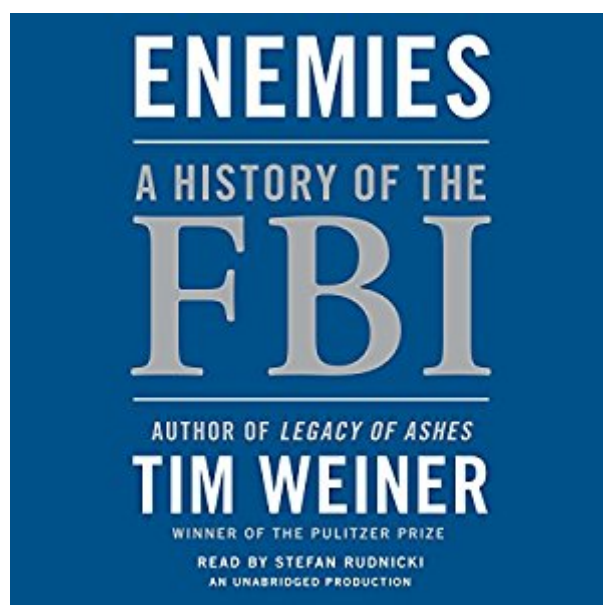


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Enemies: A History Of The FBI



Synopsis

Enemies is the first definitive history of the FBI's secret intelligence operations, from an author whose work on the Pentagon and the CIA won him the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award. We think of the FBI as America's police force. But secret intelligence is the Bureau's first and foremost mission. Enemies is the story of how presidents have used the FBI as the most formidable intelligence force in American history. Here is the hidden history of America's hundred-year war on terror. The FBI has fought against terrorists, spies, anyone it deemed subversive-and sometimes American presidents. The FBI's secret intelligence and surveillance techniques have created a tug-of-war between protecting national security and infringing upon civil liberties. It is a tension that strains the very fabric of a free republic.

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Customer Reviews

Tim Weiner's excellent treatment of the FBI's 100-year-old history of domestic spying is destined to be the seminal work on the subject. Not too long ago, Weiner got a call that his 27-year-old Freedom of Information Act request for declassification of J. Edgar Hoover's secret intelligence files had been granted. Three banker's boxes of documents appeared. Together with other recently-declassified files, numerous interviews and other reliable sources, primary and secondary, Weiner crafts (with 60 pages of illuminating endnotes) a riveting and revealing history of the FBI's domestic surveillance. Weiner recounts the admonitions of Founding Fathers, such as Hamilton and Madison, that a free nation must be ever-vigilant; but, in conducting such vigilance, must not compromise civil

liberties. President-by-President, we see a constant tension between the two tenets. The consistent thread, for the first 60 years, is J. Edgar Hoover. This is not the Hoover of the Clint Eastwood movie. The Hoover Weiner describes as an "American Machiavelli" seems relatively uncomplicated. He always hated Communism. He resisted aiding the civil rights movement (until late, cajoled by LBJ) because he believed the movement was fostered by the Soviet Union and U.S. Communist Party. He had "evidence"--e.g., a close confidant of MLK was a Communist. For Hoover, and many of the Presidents, the end justified the means, unconstitutional as they were. But Weiner points out that even Hoover had his limits. Hoover's refusal to carry out Nixon's directive to spy on Democrats led Nixon to organize "the Plumbers" of Watergate and other disasters. At the other end of the FBI Director spectrum is Robert Mueller. Weiner recounts how Mueller told G. W.

Acquaintances ask me whether this is a conservative or a liberal book? It seems like a strange question; I mean I wrote a book about Vietnam that I wrote for everyone; I had no political agenda when I was writing my book. I feel the same with this book. I tell people that Weiner worked as a journalist for the New York Times, but it appears that he is striving to write an honest book, without any hidden agenda. That being said, this is a very readable book; the author writes in a captivating and gripping style -- it's hard to put down. Most of us simply associate the FBI with the life of J. Edgar Hoover, but this is not just another biography of that powerful person, rather this is an insightful history, which begins with the establishment of the Bureau in 1908 under the Presidency of Theodore Roosevelt and continues up to present times. It addresses my interest as to the interaction of the FBI with the CIA. I am aware of the fact that the CIA has no legal domestic police authority, and therefore, in regards its narcotics findings, it sends this intel on to the FBI and other law enforcement organizations for action, yet both the FBI and the CIA are involved with counter-terrorism operations. In fact, according to Weiner, the FBI was more successful in countering the KGB than the CIA, and it was the FBI, rather than the CIA, that succeeded in placing "a spy inside the highest councils of the Soviet Union." Hoover considered "intelligence operations as more crucial than any law enforcement work." By the middle of the Eisenhower years the "Intelligence Division was .. the most powerful force within the Bureau, commanding the most money, the most manpower, and the most attention from the director.

Tim Weiner, author of *Enemies: A History of the FBI*, is no ordinary historian, and *Enemies* is no ordinary book. Weiner, a New York Times reporter that has won both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award, graduate of Columbia University's journalism program, is one of America's

most gifted authors. In *Enemies*, he has produced a masterpiece that is thoroughly reflective of his talents. Weiner, as was also his pattern in his terrific history of the CIA (*Legacy of Ashes*), builds context by starting way back. How far back? As far back as the first decade of the 20th century, when Teddy Roosevelt was wrestling with the need for effective sources of domestic and foreign intelligence. Weiner's thorough, but not plodding, reporting uncovers parts of American history that many of us have forgotten, or never knew, such as the many hundreds of episodes of domestic terrorism that occurred during the 20th century, first by the anarchists, later by a variety of groups during the Vietnam War, up to and including the Unabomber and Timothy McVeigh's Oklahoma City bombing. His meticulous approach spotlights the triple threats that presidents from Woodrow Wilson through Barack Obama have asked the assistance of the FBI to deal with: terror from within, national security in time of war (including the Cold War), and foreign-based attempts at terror on U.S. soil, U.S. military bases, and U.S. embassies. Necessarily, *Enemies* is also the story of J. Edgar Hoover, who by his mid-20's was the assistant director of the intelligence service that was to become the FBI, and who before he was 30, was appointed to the directorship. He remained director of the FBI until his death at age 77 (allowed to stay on well past the mandatory federal employee retirement age of 70 by presidential waiver).

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