

32 San Francisco Chronicle Tues., Jan. 27, 1976

SFChronicle

JAN 27 1976

# TV Views

## A Look at the FBI

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Associated Press

New York

THE Federal Bureau of Investigation, its once-shiny image a bit tarnished of late, got the once-over last night in a one-hour CBS News special called "Inside the FBI."

Alas, the show, written and produced by Howard Stringer and reported by Dan Rather, doesn't live up to the hard-hitting reputation of previous "CBS Reports" programs.



J. Edgar Hoover

And one segment, a study of FBI agents in Atlanta trying to find a suspect wanted for questioning in a Florida jewel heist, would make even the most kindly city editor scream for some basic facts.

In it, Rather follows the FBI's search of the suspect's house after the man has fled the scene. He asserts that the man's alibi has collapsed and that "he is the Florida jewel thief after all."

The suspect is arrested a day later in Louisiana. But we never learn if he was ever charged with the jewel theft, let alone tried for it.

★ ★ ★

THE SHOW'S premise basically concerns the damage done the FBI's reputation by post-Watergate revelations of what Rather calls its "massive domestic spying" and its campaign against Martin Luther King.

"We know the headlines," Rather says. "We wanted to know how these things could have happened."

But first comes a look at the climate of the FBI, the sort of persons who join it, their training, their work, the ranges of cases they handle.

Eventually, we get to the nub of the show, the area of national security and domestic intelligence where, as Rather says in beginning the program, "most of the abuses by the FBI developed."

Only four cases are specifically cited. One involves an attempt by the late J. Edgar Hoover to get a Washington reporter fired because Hoover felt the man was out to discredit the FBI.

The reporter, Jack Nelson of the Los Angeles Times; quotes from and speaks about allegations contained in a file the FBI kept on him.

Chilling, yes, but why not an examination of whether and how such a file violates Nelson's constitutional rights? Just saying the FBI sometimes gathers poop on "anyone it dislikes" doesn't add much to understanding the problem.

★ ★ ★

A SIMILAR FLAW lies in an interview with a former campus activist who supported Arab causes, later was a defense lawyer for Sirhan Sirhan and was the object of intense FBI scrutiny for eight years. But we don't learn that, if anything, could justify such scrutiny.

The two other cases each involve a paid FBI informant. Each spied on and led dissident groups, one an anti-war group, the other a right-wing group opposed to both the left and the Nixon administration.

Each spy says he was present at a clear instance of criminal activity — the trashing of a draft board office and a shooting that wounded a lady. Yet the FBI took no immediate action, each spy says, even though it knew of the planned trashing and was informed of the shooting the day after it happened.

Why? And why no investigation into whether the FBI agents involved in each case themselves violated the law? There are answers, but I'm afraid you'll not find them in CBS' "Inside the FBI."

① Robert W. Hardy ★ ② Howard Berry Godfrey ★

Hardy (Camden Draft Board) -  
filed FBI-II  
first clipping 23 Aug 71  
Godfrey (Secret Army Organization) -  
filed Infiltrators  
8 Sep 72; 25 Jun 73