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Mr. Gray's Active Broom

Apart from its headlines involvements in the Watergate and wheat, some other very interesting things have been going on inside the FBI of late. Three significant personnel shifts have been reported in the past few weeks. First, it was announced that Wesley G. Grapp was being reassigned from his post as Special Agent in Charge of the Los Angeles office to a similar post in Albuquerque because he didn't follow the new orders relaxing dress and appearance requirements for agents. Then it was announced that Mr. Grapp was being demoted and sent to Minneapolis as an ordinary agent because he tapped phone conversations in his own office. Mr. Grapp resigned rather than accept the demotion.

Then, earlier this week, it was announced that Robert Kunkel, Special Agent in Charge of the Washington, D.C., office, has been placed on probation by L. Patrick Gray III, the Acting Director of the Bureau, and is being transferred to St. Louis where he will serve as Special Agent in Charge. Mr. Kunkel's exile apparently resulted from his failure to provide the Acting Director with all the facts about an incident involving several agents under his supervision at a May 21 peace rally. Apparently Mr. Gray was not annoyed so much by the incident itself as by the fact that his lieutenants were not being candid with him.

Finally, it was revealed this week that the Special Agent in Charge of the Honolulu office was being transferred from that assignment to Richmond because the wives of some of his employees had complained to Mr. Gray that their husbands had been pressed into standing guard duty at night and that the agent in charge had used off color language in front of women and publicly humili-

ated his subordinates when they made mistakes. So, the Special Agent in Charge, Mr. Richard Rogge, was transferred to Richmond.

Now all of this may sound quite ordinary to you, but it isn't ordinary at all. Because the Bureau has been so secretive about its workings, the public's knowledge of the agency rests in some measure on myth, fantasy and the out of school stories told by the disaffected former employees. But enough has seeped out to give credence to the view that there has been in the past, in the FBI, something of a fetish about not embarrassing the Bureau and a tendency to send in reports that reflected what the writer thought his superiors wanted to hear rather than what the agent actually knew or believed to be true. In addition, despite all its literature, there was a definite odor of mustiness about the place—all resulting from having one hand at the helm for too long a time.

Thus, if Mr. Gray has done nothing else, he has sent resounding shock waves throughout the old bureaucracy and has sent out some very clear messages. He expects to give sound orders and he expects those orders to be obeyed. He will not tolerate the perpetuation of petty tyrannies nor will he tolerate lies being sent in from the field. And he will send his men to get the facts when he has some question about what is going on out in the country—and once having gotten the facts, he will act.

At a time when there is much concern about corrosion in so many of our institutions, it is heartening to see a new broom sweeping hard inside a place that has long needed sensible and dispassionate management.