

9 Oct. 1965

Excerpt, interview by Haskel Frankel of Rex Stout, on publication of his book, "The Doorbell Rang" (filed FBI, II):

"In a democratic country, J. Edgar Hoover is a completely impossible person to be in a position of authority. Do you know that he has decreed that no fictional FBI agent may be portrayed in a movie or on television without the FBI's approval of the actor? I understand why Hoover has done that, but what is surprising is that people have let him get away with it. The fact that Hoover even attempts such control makes him an impossible person in authority in a democratic country.

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"I've been asked if I know what kind of man he is. I think I know from actions of his that have been made public. I got my first idea from the newspapers years ago when I read that he frequently went to the races with Senator McCarthy. I was astonished that a man - Hoover - whose function is to preserve and uphold the law would take as a social companion a man who was so obviously a threat to the very basis of democracy.

"I would like to see an FBI managed and directed in such a manner that the citizens who hire them can contemplate them and talk about them even to the point of severe criticism, as they do all other police organizations in this country.

"I've written a lot of stories in which the New York police and the D.A. of Westchester County have done questionable things but it's never kicked up the dust like this one. I may stick with the FBI for a few more years if it makes people buy books. The FBI certainly has asked for it."