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Your local bomber

might be an FBI agent

Art Kunkin

The Report on the FBI which we are featuring in this issue is the text of a National Educational Television (NET) film which alleges that the Federal Bureau of Investigation encouraged or condoned acts of violence by three undercover informants. The informants appear in the film and admit bombings and other acts of provocation.

This film prepared by San Francisco writers Paul Jacobs and Saul Landau, was cleared for broadcast by the legal staff of NET and the distribution system of the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) several weeks ago and was to have been aired Wednesday, October 6.

However, only hours before the scheduled broadcast, the program was cancelled, ostensibly due to a letter written by FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover and hand delivered to the New York office of NET.

There was immediate speculation that the cancellation took place because of the increased reliance of NET and PBS on Congressional funding, and a fear that Hoover's hostility could eliminate or reduce such funding.

However, the cancellation was challenged by the almost instantaneous public interest and a reversal of the decision to cancel took place. The program was finally aired on net's New York Channel 13 on Friday October 8 in two versions: one prepared before the FBI intervention and one prepared after. Accompanying the two versions was a debate by a panel of journalists, lawyers and broadcast executives on the merits of the report. What had started out a 12 minute segment of the Great American Dream Machine program became a two hour show of its own.

The program was aired in Los Angeles last Sunday evening at 10 pm with only a few advance spots notifying the public of the unscheduled showing. This publication in the Free Press is the first time that this material has appeared in print.

Paul Jacobs and Saul Landau began their investigation of these three FBI informers in June 1971 after reading of their activities in the underground press. One of them, Grimm, had left Tuscaloosa, Alabama, the scene of his activities, where he had denied setting fire to any buildings in the course of a trial of radicals. Jack Nelson of the Los Angeles Times wrote an article about Grimm, placing him in Minneapolis, and the NET researchers, following this lead, located Grimm who agreed to go on television with the truth. The film was completed by the end of August.

There is nothing intrinsically illogical, incomprehensible or bizarre about the FBI using or encouraging their agents or informants in radical groups to commit illegal acts so that the radical groups may be charged with violations of the law. This type of behavior by secret police has been known in every country throughout history. There is even a special phrase to describe men engaged in such activity: agents provocateurs. Funk and Wagnall's Standard Dictionary defines an agent provocateur as a 'secret agent implanted in an



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Know your local bomber

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organization, a trade union or political party, to incite its members to actions or declarations that will incur penalties or punishment.

In the opinion of this writer, there is sufficient detail in the text of the film to testify to the truth of the allegations about the FBI. It is also clear that NET and PBS did not lightly consider publicizing these charges.

The president of the Public Broadcasting Service, Hartford Gunn Jr., has denied that the original cancellation had anything to do with censorship or pressure but was solely an "editorial decision" because of shortcomings in documentation of the allegations of FBI approved violence.

However, it is evident that by Friday night, three short days later, his own doubts about the documentation must have been resolved for he permitted the broadcast, following the advice previously given by his legal staff. (Or perhaps his fear of the FBI had been lessened, a possibility which suggests that all is not yet over in this country).

Only the naive, or those who want to blindly trust in the agencies of government, can be really astounded by what this short film infers about the FBI. It really did not take the publication of the Pentagon Papers to make known the fact that the Executive branch of our government has been pursuing a war in violation of the Constitution. Publication just reminded us what our own knowledge and intuition should have told us.

In recent years there have been a number of critical books and articles about the FBI which give all the information we need to make an objective judgement about what is actually our national police force (although, off hand, I don't remember specific cases of provocation in any of these writings). Two of these books were authored by California men who were employed by the FBI as Special Agents, left the FBI and developed to the point where they both could visit the Free Press offices in a totally friendly manner. ("Inside The FBI" by Norman Ollstad; Published by Lyle Stuart 1967. \$5.95 hardback; and "Hoover's FBI" by William W. Turner; Published by Sherbourne Press, Los Angeles, 1970; \$7.50 hardback).

These books tell the story of how the FBI is out of the control of American people and even out of the control of elected politicians. Turner, for example, tells the story of how Lyndon Johnson, immediately upon achieving the presidency, requested and obtained from the FBI 1,200 supposedly confidential dossiers about his political enemies.

Along with such books as Omar Garrison's "Spy Government", the emerging police state in America (Lyle Stuart, 1967, \$5.95 hardback) these writings by ex-FBI agents themselves tell us that the problem is who will police the police?

For many years, J. Edgar Hoover has been aiming at the construction of a thought police in the United States. As a young man in 1919, Hoover was a key figure in the infamous Palmer Raids on radicals, when ten thousand innocent people were hysterically dragged from their homes and places of work, mostly without warrants (97 warrantless out of each 100, it is said) after Hoover, as head of the General Intelligence Division of the Justice Department, had compiled dossiers on 450,000 Americans. (The GID was revived by Hoover in 1949 as the Domestic Intelligence Division of the FBI, and now has files on many millions of Americans).

