

A HISTORY OF THE F. B. I.

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In 1908, at the direction of President Theodore Roosevelt, Attorney General Charles Bonapart issued an order creating the agency now known as The Federal Bureau of Investigation. President Roosevelt, mad because of the refusal by Congress to support measures against political and business corruption, had seized the initiative and created an investigative service within the Department of Justice. Stanley W. Finch was appointed Chief Examiner, the early title for the director, and less than a year later, the agency was given the name, the Bureau of Investigation. It was given its present name, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, by an act of Congress in 1935.

The early period of the F.B.I.'s history had a very limited impact on the crime problems of the time. Thirty-five men made up the original staff and their numbers grew very slowly. The Agents were under very little administrative control, with no fixed standards of training. Political endorsements were likely to count more than experience or character in selection of the investigative staff. Only a few violations came within the Bureau's jurisdiction. These included bankruptcy fraud, antitrust crime, espionage, and locating certain federal fugatives. By comparison, today the F.B.I. has statutory jurisdiction over more than 200 different types of crimes.

The passage of the White Slave Traffic Act in 1910 proved to be a forerunner of the F.B.I.'s later emergence as a national crime fighting agency. The act, which gave the Bureau investigative authority over interstate transportation of women for immoral

purposes, also prompted criticism that such legislation amounted to an invasion of state police powers. Attorney General George Wickersham, aware of the difficulties that might arise, called for prudence in enforcing the law so that violations of community regulations would be left to local authorities.

The Bureau's responsibilities gradually expanded. New matters placed under its jurisdiction included treason, crime on the high seas, crimes committed on Indian reservations, opium smuggling, and impersonation of a federal officer. But the number of agents was too small, and charges of political corruption reaching into the Department of Justice and the Bureau itself prompted angry demands for drastic change.

The appointment of J. Edgar Hoover in 1924 as Director of the Bureau of Investigation set the stage for those changes. Hoover was twenty-nine years old and a Department of Justice lawyer at the time of his appointment. When he took over the Bureau was in bad shape. It was full of political hacks and incompetents. Promotions were often dictated by White House personnel, senators, congressmen, and big campaign contributors. Editorials demanded that the Bureau be abolished and its work be divided with other branches of the government. But, Hoover didn't give up. He threw out the political pets and the incompetents, found smart accountants and lawyers to fill the Special Agent ranks, established a policy of promotion based on merit, and made the Bureau the most efficient government investigative agency in the world.

In addition, Hoover made great efforts to expand the F.B.I.'s

communications and cooperation with other law enforcement and criminal justice agencies. Prior to 1924, there was no effective national center for fingerprint records, although there was a growing need for one due to the increasing number and mobility of criminals.

Legislation was passed for the establishment of such a place within the F.B.I. As a result, the Bureau's Identification Division was created and it began operation on July 1, 1924.

The Identification Division's original fingerprint holdings totaled about 810,000 cards. This was including the F.B.I.'s National Bureau of Criminal Identification's and Leavenworth Penitentiary's fingerprint cards. Because of the proven value of fingerprint identification, the Division grew rapidly over the following years. By the end of its first year, the Identification Division was receiving over 500 fingerprint cards each day from more than 1,000 contributors. Today, the Division's fingerprint holdings exceed 260 million cards, and it receives over 25,000 cards daily from more than 19,000 criminal justice and civilian agencies which rely on the Division for criminal identification and related services. Many of us here tonight have our prints on file with this Division of the Bureau.

J. Edgar Hoover encouraged the Bureau to continue to search for new ways to improve investigative methods. On November 24, 1932, with a borrowed microscope and a few other pieces of scientific equipment, the Bureau's Laboratory opened. The Laboratory assisted both federal and local investigations by examining and analyzing blood, hair, firearms, paint, handwriting, and other types of evidence. It became

the cornerstone of scientific crime investigation.

During its first year of operation, the Laboratory conducted 963 examinations. About 900 of these were examinations of handwriting in extortion cases. Most of the remaining exams involved analysis of firearm specimens. In 1990, the Laboratory conducted close to 900,000 scientific examinations on more than 175,000 specimens of evidence. Highly specialized techniques were used in analyzing physical evidence ranging from explosives to hairs and fibers, from toolmarks to drugs, from plastics to bloodstains. More than a third of requests for examinations were submitted by state and local law enforcement agencies and were conducted at no expense to these agencies.

