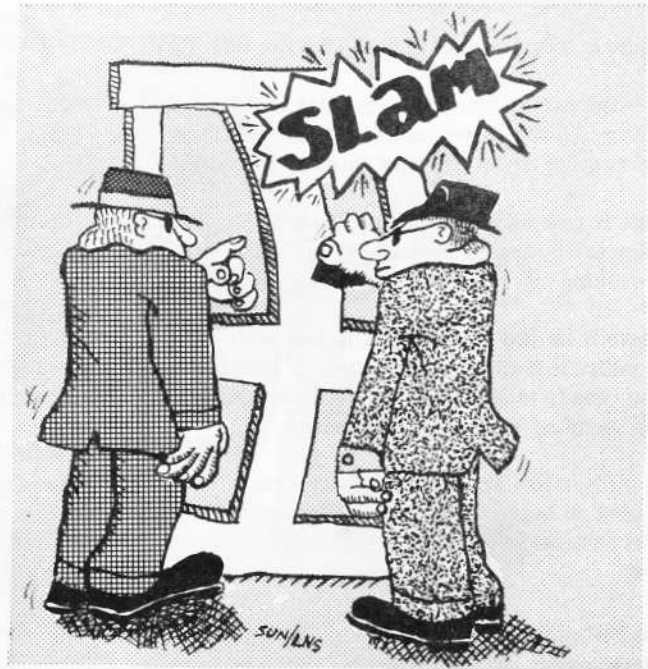


the FBI is in town...



and snooping for bits and snatches of information. They ask questions of our friends and acquaintances about us and our activities. Through the use of Grand Juries, they attempt to delve into our personal lives in ways which otherwise would be unavailable to them. They seek information from those who may know nothing of the activities being investigated, sometimes breaking into people's houses or just generally harassing them.

It is public knowledge that one of the primary goals of the FBI in the last decade has been to crush the Left through harassment, prosecutions, and undercover disruption. The budgets of police agencies at every level continue to soar.

That is no big surprise. This is a time of economic and political crises in the United States. The government has suffered recent setbacks with the people's victories in Vietnam and Cambodia, Watergate, the CIA and FBI exposes, and ever-increasing inflation and unemployment.

In such a period, the FBI and other police agencies have their tasks cut out for them: divide, disrupt, intimidate, slander and jail people. They are especially eager to capture those who have been forced or have chosen to go underground; to cut off the support of their friends; and to paint the entire radical movement as a criminal enterprise.

With the recent nationwide upsurge of FBI and Grand Jury activity, the government is attempting to intimidate several specific communities. First, the attacks center on the women's and gay communities. The FBI alleges that these groups have aided and abetted underground fugitives. They continue to single out the Native American movement and their struggle for sovereignty. They are seeking information about us, and as recently seen in Kansas, South Dakota, San Francisco, and New York, about our people's lawyers.

Our collective response will be crucial in determining the extent to which they succeed in isolating us from each other.



don't talk!

REFUSE TO TALK

There is only one way to deal with the FBI: REFUSE TO TALK.

It is important for us to recognize that bugs and infiltrators aren't the only sources of raw data that help the police. All too often, radical activists and their friends supply dangerous bits of information, including a lot that seems quite trivial and later turns up in court.

This is one way it happens. Some of us get scared when an FBI agent appears at the door. We answer a few "simple" questions because we are afraid not to—afraid of committing some crime by not talking or afraid of provoking more intense curiosity.

There is no law requiring us to talk with an FBI agent or any other investigator or cop. (You do have to let FBI or police in if they have an arrest or search warrant, but you still don't have to talk to them. If you're arrested, you have to identify yourself, but there's no reason to say anything more. You have a legal right to call a lawyer and to refuse to answer questions.)

In a place like San Francisco Bay Area where there has been much radical activity in the past ten years, the FBI is used to being told to get lost. What does, in fact, provoke any investigator to intense curiosity is the slightest hint that pressure tactics may budge someone from total non-cooperation. Any cooperation at all supplies that hint.

WHAT THEY'RE AFTER

No FBI agent asks idle questions; there is no such thing as small talk with a trained investigator. A long answer, a short answer, a truthful answer, a lying answer—any of these supplies some sort of information which is of use to the State.

What's more, the law does not require FBI agents to tell the truth about whom they are investigating or why, but if you tell any lie to an FBI man, you can be prosecuted under a United States law which makes it a crime to lie to any federal official, even when you are not under oath.

That's the great fallacy in attempting to talk with the FBI or police just long enough to psyche them out and find out what they're up to. We are so arrogant about our wits and the Fed's stupidity that we think we'll get the better end of the deal just asking a few questions. But our very questions give the investigator information he might never stumble over.