President Harry Truman so feared Hoover's wide-ranging ambitions when Hoover wanted to control all espionage activity of the United States following World War Two, that Truman established the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) as a counterforce to the FBI. (Are two secret police forces really better than one? Maybe for the President, but down here it looks twice as bad).

As ex-FBI agent Turner says, however, Hoover never gave up. After the Bay of Pigs disaster, when CIA stock was at rock bottom, Hoover spread the word through Washington that the FBI could and should take over from the CIA. And he is still trying!

Also, we must not forget that it was President Roosevelt himself, the model for all good Democrats, who in 1936, secretly invested Hoover and the FBI with the responsibility of investigating 'subversive activities', moving the full attention of the agency away from the prosecution of criminal actions (where it didn't do much good, anyway) to the realm of probing what men think.

It is only one tiny step from investigating thoughts to attempting to control them, either by mental intimidation or, by what seems to be the case with the informants, on the NET film, by the fabrication of evidence and actions.

First we had the Pentagon Papers; Now we are beginning to have the FBI Papers. They are both worthy of study. The fact that we can still study them in public should give us confidence that the battle against dictatorship can still be fought and won.



Text of the NET film

Informants say bombings were under FBI agents instructions

First Man: This is the West approach to the Evergreen Point floating bridge. It was this bridge that I was instructed by the F.B.I. agent Bert Carter, approximately December 2 last year, to blow up, with five radicals, and to insure that the individuals who set the bomb died in the booby trapped explosion. I was instructed to infiltrate bombing groups to gain credibility as a bomber by actually doing bombing.

Second Man: Well, while I was making the bomb, I notified first Lou Harris in the F.B.I. and told him what was going on and he said go ahead and do it and call him the next morning, you know.

Paul Jacobs: Hmm.

Second Man: He didn't care if anyone got killed or what.

Third Man: Eric Wilson, the F.B.I. agent, he told me to burn the buildings, and — he told me to burn the buildings, and the reason he wanted me to burn the buildings was so that the state troopers could have an excuse to come on campus and "crush" the rebellion on campus.

Paul Jacobs: The F.B.I. involved in bombings and arson? It sounds incredible. I'm Paul Jacobs, a writer, and I've been covering this story for several months. The three young men you just saw insist they committed criminal acts with the knowledge of the F.B.I. They claim that while working as undercover agents they tried to provoke violence, so that the Police and the F.B.I. would have an excuse to arrest radicals.

The F.B.I. has denied these accusations, calling them "totally and absolutely false," and the agents named say the charges are also "malicious" and "libelous."

The first man you saw was David Sannes. United States Attorney Stan Pitkin in Seattle has stated that Sannes volunteered to be an F.B.I. informer and was given a code name and a post

office box.

The second man you saw was Jeff Desmond. His mother has publicly reported that he had repeated conversations and meetings with a man who identified himself as F.B.I. agent Louis Harris at Desmond's home in Seattle.

Charles Grimm was the third man you saw. F.B.I. agent Eric Wilson of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, when asked in court if he knew Grimm declined to answer on the ground that the question involved an official matter which could not be made public without the consent of the Attorney General. Wilson stated that the F.B.I.'s Tuscaloosa mailing address was Post Office Box 85. This was the forwarding address Grimm said he used when he left Tuscaloosa.

These statements by U.S. Attorney Pitkin, Mrs. Desmond, and F.B.I. agent Wilson suggest that a relationship did exist between the F.B.I. and these men.

Charles Grimm, a former student of the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa, says he was recruited as an undercover agent by the F.B.I. after he and his fiancée got in trouble with local police.

Grimm: Well, this one detective who was working with the narcotics in Tuscaloosa for the Tuscaloosa police department he threatened me he said, "I'm going to throw in jail you and your fiancée if you don't cooperate with us." And being afraid of jail, as I am, I decided, well I'd better cooperate. These people had me by the throat and they knew it. And well, eventually the F.B.I. came in and the F.B.I. said, "Listen we want you to work for us too," and they also offered to pay me. But see it wasn't the money so much; it was the fact that if I didn't do it with them they'd nail me anyway.

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FBI Informants

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Jacobs: Did the F.B.I. agent ever suggest that you were to do some actions?

Grimm: He's a very subtle man and he came across very strong though he stepped out of line. In other words, he would say, "Well we need — if there was a fire on campus —" These aren't his exact words but this is what he was saying. "If there was a fire on campus we could get in there and crush those communists that are on campus." Well, there are no communists on campus, just students that are concerned. And he would say this and say this. And I did burn a few buildings, and I did throw Molotov Cocktails. And eventually the state troopers did come in.

Jacobs: Did the F.B.I. agent know that you were going to set fire to the buildings?

