

Romance Hasn't a Chance in the FBI



Jack Anderson

J. EDGAR HOOVER, the 76-year-old bachelor father of the FBI, requires his FBI family to be off the streets and safely tucked into their own beds by 2 a.m. He frowns sternly on after-hours romance.

His wrath was roused, therefore, over the discovery that a 17-year-old file clerk had dozed off while cuddling on the couch with his girl friend the other night. The pair were found asleep on the couch next morning by his FBI roommates.

Faithful to their FBI indoctrination, the two roommates dutifully reported the incident, and the sleepy file clerk was required to submit a detailed confession to Hoover.

★ ★ ★

JOHAN P. McKELVEY, fresh out of high school in Toms River, N.J., with visions of Efrem Zimbalist Jr. in his head, signed up this summer to work at the FBI's vast Washington cantonment. He sheared off his shoulder-length hair to conform to Hoover's hair standards and ran two miles every day to keep his weight below the maximum Hoover allows.

A clean-cut, appealing young man, McKelvey performed his filing chores efficiently and kept his nose clean until the romantic interlude.

The incident seemed innocent enough. McKelvey took his date shopping, then they stopped by his apartment for a beer. They were holding hands on the couch when his roommates went to bed. At

sun-up, the roommates found the couple, fully clothed, asleep on the couch.

After this breach of Hoover's curfew was reported, it was formally investigated by FBI agent J. A. Conley. The errant file clerk got into deeper trouble when he lied, gallantly, to protect his girl friend.

But the FBI got the goods on McKelvey and demanded a full confession. He was carefully coached what to say. He had to account for all his movements on the fateful night, giving the exact times he picked up his date, arrived at the apartment and drifted asleep. It was suggested he stress, of course, that nothing immoral had occurred.

"No immoral actions were taken, and everybody's clothes were on," the young file clerk solemnly assured J. Edgar Hoover.

★ ★ ★

BACK CAME a grim letter from the FBI chief, marked "personal" and dated August 23.

"It is obvious you exercised exceedingly poor judgment in this instance and your conduct did not measure up to the high standards expected of FBI-employees," admonished Hoover. "Had you given careful consideration to this matter, you would have realized it was most indiscreet and subject to misinterpretation. Because of the seriousness of this matter, you are being placed on probation."

McKelvey also put the FBI on probation and decided he didn't want to be like Efrem Zimbalist Jr. after all. He expects to return to Toms River this week to look for more prosaic work.