

Defending CHAOS

By Jay Peterzell

MH/CHAOS: the CIA's Campaign Against the Radical New Left and the Black Panthers

Frank J. Rafalko

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I doubt that anyone who hasn't read [Richard Helms's](#) April 1975 testimony before the [Rockefeller Commission](#) can really understand why he called [Daniel Schorr](#) a
*****.

It's true that an unwelcome season of inquiry had settled on the CIA. And true that two months before, on the CBS *Evening News*, correspondent Schorr had reported President Ford's concern that the Rockefeller panel might find out about the CIA's role in [assassinations of foreign leaders](#)—a secret Helms did not think should ever be breathed, much less investigated.^[1]

Yet these circumstances could hardly suffice to provoke Helms, a former director of Central Intelligence famous for his cool, seemingly unflappable manner. There had to be something more. And there was.

By now the US ambassador to Iran, Helms had made the arduous journey back to Washington once already, in January 1975, to appear before the Rockefeller Commission. While there he had also been obliged to correct his 1973 sworn testimony before a Senate committee that the CIA had not engaged in domestic spying; that he had not formed a unit in the agency to do this; that he couldn't recall the White House asking him to do it and would not have done it if asked.^[2]

But while it's one thing to make and retract sweeping misrepresentations, it's quite another to be dragged through them point by point. And that's what had just happened to Helms now, after being called back from Tehran a second time. The staff

and members of the Rockefeller Commission no longer took the ex-director's word for anything. He would be asked a question, say he couldn't remember, then be shown a document of unforgettable significance that he had written or one that been addressed to him. He would be asked a question, give his answer, then be shown a document contradicting what he had just said. Is this your signature? Is this your name? Then the whole cycle over again. It's hard to imagine how unpleasant this must have been.

For two and a half days the sardonic, courtly, resentful Helms kept a grip on his composure. But on the third day, when he emerged from his torment in the vice president's office and found himself ambushed by Schorr, who with what Helms can only have seen as gloating journalistic insincerity, camera running, extended his hand and said, "Welcome back"—Helms let go.

"You son of a bitch!" he shouted at Schorr. "You killer! You cocksucker! 'Killer Schorr! Killer Schorr!'—that's what they should call you." Still upset, Helms strode to the press room, held a brief exchange with reporters and tried to escape the building, only to find himself once again pursued by Schorr. "Get away from me! Killer!" he said. But Schorr was trying to explain where the assassination story came from. President Ford had blurted it out during a luncheon with editors from *The New York Times*, then put it off the record, but word had gotten out—

Hearing this, Helms calmed down. He said he admired most of Schorr's reporting with the exception of one sentence, he wasn't sure which. He apologized for losing his temper. "We shake hands," Schorr wrote the following year. "Our conflict is over."[\[3\]](#)

That's according to Schorr. But here is Helms, five years later, in Thomas Powers's *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*:

Schorr says that Helms cooled and apologized. Helms denies it, still angry. He did not apologize, he never apologized! He thought Schorr's was a stinking broadcast, maligning the names and reputations of CIA people who had never committed any assassinations. Helms still thinks it was a stinking broadcast, wrong and unfair. Maybe gentlemen apologize, but Helms felt he had nothing to apologize for. He did not apologize.[\[4\]](#)

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These old resentments fester, and no one has apparently harbored them longer than Frank Rafalko, a CIA officer who has written a defense of Operation CHAOS, the agency's intelligence collection program against US political dissidents in the late 1960s and early 1970s.[\[5\]](#)

Rafalko joined the CIA in 1967. In 1969 he was drafted by the counterintelligence staff's Special Operations Group (SOG), which ran CHAOS, and assigned to the branch dealing with the [Black Panther Party](#). In 1972 he became chief of the computer section that prepared studies of dissidents for other agencies. He left SOG after CHAOS ended in 1974. Except for a year and half abroad, he spent the rest of his career in counterintelligence positions, retiring from the agency in 2000.

So he was there, at the heart of one of the most controversial episodes in the CIA's history—in fact, the iconic controversial episode, which led the US government for the first time to closely examine the role of secret intelligence in a democracy, and eventually enact oversight provisions and laws that put it on a firmer constitutional basis. Notwithstanding that public airing, Rafalko states he wrote his book because he felt a duty to tell the American people “the entire story.”