In his continuation for a better F.B.I., Hoover also stressed that effective law enforcement lay in cooperation among various police agencies, in taking politics out of police work, and in providing training for police officers. Hoover suggested that the Bureau's training facilities for its own personnel "could be extended to the local law enforcement agencies of the country." Attorney General Homer Cumming agreed with Hoover's proposal, and in July, 1935 twenty-three police officers met as the first class of the F.B.I. National Academy in Washington D.C.

The growth of the National Academy is a matter of record. It has changed dramatically since the 1930's, when on one occasion an officer mortgaged his home in order to pay his expenses at the Academy. Sessions were held in Washington until 1940, when the major portion was shifted to the newly completed facilities at the U.S. Marine Base in Quantico, Virginia.

At present, some 1000 state and local law enforcement managers are trained each year in four National Academy sessions. During the 11 week program, these officers receive advanced professional instruction in a wide range of courses relating to all facets of law enforcement. Locally, Captain C.R. Beard is currently enrolled in the National Academy at Quantico.

In the late 1920's and early 1930's, law enforcement was faced with demands to do something about the gangsters then terrorizing communities throughout the land. By crossing state lines after staging their robberies, bandits had placed themselves beyond the reach of local police officers. At the same time, the F.B.I. had no authority to investigate the crimes or to take action against the felons for fleeing from state to state to avoid prosecution.

This time period also stands as a low point in the history of American crime. The criminals had faster autos and better weapons than the police who were supposed to stop them. (Does this sound familiar?) Many gangsters had made up their own empires through alliances with crooked lawyers, policemen, and politicians. These empires were making big money from bootleg liquor, prostitution, narcotics, gambling, and protection schemes.

Several incidents, including the June 17, 1933, Kansas City Massacre, shocked the country. Bureau Agents and policemen were escorting convicted criminal Frank Nash out of Kansas City's Union Station for the trip back to Leavenworth Penitentiary, when the convict and four of his guards were killed by a group which included Charles "Pretty Boy" Floyd. Shortly thereafter, Charles Urshel, a

wealthy oilman, was kidnaped from his home in Oklahoma City by Alfred Bates and George "Machine Gun" Kelly. John Dillinger, released from prison in May, 1933 went on a 14 month crime spree during which he robbed at least a dozen banks, helped friends escape from prison, killed ten people, wounded seven, and plundered three police arsenals.

He also broke out of jail in spectacular fashion twice during this time. John Dillinger easily rates as the Number One criminal in the history of the F.B.I.

"Baby Face" Nelson escaped from prison and killed three Bureau Agents. Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker terrorized the Midwest from 1930 to 1934 by robbing grocery stores, gas stations and banks killing thirteen people in the process. Members of the Texas Highway patrol killed Bonnie and Clyde in a bloody shootout in 1934. The Barker-Karpis Gang, led by "Ma" Barker and Alvin "Old Creepy" Karpis operated virtually unchallenged, robbing banks, killing policemen, and kidnaping wealthy businessmen.

The uneasy tolerance that the country had felt toward criminals gave way to angry demands that something be done about the menace of these gangsters and racketeers.

Responding to the challenge, Congress passed a series of anticrime laws in May, 1934, which significantly expanded the Bureau's jurisdiction over interstate crimes committed by these notorious criminals. In addition to the Fugitive Felon Act that made escape across state lines to avoid prosecution a Federal Crime, the law gave the Bureau a broad range of enforcement powers and protection for its Agents. Stiff penalties were enacted for killing or assaulting

Federal officers. The Lindbergh Law, which had been passed after the kidnaping-murder of Charles Lindbergh Jr., was amended to create a presumption of interstate transportation of the victim, to cover cases where there was no ransom demand, and to add the death penalty. It became a Federal Crime to extort money or other valuables by telephone or any other means subject to interstate regulation. Robbery of any national bank or member bank of the Federal Reserve System became a Federal violation as did interstate transportation of stolen property worth more than \$5000. Also as part of the 1934 Anticrime Bill, Agents were given full arrest power for offenses against the United States and the authority to carry firearms.

