

Nixon Picks Police Chief To Head FBI

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President Nixon selected Kansas City Police Chief Clarence M. Kelley yesterday to be FBI director, describing him as "the best man in the country for the position."

Kelley, a 21-year veteran of the FBI before he was named police chief in 1961, told reporters in a brief statement that he plans to combat crime without infringing on "human rights and dignity."

Carefully avoiding the partisan pitfalls that snared Mr. Nixon's previous nominee, L. Patrick Gray, the White House refused to say whether Kelley was a Democrat or a Republican.

If confirmed by the Senate, Kelley will become the first permanent FBI head since J. Edgar Hoover died more than a year ago. Gray served as acting director for 11 months before he was forced to resign amid criticism of FBI handling of the Watergate investigation.

ROOM

Attorney General Elliot Richardson, who was at Kelley's side during a brief appearance in the White House press room, said William D. Ruckelshaus would continue

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NEW FBI DIRECTOR

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as acting director until Kelley is confirmed.

"The attorney general and I agree and the Cabinet agrees that we selected the best man in the country for the position," Mr. Nixon said to newsmen who were admitted to the Oval Office for a short picture-taking session.

When a reporter asked Kelley about his politics, Mr. Nixon put his hand in front of the nominee and said: "We haven't even asked him whether he is a Democrat or a Republican — don't tell them."

Kelley spoke briefly with reporters but he declined to answer questions in advance of his confirmation hearings by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

"After an interlude of almost 12 years away from the FBI, it is very gratifying to me to be selected by the President to be its director," Kelley said.

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He said progress has been made in recent years in the war against crime.

"I feel that it has been done with a recognition of human rights and dignity," he said of the crime fight. "I strongly adhere to those precepts."

Mr. Nixon introduced Kelley to his cabinet a few minutes before the appointment was announced.

Kelley was in San Francisco, as assistant special agent in charge of the FBI office for approximately one year, from the fall of 1956 to the fall of 1957.

Kelley, 61, was born in Kansas City. He is a graduate of the University of Kansas and the University of Missouri Law School.

Kelley joined the FBI in 1940. He was agent in charge of the Memphis office when

he was picked in 1961 to take over a scandal-plagued Kansas City police force.

"He brought about the restoration of morale in Kansas City; he instituted firm discipline and he eliminated corruption," Richardson said. The attorney general described the Kansas City police force as the "most innovative" in the nation.

In answer to a question Richardson said he was sure that FBI professionals would consider Kelley to be one of them. Bureau holdovers from the Hoover era had urged Mr. Nixon to pick a director from within the FBI.

Both Gray and Ruckelshaus lacked backgrounds in law enforcement and both were active in politics. Unlike Gray who fought hard to obtain confirmation as permanent director, Ruckelshaus has said he would not accept the post on a permanent basis.