Let's start, though, with what they already knew.[\[6\]](#)

In the summer of 1967, in response to growing racial violence, President Johnson formed a [National Advisory Commission on Civic Disorders](#) to analyze causes of the unrest. He also ordered then-CIA Director Richard Helms to investigate any possible foreign role. Beginning with a focus on black extremist groups, CHAOS expanded to cover four additional targets: radical student and youth groups, antiwar groups, the underground press, and draft-evasion support groups. Over the next seven years, the office that ran the program would amass 13,000 files including 7,200 on American citizens; index 300,000 people and organizations in its computer; write 12,000 cables and 3,500 memos; send 3,500 more to the FBI, and prepare 37 reports for White House and other top officials.

Each of the major studies produced by the CIA found that there was no significant foreign funding and no foreign direction or control of US protest groups. The negative finding merely led to increased demands for evidence from the White House. Helms told the Rockefeller Commission that after Nixon became president in 1969 this pressure became “about as much as the law would allow, and by that I mean next to hitting me over the head with a baseball bat.” CHAOS started running its own agents (eventually totaling more than two dozen), and began receiving incidental reporting from more than “100 other agent sources” run by other CIA divisions or agencies.

The intensity of CHAOS activities decreased only with the decline in anti-Vietnam war protests after 1972—although to be sure, there was increasing resistance within the CIA to what many officers considered an improper domestic political operation. Then, after [William Colby](#) became director in mid-1973, he restricted CHAOS to collecting information about foreign activities and barred the agency from spying directly on Americans abroad, before ending the program altogether in March 1974. Before the year was out, *The New York Times* reported that the agency had conducted a “massive, illegal domestic intelligence operation” against antiwar and other political groups. The season of inquiry was on.

Although the official inquiries gave quite a jolt at the time, details about what CHAOS really involved remained thin. And 35 years later the texture is still thin. So a book by an insider, whatever his view, should expand our understanding.

Unfortunately, Rafalko's book is entirely defensive, and he is so committed to the terms of the 1975 controversy that he has little time to tell us anything new. The first third of his book rehashes old arguments about *The New York Times's* [original disclosure](#): was it really "massive," really "illegal," was it really uncoordinated with the Justice Department, and so on. Rafalko generally accepts the *Times's* figures for the size of the program, quibbles about minor points like whether Helms received written reports (he did), then lapses into insult. The stories were "inflated for their commercial value to stimulate newspaper sales." Seymour Hersh, who wrote the *Times* stories, was either "sloppy" or deliberately sought sensational quotes from uninformed sources. "In his own sinister way," Rafalko says, Hersh repeated information from his earlier stories in later stories. One chapter begins: "Misrepresenting the truth, Hersh . . ." and Rafalko repeatedly refers to the "onslaught" by Hersh and the *Times*, or "Hersh and Congress." Perhaps most endearingly, Rafalko writes: "If Hersh had taken the time to obtain the truth he might have discovered" that the head of the CHAOS office had met with an assistant attorney general at such-and-such a time, as though Hersh had only to be more diligent in looking up this information in the CIA's library.[\[7\]](#)

I used to work for Hersh, and he hardly needs defending here. But I did re-read his original stories. His account of the outlines, nature, and scale of the program was detailed and correct. He didn't have the whole story, though for some reason Rafalko doesn't mention his omissions. Hersh didn't know the name of the program, didn't distinguish it from similar operations run by the agency's Office of Security, thought CHAOS started under Nixon not Johnson, and thus connected its genesis too closely with the (related) "[Huston Plan](#)" and Nixon's effort to remove restrictions on domestic intelligence gathering. All of which became clearer in the official investigations.[\[8\]](#)

Frustration with the slippery Hersh can provoke Rafalko to a remarkable looseness of argument. Here's the first paragraph of a chapter titled "CIA Terrorizing American Public."

