



Bonnie Heady, Carl Hall were captured in Greenlease case.



Chief's top aide and possible successor is Clyde Tolson.



FBI head and President Eisenhower discuss Hoover's greatest goal—stamping out Reds.



When FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover speaks on crime, the nation listens. He talks from 37 years experience.

enabled the U.S. government to realize more than \$79 million in fines, savings, and recoveries of stolen property—or very close to the amount of its annual operating budget.

The demands on Hoover himself are tremendous. Practically everyone who appears at the Department of Justice wants to see the director in person. This includes criminals who seek the dubious distinction of surrendering to Hoover himself. Eccentrics also turn up in this category.

One well-dressed but slightly irrational man in his 30s once showed up at FBI headquarters, identified himself as a dangerous criminal, and asked for Hoover. When he got him, the man refused to give his name. "You guys are so smart," he said, "you identify me."

They did—in just a few minutes through their vast fingerprint files. The man turned out to be a vagrant and was handed over to the local police.

During World War II, a middle-aged woman once appeared and insisted on giving Hoover, and no one else, vital information on the enemy. She told the FBI director she was mentally attuned to German short-wave radio and received all the German military messages. She offered her services to Hoover and the FBI free of charge.

"We receive scores of strange requests daily," says Hoover, "mostly from people who think the FBI possesses mystic powers and answers to all their ills."

FEW PEOPLE seem to understand that FBI activities are strictly limited in scope. As one of more than a dozen investigative agencies of the federal government, the FBI is responsible for the internal security of the United States in matters relating to espionage, sabotage, and subversive activities, plus investigating violations of about 140 different federal statutes. It has no jurisdiction in local or state matters, and constantly refers callers to the local police authorities.

Probably the greatest source of help to other law-enforcement agencies all over the world—and the best-known adjunct of the FBI—is its fabulous fingerprint files, in which more than 73 million persons are represented.

For years criminals have been trying unsuccessfully to beat fingerprint identification. John Dillinger used acid in an attempt to disguise his prints, but it didn't work. Probably the most ingenious effort of this kind was that of a 23-year-old burglar and auto thief who had a surgeon remove the skin from the tips of his fingers and replace it with flesh grafted from his chest. Both the bandit and the doctor landed in jail. The criminal was identified by the ridges on the second joint of his fingers, which showed up clearly when he was fingerprinted.

Nowadays, Hoover's mountains of administrative work keep him behind a desk most of the time, but he supervises big cases—like the Greenlease and Weinberger kidnappings—from Washington. He sometimes chafes at being desk-bound—and once in a while chucks it, as in the apprehension of gunman Alvin Karpis. The gangster made the mistake of publicly boasting he would kill Hoover on sight. Hoover took personal charge of Karpis' pursuit and led the agents who captured him. When the handcuffed Karpis was flown back to jail, a quietly triumphant J. Edgar Hoover rode beside him.



Hoover is a television producer's dream of what a crime fighter should look like. Jut-jawed and barrel-chested, he stands just under six feet and weighs about 180 pounds. He has almost a full head of hair, greying very slightly, and only the

hint of a paunch. At 63 he looks 20 years younger. His speech is modulated, noticeable for its clarity, but clipped and staccato in delivery. His talking style seems to say, "State your problem and let's dispose of it as quickly as possible because there's a lot to do." And in Hoover's busy life, there is a lot to do.

He walks faster than many people trot—a trait he has possessed since childhood when he was nicknamed "Speed." His bushy eyebrows sometimes give him a glowering expression, and the set of his mouth ends in a vertical line that joins his set jaw to give him a highly formidable appearance. Yet he doesn't act precipitately—just decisively.

FOR ALL practical purposes, Hoover has no private life. He has never married—and members of his family, to whom he was devoted, are now all gone. He lives quietly and modestly in a red-brick, six-room Georgian house in Washington. He spends little time there, and when he's at home he is in constant touch with his office. Hoover's favorite pastime is fishing, but he also enjoys baseball, tennis, and horse racing. He sometimes smokes a pipe but seldom takes a drink.



A lifelong Presbyterian, Hoover is a member of the National Presbyterian church. Wherever he is, he attends church regularly. During his youth he seriously considered entering the ministry.

Hoover's close friends call him "Edgar"—a term not heard very often around FBI headquarters. Because he literally lives, eats, and sleeps his job, his best friends are also his business associates. The man closest to Hoover is his second-in-command at the Bureau: Clyde A. Tolson. If anything happened to Hoover, Tolson would probably take over.

But Tolson is only a few years younger than Hoover, which raises a question that concerns Americans everywhere. What will happen to the FBI when John Edgar Hoover is no longer able to run it? Seldom has an organization been so thoroughly dominated by one strong individual. How will this affect its functioning without that individual?

Hoover insists that it will be affected very little, that the Bureau will continue to operate at the same level of efficiency without him. And his reasoning is persuasive. Every man now in the FBI has been selected and trained by Hoover standards. Those close to the top have been carefully moved up through the ranks. The present system of FBI operation is as much a part of them as is loyalty to their country. Therefore, Hoover insists, the FBI will run on its own momentum indefinitely—always under the leadership of men who believe implicitly in the precepts which have made the FBI respected and successful.

Hoover feels strongly that Communism is the greatest threat to America today.

"At this very hour," he told me, "the devotees of this atheistic doctrine are attempting to destroy our American way of life. Whoever feels that Communism contains the possibilities of advancing the best interest of mankind is sadly deluded. In our country, ignorance of the workings of Communism is a serious problem. We need to be constantly on the alert—always to look through the deceptive outer line and understand fully the inner motivations of Communism. Then, and only then, will we be able to fight this menace to our security effectively."

