

Hoover exposé bares judicial corruption

by Jeffrey Steinberg

The joke now among Washington's "politically incorrect" is that President Bill Clinton no longer has to feel obligated to appoint a woman as his attorney general since it is now known that the head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation for 48 years was a homosexual and a transvestite.

The airing of the Public Broadcasting Service "Frontline" documentary, "The Secret Life of J. Edgar Hoover," on Feb. 9, has added new urgency to the cleanup of the Department of Justice (DOJ) and FBI. The PBS broadcast detailed FBI boss Hoover's longtime collusion with organized crime kingpin Meyer Lansky, and charged that Hoover was being blackmailed by the mob over his addiction to gambling and his notorious homosexual escapades with his chief deputy Clyde Tolson.

Lansky, according to author Anthony Summers, whose biography of Hoover is scheduled to be published this month by G.P. Putnam's Sons, was the mob figure in charge of the "Hoover file." By no later than 1938, according to Summers, Lansky, Frank Costello, and other mob kingpins had the goods on Hoover. As long as Hoover was alive, the FBI never seriously attempted to shut down the national crime syndicate. In return, the mob aided Hoover in his own gathering of blackmail files on prominent Americans, including many members of Congress and even Presidents.

Following Hoover's death in 1972, the DOJ's Organized Crime Strike Force conducted a several-year probe of Hoover's corruption. According to one former strike force official, that probe turned up massive graft, bribery, and undeclared income by Hoover and his top aides. Had he been alive, the DOJ official asserted, Hoover would have been "prosecuted and convicted" of serious felonies. Instead, the Hoover scandal was buried for over two decades. As a result, Hoover's legacy of corruption lived on long after his death and eventually engulfed the DOJ, as well as the FBI.

In recent years, some of the corruption in the DOJ and FBI has come to light. Former Attorney General Richard Thornburgh, now an administrator at the U.N., was forced out of his job in the Bush administration after a federal grand jury in Pennsylvania indicted several of his longtime aides for cocaine trafficking. Under Thornburgh, the DOJ and the FBI arrogated the "authority" to kidnap foreign nationals and continued the Hoover program of dirty tricks against members of Congress.

Other scandals also point to systemic corruption:

- The John Demjanjuk case suggests that the DOJ's Office of Special Investigations buried evidence and sent a man whom it knew to be innocent to Israel to stand trial for war crimes.

- The Inslaw case has already been ruled on by two federal courts, both of which found that the DOJ used "trickery, fraud, and deceit" to bankrupt the Washington, D.C. computer firm in order to steal valuable software.

- In both the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro and Bank of Credit and Commerce International cases, federal prosecutors are accused of withholding and falsifying evidence to coverup high-level crimes by the White House and U.S. intelligence services. When FBI Director William Sessions tried to investigate the role of senior DOJ officials in the BNL coverup, he was targeted by Bush Attorney General William Barr for prosecution for corruption. Sessions has also been under the gun from old-line Hooverites in the FBI who object to his efforts to racially integrate the bureau. Clinton is still in the process of deciding whether he will ask Sessions to resign before the end of his 10-year term as director.

Rep. Jack Brooks (D-Tex.), the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, and Rep. Henry Gonzalez (D-Tex.), the chairman of the House Banking Committee, are both reportedly considering the creation of a special House panel to investigate corruption at the DOJ and FBI. All of these still unresolved scandals underscore the importance of a thorough housecleaning at the DOJ.

Crimes against LaRouche

No case epitomizes the degree of systemic corruption at the DOJ more than that of Lyndon LaRouche, a case which has not received the congressional attention given to these others. Several years ago, the Solicitor General of the United States decided not to pursue an appeal of a district court ruling that the DOJ had committed "fraud upon the court" in ordering the involuntary bankruptcy of four LaRouche-linked corporations. Those bankruptcy orders led to a criminal prosecution of LaRouche and a half-dozen others. LaRouche still remains behind bars as a result of that frameup.

The day that PBS aired the Hoover exposé, the *Boston Globe* warned in an editorial that the Hoover legacy may still live on: "The demystifying of Hoover should not be classified as an academic history lesson. It also offers a political moral. The better Americans understand how this crime fighter of legend was really a pawn of organized crime, the devoted civil servant a blackmailer of elected Presidents, the chief defender against subversion the ultimate subversive, the better they will know how to guard themselves against the Hoovers of the future."

The criteria that ought to form the basis of Clinton's choice for attorney general are defined by the urgent need to clean out the justice system of the Hoover legacy.