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(750) AMS BUDGET

PERSONALITIES IN THE NEWS

HOOVER AND KENNEDY

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WASHINGTON, DEC. 12 (AP)-J. EDGAR HOOVER, WHO PROFESSES A DISDAIN FOR CONTROVERSY, AND ROBERT F. KENNEDY, WHOM CONTROVERSY SEEMS TO COURT, HAVE CLASHED IN A DISPUTE MATCHING TWO OF THE NATION'S BEST KNOWN PUBLIC FIGURES.

THE ISSUE: DID KENNEDY AUTHORIZE ALL WIRETAPPING AND ELECTRONIC EAVESDROPPING UNDERTAKEN BY THE FBI WHILE HE WAS ATTORNEY GENERAL?

HOOVER, IN A LETTER TO A CONGRESSMAN MADE PUBLIC DURING THE WEEKEND, BROKE HIS SILENCE ON THE BUREAU'S WIRETAPPING AND SOUGHT TO PLACE THE RESPONSIBILITY DIRECTLY ON KENNEDY.

KENNEDY, NOW A DEMOCRATIC SENATOR FROM NEW YORK, REPLIED THAT HOOVER WAS MISINFORMED. HE CHALLENGED THE FBI DIRECTOR TO MAKE PUBLIC HIS ENTIRE FILE ON THE MATTER.

BUT THE ISSUE ITSELF IS ALMOST DWARFED BY EE

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BUT THE ISSUE ITSELF IS ALMOST DWARFED BY THE PERSONALITIES OF THE ADVERSARIES.

HOOVER, 71, HAD BEEN FBI DIRECTOR FOR MORE THAN A YEAR WHEN KENNEDY WAS BORN IN 1925. WHILE KENNEDY WAS IN PREP SCHOOL, HOOVER AND HIS AGENTS WERE TRACKING DOWN JOHN DILLINGER AND BABY FACE NELSON AND PRETTY BOY FLOYD.

BY THE TIME KENNEDY WAS APPOINTED ATTORNEY GENERAL BY HIS BROTHER, PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, IN 1961, HOOVER LONG HAD PROJECTED AN IMAGE FOR RELENTLESS, INCORRUPTIBLE, SCIENTIFIC CRIMEFIGHTING.

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AS ATTORNEY GENERAL, KENNEDY WAS HOOVER'S BOSS--AT LEAST ON PAPER. THE LAW SAYS THE FBI DIRECTOR SERVES AT THE PLEASURE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL. BUT IN FACT, THE FBI FOR YEARS HAS OPERATED AS A SORT OF INDEPENDENT FIEFDOM UNDER HOOVER.

NICHOLAS KATZENBACH, ONE OF THE 14 ATTORNEYS GENERAL HOOVER HAS SERVED UNDER, ONCE CRACKED THAT WHILE HE COULD FIRE HOOVER ON A MONDAY, THERE WOULD BE AN UNEMPLOYED ATTORNEY GENERAL ON TUESDAY.

IN KENNEDY'S THREE YEARS AT THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON WAS ABUZZ WITH RUMORS THAT HE WAS TRYING TO BE HOOVER'S BOSS IN FACT AS WELL AS NAME--AND THAT THIS HAD LED TO FRICTION.

BUT IF THERE WAS FRICTION, IT NEVER CAME INTO PUBLIC VIEW.

HOOVER, A NATIVE OF WASHINGTON, D.C., HAS SPENT ALL HIS ADULT LIFE IN GOVERNMENT WORK. HE GOT HIS FIRST JOB AT 18 AS A MEXXENGER FOR THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS WHILE TAKING NIGHT COURSES AT GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY.

HE BECAME A JUSTICE DEPARTMENT LAWYER IN 1917. SEVEN YEARS LATER, AT THE AGE OF 29, HE WAS APPOINTED DIRECTOR OF THE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, LATER THE FBI.

IN A CAPITAL WHERE AGENCY HEADS COME AND GO WITH GREAT FREQUENCY, HOOVER HAS BEEN THE ONLY CHIEF THE FBI HAS EVER KNOWN. HE HAS SERVED UNDER SEVEN PRESIDENTS, REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRATIC.

HOOVER IS NOT WITHOUT HIS CRITICS. SOME CONTEND THAT IN HIS MILITANT STAND AGAINST COMMUNISM--"WE ARE AT WAR WITH THE COMMUNISTS AND THE SOONER EVERY RED-BLOODED AMERICAN REALIZES IT THE SAFER WE WILL BE"--HOOVER SEES ENEMIES WHERE THERE ARE NONE.