To make his accusations more shocking, Hersh quoted several individuals to reveal the terror CIA was generating among the American public. "These alleged activities are known to have distressed both Mr. [James] Schlesinger, now secretary of defense, and Mr. [William] Colby. Mr. Colby has reportedly told associates that he is considering the possibility of asking the attorney general to institute legal action against some of those who had been involved in the alleged domestic activities." There is no shred of evidence that CIA terrorized any American, nor is there an iota of truth in Hersh's allegation.[\[9\]](#)

And yet sometimes there surfaces another Frank Rafalko: one who makes a serious defense of Operation CHAOS based on the legitimacy of the inquiry and the

integrity of the CIA's reporting. "Was it then and is it still justified," he asks, "for CIA to determine if American [New Left](#) and black extremist bombings, murders, and destruction were being directed by any foreign power?"

Well, yes. Of course, the agency was not just looking at violent or criminal groups, and the real question is: was it justified to investigate foreign connections to domestic radical groups per se? This is not a simple issue. We'll come back to it. But that was the assignment two presidents gave Helms, and it entailed a focus on domestic dissent that (as Helms wrote at the time) was "not within the charter of this agency." Rafalko argues that the CIA exonerated itself through the care with which it carried this out. "Our reporting," he writes,

was without bias and did not favor administration thinking or serve the White House's conclusion. We probed beneath the mere rhetoric streaming forth from all these groups. In so doing, we had a firm grasp of existing conditions within the antiwar and black militant movements If any antiwar, New Left, or black militant was being controlled by a foreign entity, we could not find any evidence of it. If our conclusions were correct—and in more than thirty years no information has surfaced to refute or alter these conclusions—we did our job

[M]ost important, we did not slander or accuse any antiwar, New Left, or black militant of being in bed with the Communists Each officer was a professional.

Moreover, he says, the CIA did not ask foreign security services to detain Americans "though many of the Black Panthers abroad were wanted for crimes committed in the United States."

We did not take any intrusive operational action We did not interfere with anyone's travel. We did not stop anyone from speaking or publishing anti-government statements We simply collected information on the foreign activities of these people and, in so doing, we tried to balance the two great social values of national security and individual freedom.

He concludes that the operation "did no harm."[\[10\]](#)

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The two Rafalkos are at war in the long middle section of the book, in which he catalogues the foreign travels and contacts of the Black Panthers and New Left radicals in

the years covered by CHAOS. It is the most original part of the work and the most taxing to the reader's patience.

Rafalko was responsible for the Panther desk at CHAOS. He is especially knowledgeable about the travels of [Eldridge Cleaver](#), the group's minister of information, who fled the United States and a charge of attempted murder following a 1968 shoot-out with Oakland police. CIA officials are generally not above making fun of leftist poseurs, but Rafalko is so intent on darkening the threat that he misses the humor. Cleaver, expecting to be welcomed in Cuba, is instead put under informal house arrest. He is then shipped secretly to Algeria, whose government, angry at finding out he is there, proposes to send him onward to a Palestinian al-Fatah training camp; he refuses, and only after a year of repeatedly being turned down is grudgingly allowed to stay in Algiers. We learn a little about the Panthers' impoverished, chaotic, largely alcoholic life there, then follow Cleaver and other Panthers to Germany, Scandinavia, North Korea, North Vietnam, and god knows where. There is no story and no analysis so the account reads like a laundry list. Here is a representative passage:

On March 12 [Bobby] Seale, [Raymond] Hewitt, and [Leonard] Malone left Stockholm for Copenhagen, where [Connie] Matthews joined them. All proceeded to a meeting at the University of Aarhus. Three days later the group left Denmark and returned to Sweden, where they addressed a meeting arranged by the students' union in Lund. They then traveled on March 16 to Gothenburg, where they addressed a meeting arranged by the students' union there.

On March 17 Seale, Hewitt, and Malone left Gothenburg and traveled to Oslo. According to an *Arbeiderbladet* article, Seale stated that the Black Panthers had direct contact with groups in Cuba and Vietnam and that they would cooperate with their "class brothers" in China. Seale advocated worldwide revolution and stated that there would be more "warm summers" if the "pigs" attempted to murder more "brothers." They returned to Stockholm on March 20 but stayed one day before going to Helsinki.[\[11\]](#)

—and so on for a hundred pages. A chapter on the New Left is the same.

