsel for the McClellan Committee, Robert F. Kennedy. When Kennedy became Attorney General, he dropped the proposal. Although he was technically Hoover's boss, he was too politically sophisticated to clash openly with the honors-encrusted FBI director. According to an FBI source, Hoover is not in the least opposed to the newly established President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice. He regards it as a study group rather than a clearinghouse of law-enforcement information.

The FBI's "one-way street" tactic on information was a factor in the formation of a police organization called the Law Enforcement Intelligence Unit. Founded in 1956, and now comprising a nationwide network of 60 police departments, L.E.I.U. got its start in Los Angeles. The Los Angeles department is often rated the best police force in the nation, but has perhaps the worst relations with the FBI. It is headed by tough William Parker, who has many of Hoover's hard-driving, strive-and-succeed characteristics. Parker clashed openly with Hoover in the Frank Sinatra Jr. kidnaping, on the grounds that Hoover's men were scurrying all over his jurisdiction and not keeping him informed. According to a staffer in the office of L.A.'s Mayor Samuel Yorty, Parker hasn't been able to get a police officer into Hoover's prestigious training academy for five years. Parker is often mentioned as a possible successor to Hoover, but early this year he said flatly that he wouldn't even consider the job. Hoover did not express any regret over Parker's announcement.



Thousands of sightseers tour the FBI's headquarters in Washington each year. Seeing a "Tommy gun" in action on the firing range always seems to be a special thrill.

Growth of the L.E.I.U. also reflects a frequent police complaint that the FBI is ineffective against organized crime. Combating syndicated crime requires interstate cooperation, and police critics assert that the FBI is too strongly oriented toward solving the spectacular crimes of "loners" and pays too little attention to the complex, difficult problem posed by the big syndicates.

Indeed, at least once the FBI unwittingly abetted the rise of organized vice by its zeal against a "loner." Twelve years ago, Las Vegas, Nev., had a single, thriving brothel a few miles out of town. It had flourished for years, apparently without molestation from law-enforcement authorities, who policed vice with considerable efficiency up and down the famed Las Vegas resort "strip." In 1954, FBI agents raided the brothel, and its owners were sent up on a Mann Act violation. Since then the old established order of one "monopoly" house has been replaced by one of the most tightly organized prostitution systems in the United States. Girls are "worked" in the major resort hotels, and are assigned beats and working hours with computer-like efficiency. "There used to be about twenty girls," says a Las Vegas reporter, "and today there are at least twenty-five times that number. Reinforcements fly in from L.A. every weekend, and the Mann Act gets fractured every time a plane lands here Friday night."

In recent years the FBI has been giving organized crime considerably more attention than it did a decade ago. It has so far scored few successes, however, that rate with such spectacular feats as smashing the kidnaping wave of the 1930's, wiping out the gaudy titans of wrongdoing like Dillinger, Alvin (Creepy) Karpis, and George (Machine Gun) Kelly—or with its success in infiltrating the Communist Party.

Like its mores and idiosyncrasies, the FBI's successes plainly have been strongly affected by Hoover's character. He has become the foremost American symbol of unrelenting anti-Communism, and more than any other man, he has been effective in reducing the C.P.U.S.A. to a shell of its former self, its ranks thinned down to aging die-hards, its membership riddled with FBI informers.

Since his young manhood, Hoover has been outraged, baffled and fascinated by the Communists, who typify everything that he is not. As a young Justice Department assistant he was active in the deportations that followed Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer's "Red raids" after World War I. He interrogated and argued with many of the "boisheviks," studied their manifestos and writings, and tried to understand what made them tick. He finally concluded that there was something psychologically wrong with them.

Hoover's critics maintain that he has a fixation on domestic Communism, and that the FBI lavishes time and manpower on the C.P.U.S.A. out of proportion to the party's current threat. Hoover delights, however, in the FBI's success in infiltrating the Communist Party. "Every now and then they expel someone as an informer," he says, "and sometimes it's a person we never heard of." He boasts that the FBI has penetrated the Ku Klux Klan as thoroughly as it has the Communists. "Now they're starting to suspect each other too," he says, "and I encourage that."