OTHER CRITICS SAY HOOVER RUNS THE FBI WITH TOO MUCH OF AN IRON HAND.

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, AS HOOVER WAS NEARING THE MANDATORY RETIREMENT AGE OF 70, THERE WAS A FLURRY OF REPORTS HE WAS ON HIS WAY OUT.

BUT PRESIDENT JOHNSON LAID THESE RUMORS TO REST WHEN HE EXEMPTED HOOVER FROM THE MANDATORY RETIREMENT RULE, TELLING HIM "THE NATION CANNOT AFFORD TO LOSE YOU."



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THE FBI CHIEF IS A BACHELOR WHO LIVES ALONE EXCEPT FOR A HOUSE-KEEPER IN A SEVEN-ROOM BRICK HOUSE IN NORTHWEST WASHINGTON.

HOOVER HAS MET WITH NEWSMEN ONLY RARELY IN RECENT YEARS. IN ONE OF HIS LATEST INTERVIEWS, IN 1964, HE TOLD A REPORTER "I DON'T ENJOY A CONTROVERSY AND I DON'T GO LOOKING FOR ONE. I HAVE TRIED FOR YEARS TO AVOID PUBLIC DISPUTES. BUT I CAN NOT LET ATTACKS ON THE FBI GO UNCHALLENGED WHEN THEY ARE NOT JUSTIFIED."

KENNEDY, LIKE HOOVER, MAY NOT PREFER CONTROVERSY. BUT IT SEEMS TO FOLLOW HIM WHEREVER HE GOES.

HIS APPOINTMENT AS ATTORNEY GENERAL, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL OF HIS BROTHER'S CABINET APPOINTMENTS. AND HIS ENTRY IN 1964 INTO THE NEW YORK SENATE RACE BROUGHT CHARGES OF "CARPETBAGGER."

THE SEVENTH OF NINE KENNEDY CHILDREN, HE GRADUATED FROM HARVARD AND THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA LAW SCHOOL. AFTER NAVY SERVICE IN WORLD WAR II HE STARTED GRABBING HEADLINES AS CHIEF COUNSEL FOR A SENATE COMMITTEE INVESTIGATING CORRUPTION IN THE TEAMSTERS UNION.

IN 1960, KENNEDY DIRECTED THE CAMPAIGN THAT MADE HIS BROTHER PRESIDENT. HE BECAME KNOWN AS HIS BROTHER'S "NO" MAN, HANDLING THE UNPLEASANT TASKS AND DRAWING CRITICISM AWAY FROM THE CANDIDATE. THE REWARD WAS SEEING JOHN F. KENNEDY ELECTED, BUT THE PENALTY WAS THAT FROM THEN ON ROBERT KENNEDY WAS REGARDED BY MANY PERSONS IN WASHINGTON AS VINDICTIVE, INTENSELY AMBITIOUS AND COLDLY RUTHLESS.

HE HAS NOT COMPLETELY LIVED DOWN THIS REPUTATION. BUT MOST OBSERVERS AGREE THAT WITH HIS BROTHER'S DEATH, AND WITH THE ADDITION OF A FEW YEARS TO HIS OWN AGE, KENNEDY HAS GAINED A NEW PATIENCE AND SENSITIVITY, ALONG WITH A BIT OF GRAY IN HIS TOUSLED BROWN HAIR.

HIS BOSTON ACCENT AND HIS SPEECH-MAKING GESTURE OF CHOPPING AT THE AIR WITH HIS RIGHT HAND REMIND MANY OF HIS BROTHER. ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL IN 1964 AND AGAIN THIS YEAR, HE STIRRED WAVES OF EMOTION.

WOMEN SMEARED HIS FACE WITH LIPSTICK, TEEN-AGERS RAN BESIDE HIS CAR AND TRIED TO GRAB HIM. HE WAS SHOWERED WITH FLOWERS, CONFETTI AND RICE AND GREETED WITH "BOBBY IN '68" SIGNS--A REFERENCE TO THE 1968 DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION HE HAS SAID HE ISN'T SEEKING.

KENNEDY AND HIS WIFE, ETHEL, LIVE IN A RAMBLING, WHITE-PAINTED HOUSE OF CIVIL WAR VINTAGE IN MCLEAN, VA., A FEW MILES FROM WASHINGTON. THEY HAVE NINE CHILDREN WITH A 10TH DUE IN THE SPRING.

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