

S.F. EXAMINER - FEB. 2, 1993

## The outing of J. Edgar Hoover

**H**ISTORY SOMETIMES has symmetry.

"He was wearing a fluffy black dress, very fluffy, with flounces and lace stockings and high heels and a black curly wig," according to a woman quoted by British writer Antony Summers in a new book on J. Edgar Hoover, the mercilessly homophobic director of the FBI. "It was obvious it wasn't a woman; you could see where he shaved. It was Hoover."

For half a century as the nation's most powerful cop, Hoover was only too willing to investigate, expose, persecute or blackmail individuals who could be accused of homosexual behavior or left-wing political views. Now that he has been safely dead for 21 years, the Summers book joins other reports of Hoover as a closet gay.

It's not exactly fair, but it's justice: Unproven gossip was just the sort of character assault that Hoover himself had turned into an art form during his half-century as the nation's chief crime fighter.

Many people wondered why Hoover seemed to ignore the Mafia. According to the Summers book, photographs of Hoover as a transvestite in company with his long-time aide Clyde Tolson came into the possession of organized crime bosses Meyer Lansky and Frank Costello.

During those years, according to FBI records, Hoover ordered agents to compile an estimated 300,000 pages of "sex deviate" reports that ruined reputations and destroyed careers of thousands of people.

Among them was a file on the late Illinois governor, Adlai Stevenson, the Democratic presidential nominee in 1952 and 1956. Although the candidate was described by his biographer as "decidedly heterosexual," the index card calls him a "sex deviate" — and the file itself quoted informants as saying he was known as "Ade-line." These reports were secretly leaked to press and politicians by Hoover, who preferred Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Now we hear that Hoover was a transvestite. What goes around, comes around.

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### G-man's G-string

IT IS hard to see why there is such a fuss over "Official and Confidential: The Secret Life of J. Edgar Hoover" by Anthony Summers (G.P. Putnam & Sons; 528 pages; \$25.95. Gollancz; £14.99). Most of its credible disclosures are old hat. The FBI director's rumoured homosexual relationship with Clyde Tolson was common gossip in Washington long before his death in 1972. Everybody everywhere knew that Hoover hated radical blacks and left-wingers of all colours. Criticism of his reluctance to take on the Mafia was a commonplace. And even Martians must by now have heard that some presidents were loth to scold, let alone to sack, Hoover lest he spill the

beans on their misdeeds.

The book contains some truly sensational revelations, but they are about as convincing as the scandal sheets at supermarket check-out counters. The Mafia hiring Lee Harvey Oswald to assassinate President Kennedy, for instance. Or, more implausibly still, the disclosure that Hoover and Roy Cohn, another notorious Red-baiter, liked dressing up in women's clothes to partake in sexual orgies with Aryan-looking boys. If this, or anything like it, had really happened, it would have become public knowledge donkey's years ago. The many people in the media who had reason to bear Hoover a grudge would have seen to that.

THE ECONOMIST MARCH 6TH 1993

D6a)r Jim 3/24/93

Getting this today reminded me of what I'd intending; telling you when last I wrote.

As the note with this from the British friend who sent it says, the Economists say what I'd told him. *and a few others*

Tony spent much time here. So also did the two college professors who

came from London to help him. Collectively they took much time, had the free run of my files and copier and as you may remember, I had one hell of a time and it took much and repeated effort to get the transcribing machine I'd loaned Tony when he was too cheap to buy one and that poor woman helping him had to transcribe his interviews <sup>with</sup> a small <sup>d</sup> tape recorder. I suppose this is because he had so small and advance, a mere three-quarters of a million dollars. What I may not have told you earlier is that years ago I learned from a Swede that when he had asked Tony why he had not consulted me for information, words to this effect, <sup>at</sup> not verbatim, Tony wrote <sup>him</sup> me that he had asked and I had refused. I have the letter. Fact is that when he was writing Conspiracy at Chadd's Ford I did invite him here. He had called to ask permission to <sup>use</sup> something from O in NO, saying he would credit it. He didn't and without a word of complaint from me he later wrote and apologized for his oversight. I suppose he'd heard from people about it. Well, <sup>Hoover</sup> the book is out, I've seen a few reviews and that <sup>is</sup> a best seller and, fortunately, I've not been asked about it. Because if I had <sup>it</sup> have responded without <sup>or needing to</sup> having read the book, Tony is so cheap a "dirt bag" whatever that means in Ireland - ~~as~~ it was used to describe him by an Irishman who knew him in Ireland - I am inclined to believe it is praise. With all that advance and all he got here free and all the time he took he was so damned cheap he did not send me a book. Or can it be that after reading it I <sup>did</sup> have made the comment the Economist did and he knew I would. So much for his personal integrity, the kind of man he is. From this review it is apparent that like so many of the whores who profit from this great national tragedy he assumes Oswald's guilt. Or is this not for the first time? He and the growing multitude like him <sup>make</sup> ~~are~~ those who sell sex seem honorable and decent by comparison. While based on his past I suppose I should have expected something like this and what he evolved, I really did not expect him to foul his own nest and to destroy the credibility of what could and should have been a fine and a worthwhile book given the resources he had, his ability and the willingness of so many of us to help him. With friends like him, who has any need of enemies?

*Harold*

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