Patrick Gray III (July 18, 1916 – July 6, 2005) was acting Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) from May 2, 1972 to April 27, 1973. During this time, the FBI was in charge of the initial investigation into the burglaries that sparked the Watergate scandal, which eventually led to the resignation of President Nixon. Gray was nominated as permanent Director by Nixon on February 15, 1973 but failed to win Senate confirmation. [Harvnb | Gray III | Gray | 2008 | p=236] He resigned on April 27, 1973, after he admitted to destroying non-watergate-related documents given to him Louis Patrick Gray III (July 18, 1916 – June 7, 2005) was Acting Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) from May 2, 1972 to April 27, 1973. He was in charge of the initial investigation into the burglaries that sparked the Watergate scandal, which eventually led to the resignation of President Nixon. Gray was nominated as permanent Director by Nixon on February 15, 1973, but failed to win Senate confirmation. He resigned as Acting FBI director on April 27, 1973, after he admitted to destroying documents received on June 28, 1972, 11 days after the Watergate burglary, that had come from convicted Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt's safe, given to him by White House counsel John Dean.[2]

By the time Gray had successfully defended himself against five federal grand juries and four committees of Congress, he had been vilified by the press and denounced by the prosecutors who could not prove his guilt. Gray remained publicly silent about the Watergate scandal for 32 years, speaking to the press only once, at the end of his life and prior to his death in 2005. Gray's documents

Early life and education

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In office

May 3, 1972 – April 27, 1973

President
Richard Nixon
Deputy
W. Mark Felt
Preceded by
J. Edgar Hoover
Succeeded by
William D. Ruckelshaus

Born
July 18, 1916
St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.
Died
July 6, 2005 (aged 88)
Atlantic Beach, Florida, U.S.
Spouse(s)
Beatrice Gray

Early life and education
Gray was born in St. Louis, Missouri, on July 18, 1916, the eldest son of a Texas railroad worker. He worked three jobs while attending schools in St. Louis and Houston, Texas, graduating from St. Thomas High School in 1932, at the age of 16 (having skipped two grades). Gray initially attended Rice University; however, his true goal was to be admitted to the United States Naval Academy. He was finally admitted to the Naval Academy in 1936 and he immediately dropped out of Rice University in his senior year so he could attend.

At the time, however, Gray could not afford the bus or train fare to Annapolis, so he hired on as an apprentice seaman on a tramp steamer out of Galveston. During the journey to Philadelphia (the closest the steamer could get him to Maryland), Gray taught calculus to the ship’s captain, a Bulgarian named Frank Solis, in return for basic lessons in navigation. Once in Philadelphia, Gray hitchhiked to Annapolis.[8]

Once at the academy, Gray walked onto the football team as the starting quarterback, played varsity lacrosse and boxed as a light heavyweight. In 1940, Gray received a Bachelor of Science degree from the Academy.

Military career

The US Navy commissioned Gray as a line officer, as which he would serve through five submarine war patrols in the Pacific during World War II. Gray suffered a ruptured appendix at the start of his sixth patrol and he was unable to get to a hospital for 17 days, an ordeal that should have killed him. His Academy class of 1940 would go on to suffer more wartime losses than any other class in US history.[8]

In 1945, Gray visited Beatrice Kirk DeGarmo, the widow of his classmate at the Naval Academy, Ed DeGarmo. A year later, in 1946, he and “Bea” were married, and he would adopt her two sons, Alan and Ed. They would have two more of their own, Patrick and Stephen.[4]

In 1949, while still serving in the navy, Gray received a J.D. degree from George Washington University Law School where he edited the law review and became a member of the Order of the Coif. He was admitted to practice before the Washington D.C. Bar in 1949; later, he was admitted to practice law by the Connecticut State Bar, the United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, the United States Court of Appeals, the United States Court of Claims, and the United States Supreme Court.[5]

By 1960, Gray’s achievements in the Navy included commanding three submarine war patrols during the Korean War, earning the rank of captain two years before he was legally allowed to be paid for it, and serving as congressional liaison officer for the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Chief of Naval Operations. In that same year, when Gray indicated his desire to retire from the Navy, Arleigh Burke, the Chief of Naval Operations, told Gray “If you stay, you’ll have my job some day.”[4] Gray did not stay, and in 1961 joined a Connecticut law firm.

