

# D.C. Chief Of FBI

## Punished

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Acting FBI Director L. Patrick Gray III yesterday censured the head of the bureau's large Washington field office, put him on probation and transferred him to St. Louis.

The action against Robert Kunkel, a 26-year FBI veteran, was intended to punish him for allegedly covering up an incident in which an agent from the field office here was overpowered during antiwar demonstrations at the Capitol last May, FBI sources said.

It was the second time this month that Gray, asserting firm control over the bureaucracy he inherited from the late J. Edgar Hoover in May, took disciplinary action against the special agent in charge of a major field office.

Earlier, he demoted, suspended, transferred and censured Wesley G. Grapp, the former head of the Los Angeles FBI unit, for privately monitoring office telephone conversations and disobeying Gray's order relaxing the bureau's dress and grooming regulations.

Grapp, a 25-year FBI veteran, resigned last week rather than accept his transfer to a position as an ordinary special agent in Minneapolis.

Kunkel, reached after a showdown session with Gray yesterday afternoon, said "I don't have any comment whatsoever. All of these are personnel matters that I'm sure the headquarters is perfectly capable of making a comment

A spokesman at FBI national headquarters here would confirm only that Kunkel had been transferred to the smaller St. Louis, where he will also be special agent in charge.

He said there will be no change in Kunkel's grade of GS-17, which carries an annual salary of over \$35,000.

Gray, who was leaving

Washington for the weekend, could not be reached yesterday for comment on the incident, which has provoked controversy within the Bureau's ranks.

But other FBI sources provided this account of the complex chain of events leading to the censure and transfer of Kunkel:

Last May 21, during a rally of an estimated 8,000 to 15,000

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antiwar demonstrators at the Capitol, sporadic skirmishes erupted between police and youths who were throwing rocks.

At one point, a member of the Capitol police force was disabled when he was hit in the back with a heavy stone.

On seeing that incident, an FBI agent who was in the crowd—presumably on an information-gathering mission—attempted to tackle the policeman's assailant. But demonstrators converged on the FBI agent, who was soon overpowered.

Only after reinforcements were called in, from among other FBI undercover men scattered among the demonstrators, was the besieged agent set free. He has not been publicly identified.

In the process, both the agent who was overpowered and those who rescued him pulled their service revolvers and pointed them at demonstrators.

The man who threw the rock at the Capitol policeman apparently escaped during the confusion.

(FBI sources revealed that police had recently arrested a man named Lawrence Joseph Kelly and charged him with assault on a federal officer in connection with the incident. The U.S. Attorney's office for the District of Columbia said yesterday that Kelly's case is pending before a federal grand jury here.)

Gray, upon reading of the incident in the press and hearing scattered details through the FBI grapevine, asked Kunkel to prepare a full confidential report.

When the report was submitted to Gray during the summer, the FBI sources told The Washington Post, it as-

serted that the agent had not been overpowered and glossed over many of the controversial details of the situation.

According to the sources, Gray was skeptical and directed the FBI's inspection division—where Kunkel had worked for a time during the 1960s—to conduct its own quiet inquiry.

The inspection division's report, which was carefully documented, contradicted Kunkel's version and confirmed both that the agent had been overpowered at the Capitol and that several agents had pulled revolvers at the time.

Gray was infuriated. The Washington Post's sources said, and felt that Kunkel's report had been motivated by a long-standing "don't embarrass the bureau" syndrome.

It was not the overpowering of the agent which upset Gray, the sources explained, but the feeling that he could not

count on his lieutenants to be candid with him.

After consulting with several senior FBI officials, Gray decided to censure Kunkel and send him to a smaller office in order to set an example.

Although the action against Kunkel is less severe than Gray's punishment of Grapp, it was taken as a serious rebuke within FBI circles.

Apparently well liked and widely respected among the estimated 800 agents he supervised in the Washington field office, one of the 10 largest regional FBI units in the country, Kunkel, 48, has climbed steadily through the bureau's ranks since he began as a clerical worker before World War II.

From 1957 to 1959 he served as assistant legal attache at the American Embassy in Tokyo and was also temporarily assigned during the 1960s as an investigator for the House Appropriations Committee.

After a brief period in charge of the FBI's Memphis field office, he was transferred to the same job in Washington in July, 1970. Although FBI headquarters is here, the bureau maintains a separate field office to coordinate local investigations.

FBI sources have said that

Gray is especially concerned about checking the power of so-called "empire-builders" who attained considerable influence under Hoover and often claimed to have his sanction for controversial actions.

Departing dramatically from the style of Hoover, who generally told agents of their promotion or demotion by letter, Gray called both Grapp and Kunkel to his office here for face-to-face confrontations.

In another move that appeared to be motivated by his effort to establish control, Gray announced yesterday an exchange of positions by Robert E. Gebhardt, special agent in charge of the San Francisco field office, and Charles W. Bates, assistant director of the powerful general investigative division.

The exchange, Gray said in a prepared statement, "represents a new policy . . . permitting field commanders to have periodic duty at FBI headquarters and top-ranking bureau officials to have tours of duty in the field."