

FBI's Bulldog Bites Critic Again

By Jack Anderson

The old FBI bulldog, J. Edgar Hoover, has taken another bite out of us. He spoke at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts where former FBI agents gathered amid the marble and majesty for an evening of culture.

In his familiar growl, Hoover rumbled: "(One) of my more virulent critics—his name escapes me for the moment—has apparently fallen off his merry-go-round once too often.

"Last spring, he spent considerable time sifting through my garbage . . . My only reason for mentioning it is that I understand he is becoming increasingly confused between the trash he examines and the trash he writes . . .

"The publication of drivel," he added, "while admittedly a right, is not the best way of discharging the precious responsibilities of a free press . . . Criticism, to be valid, must be based on knowledge and a desire to correct deficiencies."

We have been trying to correct a few deficiencies at the FBI for some time, and we have done our best to obtain the necessary knowledge. But Hoover, unhappily, won't let anyone at the FBI discuss its deficiencies.

The old curmudgeon also tolerates absolutely no criticism of himself. Indeed, he

takes extreme measures to keep this kind of knowledge from the public.

FBI Secrecy

We learned, for example, that Hoover has collected more than \$250,000 in royalties from three books researched and ghostwritten for him by FBI personnel on government time. He refused to discuss this with us. The FBI's publicity people, who love to tell about FBI heroics, also suddenly developed lockjaw.

We asked the Justice Department, which is supposed to have jurisdiction over the FBI, how the royalties were divided. We even threatened to file a lawsuit under the Freedom of Information Act to get the facts.

Unable to get an official response from anyone, we published all we knew about the \$250,000 Hoover had collected for other people's work. Most of the money, we reported, had been earned by Hoover's best seller, "Masters of Deceit." We also learned that Warner Brothers had paid Hoover some \$50,000 for the movie rights to the book.

Subsequently, the FBI leaked a report to National Review publisher William Rusher that Hoover had split his "Masters of Deceit" royalties five ways—one-fifth to Hoover, one-fifth to the FBI recreational fund and three-fifths to the FBI employees who did the work.

Financial Breakdown

We have tried for weeks to get the exact breakdown. We have now learned that Hoover, indeed, pocketed one-fifth of the royalties. Another fifth went to his lifelong companion, Clyde Tolson, who did no work on the book at all. Another fifth went to Lou Nichols, a former FBI factotum, who helped to arrange for the publication. The FBI recreational fund also got a fifth. The final portion went to a middleman, whose name we have been given but have been unable to verify.

By taking money for work done by FBI personnel on government time, Hoover has committed an offense that would bring an FBI investigation of any other government official.

As Hoover himself put it in his speech at the Kennedy Center: "No man has the inherent right to place himself above and beyond the law."

Footnote: The last time Hoover ripped into us, we offered to back up our stories before an appropriate congressional committee. We invited him to tell his side, and we would lay out the evidence supporting our stories. The loser, we suggested, should agree in advance to retire. The logical committee to hold these hearings would be the House Freedom of Information Subcommittee. Chairman William Moorhead (D-Pa.) has

offered to go ahead with them provided that Hoover will join us in requesting hearings. It's now up to the FBI chief.

New Horizons

The federal official in charge of regulating land sales has wangled a job with one of the big land developers he was supposed to regulate.

He is Alfred Lehtonen, a 41-year-old attorney who headed the Office of Interstate Land Sales Registration. This was established in 1969 to prevent land companies from hornswoggling their customers.

Lehtonen is now signed on with Horizon Corporation, an enterprising firm which ran up its land sales from \$36 million to \$58 million while he was in charge of regulation.

Before Lehtonen resigned as land sales administrator, he flew to Horizon's headquarters in Tucson as the company's guest to discuss the job offer. He accepted a vice presidency with the company and resigned from the government at about the same time.

Lehtonen told us he had announced his resignation from the government before he formally joined Horizon, thereby complying with HUD regulations. From Tucson, his new boss, Horizon vice president Russell Wilde, commented: "You have a very normal case of a capable executive being seduced out of government." Bell Syndicate

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