It is this lack of analysis that hurts most. Now and then in the cascade of meaningless detail we see a flash of something relevant to Rafalko's purpose. The Panthers, he writes, got funding from "[CENSORED] and North Vietnam." The [KGB](#) gave money through the Cubans and other cut-outs to almost every antiwar group in the United States, including the [Weathermen](#). Most of the nearly 700 [SDS](#) members who traveled to Cuba as part of the *Venceremos* Brigades received guerilla warfare training. The FBI thought the SDS-led takeover of Columbia University in 1968 was "planned in Cuba," where [Mark Rudd](#) and others "received instructions." Indeed, the [Weather Underground Organization](#) grew out of Cuban influence over a faction of SDS, and a

Cuban intelligence officer “became the control operative” of the Weathermen’s leader.[\[12\]](#)

Well, fine. Now we’re talking! Sources though, please. Evaluate, please. You would think the CIA would have concentrated on these reports and used whatever sources it had to inquire into the facts behind them. But if so, we don’t hear about it. Instead, these instances of alleged foreign influence rush by without pause, without comment or analysis, and vanish back into the mass of irrelevance. Sometimes a source is hinted at (“The FBI believed . . .” “A Cuban . . .” “testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee . . .”) but, though the book has many footnotes, no citation is given. We have no way to judge the information or the accuracy with which Rafalko reports it.[\[13\]](#)

In fact, rather than analyzing or discussing these bits of conclusory intelligence, Rafalko simply contradicts them later in the book. “There was no significant foreign training of American New Leftists,” he says. “This is at odds with information presented to congressional hearings.” And elsewhere: “The foreign funding, training, and propaganda support did not play a major role in the black militant or New Left movements in the United States.” What funding is he referring to? The only important foreign funding to the New Left, Rafalko says, was Cuba’s paying for the travel and lodging of [Venceremos Brigade](#) volunteers who went to the island to cut sugar cane.[\[14\]](#)

Thus the two Rafalkos. He starts his chapter on the New Left, “A close scrutiny of the information below . . . will corroborate that there was no foreign control of the US peace movement,” then pours out fifty pages of insinuating material, with the insinuation and unadorned allegations maximized. “In my personal view,” he concludes,

these American students carried placards and banners that said “Peace,” and raised their voices to cry “Peace,” but they either did not understand or refused to acknowledge that “Peace” to a Communist meant Communist world control. In effect, the North Vietnamese manipulated them into a kind of fifth column for the sole purpose of stage managing US public opinion.[\[15\]](#)

Another token of Rafalko’s unsettled attitude is his inclusion, as an appendix, of a 49-page list of bombings and attempted bombings in the United States between 1 January 1969 and 9 July 1970. The only explanation of this appendix comes early in the book where he is describing the social disorder that led to CHAOS. He notes that President Nixon “had to deal with a wave of bombings across the nation.” Well, yes. But was CHAOS about bombings or dissent? When we look closely we see how carelessly Rafalko relates information and implications.[\[16\]](#)

The 49-page appendix lists about 20 incidents per page, for a total of about 1,000. In the book’s one brief reference to this list he says that between 1 January 1968 and 9 July 1970 there were 4,568 bombings and 1,506 attempts. Note that this starts a year before the time period in the appendix and ends at the same time. It gives a total of about 6,000 incidents over two and half years, as compared with about 1,000 for the year and

half covered by the appendix. Rafalko seems to miss the point that, assuming his figures, the number of bombings went down sharply after 1968—from about 5,000 that year to about 700 a year in 1969 and the first half of 1970.[\[17\]](#)

There are no comparative figures before 1968 and no attempt, when we look at the list, to distinguish conscious political violence (“Molotov cocktails thrown into [ROTC](#) building”) from what might have been simple vandalism (“bomb destroys telephone booth”). Yet, writing in his other, more-judicious mode later in the book, Rafalko says that the Weather Underground—the most violent object of CHAOS’ attention, apart from the Panthers—was responsible for 12 bombings in the United States between 1970 and 1974, one of which resulted in the apparently accidental death of a post-doctoral student.

Well, bombing is bombing. But it was primarily a job for the FBI.

