



"Young man, I would not give the job to you under any other conditions. That's all. Good day."

One of his earliest communications to his department, as he shook out its weak and corrupt members, might have been written by his Bible-reading uncle. Prohibition laws were being flaunted by many Government employees, but Hoover warned:

"I am determined to summarily dismiss from this Bureau any employee whom I find indulging in the use of intoxicants to any degree or extent upon any occasion... and I believe that when a man becomes a part of this Bureau he must so conduct himself, both officially and unofficially, as to eliminate the slightest possibility of criticism of his conduct or his actions..."

Hoover's strictness eventually brought him under criticism. When he appeared before a Congressional committee in 1936, a Senator pointedly asked why the FBI director sent out men on dangerous assignments but made no arrests himself. The implication was clear.

Hoover stalked back to his office and let it be known that Alvin Karpis, then Public Enemy No. 1, would be his personal quarry. Coincidentally, the killer and kidnaper sent word to the FBI that he intended to shoot down Hoover on sight.

Karpis was located in New Orleans. Hoover and a picked squad flew there immediately. They surrounded the hide-out and were planning to move in when Karpis and a friend walked into the street. Without hesitating, Hoover and another agent went after them. Karpis and his pal climbed into a parked car. A loaded rifle lay on the back seat. Hoover took the left side of the gangster's car, the other agent the right. Karpis spotted them and whirled toward the rifle. But Hoover was faster. He grabbed the killer and spun him toward him. Karpis' eyes widened in fear, and his hands went up. Hoover's personal manhunt was over.

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Hoover retains his early interest in youth affairs. Long a Sunday-school teacher, he now helps promote such activities as boys' clubs and scouting.