

# Karpis Nabbed 36 Years Ago N.O. ARREST SEALED CAREER

A spectacular career of crime ended and the reputation of J. Edgar Hoover was assured by a dramatic arrest in New Orleans 36 years ago yesterday.

The FBI chief, then 41, personally nabbed "Public Enemy No. 1" Alvin Karpis in a showdown at Canal Street and Jefferson Davis May 1, 1936.

The incident answered critics of Hoover of that time who had scoffed at the FBI chief as a "swivel-chair detective" who had never made an arrest personally.

Karpis was the co-leader of the notorious Karpis-Ma Barker gang that terrorized the nation in the Depression years. After a nationwide search, his position was pinned down at an apartment at 3343 Canal Street.

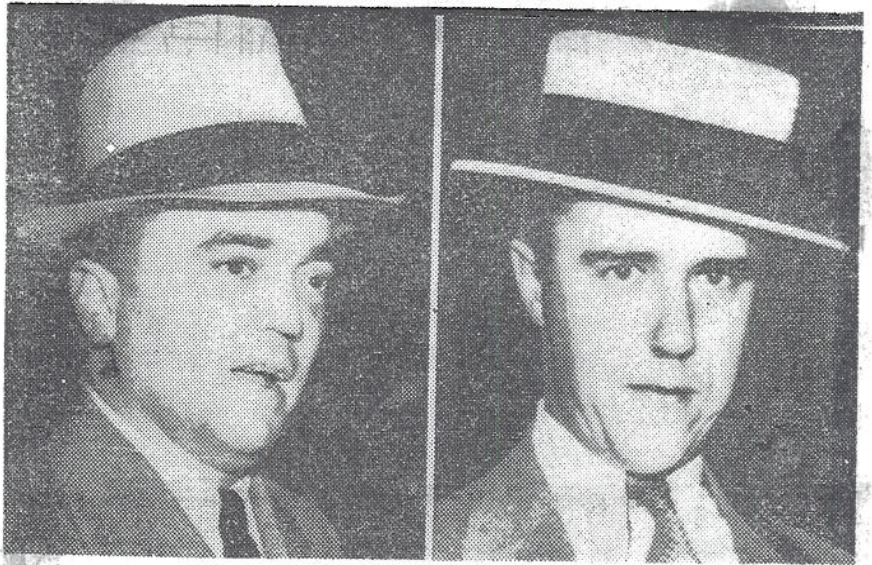
At 5:30 p.m. on May 1, a number of black automobiles drew up before the apartment where Karpis had been holed up for three weeks with a red-haired companion known as "Mrs. Ruth O'Hara" to neighbors.

**IN AN INSTANT** the neighborhood bristled with submachine guns, automatic rifles and other weapons.

Quite unsuspectingly, the little man who had been known as "Eddie O'Hara" walked out of the house toward his newly purchased car, literally into the arms of officers.

Hoover and several other agents had positioned themselves in an auto in front of the house, waiting for Karpis. When he emerged, a group of children was playing in the street.

Hoover took no chances of a gun battle that might harm the youngsters. He leaped from the car alone, ran to Karpis and grabbed him.



## Enemies in 1936

J. EDGAR HOOVER, left, and ALVIN KARPIS as they appeared in 1936 when the FBI chief captured the gangster in an apartment at Canal Street and N. Jefferson Davis Pkwy. (AP Wirephoto.)

**THE CRIMINAL** was taken so completely by surprise he didn't have time to draw his pistol. Nobody ever questioned Hoover's courage after that.

The arrest had its amusing side. Hoover turned to his agents as they closed in and asked for handcuffs. No one had thought to bring any. They had to use their neckties to tie Karpis' hands.

Karpis, then 27, was taken to St. Paul, Minn., and convicted of the kidnaping three years earlier of William Hamm. Ransom of \$100,000 had been paid for the release of Hamm, a wealthy brewer.

**SENTENCED** to life imprisonment, Karpis was sent to Leavenworth prison and later to Alcatraz where he spent 25 years.

He was paroled in 1969 and deported to his native Canada, where he became a social worker.

Hoover, already head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, became a national figure and a power in Washington, surviving as FBI chief through the administrations of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard M. Nixon.

Last night, on the 36th anniversary of his biggest arrest, he died of natural causes.