

# Watergate Makes the

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## Burglaries, Political Operations

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WASHINGTON — "I used to sit up until three or four o'clock in the morning waiting for a telephone call that they had gotten in and out all right..."

So said a former FBI official telling how the FBI used to employ "suicide squads" of agents for breaking and entering illegally to gain evidence in major espionage and criminal cases.

The agents knew that just as in "Mission Impossible" the FBI would disavow them if they were caught in one of the clandestine operations, he said.

### Never Arose

But the official said he often wondered late at night, with the clock ticking away, if he would be able to carry out the disavowal if the second-story agents ever faced a prison sentence. The occasion apparently never arose.

The Watergate scandal — along with the Ellsberg psychiatrist's break-in engineered by the White House's dynamic duo, E. Howard Hunt and G. Gordon Liddy — may have stopped such extra-legal crime fighting for at least years to come, in the mind of a former official.

"I suppose if we knew some terrorists had plans for blowing up a building or kidnaping an official, we might get permission for a 'bag job,' but I'm not so sure about that either," he said in the tone of a sharpshooter who has lost his favorite .38.

Thus politics has forced as much a change in FBI covert operations as former Attorney General Ramsey Clark did when he ordered a halt to break-ins and wiretaps in 1966 for constitutional reasons. Not even President Nixon could order a return to the practice in the face of the late Director J. Edgar Hoover's resistance.

The history of the FBI

could well be entitled, "The FBI! In War and Peace — and Politics," according to some of the men who saw its operations from inside as aides to Hoover.

While in law and order lore the bureau has a reputation for being politically virginal, politicians understand that none of Uncle Sam's agencies can remain sterile in a democratic society — neither the Agriculture Department, the Securities Exchange Commission nor the FBI.

"The FBI has been involved in politics for 30 years," observed a former assistant director who insisted on remaining anonymous. "But under J. Edgar Hoover it was covered up because people were afraid to say anything. Now, it is all coming out."

Another former official known for his links to Democrats said "There has never been anything like what was going on in the recent four years." Before that, he said the FBI probably "used politics" more than it was "used politically" itself.

### Denies Brand

A third former assistant director, Cartha "Deke" DeLoach, the only former official willing to talk on the record, denies the FBI ever carried a political brand.

"If the FBI was used politically, why did Mr. Hoover have so much trouble with attorneys general?" he asked.

Even those whose respect for Hoover was not boundless are quick to acknowledge that the late FBI director was, in the words of one of his former assistants, "one of the smartest, most cunning politicians who ever lived."

A former official recalled that Hoover harbored a de-

sire to sit on the Supreme Court. Thus in 1948 the bureau "embraced" Thomas Dewey in Hoover's belief that he would certainly defeat President Harry Truman and possibly appoint him attorney general, a white marble stepping stone to the court, according to the official, a Hoover critic.

### At Disposal

But when Truman pulled off the historic surprise, Hoover dispatched an agent to President Truman to advise him "the FBI is at your disposal," the official said.

Truman, however, had no love for Hoover. He sent this reply through the agent: "Please tell Mr. Hoover that any requests I have to convey will go through my attorney general."

Hoover, according to a former aide, preferred to deal directly with presidents and thus had worked out an end-around the attorney general.

He would assign an FBI official as a direct liaison man with the White House, usually someone the president or his aide knew and liked.

Courtney Evans, an intelligent urbane assistant director was assigned to the late John F. Kennedy. DeLoach, a handsome politically sharp and diplomatic assistant director who knew Lyndon Johnson from his days as Senate majority leader, was assigned to LBJ.

### Direct Line

DeLoach had a direct White House telephone. He recalled how it was installed in a recent interview:

The President tried to reach him one Saturday night but got a busy signal for 18½ minutes because DeLoach's teen-age daughter was on the telephone.

The next morning as DeLoach was leaving for church White House signal men ar-

rived with orders to install a telephone.

"Well, I told them to put it in the den. But no, they said they had direct orders from the President to put it in the bedroom." That's where it went. DeLoach acknowledged that at least for the first two or three years it was used frequently with LBJ giving orders on how FBI background investigations of his appointees should be handled.

Johnson is also remembered in the bureau for "the case of 200 missing Marines."

### Navy Men

Back in 1965 there was a public uproar over the slaying of three young civil rights workers in Mississippi. Johnson called Hoover



# FBI Go Straight

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## Are Out in the Open

one day to ask what the FBI was doing to find the bodies. Hoover checked with an aide and passed on detailed report to the President including the fact that 200 Navy men had joined the search.

Not many minutes later the news tickers in the FBI reported that President Johnson had announced that he was personally following the Mississippi case and that 200 Marines were assisting in the search.

Marines! Hoover nervously called his aide. Where had the President got 200 Marines? It was sailors, wasn't it? Yes, sir, replied the aide. Soon Hoover and Johnson were in crackling communications. Minutes later Hoover, his voice quavering, told the aide: "Call

(Defense) Secretary McNamara and tell him the President wants 200 Marines dispatched immediately to Mississippi." Johnson was not going to add to any credibility gap if he could help it.

McNamara, a former FBI aide remembered, was not only non-plussed but angry. He would not carry out the order until he was assured by a presidential aide that Johnson did indeed want 200 Marines flown to Mississippi.

### Order Canceled

Finally, when the first helicopter was airborne with Marines and others boarding, President Johnson called Hoover to cancel the order.

Members of the Mississippi congressional delegation

were up in arms. They threatened to announce that Mississippi was being invaded by Marines unless the Leathernecks were recalled.

The argument over a political FBI has received new impetus by the Watergate case.

When L. Patrick Gray was trying to win Senate confirmation as Hoover's successor he repeatedly swore that he would quit rather than bow to political pressure.

But it was shown, and he sadly admitted, that he had bowed to the pressure while acting director. He wanted the FBI job so badly, he admitted, he burned evidence in the Watergate case.

William C. Sullivan, a former assistant director and No. 3 man in the bureau's chain of command, has written a memo reportedly detailing political use of the FBI in the past. He

wrote the memo at the request of then White House Counsel John W. Dean III, who was trying to engineer a historic defense for the Nixon Administration's alleged efforts to manipulate the FBI in the Watergate affair. The memo is in the hands of the Senate Watergate Committee which has not made it public.

While Sullivan reportedly points a finger at DeLoach for doing political favors for Johnson and some other former officials contend Evans did them for Kennedy, Sullivan does not escape the tar brush.

Sullivan, according to former colleagues, was the Nixon man at the FBI and was close to the plumbers unit of Liddy and Hunt.

Can the FBI ever be lifted to the pedestal above the sound and fury of politics? It seems unlikely as long as ambitions are more important than law or principles.