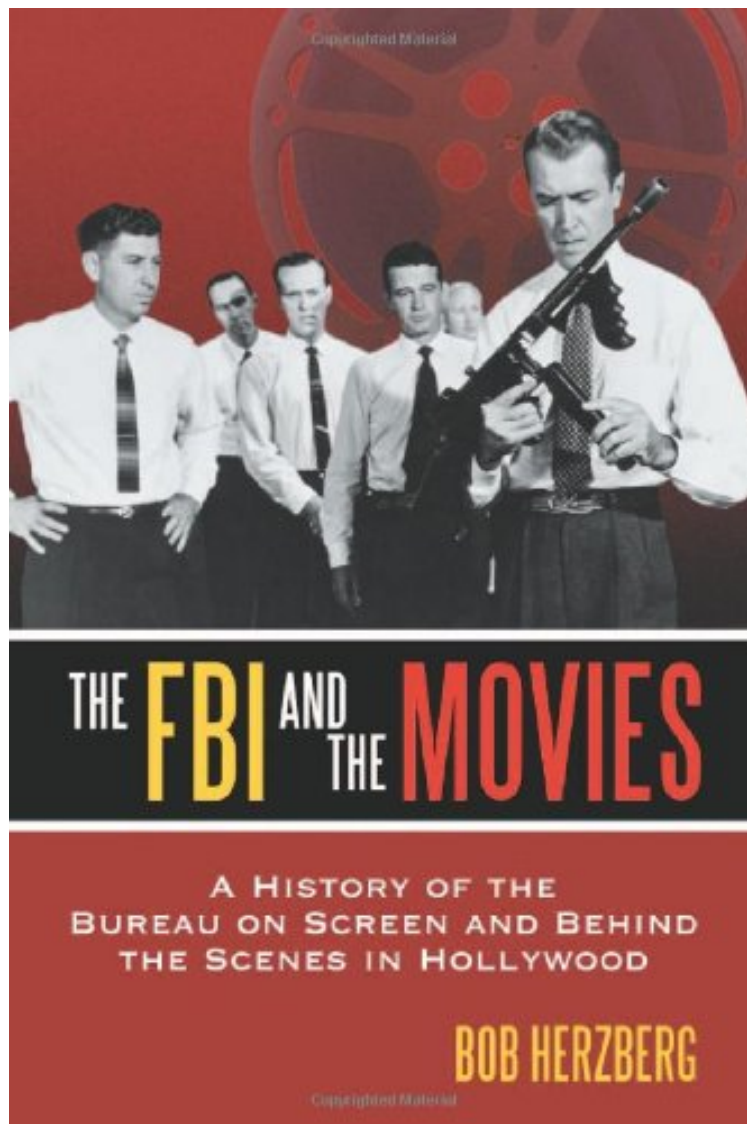


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FBI And the Movies: A History of the Bureau on Screen And Behind the Scenes in Hollywood

Bob Herzberg

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On June 29, 1908, U.S. Attorney General Charles Bonaparte ordered the creation of a special force within the Department of Justice. Consisting of 28 agents and eight former Treasury Department investigators, it was designed to stop interstate crimes yet had no power to arrest perpetrators or carry firearms. Named the Bureau of Investigation, the agency was soon bogged down with its own inherent problems, becoming an object of corruption and contempt-until May 19, 1924. On that date, President Calvin Coolidge appointed J. Edgar Hoover to replace the corrupt director. Hard-working with a no-nonsense attitude, Hoover immediately set about reorganizing the bureau, setting a standard that he expected his agents to follow. Hoover, impressed by Hollywood's manner of maintaining an image and manipulating the media, began to use some of these tricks to clean up his agency's image. Thanks in part to his efforts, movies of the 1930s shifted from glorifying outlaws and gangsters to glorifying lawmakers-and who better to play that role than Hoover's new, improved FBI? From crime-busting heroes to enemies of free speech, this volume examines the evolution of Hollywood's portrait of the FBI over the last 75 years. The book looks in-depth at how Hollywood's creative rewriting of history enhanced the FBI's reputation and discusses the historical events that shaped the bureau off-screen, including the various figures who tell the real FBI story-the gangsters, the politicians, the journalists, the communists. The main body of the work examines the filmmakers, actors, technicians, writers and producers who were responsible for FBI films, following the FBI from the birth of a cultural icon in the 1930s, through the spy-busting war years and the threat of the Red Menace, and, finally, to death of Hoover and the scandals of the 1960s. Studio correspondence and once confidential FBI memos are also included.

"fascinating...deftly researched...well-documented...extremely detailed...lively historical accounts of what was going on at the FBI at the time...solid bibliography and a well-constructed index"--Law Library Journal.About the AuthorPlaywright and author Bob Herzberg is the author of Shooting Scripts (2005) and also a stand-up comedian and actor. He lives in Brooklyn, New York.