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Truman's Dig At FBI Chief

Washington

President Harry S. Truman's toughness showed through in his dealings with all manner and rank of public officials, including those well on their way to legendary status, such as the late FBI director J. Edgar Hoover.

Soon after President Franklin D. Roosevelt's death, Mr. Hoover sent word through the FBI that he wanted any agent or other bureau employee who knew Mr. Truman personally to advise the director of that fact. A former top aide to the late FBI chief said the request was in line with Mr. Hoover's policy of establishing direct contact with the man in the White House, circumventing the attorney general, Mr. Hoover's nominal boss.

After much pondering, an agent who was the son of a long-time friend of Mr. Truman reluctantly decided he would tell Mr. Hoover of the relationship.

The FBI director was delighted, his former aide said. He instructed the agent to renew his acquaintance with the new president and carry a message for Mr. Hoover.

Mr. Truman promptly met with his old friend's son, who relayed word from Mr. Hoover. It was that Mr. Hoover and his organization stood ready to comply with and request the chief executive might make. Did he have any request? The agent asked.

No thanks, Mr. Truman told his friend's son. Then, he added: Tell Mr. Hoover that any request I have I'll pass on — through my attorney general.

Mr. Hoover's former aide recalled that Mr. Truman never made a request of Mr. Hoover — directly or through an attorney general.

The onetime aide said the chilliness in the relationship between Mr. Truman and the FBI director that followed the president's rebuff never thawed.

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