Recently the FBI has been keeping a close eye on the ultraright Minutemen. Although Hoover is a towering hero to much of the right, the founder of the Minutemen, Robert DePugh, flatly refused to furnish the FBI with a list of his membership. "It could serve as an assassination list for the Communists when they take over," says DePugh, who believes that the "take-over" is inevitable, Hoover or no Hoover. Despite the tendency of many liberals to lump Hoover with his far-right admirers, Hoover disavows the ultraconservative political label, terms himself an "objectivist," and

In a permissive age, Hoover stands firm, a monument to conventional morality.

has publicly declared that he "has no respect" for the extremist notions of Robert Welch, founder of the John Birch Society. "I know Mr. Hoover says that about Mr. Welch," says Birch public-relations director John Rousselet sadly. "But we still have high regard for him and the FBI."

For a man of strong opinions Hoover has more flexibility than he is given credit for. "When the chips are down, he is as canny as a Richelieu," says one Justice Department staffer. "I've watched the Bureau operate for years, and they have an established technique. Whenever they goof, they deny everything, and then quietly clean things up behind the scenes." In the Oswald case Hoover bitterly denounced the Warren Commission for suggesting that the FBI should have passed on to the Secret Service its data on Lee Oswald, whom the Bureau had under investigation prior to the Kennedy assassination. Long before the Warren report, however, the FBI had instructed its agents to broaden the information they funnel to the Secret Service on possible threats to the President—and to include all defectors like Oswald.

While publicly defending the Bureau's role in the Oswald case, Hoover had ordered the agent involved to be reprimanded, suspended for a month without pay, and transferred to another post. Questioned on this seeming double standard, Hoover replied that "it is not uncommon" for the Bureau to praise an agent for one aspect of an investigation, and reprimand him for another. In keeping with established Bureau policy, he did not specify what the agent in the Oswald case had done to draw punishment.

Hoover's handling of the Martin Luther King affair also exhibited considerable agility. Shortly after Hoover made his "most notorious liar" charge, King asked for a conference with Hoover. Although King had publicly implied that Hoover was faltering under the heavy burdens of his office, his request was promptly granted. With a throng of curious newsmen milling outside, King was closeted with Hoover and four of their aides behind closed, agent-guarded doors. Fifty minutes later King emerged, spoke a few generalities into the microphones, and then departed to fly to Europe for his Nobel prize.

The FBI has never discussed the confrontation, but this writer has obtained a detailed report of what occurred. Despite the aura of an old Western showdown that preceded the encounter, there were no personal recriminations, and no references to their exchange of hot words. King told Hoover that any criticism of either Hoover or the FBI attributed to him had been a misquotation. He praised the role of the FBI in Mississippi, and said the Bureau had a strong restraining influence on violence down there. He denied he had ever advised Negroes not to report violations to the FBI, and said he encouraged them to cooperate with the Bureau, and would continue to do so.

The only complaint he had, King went on, was that sometimes Negroes would report grievances to FBI agents, and the following day they might see the agents apparently fraternizing with the police officers who had brutalized them. "We are sometimes on the verge of temporary despair," King said. When King finished, Hoover assured King that the FBI is in full sympathy with the "sincere aspects of the civil-rights movement." He said that much of the difficulty arose out of the great misunderstanding by the general public, and par-

ticularly Negroes, on what the FBI can and cannot do. He pointed out that the Bureau cannot recommend prosecution, provide protection to individuals, or make on-the-spot arrests, that it can only investigate and turn its findings over to the Justice Department.

Hoover told King that the FBI had "put the fear of God in the Ku Klux Klan" in the South, and dismissed the Klan as "white trash" and "yellow cowards." Hoover said his agents "have interviewed every Klan member in Mississippi and put them on notice that if trouble comes, the FBI plans to look into the Klan first." Hoover boasted that the FBI often knows what the Klan plans to do in advance, and that Klan members now suspect each other of informing and are fighting among themselves.

Hoover bitterly attacked "miscarriages of justice" in the South and cited instances where the Bureau had "an open-and-shut case" and then saw the defendants set free. He assailed Alabama's Gov. George Wallace and complained that the FBI couldn't even work with the highway patrol there because of the governor's intractable attitude toward the race issue.

Hoover told King that as a policy he had shifted northern agents into the South, but assured him that southern agents could effectively handle a civil-rights case, and that it damaged the Bureau to imply otherwise. He advised Negro leaders to concentrate on vote registration and job training, and expressed his belief that the race problem would be solved by "a complete change in community thinking in due time." He urged King to call the FBI at any time if he had any complaints to make. "I want to know about it," he said, "if any agent acts in a supercilious manner or mishandles any complaint."