Behind each question is a body of information which may be revealed in the question itself or in a series of questions. In a casual chat with the FBI, you stand one chance in a million of getting an accurate idea of what they're up to, and at the same time you are playing with other people's lives. The history of struggle is filled with cases of sisters and brothers sent to jail and to death on "frame-ups" based on just enough snippets of circumstantial evidence to give an aura of credibility to the State's charges.

TRICKS TO WATCH FOR

In gathering information about the left, the FBI and local police will fight dirty. Sometimes when we open the door unafraid and ready with a brush off, we get caught by an old interrogation trick. The FBI agent says, "We have some information which tends to implicate you (and some of your friends) in running a few errands for such-and-such a guerrilla group which we're attempting to get off the streets. If you could answer a few questions, I'm sure we could clear this all up." Your mouth drops: "What the hell is he talking about." Suddenly you're caught off-guard and you're only too glad to tell the man what you were really busy doing at the time and who can vouch for you. Maybe that's all the guy wanted to know—where you were and who was with you. And he's got his answer. The FBI pays its agents to use any methods that work in picking our brains.

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Another FBI trick is to threaten a grand jury subpoena if you refuse to talk. You can frequently be jailed for refusing to answer questions put to you behind closed doors at a grand jury hearing, so there's plenty of reason to want to avoid grand juries. But talking with the FBI will greatly increase the odds that you will be subpoenaed.

It's that same rub: any cooperation whets their appetite. A large percentage of the people who have been called before "Internal Security" grand juries in the last few years are the people who didn't say "No!" the first time the FBI dropped by.

HOW TO SAY NO

So how do you say "No!" It's really pretty simple. Experience has shown that the best response after the caller identifies himself and flashes his badge is to say, "I have nothing to say to you. Goodbye." And shut the door.

If it makes you feel more comfortable, you can also say, "If you have any questions, contact my lawyer. She or he is so-and-so. So long." When a person insists on having a lawyer, the FBI often decides it isn't worth following up. If you need legal advice or representation and you don't know a friendly lawyer, call the National Lawyers Guild, 285-5066.

It is not paranoia for radicals and their friends to anticipate FBI house calls in the Bay Area. In the last two years there have been over 30 political bombings and no one sent to jail for them. A few frame-ups would save face for the police and create convenient scapegoats for political and economic collapse.

If you have any reason at all to think you and the people you live with are likely to get hassled, if any of your friends are approached, it is time to think about preparing for a knock on the door. A good policy is to keep your door closed until you know who's on the other side. If you open your door for the police, they can bust you for a crime they say they saw, heard, or smelled inside. FBI agents are known to physically jam their feet in the door and badger uncooperative people at the top of their lungs for half an hour.

If you've opened the door and find a couple of suspicious characters on the other side, you can make a good recovery by stepping outside and locking the door behind you before you refuse to talk. After that you might want to go get an ice cream cone.

GET READY

If you live in a group, try to sit down together and figure out collectively what is needless paranoia and what is prudent precaution.

If you have a portable tape recorder, you might want to keep it near the entrance to your house or apartment ready to tape your request for the FBI to leave you alone and get out of your doorway. If they continue to pester you, you may have a tape that is someday worth something in court.

Also, write things down whenever you have contact with the FBI and police or notice any suspicious activity, especially possible surveillance. Write down as much as you can: names, badge numbers, car license plates, physical descriptions, questions, actions, etc. This information is the beginning of your legal protection against repression. Send copies to the National Lawyers Guild.

VISITS TO FRIENDS

Don't be surprised if the FBI or local police take their questions to parents, friends, employers, and neighbors. Bits and pieces of information from nervous employers and upset parents may make up a mosaic of trouble for one of us. So try to anticipate the problem and handle it ahead of time with enough tact and humor to ease the situation.

Usually it's best not to spread information by explaining to your acquaintances why the FBI or cops may be inquiring. Just say you'd appreciate their not cooperating and ask them to let you know if they're contacted.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

1. Look before you open your door.
2. Don't let FBI or police in without a warrant.
3. DONT TALK. No law requires that you talk with FBI or police. Lying to any federal official is a federal crime.
4. Note down names, badge numbers, license numbers, physical descriptions, etc. Send to National Lawyers Guild.
5. Ask your friends, relatives, and employers not to cooperate and let you know if they've been contacted.
6. If you need legal help and don't know a friendly lawyer, call the National Lawyers Guild: (415) 285-5066.
7. Stay cool. Stay calm. Stay silent.

FREE COPIES AVAILABLE FROM: THE NATIONAL LAWYERS' GUILD
558 CAPP ST., SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94110