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Rafalko thinks CHAOS did no harm and the public furor it caused was “a congressional firestorm over nothing,” driven by political opportunism. This ignores the larger context: the Army domestic spying scandal of the early 1970s; the expansion of domestic spying under Nixon; the FBI’s deadly covert operations against black extremists; the murder of [Fred Hampton](#) and other Panthers by police—all of which aroused some mistrust of the government.[\[18\]](#)

Yet surely the point is not just that Americans had a right to be spied on by the FBI rather than the CIA. And certainly not then, when the FBI was waging a clandestine war against US political activists, especially blacks. (Rafalko speculates that one such “FBI covert action operation,” intended to sow discord among the Black Panthers, may have led Cleaver to expel most of his entourage from Algiers in 1970. Rafalko also reports that Cleaver murdered another Panther, Rahim Smith, because he suspected that Smith slept with his wife [Kathleen](#). Rafalko majored in history in college and still writes historical articles about intelligence, but shows no curiosity, and his book makes no attempt to determine what the FBI did with the 3,500 intelligence reports CHAOS sent them.)[\[19\]](#)

The point, rather, is that the FBI of those days is gone. Since 1974 the bureau has operated under guidelines that require a criminal predicate—suspicion that a crime has been or will be committed—to investigate Americans. The CIA—which tries to gather whatever foreign intelligence the government wants abroad and has the job of breaking the laws of other countries to do it—has stayed out of domestic political espionage. Because of the national self-examination that followed the exposure of CHAOS, the CIA and other agencies now report to oversight committees in Congress; electronic

surveillance and break-ins to gather foreign intelligence that could involve Americans are regulated by the [Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act](#) (FISA); and there is no longer a sense in the country that the existence of secret intelligence agencies is per se incompatible with democratic government.^[20]

Even Richard Helms eventually made his peace with this . . . sort of. “The fact that significant areas of the agency’s activity must remain cloaked from public view,” he wrote in his 2003 memoir, *A Look Over My Shoulder*,

magnifies the DCI’s responsibility for keeping the president and appropriate congressional committees fully informed of all agency operations The regulations, rules, and practices under which the DCI labors are as clearly established as those of other government agencies.

As for CHAOS, Helms recalled that he told Johnson “he risked pushing me out-of-bounds,” but he thought the president’s determination was sufficient for the initial investigation abroad. “As our effort continued,” he adds, “we erred in examining and analyzing domestic aspects of the problem.”^[21]

Rafalko is the only CIA officer directly involved in CHAOS who has written about it. Thirty-five years later there is a great deal he could have told us about how CIA agents and officers actually operated against US activists, about the growing protests within the agency, about whether the FBI used CIA information to disrupt leftist groups. He could have told the story of some aspect of CHAOS in detail. He could have used the example of CHAOS to analyze grey areas in counterintelligence and counterterrorism—there are hard questions about what it’s legitimate to collect, and not because any position is held in bad faith. He could have explained how the evidence he presents was investigated and the CIA’s judgments reached. He could have made his best argument—his best argument is not bad—and gone on to tell us something new about the program.

Rafalko says he wrote *MH/CHAOS* because there was no good book on the subject. He is right.

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[1] The season of inquiry: On 22 December 1974, *The New York Times* reported that the CIA had conducted a “[massive, illegal domestic intelligence operation](#)” against antiwar and other dissidents in violation of its charter. After the outlines of the story were confirmed by the agency, President Gerald Ford appointed a Commission on CIA

Activities Within the United States, under Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, to investigate. A number of congressional committees, including a Senate Select Committee to Study Intelligence Activities (aka the Church Committee, after Senator Frank Church (D-Idaho), also got into the act.

[2] During his 1973 ambassadorial confirmation hearings, Helms had told the Foreign Relations Committee that the CIA had not been involved in US domestic intelligence or engaged in covert action to overthrow the government of Chile. In 1977 he was convicted of perjury based on his statements about Chile. Helms's explanation was that public hearings before the Foreign Relations Committee was not the understood venue for answering such questions truthfully.

[3] Daniel Schorr, "A Backstage Journal: My 17 Months on the CIA Watch," [*Rolling Stone*](#), 8 April 1976.

[4] Thomas Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets: Richard Helms and the CIA* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 377.