Grimm: Definitely. I believe he knew this and I believe he was telling me this. I can't prove it; I know he told me. There was nobody else there, you see, but he did tell me that destruction was necessary and, you know, he never came right out and said why destruction was necessary, but I know why and he gave me subtle hints again.

Jacobs: Were any students arrested at the University of Alabama as a result of the fires you set?

Grimm: No, but the fires themselves created an attitude on campus and in the town Tuscaloosa. The people in the town at the time were just kind of — didn't like the students but, you know, they had no hatred. After the fires, they felt that those buildings were part of them and that the students had done it. So the people in town hated the students.

Jacobs: David Sannes says that he had volunteered to be an undercover agent for the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Seattle. We discussed what the agency wanted him to do.

Sannes: Well, my instructions were general, to find people interested in bombing. These were people that I sought out for the F.B.I., that I convinced to actually bomb the structure itself.

Jacobs: Did it take a lot of convincing?

Sannes: For a few of the members it was a matter of many weeks of persuasion to actually — actually have them carry through with the bombing projects.

Jacobs: Well, now when you were involved in this kind of activity did you keep in touch with the F.B.I. and tell them what you were doing?

Sannes: Yes, all arrangements for the bombing and for the added operation to make certain that the individual died in the explosion — all these transactions were made between Carter and myself by utilizing an intermediary, a uniformed police officer right here in Seattle.

Jacobs: Did you actually do the bombing?

Sannes: No. After Carter had instructed that the bomber was to die in a booby trapped explosion, I thought it over and dropped my association with the F.B.I. Besides none of these individuals had any knowledge of explosives themselves. It was necessary for them to have outside explosive help, and that was me.

Jacobs: Sannes has said that the idea for the bombing originated with him, and that his instructions to go ahead with it came from F.B.I. agent Bert Carter. The police intermediary to whom Sannes refers is officer David Franklin of the University of Washington police. Franklin

confirmed to me that he was indeed the intermediary and that Carter did know that a bombing was planned which was intended to result in a loss of life.

Another man who claims he participated in a bombing with the knowledge of an F.B.I. agent is Jeff Desmond. He says he was originally recruited as an informant by the Seattle Police. I asked him how he had been contacted.

Desmond: I had been involved with drugs and had been for such a long time. I knew quite a bit about explosives. I had been trained by the Du Pont Company, which made me a natural for what they wanted. And I wasn't doing anything at the particular time. I was bored, not involved in politics or anything, and agent Lou Harris just came up to my house one day and he wanted me to investigate bombings and find who was doing them, and especially find out about any foreign intervention — foreign money or whatever was being put into it, you know. And by the time he came back the next time, a couple of days later, I found out that the only real way that I could do it was to actually perform a bombing or two myself, you know, to increase my credibility. I told him that, and I told him I didn't have the proper components that I needed — blasting caps; I had explosives but I needed caps, you know, fuses and what not and he told me that he might be able to get them himself and he had to go back to his office and check. He went back and came back and said he could but it would be a hassle and it would be easier and more logical for me to go out and buy them myself and so he gave me some money to do that with.

Jacobs: Then what happened?

Desmond: Well, nothing much until the bombing. I showed the guys I was involved with in the bombing how to manufacture bombs and what not, and using Harris's caps and fuses and what not that Harris provided, we bombed the construction site near the University of Washington one night.

Jacobs: What was the next bombing you got involved in?

Desmond: The next one was the last one — the Post Office Building. And in between the Post Office and the construction site the police came by and found out I had something to do with it and found a way by threat of imprisonment to coerce me into working with them. And what they wanted me to do ...

Jacobs: You're talking about the local police?

Desmond: Yes, the local police. The Seattle police — general narcotics — general detective detail — the Seattle Police Department wanted me to actually go out and set somebody up, you know, if necessary show them how to do everything so that they would go out and do a bombing and would be captured in the process, you see.

Jacobs: How did you set up this bombing unit?

Desmond: Well, I just — by providing explosives and what not and by knowing that the guys involved were revolutionaries and pretty violent ones, that they would do something like this and I just waited until they got ready to, and they decided one night to bomb the Post Office over a little altercation with the police in the university district. And I notified the F.B.I. first, then I called the police and they mobilized all their people and had them out there waiting around the place and we drove up. One guy got out and tossed a bomb. And just as he did, just as he tossed it, a plainclothes unmarked car

pulled up in front of us and they jumped out and drew their guns and told us to get out of the car.

Jacobs: What happened after you all got arrested?

Desmond: They let me out the next morning and gave me five hundred dollars.

Jacobs: During the summer several unsuccessful attempts were made to get comments from the Seattle police, the F.B.I. agents and Bureau Headquarters in Washington. In September we formally asked all of them to respond over these facilities to the charges made against them.

