

The Witch Hunter



Jack Anderson

IN THE 1640s, an Englishman named Matthew Hopkins discovered a fool-proof method of detecting witches. It consisted of some original techniques in torture. The King, grateful over the opportunity to rid his realm of witches, conferred upon Hopkins the title of "His Majesty's Witch-Finder General."

Some 330 years later, an American President, Richard Nixon, appointed a modern Witch-Finder General to root out the radicals in our midst. The witch hunter, Guy Goodwin, hurried from place to place indicting radicals.

Justice Department sources say he supervised about 100 grand jury investigations in 36 states. He returned more than 400 indictments. There was one trouble. The indictments didn't stick; only about 10 per cent ended in convictions.

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MANY OF THE convictions were also for minor offenses, having nothing to do with the subversive activities Goodwin was investigating. Goodwin sought contempt and perjury indictments when he couldn't make a better case.

We have questioned officials at all levels of the Justice Department about Goodwin's tactics.

The most common complaint was that Goodwin abuses the grand jury processes and that he uses the grand jury to harass people for their political beliefs. Some of Goodwin's colleagues refer to him as the "grand inquisitor."

Yet the Justice Department, under

fair-minded Attorney General Edward Levi, is continuing to use the Witch-Finder General. He was recently dispatched to Richmond, Va., for example, to oversee a grand jury investigation of an FBI coverup.

Goodwin has the kind of faith in the FBI that most people reserve for their church. Goodwin seemed as eager to protect the FBI men in Richmond as he was to persecute leftists. This brought him into a head-on collision with Rodney Sager, a tough federal attorney who headed the Justice Department office in Richmond.

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SAGER at first tried to cooperate with Goodwin, but then sought to remove him from the FBI case. The witch hunter, believe it or not, hauled Sager himself before the grand jury for 15 hours. For Sager, this was the last straw. He worked nights to draft a long formal departmental complaint against Goodwin.

It charges that Goodwin and an aide indulged in "gross professional misconduct and gross abuse of the grand jury system." In the interest of justice, added Sager, it was vital "to properly expose this flagrant abuse of the grand jury system."

The department's ethics watchdog, Michael Shaheen, responded that Sager's charges had been investigated and had been found without merit. Yet we have evidence that only a perfunctory investigation was made. In disgust, Sager quit the Justice Department a few days ago.