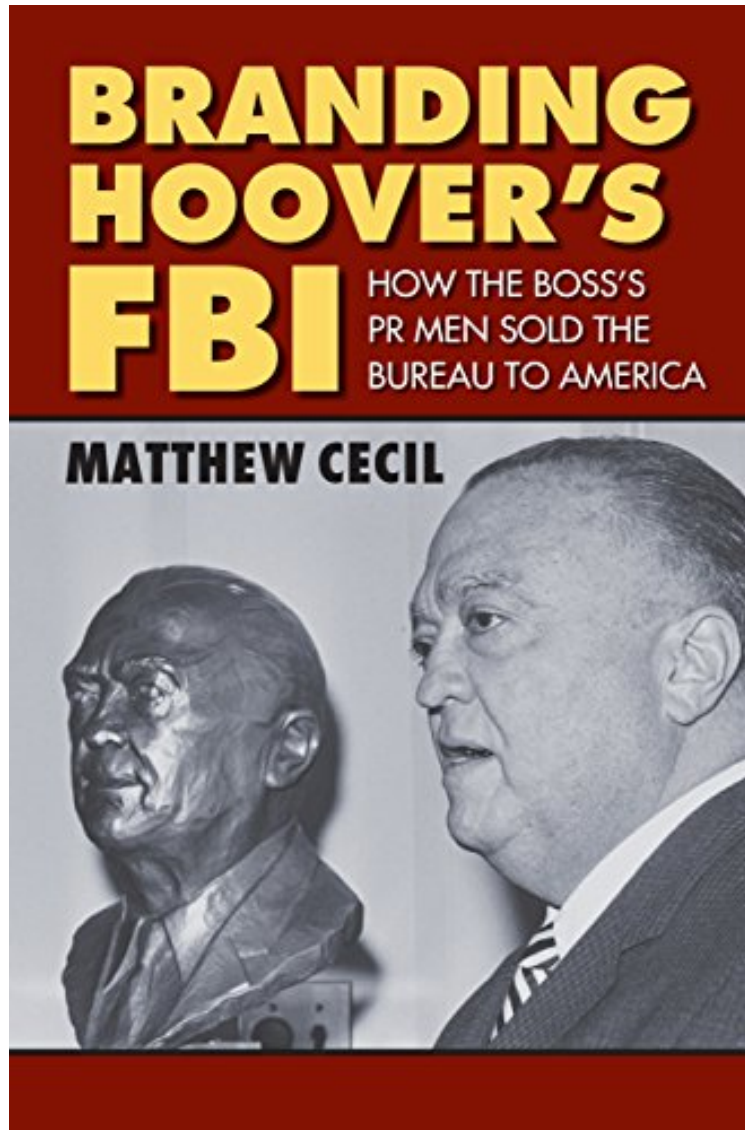


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Branding Hoover's FBI: How the Boss's PR Men Sold the Bureau to America

Matthew Cecil

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He and his lover, Tolson rule like dictators and had a PR system to paint their actions in a different light, mostly lies. He had information on everybody, thus shielding himself from exposure. A fascinating read, and very informative.

Hunting down America's public enemies was just one of the FBI's jobs. Another—perhaps more vital and certainly more covert—was the job of promoting the importance and power of the FBI, a process that Matthew Cecil unfolds clearly for the first time in this eye-opening book. The story of the PR men who fashioned the Hoover era, *Branding Hoover's FBI* reveals precisely how the Bureau became a monolithic organization of thousands of agents who lived and breathed a well-crafted public relations message, image, and worldview. Accordingly, the book shows how the public was persuaded—some would say conned—into buying and even bolstering that image. Just fifteen years after a theater impresario coined the term "public relations," the FBI under J. Edgar Hoover began practicing a sophisticated version of the activity. Cecil introduces those agency PR men in Washington who put their singular talents to work by enforcing and amplifying Hoover's message. Louis B. Nichols, overseer of the Crime Records Section for more than twenty years, was a master of bend-your-ear networking. Milton A. Jones brought meticulous analysis to bear on the mission; Fern Stukenbroeker, a gift for eloquence; and Cartha "Deke" DeLoach, a singular charm and ambition. *Branding Hoover's FBI* examines key moments when this dedicated cadre, all working under the protective wing of Associate Director Clyde Tolson, manipulated public perceptions of the Bureau (was the Dillinger triumph really what it seemed?). In these critical moments, the book allows us to understand as never before how America came to see the FBI's law enforcement successes and overlook the dubious accomplishments, such as domestic surveillance, that truly defined the Hoover era.

"This unique, creative, and excellent study makes a significant contribution to the literature on the FBI. Cecil's brilliant mining of FBI personnel files has resulted in a fascinating, richly detailed, and wholly satisfying look at the inner workings of Hoover's FBI. An outstanding work on an important subject." —Douglas Charles, author of *War on Gays: Exposing the FBI's "Sex Deviates" Program*

"*Branding Hoover's FBI* is a path-breaking assessment of former FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover's public relations initiatives. Cecil's brilliantly researched study documents Hoover's success in transforming the image of the FBI from a minor and suspect to a powerful and autonomous agency, in the process reshaping American politics in the twentieth century. His thoughtful monograph has particular contemporary relevance highlighting how control over information undermined a constitutional system based on accountability and transparency." —Athanasios Theoharis, author of *The FBI and American Democracy: A Brief Critical History*

About the Author: Matthew Cecil is Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities, Minnesota State University, Mankato. He is the author of *The Ballad of Ben and Stella Mae: Great Plains Outlaws Who Became FBI Public Enemies Nos. 1 and 2* and *Hoover's FBI and the Fourth Estate: The Campaign to Control the Press and the Bureau's Image*, both published by Kansas.