Department of Justice

In 1969, Gray returned to the federal government and worked under the Nixon administration in several different positions. In 1970, President Nixon appointed him as Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Division in the Department of Justice. In 1972, Gray was appointed Deputy Attorney General but before he could be confirmed by the full United States Senate, his nomination was withdrawn.

Acting Director FBI

Instead, President Nixon designated him as Acting Director of the FBI after the death of J. Edgar Hoover. Gray served in this position for less than a year. Day-to-day operational command of the Bureau remained with Associate Director Mark Felt.

Watergate involvement

Watergate and the FBI’s investigation

On June 17, 1972, just six weeks after Gray took office at the FBI, five men broke into the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate hotel complex in Washington, D.C.. The culprits were caught in the act by Frank Wills, a security guard at the Watergate Complex.

Gray first learned of the Watergate break-ins on June 17 from Wes Grapp, the SAC of the Los Angeles field office. Gray immediately called Mark Felt, his second in command. At the time, Felt only had limited information, remaining unclear as to whether it was a burglary or bombing attempt.[6]

Felt had more information the next day, when he informed Gray that the burglars had connections to the Committee to Re-elect the President (CRP), that one burglar (McCord) was head of security for the Watergate hotel complex. The culprits were caught in the act by Frank Wills, a security guard at the Watergate Complex.

Gray recalled the conversation concluding with the exchange:

“Are you absolutely certain that we have jurisdiction?” I asked. “I’m sure of it,” he [Felt] answered. “Just check it and be absolutely certain,” I ordered. “And then investigate it to the hilt with no holds barred.”[7]

On the same day, Gray also met later-identified Watergate conspirator Fred LaRue in California on Sunday, June 18, 1972—the day after the five Watergate burglars were arrested. The two discussed Watergate, according to LaRue, and made arrangements to meet again back in Washington D.C.[8] In his own memoir, Gray relates the LaRue meeting as a chance encounter at a hotel swimming pool and quotes their entire Watergate-related conversation:

“The Watergate thing is a hell of a thing,” he said. “You bet it is, Fred,” I answered. “We’re going to investigate the hell out of it.” That was all either of us said about it.[8]

For the first six months of the investigation, Gray remained heavily involved. It was only when it became apparent that the White House was involved that Gray recused himself from the investigation and handed control over to Mark Felt.[10]

Cover-up

On June 23, 1972, White House Chief of Staff Bob Haldeman and President Nixon held one of the infamous “smoking gun” conversations in which they conspired to use the CIA to block the FBI...
On June 21, 1972, Gray met with John Dean and John Ehrlichman in Ehrlichman's office. During this meeting, Gray was handed several copies of some of the files on the investigation to investigate into the money trail leading from the Watergate burglars to the Committee to Re-elect the President, which would constitute hard evidence that Committee members were involved in the planning of the burglaries.

According to Gray, this plan was first put into action when he had a meeting with Vernon Walters, then deputy director of the CIA, in which he quotes Walters as falsely saying, "If the investigation gets pushed further south of the border... it could trespass on some of our covert projects. Since you've got these five men under arrest, it will be best to bater the matter off here." This conversation implicitly stated that the FBI should not interview Manuel Ogarrio and Kenneth Dahlberg, individuals connected with the money used to fund the Watergate burglars. [11]

This would later be backed up by the Director of the CIA, Richard Helms, when he specifically told Gray that Karl Wagner and John Caswell should also not be interviewed, as they were, he stated, active CIA agents at the time. [12]

