

The naissance of fbi essay sample



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History

Few federal agencies have had a greater or more persistent influence on the political landscape of twentieth century America than the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Created in 1908 and assigned the legal authority to investigate “ crimes against the United States”, the Bureau has, almost from the beginning, claimed defining and rooting out political dissidents as part of its mission. In pursuit of this end it has used both legal and extra-legal means to disrupt and destroy numerous and diverse political movements. Thus, the Bureau helped determine what types and what intensity of political dissent would be tolerated in the United States and, in turn, influenced the formation of federal (as well as state and local) policies affecting a range of domestic and foreign issues (Theoharis, 11).

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is one of the best-known and, at times, most controversial law enforcement agencies in the world. From its humble beginnings in 1908 as the Bureau of Investigation (BOI), to its vast expansion under J. Edgar Hoover, to the modern-day FBI under William Sessions, the Bureau has played an important role in American society. Over the years it has gathered information on and investigated not only criminal activities in the United States, such as organized crime, bank robbery, kidnapping, murder, and white-collar crimes, but also has become intimately involved in intelligence matters ranging from counterintelligence activities and domestic security concerns to terrorist and narcotics problems.

The federal response to crime in the early years of the twentieth century, however, was characteristically patchwork. Primary responsibility for

enforcing federal crimes rested with the attorney general. But the Department of Justice, with no standing detective force of its own, relied on an odd collection of temporary, limited, borrowed, and part-time detectives to conduct its criminal investigations. Prior to 1892 the Department of Justice hired private detectives to conduct most of investigations (Koletar, 33). After Congress banned this practice the Treasury Department's secret service became the attorney general's primary source for investigators. In general, FBI's goal is to address issues that are detrimental to the states.

Mission and Philosophy

The Bureau's records touch on all aspects of American society from prostitution and auto theft to espionage and subversion. During 1919 and 1920 it was deeply involved in the controversial Palmer Raids. In the 1930s it gained notoriety under Director Hoover as a tough, honest Federal law enforcement agency leading the fight against corruption and organized crime. During the late 1930s and 1940s, in response to the growing world crisis and President Franklin D. Roosevelt's urging, it expanded its responsibilities in the foreign intelligence arena. It monitored Nazi, Fascist, and Communist activities in the United States and conducted an extensive intelligence operation abroad, especially in Latin America. Deeply committed to the Cold War in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Bureau launched an intensive anti-Communist crusade that brought it into direct contact with American citizens (Jeffreys-Jones, 111). The 1960s and 1970s saw Hoover and the FBI embroiled in domestic social, political, and economic matters as the Bureau sought not only to monitor but also to disrupt the civil rights

movement, anti-Vietnam War protest groups, and black activist organizations.

In general, FBI mission is to:

protect and defend the United States against terrorist and foreign intelligence threats, to uphold and enforce the criminal laws of the United States, and to provide leadership and criminal justice services to federal, state, municipal, and international agencies and partners (<http://www.fbi.gov/intelligence/philosophy.htm>).

Such mission is the embodiment of FBI philosophy, which is to serve the interest of the whole nation, and to protect the State, and most importantly that such embodiment is actualize and reinforce.

Methods and techniques used

Under Classification 1 of the FBI files, National Academy Matters is hidden, in which training and hiring of agents is its focus. Among the many FBI activities are those involved with training and the FBI National Academy at Quantico, Virginia. To establish administrative control over all Bureau training, the FBI created this classification in 1935. Included among the files is documentation relating to the training of FBI personnel as well as local, state, foreign, and other law enforcement personnel. The vast majority of cases opened in this classification relates to applications for FBI training at the academy (Ibid, 121). Law enforcement agencies nominate individuals through the local FBI field office for such training. The local office then conducts an investigation of the applicant, after which the nomination is sent

to headquarters for a final determination. The Bureau maintains a national academy directory of all graduates with pertinent biographical information. The classification also includes a small number of administrative case files documenting such specialized training as the New Special Agents School, Election Laws School, and the Conference of Special Agents in Charge. In addition, there is a file relating to national academy "interesting cases".

Due to the broad scope of the FBI's law enforcement mission, Special Agents can be put to work on literally hundreds of types of cases. Among these are investigations into organized crime; bank robberies; espionage; terrorism; civil rights violations; embezzlement; extortion; bribery; fraud; public corruption; finance, commerce and trade law violations; kidnapping; and attacks or assassination attempts on federal officials.

While Special Agents usually work on high security cases and have the FBI's sophisticated resources at their disposal, their basic duties are common to most investigative work. They are seeking facts and evidence that can be used to expose and solve criminal cases. This may involve undercover activities and surveillance operations; reviewing relevant records and documentation; questioning informants, witnesses and suspects; and arresting suspects and seizing evidence (Theoharis, 65).

Special Agents document the methods and results of their investigations in detailed reports. The information and evidence they gather is then submitted to the U. S. Attorney General for any legal action that may be justified. They also assist in preparing cases for trial and testify in court when needed.

Selection Process

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To qualify as an FBI Special Agent, you must be a U. S. citizen between the ages of 23 and 37. You will need to take a series of written tests which are computer-scored at FBI headquarters in Washington, D. C. After passing these tests, you will participate in a formal interview. You also must pass a thorough background investigation and physical exam (including vision and hearing tests). Candidates typically need to rank well above average in each area to be considered, due both to the nature of the work and the high level of competition for these positions (Koletar, 25).

The FBI has established five entrance programs under which Special Agent candidates may qualify (Ibid, 33):. These programs take into account a candidate's education and work experience based on these general guidelines: 1) Law—graduates of an ABA-accredited law school that has 2 years of resident undergraduate work, 2) Accounting—graduates of an accredited four-year college or university with a degree in accounting, 3) Language—graduates of an accredited four-year college or university who are fluent in a foreign language for which the FBI has a current need, 4) Diversified—graduates of an accredited four-year college or university who has at least three years full-time work experience, and 5) Engineering/Science—graduates of an accredited college or university who have either (a) a master's or other advanced degree in engineering or computer science; or (b) a bachelor's degree in engineering or computer science and at least three years of work experience.

Works Cited

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Theoharis, Athan G. *The FBI: A Comprehensive Reference Guide* . Phoenix, Ariz. Oryx Press, 1999.