The *détente* with King was achieved without Hoover's yielding on what he views as a major issue in the civil-rights controversy. He believes that many Negroes want the FBI converted into a national police force in order to stiffen law enforcement and provide better protection in the South. While outraged at local police misfeasance, Hoover holds that a federal police force would be a greater evil, susceptible to nationwide political misuse. He fights the proposal at every turn, although it would mean tremendous expansion for his Bureau—the dream of every Washington empire builder.

Ironically, his success with the FBI has constantly edged the Bureau nearer to the status of a *de facto* federal police. Although Hoover battles against new enforcement duties, an admiring Congress keeps overriding him and charging the FBI with new duties—such as overseeing the interstate movement of unsafe refrigerators.

"I deplore the growth of the Bureau," Hoover says, but he realizes that the growth is inevitable. In Washington, ground is being cleared for a gigantic new \$60 million headquarters, a block square. Everything is bigger now, including the crime rate in almost every category. It keeps going up, despite Hoover's stern morality, high prestige, and the 1,500,000 hours of free overtime annually contributed by his 6,000 agents.

It grows in spite of the most advanced crime-fighting facilities in the world. The Bureau's fingerprint section now contains more than 173 million sets of prints from 78 million people. It receives an avalanche of 23,000 sets a day for identification, processing each within 48 hours, and it has snared criminals by their fingertips as long as 40 years after the commission of a crime. So specialized has the FBI become that it is even geared to trap amputee criminals. For a small group of handless wrongdoers, the Bureau maintains a collection of footprints for identification purposes. The Bureau crime lab is jammed with superb equipment, files, and samples for scientific sleuth-

ing, ranging from handwriting specimens of all known professional check forgers, paint samples of every color of every make of American and foreign car, down to specimens of animal hair filed alphabetically from the aardvark through the zebu.

The most spectacular growth of the FBI—and the one that worries many thoughtful people most—has occurred in its famed secret files. These repose in a huge building a mile from the FBI headquarters. They contain all the information on every case the Bureau has ever investigated, and they constitute a monument both to Hoover's 41 years of relentlessly pursuing wrongdoers and to mankind's stubborn persistence in doing wrong. The files have grown until they occupy three floors, and they fill 7,500 filing cabinets, and there are 5,000 more cabinets of files on microfilm. Just the index to them is a card file three blocks long.

Their contents, under Hoover, are handled with tight security. They are available only to agents; even the FBI clerks who extract and refill the folders are under orders not to read them. Cases extracted for use are sent to the FBI headquarters in locked boxes. There they are distributed in carts with a canvas flap over them, to shield their contents from passersby. The files have long been the subject of persistent public interest, criticism and speculation.

No one really knows what is in them, not even Hoover. Periodically someone raises a nervous question about what will be done with all that indexed dynamite—ranging from details of the nation's darkest secrets to a vast amount of scandal, rumor, and unevaluated accusations—when Hoover steps down. "There is no question but what the files could do great damage if they fell into the wrong hands," says one of Hoover's top aides. The question of how to defuse them, and still keep the FBI in business, remains unanswered—while the files continue to grow.

The man in charge of that vast anthology of violence, treason, lust, theft, and murder most foul approaches his 71st birthday seemingly as full of zest for the pursuit of criminals as ever. By an act of Congress he could step down with his full \$30,000-a-year salary at any time. Since his retirement pay would be tax-free, whereas he is taxed on his salary now, staying on costs him a substantial sum. But it is not money that interests him; he could have moved into private industry decades ago at four or five times his federal pay.

He is bound up inextricably in his huge, efficient, disciplined and incorruptible Company A. It has been his whole life, and he identifies himself with it totally. Not long ago he told one visitor a story that probably reveals as much of the real Hoover as anyone will ever know. In November, Chicago's Loyola University awarded him yet another honor to go with the 114 plaques of The Fortieth, his 19 honorary college degrees, and his many other medals, awards, and tributes. He was presented with the Sword of Loyola at a dinner in Chicago. It was at the height of the uproar over his scatter-gun press conference, and the whole country was arguing about him. The dinner drew a turnout of more than 1,000, and many in the audience doubtless wondered what was on his mind as he rose to speak.

Although it has been almost a quarter of a century since Hoover buckled on a gun, he was concerned that night about a call to duty. "You know," J. Edgar Hoover explained later, "we have a rule at the Bureau that the senior agent on hand must lead any armed raid. When I spoke at Loyola, the thought suddenly struck me—I hope we don't have any FBI raids in town tonight, because I'd hate to walk out on all those people." □

Hoover is driven part of the way to work each day, but he usually gets out in time to walk the last mile or so with the FBI's associate director, Clyde Tolson.