Agents Carter, Harris, and Wilson then replied, denying the accusations and labeling the charges "Malicious" and "Libelous." F.B.I. Director J. Edgar Hoover also denied the charges, stating that "On the basis of the information available to the bureau, each of the charges is totally and absolutely false in each and every particular. We have referred this matter to the Department of Justice."

The Seattle Acting Chief of Police wrote us on September 9th that, "It would be an exercise in futility for the Seattle Police Department to attempt to verify the statements that have no basis in fact. Unfortunately, our response denying the allegations would be more apt to lend credence to fantastically inaccurate or deliberately contrived efforts to discredit the Seattle Police Department and the Seattle office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Our agencies are not isolated in these attacks, and it is obvious that the type of notoriety actively sought by Mr. Desmond and Mr. Sannes is just part of an organized attempt to destroy public confidence in law enforcement. I am surprised that the NET (National Educational Television) would allow itself to be used as a vehicle for this type of subversive activity."

The Chief's letter then went on to say, "We can not help but conclude that the desire for sensationalism has taken precedence over the responsibility of public service, and the obligation to objectively and fairly comment on those agencies of government that protect and serve the public."

Jacobs: Who is telling the truth? Clues to the relationship between the F.B.I. and some of its informants can be found in documents recently stolen from the F.B.I. office in Media, Pennsylvania, and subsequently sent to the press. One of these documents from the F.B.I. files states that informants should "Rise to the maximum of their ability within the New Left Movement" but that they "Should not become the person who carries the gun, throws the bomb, does the robbery, or by some specific violative overt act becomes a deeply involved participant."

Yet there is evidence from the same documents that at least some of the violence attributed to political groups was actually inspired or committed by F.B.I. informants. The document says that in a few instances, "Security informants in the New Left got carried away during a demonstration, assaulted police, etc. ..." But when this does happen those who commit these acts are rarely prosecuted. And it is a fact that neither the Seattle police nor the F.B.I. has made any attempt to prosecute Jeff Desmond for his admitted part in bombing a Federal Post Office just as Charles Grimm has not been prosecuted for his admitted illegal activities in Tuscaloosa.

I WAS A POET FOR THE FBI

LAWRENCE LIPTON

Murder, suicide, mayhem. Wow! the stories I could tell. See my agent. Even before God was insulted at Yale I was at the U of I picking up spondees and trochees in the Co-op and counting the condoms in the boneyard on Monday morning.

I was Ed Hoover's man at YMCA College collecting free verse in the ladies' room and once, disguised as Oscar Wilde, in the men's toilet. Cash McCall is my co-pilot.

At the Green Mask, in the very shadow of the Tribune Tower — may I speak freely? the beard of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was burned in ritual orgy, hair by hair.

In Chicago I joined the Escalator Movement under the name of Gertrude Stein and nobody suspected anything. From a poet named Rexroth I learned about six different kinds of sex, all of them subversive.

In dives on Rush Street we lay on divans in mixed company and talked about modern art,

waited on by naked African pygmies. We sat on the floor and read Edna St. Vincent Millay, aloud. I could name names and places.

On orders from Ezra Pound I infiltrated the Saturday Evening Post and planted excerpts from Edgar A. Guest. One night I broke into the Saturday Review and lopped off Literature from the masthead. Nobody noticed it.

Four times I escaped from behind curtains — iron, bamboo, dimity and shower, and once I barely made it by way of a bedroom fire escape clad only in pajama tops. Danger is my business.

I found an atheist in a foxhole and reported him to General MacArthur. Twice I was shot down in missions over Union Square, Waldorf Cafeteria, Camp Nitgedieget and the League of American Penwomen. Arthur Godfrey is my co-pilot.

I joined the Brownian Movement before it split with the Fourth Dimensheviks. Big Jim Oppenheimer was its Party boss. I would tell you about my affair with Tillie Zilch but that's still classified.

I was there when they dubbed the Communist Manifesto into the movie of Charley's Aunt, and nipped the conspiracy to smuggle quotations from Karl Marx into the popcorn bags. Now they're plotting to fold up the rhymes in the singing commercials.

Ten grand buys my tale of horror at the Cotton Club when Louis Armstrong sang Eli Eli on secret orders from the Elders of Zion, and the borschtcapades in the Holland Tunnel with Mickey Katz on Walpurgisnacht. Commander Whitehead is my co-pilot.

For an extra grand I'll tell all I know about free verse, free love, free lunch, free wheeling and free pop at barbecues of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a Dadaist front controlled by Tristan Tzara and Ogden Nash.

Now, back in the free world, with my unexpurgated copy of Anne Morrow Lindbergh's The Unicorn and the complete files of the Soviet Ministry of Culture I am Poet in Residence at Time, Life and Fortune. Zsa Zsa Gabor is my co-pilot.