The basis for such a request came from a long-standing understanding between the CIA and the FBI that they would not reveal each other’s informants. This effort by the White House and the CIA succeeded in delaying the interviews of both Ogarrio and Dahlberg for a little more than one week, at which point Gray and his senior FBI staff, including Mark Felt, Charlie Bates, and Bob Kunkel, decided that, due the increasing importance of these individuals in the investigation, they needed a written request from the CIA not to interview them, which would have to state in greater detail the reasons for not interviewing these individuals. Once the decision was made, Gray called Vernon Walters and demanded that written request the next morning, or he would order the interviews to go forth. [13]

The next morning, Vernon Walters arrived and delivered a three-page memorandum, marked "SECRET" that did not ask the FBI to hold-off on the interviews. The meeting concluded with Walters suggesting to Gray that he should warn the President that some members of the White House staff were hindering the FBI’s investigation. After the conversation, Gray ordered the interviews to proceed immediately. [14]

Ultimately, the CIA cover-up succeeded in delaying the FBI investigation no more than two weeks.

While not active in any Watergate activities per se, Gray was aware through his dealings with John Dean that the White House was concerned about what might be discovered from a full-field FBI investigation and explored what he could do to limit the investigation or shift it away from the Bureau’s jurisdiction. [15] As Dean wrote in his Watergate memoir “Blind Ambition,” he used Gray as a shill knowing that “we could count on Pat Gray to keep the Hunt material from becoming public, and he did not disappoint us.” [16] In fact, even though he thought of this as a political not criminal situation and that he was ultimately serving the President as the “nation’s chief law enforcement officer,” Gray would come dangerously close to collusion because he chose to be useful to the White House without asking the hard questions. Dean goes on to say, "I met Pat Gray secretly at his home in southeast Washington. We were both apprehensive about the meeting as we walked to a park and sat down on a bench overlooking the Potomac, discussing my request to obtain FBI 302s and AirTels on the Watergate investigation." [17]

Later, when the missing Hunt material came to light, Gray reportedly said to Dean, “Goddammit John. You have got to hang tight. Who else knows about it?” [18] By early July 1972 however, Gray had an alarming picture of the apparent conspiracy as conveyed to him by Vernon Walters and he changed tack. Although he arguably should have made it his business to know before helping Dean in any way, once he did know for certain that the White House was somehow involved he was no longer a predictable and reliable ally they could count on.

Felt and the search for the source

The White House tapes reveal that Bob Haldeman told Nixon that Felt was the source of leaks of confidential information contained in the FBI’s investigation to various members of the press, including Bob Woodward of the Washington Post. Gray claimed that he resisted five separate demands from the White House to fire Felt, stating that he believed Felt’s assurances that he was not the source. Eventually, Gray demanded to know who was claiming Felt to be leaking. Attorney general Richard Kleindienst told Gray that Roswell Gilpatrick, former deputy secretary of defense under John F. Kennedy and now outside general counsel to Time, had told John Mitchell that Felt was leaking to Sandy Smith of Time magazine. [19][20]

After Felt admitted in the May 2005 Vanity Fair article that he lied to Gray about leaking to the press, Gray claimed that Felt's bitterness at being passed over was the cause of his decision to leak to Time, the Washington Post, and others. [21]

Confirmation hearings

In 1973, Gray was nominated as Hoover's permanent successor as head of the FBI. This action by President Nixon confounded many, coming at a time when revelations of involvement by Nixon administration officials in the Watergate Scandal were coming to the forefront. Under his direction, the FBI had been accused of mishandling the investigation into the break-in, doing a cursory job and refusing to investigate the possible involvement of administration officials. Gray’s Senate confirmation hearing was to become the Senate’s first opportunity to ask pertinent questions about the Watergate investigation.

During the confirmation hearing, Gray defended his bureau’s investigation. During questioning, he volunteered that he had provided copies of some of the files on the investigation to White House Counsel John Dean, who had told Gray he was conducting an investigation for the President. [22] Gray testified that before turning over the files to Dean, he had been advised by the FBI's own legal counsel that he was required by law to comply with Dean's order. He confirmed that the investigation supported claims made by the Washington Post and other sources of dirty tricks committed and funded by the Committee to Re-Elect the President, notably activities of questionable legality committed by Donald Segretti. The White House had for months steadfastly denied any involvement in such activities.

