

dal. According to the ethics report, Mrs. Sessions used bureau cars as transportation to get her hair and nails done. She also barged into official business in an unhelpful way, agents say. An FBI official describes her coming into a confidential meeting in Sessions' office at the FBI "in a housecoat and slippers," turning on the TV and thereby ending the briefing. Mrs. Sessions has responded that "the old-boy network" at the FBI can't accept strong-minded women. "They've never really had a director with a wife," she complained to the *Washington Post* this month. "They've never had a woman executive there."

When they get to talking, G-men gripe about a certain goofiness in Sessions' demeanor. Gary Penrith, former chief of the FBI's Newark, New Jersey, office, remembers briefing Sessions on a major racketeering case. Suddenly, Penrith says, Sessions burst into song, chirping the lyrics of an old advertising jingle: "Brylcreem, a little dab will do ya." Penrith, who quit last year, regards his former boss with contempt. "He loses it," said Penrith.

The Sessionses have not been shy about taking their case to the press. In late January, after the Justice Department report was issued, Sessions invited a dozen reporters to his office. He engaged in a bitter soliloquy in which he asserted that his nemesis Barr "was in league with others" to do him in. Although Sessions declined to be interviewed for this story, his wife told *TIME*, "All I have done is stand by my honest man. I know what Bill Sessions is, and I know what he does and doesn't do. We were raised middle-class Midwest and that makes us pioneer people, with values that we still have."

To pull him through the crisis, Sessions has pinned his hopes on his allies on Capitol Hill. He is still well liked by some key Democrats on the Judiciary and Intelligence committees, who view him as a forthright man. Congressman Don Edwards of California, a frequent critic of the bureau, calls Sessions the best director ever. But the FBI's internal revolt is well under way. The ethics charges against Sessions have led to intense resentment of a double standard in the tightly disciplined agency, where agents are routinely punished for minor infractions.

Clinton, who has been determined to give Sessions a fair hearing before taking action, has delegated White House counsel Bernard Nussbaum to conduct his own probe. Among the items Nussbaum will consider are the Justice Department's final report on the matter, due any day now, as well as Sessions' detailed response to the charges. Even if Nussbaum finds the Justice report skewed against Sessions, the Administration may decide that the director has alienated his troops beyond repair.

—Reported by
Elaine Shannon/Washington



TOGETHERNESS ON THE BOARDWALK: Hoover and Tolson in Atlantic City, 1938

Partners for Life

THE MOTTO OF THE FBI IS "FIDELITY, BRAVERY, INTEGRITY." HOW WELL DID William Sessions' all-powerful predecessor, J. Edgar Hoover, uphold these words? Not very, according to a just published biography of the late FBI chief. Anthony Summers' *Official and Confidential: The Secret Life of J. Edgar Hoover* is sure to disturb the old crime fighter's final rest.

Even as he railed against gays as "sexual deviants," Hoover apparently struggled with his own homosexuality. Summers offers fresh details of Hoover's 40-year friendship with Clyde Tolson, a handsome young agent he plucked out of the rank and file and quickly promoted to assistant director. The pair ate dinner together almost every night and vacationed together every year; Summers contends that Luisa Stuart, a former fashion model, once saw them holding hands in the back seat of a limo. According to Summers, the Mafia claimed to have the goods on Edgar and Clyde, including compromising photographs of the two men engaging in oral sex. That knowledge provided the mob with rich blackmail material. It protected gangsters like Meyer Lansky and Frank Costello from FBI scrutiny for more than 20 years and forced Hoover to insist that syndicated crime was not a national problem.

Perhaps Summers' most bizarre revelation is an account provided by Susan Rosenstiel, the wife of a liquor distiller and gambling crony. Rosenstiel recalls attending what she thought would be an elegant private party at New York City's Plaza Hotel in the company of lawyer Roy Cohn, Hoover and others. Instead, Cohn introduced Rosenstiel to a woman named "Mary," dressed in a fluffy black dress, lace stockings and high heels. It was obvious Mary was no woman. "You could see where he shaved. It was Hoover," said Rosenstiel. Joined by Cohn, Hoover stripped down to a tiny garter belt and proceeded to have sex with two young boys. Cohn later joked about the evening. "That was really something, wasn't it, with Mary Hoover?"

Hoover's presidential snooping included efforts to pin an illicit liaison on Eleanor Roosevelt and culminated, most famously, with eavesdropping on J.F.K. frolicking with Mafia moll Judith Campbell and Marilyn Monroe.

"We had to be not only as straight as an arrow," recalled a former agent last week on PBS's *Frontline*. "We had to give every perception that we were straight as arrows." In 1972, at age 77, the omnipotent FBI chief became the first civil servant to be granted a state funeral, at which he was eulogized by Richard Nixon in the Rotunda of the Capitol as "one of the giants . . . a national symbol of courage, patriotism and granite-like honesty and integrity." But the year before, bedeviled by fallout from his efforts to tap the phones of journalists, the President had confided to John Ehrlichman. "We may have on our hands here a man who will pull the temple down with him, including me." It is not surprising that not one of the eight Presidents he served dared fire him.

—By Sidney Urquhart