The F.B.I. moved quickly under its expanded jurisdiction. Agents pieced together the background of the Kansas City Massacre, identified the criminals, and pursued them. In 1934, "Pretty Boy" Floyd was killed while resisting arrest by F.B.I. Agents and police in Ohio. Once kidnap victim Urshel had been safely returned, the F.B.I. used his recollections to locate the Texas farm owned by "Machine Gun" Kelly's in-laws. Kelly was later arrested in Memphis. When arrested Kelly unknowingly gave F.B.I. Agents their nickname, shouting, "Don't shoot G-men!" Dillinger was killed while resisting arrest by Agents and police after exiting the Biograph Theater in Chicago. He had attended the movies with his girlfriend who had told agents where he would be found on that evening. "Ma" Barker and her son Fred were killed in a gun battle with Agents in January, 1935 and Alvin Karpis was arrested in May of 1936 in New Orleans by J. Edgar himself. By this time the Gangster Era was rapidly coming to an end.

(The official F.B.I. files on these cases have been destroyed. In 1974, after it became known that the late J. Edgar Hoover had many files on many people and after the scandal of Watergate, Congress passed a law requiring the Bureau to destroy all files on closed cases within six months. It has been speculated that this was Congress's way of protecting its own members from embarrassing disclosures that may or may not have been on file.)

At about the same time Europe was also moving toward another war, and there were some indications that the United States might be drawn into it. People still remembered the German sabotage and espionage during World War I. So, on September 6, 1939, President Franklin D. Roosevelt gave the F.B.I. responsibility for all matters relating to espionage, sabotage, and violations of neutrality laws.

Early in 1940, the F.B.I. conducted one of the strangest espionage and counterespionage dramas ever enacted in this country. It began when William Sebald, a naturalized American, returned from a trip to his native Germany and immediately came to the F.B.I. with a story. The German secret police, the Gestapo, had threatened injury to his relatives if he didn't cooperate with them in a spy plan. He agreed out of fear and was equipped with codes, shortwave knowledge, and micrographic instructions for other agents already in place. The FBI, urged him to play along with the Nazis. The Bureau built a shortwave station on Long Island, New York from which Sebald transmitted messages to a German receiver in Hamburg, Germany.

Sebald was set up in a Manhattan office equipped with two-way mirrors to accommodate watching F.B.I. agents. Some of the most

important German spies operating in the United States came to that office to pick up instructions and drop messages for Sebold's transmission to Germany. The most popular of these spies was Frederick Joubert Duquesne, a German spy for forty years.

On the weekend of June 28, 1941, the F.B.I. arrested the spies whose every move had been followed for nearly two years. Thirty-three persons involved in this espionage ring, including Frederick Duquesne, were seized. Nineteen members of the ring pleaded guilty, and the remaining fourteen stood trial and were found guilty by a jury on December 13, 1941. On January 2, 1942, the spies received sentences exceeding three hundred years in prison. Although busy keeping ahead of enemy espionage and sabotage efforts during World War II, the F.B.I. continued its efforts against crime.

During the 1950's, the United States experienced a sixty-nine percent rise in serious crimes, and in the following decade, the number of serious offenses reported to law enforcement agencies across the United States soared 148 percent.

During these two decades, the Nation witnessed some of the worst criminal tragedies in its history. The assassination of President John F. Kennedy in November, 1963, was foremost among them. Other distinguished Americans struck down by assassins bullets in the 1960's included the deceased President's brother, Robert F. Kennedy, and civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Each of these cases were investigated by the F.B.I. and brought to official if debatable conclusions.

Other notorious crimes of this period included the January, 1950

robbery of Brink's, Inc., in Boston, in which cash and securities totaling more than \$2,775,000 were stolen. Six years of intensive investigation of this crime resulted in the arrest and conviction of nine of the participants. Two other Boston-area hoodlums whom the F.B.I. identified as members of the Brink's gang died before the trial was held.