During the hearings, Gray testified that Dean had "probably lied" to the FBI, [23] increasing the suspicions of many of a cover-up. The Nixon administration was so angered by this statement that John Ehrlichman told John Dean that Gray should be left to "twist slowly, slowly in the wind."

Destruction of documents and resignation from the FBI

On June 21, 1972, Gray met with John Dean and John Ehrlichman in Ehrlichman’s office. During this meeting, Gray was handed several...
envelopes full of documents from the personal safe of E. Howard Hunt. Dean instructed Gray, in the presence of John Ehrlichman, that the documents were "national security documents. These should never see the light of day."[24] Dean further repeatedly told Gray that the documents were not Watergate related.

Six months later, Gray said he finally looked at the papers as he burned them in a Connecticut fireplace. "The first set of papers in there were false top-secret cables indicating that the Kennedy administration had much to do with the assassination of the Vietnamese president (Dien)," Gray said. "The second set of papers in there were letters purportedly written by Senator Kennedy involving some of his peccadillos, if you will."[25]

After learning from Ehrlichman that John Dean was cooperating with the U.S. attorney and would be revealing to him what happened on June 21, Gray told his staunchest congressional supporter, Senator Lowell Weicker, so that he might be prepared for that revelation. As a result, Senator Weicker leaked this revelation to some chosen reporters.[26]

Following this revelation, Gray resigned from the FBI on April 27, 1973.

**Legal struggles**

For the next eight years, Gray defended his actions as acting FBI director, testifying before five federal grand juries and four committees of Congress.[27]

On October 7, 1975, the Watergate Special Prosecutor informed Gray that the last Watergate-related investigation of him had been formally closed.[28] Gray was never indicted in relation to Watergate but the scandal dogged him afterwards.

In 1978, Gray was indicted along with Mark Felt and Assistant Director Edward Miller for allegedly having approved illegal break-ins during the Nixon administration. Gray vehemently denied the charges and they were dropped in 1980. Felt and Miller, who had approved the illegal break-ins during the tenures of four separate FBI directors, including J. Edgar Hoover, Gray, William Ruckelshaus, and Clarence Kelley, were convicted and later pardoned by President Ronald Reagan. Exonerated by the Department of Justice after a two-year investigation,[29][30][31] Gray returned to his law practice in Connecticut.

**Final years**

In an article written in 2005 by the Felt family's attorney, [32] deputy director Mark Felt, by then suffering from memory loss, [33] claimed to be Deep Throat, the famous source of leaks to Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein.

On June 26, 2005, mere days before his death from pancreatic cancer, Gray spoke about the Watergate scandal for the first time in 32 years. When asked about Mark Felt's claim to being Deep Throat, Gray told ABC's This Week that he was in "total shock, total disbelief," noting, "It was like I was hit with a tremendous sledgehammer;"[34]

Gray died on July 6, 2005, and was survived by his wife, four children, fourteen grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. [35]

Before his death, Gray, using his extensive and never-released personal Watergate files, began working on his memoirs with his son, Ed Gray, who finished them. The book, entitled In Nixon's Web: A Year in the Crosshairs of Watergate was published on March 4, 2008 by Times Books, a division of Henry Holt and Company.

Gray's posthumously-published Watergate book disputes the claim that Mark Felt is Deep Throat, citing Woodward's own notes and other evidence as proof that Deep Throat was a fictional composite made up of several Woodward sources, only one of whom was Felt.[36]

**Gray and the New York Times**

In 2009, Bob Phelps, a former editor of the New York Times, and Robert M. Smith, a former reporter for the Times, claimed that they had received information from Gray that would have allowed the Times to break the Watergate story before the Washington Post, but they failed to act upon it.[37]

In August 1972, Gray and Smith had lunch. According to Smith, during this lunch Gray mentioned details of Donald Segretti and John Mitchell's involvement in the Watergate burglaries. Smith quotes Gray:

