

Merry-Go-Round

J. Edgar Hoover's Grip of Iron



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FOR MORE THAN a week FBI agents have been getting the word to prepare a big publicity blast for J. Edgar Hoover when he celebrates his 56th year with the Federal Bureau of Investigation tomorrow.

An act of Congress makes it mandatory for a public official to retire at the age of 70 except by special executive decree. President Johnson has given such a decree for three years running. He is now 73, and the FBI publicity campaign is aimed at convincing Mr. Johnson that his executive clemency should be continued.

What the FBI public relations experts don't want, however, is any public attention called to a new book "Inside the FBI" by an ex-agent, Norman Ollestad, who goes further than any other former FBI agent in criticizing the man who is supposed to be above criticism.

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THE BOOK IS a daring and detailed account of how the FBI operates and how it lives in fear of the man at the top.

Perhaps the most revealing section of "Inside the FBI" is the dress rehearsal given student agents for their first meeting with Hoover. They were given this lecture on what they should wear:

"A man from the last class was dismissed for not wearing the right clothes," warned George Keady, administrator of the new agents class. "This is not Hollywood, fellows. It's the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and young businessmen of the Bureau are expected to wear conservative business suits, white shirts and dark socks. And they stay away from button-down collars. Only left-wing liberals wear

them. The director demands that his agents wear handkerchiefs. They should protrude exactly one-half inch from the pocket, should be folded perfectly straight across, no points.

"Now as we enter," continued Keady, "the director will be standing beside his government-issue desk. Walk up to him briskly, look him directly in the eye and greet him in a clear, well modulated voice.

"The director speaks very precisely, and later this afternoon an inspector who is familiar with his splendid delivery will let us listen to some tapes and help us practice the greeting.

"Now as you greet the director, he will extend his right hand — but don't extend yours until he does so. Then as his hand moves toward yours, give it a nice firm grip. You may use one of three approved greetings: 'Good morning, Mr. Hoover. My name is . . .'; 'Pleased to meet you, Mr. Hoover. My name is . . .'; 'How do you do, Mr. Hoover. My name is . . .'

"And whatever you do, don't look down. Occasionally our director enjoys standing on a little box when he greets people. Of course it's just a small one, only six inches high. Pretend you never noticed it. Not long ago we had a new agent who for some reason just couldn't keep his eyes off it. He was fired."

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THE DETAILED instructions give revealing insight into the one-man dictatorship which runs the FBI. No one in that farflung organization dares challenge the whim, the opinion, or the word of J. Edgar Hoover.

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