The mass murder of 44 people occurred when a passenger plane was blown from the skies over Colorado on the evening of November 1, 1955. By mid-November, F.B.I. Agents had identified and arrested a 23 year old Denver man as the person responsible for this crime. His mother had been a passenger on the plane and to collect her insurance money he had placed a time bomb in her luggage! Jack Gilbert Graham was electrocuted for his crime.

Three young civil rights workers were abducted and killed in Mississippi on the night of June 21, 1964. During a lengthy investigation, in which scores of agents were sent to Mississippi from F.B.I. offices in other states to assist in the prompt handling of the case, eight men were convicted and sentenced to imprisonment under Federal Civil Rights Statutes. Among the arrested were a deputy sheriff and the Imperial Wizard of the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan of Mississippi.

Director Edgar J. Hoover died in 1972 while in office. A former F.B.I. Agent and then Chief of Police in Kansas City, Missouri, Clarence M. Kelley, was appointed Director in 1973.

In 1978, the leadership of the F.B.I. passed from Kelley to William H. Webster, who left a Federal Appellate judgeship to take the

oath of office on February 23, 1978. During this time the F.B.I. continued to move forward to meet the challenges of modern law enforcement, maintain its high standards of professionalism, and to protect our society within the framework of the Constitution. Webster continued the policy of "quality versus quantity" and priorities of F.B.I. investigative activities with special emphasis on organized crime, white-collar crime, public corruption, foreign counterintelligence, and terrorism.

On November 2, 1987, William Steele Sessions was appointed by the Senate as only the fourth Director in the Bureau's history. The selection of Sessions to head the F.B.I. followed a lengthy search for a successor to William H. Webster, who was named as director of the C.I.A. in March, 1987. A number of candidates had declined the job, including several federal judges.

Throughout the years the F.B.I. has been characterized by change. Change continues in the F.B.I. today. It is reasoned change, change calculated to assure that the F.B.I. is up to the challenges currently confronting our Nation. This change also assures that the Bureau is responsive at all times to the needs and expectations of the American People.

An example of these changes came about after the hostage rescue attempt in Iran during the Carter Administration. As a result of the failed attempt Congress gave the F.B.I. total responsibility for the rescue of American hostages anywhere in the world. These Hostage Rescue Teams or HRT's are comprised of 100 highly trained specialists. Their sole job is to train and to act when and if necessary. It was

a F.B.I. HRT that made the assault on the Achelles Lauri in the Mediterranean in the early '80's literally freeing a ship load of hostages while capturing many of the terrorists responsible. More recently, it was a HRT that assaulted the Federal Prison in Taladega just a few weeks ago when Cuban detainees took control of the facility and held eight guards hostage.

Another way that the Bureau is attempting to keep up or get ahead of the criminal mind may be found in the Behavioral Science Division. Every serial killer in captivity in the world has been interviewed and detailed computer analysis completed. This procedure has been completed in other areas as well. Several years ago in a case similar to the Tylenol poisoning case, an individual tried to extort several million dollars from the Heinz Food Company in exchange for not poisoning a batch of their products. After two contacts with the extortionist, a note made up of words cut from newspapers and magazines and a brief telephone contact, information was given to the Behavioral Science Division. The job of this Division is to provide a psychological work up of the culprit, predict future moves and provide information that may lead to his arrest. In this case what they came up with sounded like something right out of Hollywood. Our man would be visiting and staying with relatives: the drop would take place after several short trips on public transportation with some type of contact at the end of each leg: the drop would take place in a very public place and would be observed by our culprit: and the money would be picked up by a young athletic runner or gazelle for later delivery to the culprit. The Behavioral Science Division was right on

every count except they missed his age by two years. As a result of their efforts an arrest was made within 90 minutes of the drop.

In keeping with the objectives of the Bureau, investigative priorities are constantly being analyzed, and where indicated, changed. The "quality over quantity" approach assures that the F.B.I. is giving priority attention to investigations of crime which have the most impact on life in the United States.

Today, the F.B.I. continues to carry out the investigative and intelligence responsibilities assigned to the Bureau by Federal laws and to render aid and support to other law enforcement and criminal justice agencies.

The F.B.I.'s continued dedication to these objectives offers the nation the best assurance that the F.B.I. is, and will remain, a dedicated and effective public service organization that will do its best to protect the United States and its citizens.