"[Gray] told me about a guy who burned his palm, and about Donald Segretti (by name). And when he intimated over the entrée that the wrongdoing went further, I leaned back against the wall on my inside banquette and looked at him in frank astonishment. "The attorney general?" I asked. He nodded. "The president?" I asked. He looked me in the eye without denial – or any comment. In other words, confirmation;"[38]

After the lunch, Smith reportedly rushed to his editor, Phelps, with the story, but it amounted to nothing. Smith left his job the next day for Yale Law School, and Phelps lost track of the story while covering the 1972 Republican Convention.

However, while only Gray and Smith knew exactly what was said at that lunch, Gray's son, Edward, denies that his father could have implicated either the Attorney General or the President, stating:

"The truth is that at the time of this luncheon--as my father testified multiple times under oath--neither he nor anyone else in the FBI had any evidence whatsoever that the president was involved."[39]

Gray goes on to point out that at the time of this lunch the Attorney General was Richard Kleindienst, who was never implicated in any of the Watergate scandals. Even if Smith meant that he was talking about John Mitchell, the former Attorney General, Gray further points out that no one (outside of the conspirators) knew of Mitchell's involvement until the following April, when John Dean admitted as much to special prosecutors.[39]

**Gray's documents**

Gray was a meticulous record keeper, a fact most easily evidenced by the forty boxes of personal records he took with him from his year with the FBI.[40] This archive would grow even after Gray left the FBI as a direct result of the legal proceedings in which he was forced to take part in the years to follow.

This archive has become what is undoubtedly the "most complete set of Watergate investigative records outside the government."[41] The Gray family intends one day to make these records available to the public, although it remains in private hands at the moment and subject to very limited access.

**See also**
Notes

1. ^ NYT1 1973
2. ^ http://abcnews.go.com/ThisWeek/Politics/story?id=883440&page=3
4. ^ a b Gray III & Gray 2008, p. xx
5. ^ FBI 2008
7. ^ Gray III & Gray 2008, p. 60
10. ^ Gray III & Gray 2008, p. 65
11. ^ Gray III & Gray 2008, p. 72
12. ^ USG 1974, p. 483
20. ^ The claim by Gray that Roswell Gilpatric had informed John Mitchell about Felt being the leaker was called "far-fetched" by the deceased Gilpatric's son, John. John Gilpatric told The New York Times that his father never mentioned knowing John Mitchell. However, a tape in the Oval Office has Nixon telling Gray that the source for this accusation was "a lawyer... for Time." For more on this question, see Roswell Gilpatric
27. ^ Gray III & Gray 2008, p. xxi
30. ^ CHTribune 1980
32. ^ O'Connor 2005
33. ^ Woodward 2005, pp. 149–183
34. ^ NYT3 2005, p. B4
35. ^ HIGH 2008
37. ^ NYT4 2009
38. ^ AJRSmith 2009
39. ^ a b AJRGray 2009
40. ^ Gray III & Gray 2008, p. 303
41. ^ Gray III & Gray 2008, p. 304

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Louis Patrick Gray, III was born in St. Louis, Missouri on July 18, 1916. He attended schools in St. Louis and Houston, Texas. After attending Rice University for a period, Mr. Gray enrolled at the United States Naval Academy and received a Bachelor of Science degree in 1940. The Navy commissioned Mr. Gray as a line officer and he served throughout World War II and the Korean War. In 1949, between his two tours of duty, Mr. Gray received a J.D. degree from George Washington University Law School. He was admitted to practice Louis Patrick Gray III (July 18, 1916 – July 6, 2005) was acting Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) from May 2, 1972 to April 27, 1973. During this time, the FBI was in charge of the initial investigation into the burglaries that sparked the Watergate scandal, which eventually led to the resignation of President Nixon. Gray was nominated as permanent Director by Nixon on February 15, 1973 but failed to win Senate confirmation. He resigned as acting FBI director on April 27, 1973.