

## THE FBI

## A Full Court Press

Citing reasons why he thought that L. Patrick Gray III would be an excellent director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Attorney General Richard Kleindienst said: "He's a real patriot and a dedicated anti-Communist." Moreover, added Kleindienst, "he's loyal to President Nixon."

But what the Senate Judiciary Committee wanted to know was whether Gray, like J. Edgar Hoover before him, would guard against partisan political tampering with the FBI. Last week the committee opened hearings on Gray's nomination. In two wearying days of testimony, Gray, wearing an American flag pin in his lapel, sought to convince



ACTING FBI DIRECTOR L. PATRICK GRAY  
A political workout.

the committee that his personal loyalties to his longtime friend, President Nixon, would not interfere with his even-handed guidance of the FBI. Said Gray: "I am not a partisan guy." But the committee's vote was still uncertain, and the hearings were to continue.

Under questioning, Gray did not convincingly refute the report in *TIME* a week ago that the FBI, under Hoover and later under himself as acting director, had tapped the phones of six or seven Washington newsmen. He said that he had checked all records of authorized security taps and had found no orders or indications that any such taps had been placed. He also questioned a Justice Department information officer and got a negative response. Asked Senator Edward Kennedy "That is the sole extent of your investigation?"

Other key questions: Did Gray give campaign speeches for the President?

No, said Gray. He did make some 16 speeches during the height of Nixon's campaign, but his theme was simply that "America is a great and good land." Why did he not question more thoroughly the White House aides who might have been involved in the Watergate bugging incident? Gray replied: "When you are working in close with the office of the presidency, the presumption is one of regularity."

Nevertheless, Gray maintained that he had ordered a "full court press with no holds barred" investigation on Watergate. He even offered to let every Senator examine all the FBI documents gathered in the Watergate probe. If they take up the offer, they may learn quite a bit, including more about E. Howard Hunt, who pleaded guilty to conspiracy in the Watergate case. According to Justice Department officials, interviews and reports by FBI agents on the Watergate case show, among other things, the following:

▶ White House records listed Presidential Counsel Charles Colson as Hunt's "supervisor" from June 1971 through March 1972, at least four months after Hunt had begun to recruit other wire tappers involved in the Watergate conspiracy. The records also show that Colson's secretary initialed Hunt's pay vouchers. Colson has denied "knowledge or involvement" in the Watergate bugging and has given sworn testimony that he did not see much of Hunt beyond August 1971.

▶ Presidential aides were involved in moving Hunt from his White House job as a \$100-a-day consultant on a narcotics-control program to a post with President Nixon's re-election committee. The FBI files contain a report of a memo dated March 30, 1972 from White House Aide W. Richard Howard to White House Aide Bruce Kehrli. The report described Hunt as "very effective for us" and sought to shift him to the Committee for the Re-Election of the President. The Watergate-trial evidence showed that while Hunt was working with the committee he was also with the group that tapped Democratic headquarters.

▶ The Robert R. Mullen Co., a Washington public relations firm, hired Hunt as a \$125-a-day consultant on an Office of Education publicity project. "Howard worked here during the day," a Mullen official told *TIME*. "He told us that he was working nights and weekends at the White House." Mullen has been doing various jobs for the CIA ever since the firm arranged propaganda broadcasts to Cuba as part of the Bay of Pigs invasion. When the FBI started to look into Hunt's links with the company after the Watergate arrests, CIA officials visited Gray and told him that the firm was used on occasion for CIA purposes. This disclosure, according to a Justice Department official, "had the effect of legitimizing Mullen" and putting severe limits on the FBI's investigation of Hunt's employer.