



Written by [Becky Akers](#) on September 16, 2010

## Betraying Friends to Friends

“It is an amazing betrayal,’ said Athan Theoharis, a historian at Marquette University... ‘This man was so well trusted,’” while “Rev. James M. Lawson Jr., a retired minister who organized civil rights rallies throughout the South in the 1960s” lamented, “If this is true, then Ernie abused our friendship.”

Hogwash. These complaints are oxymoronic and schizophrenic, like so much of the agitation for “civil rights.” What was that entire movement if not a paean to government, the stronger and more centralized the better? The men Withers supposedly betrayed gained prominence by denouncing freedom, especially that of association, and extolling government as our savior. They insisted we needed the omniscient, omnipotent Feds to control our interactions with one another, to save us from the evils that inevitably arise when individuals cooperate *sans* the State’s approval. Why, then, is it either betrayal or abuse for Withers to tattle to those superheroes about his friends? Shouldn’t “civil rights leaders” welcome the surveillance and meddling they hoped to foist on the rest of the country?



Meanwhile, Withers was so corrupt that — you guessed it — taxpayers may be on the hook for a memorial to him: “[Congressman Steve Cohen](#) [D-TN] proposed a yet-unfunded \$396,000 earmark for a museum, set to open next month, to preserve Withers’ archives.” What sins did Withers commit to earn this statist reward? He first bellied up to the public trough in 1948 when he joined Memphis’ police department; alas, “[he was fired in 1951](#) for taking kickbacks from a bootlegger.” That set the pattern for later pigging at the same trough: “[he ran successfully for Shelby County](#) constable in 1974 and later was appointed a gun-carrying agent of the Tennessee Alcoholic Beverages Commission ... in 1979, he faced similar charges, this time in federal criminal court. Then-ABC agent Withers pleaded guilty to extorting kickbacks from a nightclub owner.”

No wonder the FBI wanted this goon on its payroll.

“Some of the things we [FBI] did were sleazy,” [recalled Howell Lowe](#), one of the agents who suborned Withers. “We were fighting what we thought was the possibility of uprising in this country.” Yet the Bureau damaged America far more than its victims’ “uprising” ever could. This was the heyday of its notorious COINTELPRO, the “Counterintelligence Program” the Bureau secretly launched in 1956 with



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the excuse that it could defeat communism only by matching its tyranny and evil.

But as governmental nonsense always does, COINTELPRO quickly expanded to persecute just about everyone. In the 1960's, its "[purpose](#)" was "[to expose](#), disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of black nationalist hate-type organizations and groupings, their leadership, spokesmen, membership, and supporters, and to counter their propensity for violence and civil disorder," according to a memo from the sociopathic J. Edgar Hoover. [Naturally, the ends justified the means; no tactic in pursuit of that purpose was too dirty or totalitarian](#): wiretapping; smearing of citizens neither arrested for nor charged with any crime; planting propaganda with the media; encouraging folks to fear the Feds had infiltrated their organizations as well, however harmless or innocent; even assassinations.

What else would we expect from so unconstitutional a bureaucracy as the FBI? According to its website its "mission" is "To protect and defend the United States against terrorist and foreign intelligence threats, to uphold and enforce the criminal laws of the United States, and to provide leadership and criminal justice services to federal, state, municipal, and international agencies and partners." Ahem: isn't "protecting and defending the US against terrorist and foreign intelligence threats" the military's job?

Meanwhile, the Constitution is noticeably stingy about allowing the Feds to "uphold and enforce the criminal laws of the United States": Congress, not unelected, accountable-to-politicians-but-not-to-the-taxpayers-they-police bureaucrats, may "[provide for the Punishment](#) of counterfeiting the Securities and current Coin of the United States"; Congress, not bureaucrats, may also "[define and punish](#) Piracies and Felonies committed on the high Seas..." But that's about it. And when it comes to "suppress[ing] Insurrections and repel[ing] Invasions," Congress is "to provide for calling forth the Militia," not the FBI, "to execute the Laws of the Union..." The Founders' wisdom in this is self-evident: militia, *i.e.*, armed citizens, are far less likely to "execute" unjust "Laws" against their fellows than the FBI's [professional Ninjas](#) are against serfs.

Fine, but shouldn't Congress delegate these two jobs, given its many responsibilities? Don't we need the FBI and the Justice Department's other unaccountable enforcers to fight crime? Nope. For starters, bureaucrats' definition of counterfeiting (and piracy, and nearly everything else) differs drastically from ours: even pictures of a dollar bill in books or periodicals must be "[of a size less](#) than three-fourths or more than one and one-half, in linear dimension, of each part of the item illustrated" lest the publisher be guilty of forgery. When politicians pass laws this silly, we can boot them out of office. All we do to bureaucrats is pension 'em.

Then, too, we ought never trust government at any level to "fight crime," especially if by "fighting" we mean "preventing" it. That's best left to individuals and the free market's locks, alarms, bulletproof clothing, and private guards since government "fights" crime by attacking liberty (curfews; prohibitions of weapons and other items, such as toilet paper or eggs at Halloween; surveillance via patrolling cops and cameras). Because our rulers strip us of a right that the [Second Amendment sternly forbids](#) "[infringing](#)," we sit defenseless before thieves, rapists, and murderers — and before the charlatans in government who promise protection even as their legislation endangers us.

Such "protection" courtesy of the [FBI's 33,925 employees will cost us almost \\$8 billion this year](#) alone. That fortune also buys the deepest of delusions: "Our Core Values," the Bureau prattles, include "Rigorous obedience to the Constitution of the United States..."



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Who knew G-men can be a regular laugh riot?

**Becky Akers**, an expert on the American Revolution, writes frequently about issues related to security and privacy. Her articles and columns have been published by *Lewrockwell.com*, *The Freeman*, *Military History Magazine*, *American History Magazine*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *New York Post*, and other publications.



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