[5] The CIA's slug for the program was "MHCHAOS," and Rafalko preserves this usage throughout his book. CIA code names are assigned to programs at random, and are preceded by a two-letter digraph indicating a geographical region or a bureaucratic division in the agency. In this case CHAOS is the code name, MH the digraph. The program is referred to in the Rockefeller and Church reports as CHAOS, the CIA generally deletes the digraph before releasing documents on any program, and common practice has been to call the operation CHAOS.

[6] The summary of the CHAOS operation presented here is based on the final report of the Rockefeller Commission. The Church Committee has a useful discussion of issues raised by CHAOS and other CIA programs but does not add much to the factual record. Helms's testimony, including his baseball remark, and other specific documents discussed in this article were released in *Halkin v. Helms*, a lawsuit for damages for alleged surveillance conducted during CHAOS. I wrote a study of the CIA and other documents released in that case, *Operation CHAOS* (Center for National Security Studies, Washington, DC, 1979). The "100 other agent sources": The odd locution is probably meant to include electronic surveillance. Rockefeller Commission, *Report*, 140.

The one detailed addition Rafalko makes to the public record of CHAOS activities has to do with the number and distribution of these assets. "At any given time we had approximately 160 assets," he writes, of which 55 percent belonged to the CIA and the rest to liaison services." Somewhat confusingly he says that CHAOS had fewer than 20 "active agents," of which 15 were unilateral CIA agents operating primarily against CHAOS targets. He gives the geographical distribution: 69 assets in Europe, 34 in the Western Hemisphere excluding the United States, 31 in Asia, 24 in Africa, and four "elsewhere." He says he used 14 assets against the Panthers and seven against other black groups. Rafalko, *MH/CHAOS*, 27.

[7] Ibid., 33, 42, 44, 51, 57, 74.

[8] I worked for Hersh on his book about Henry Kissinger. I also once worked for Daniel Schorr, and Stanley Cloud (q.v.) was my bureau chief at *Time*.

[9] Rafalko, *MH/CHAOS*, 42.

[10] Ibid., 209.

[11] Ibid., 128. Commenting on a 1972 Inspector General's survey of CHAOS, William Colby wrote: "I am dubious of the CI [counterintelligence] value and political wisdom of our tracking of prominent antiwar and dissident individuals who make a major point of publicizing their contacts with hostile elements abroad rather than engaging in activities of the sort more normally thought to be of counterintelligence interest." (Executive Director-Controller William Colby, Memorandum for the Record, "Meeting with the Director on MHCHAOS, 5 December 1972).

[12] Rafalko, *MH/CHAOS*, 160, 185.

[13] When CHAOS ended most of its files were segregated or destroyed, and Rafalko does not explain where the information in his middle chapters comes from. He sometimes says information was "reported" and in context seems to mean reported to the CIA rather than by the press.

With respect to his accuracy generally there is reason for caution. A few examples will be enough:

- Toward the end of the book he argues that "the president has the authority to order domestic and foreign surveillance against individuals out to destroy our American way of life," and cites the Supreme Court in *United States v. U.S. District Court* (1972) as upholding the principle. Rafalko, *MH/CHAOS*, 194. In fact the court ruled that the president does not have this power and that a warrant is required for electronic surveillance of domestic groups attempting to overthrow the government. (The underlying case involved the bombing of a CIA office in Ann Arbor). The decision did not restrict surveillance of foreign embassies or agents of a foreign power in the United States, but this is now subject to the 1978 Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, which requires a court order and probable cause based on a criminal standard if US persons are involved.
- He misstates the conclusions of the various panels set up to study a series of spy cases in 1985, saying they placed the blame primarily on the effects of congressional investigations a decade earlier.
- See discussion later in this review of Rafalko's list of domestic bombings.
- There are some minor errors in the book, e.g., the CIA's Project MERRIMAC is called an NSA program, and *Time* correspondent Stanley Cloud is called Sydney. But these do little harm and I'm thinking of calling him Sydney too.

[14] Rafalko, *MH/CHAOS*, 205, 206. Throughout *CHAOS*, the agency “got a certain amount of information about foreign involvement, largely Cuban, but it was never really enough to satisfy the requirement,” Helms told a colleague writing an internal history of Helms’ tenure as DCI. He continues with a story about his attempt, early in the Nixon administration, to establish

why it was that in Switzerland, in Germany and in France youth was rampant and so forth when they weren’t after all involved in the Vietnamese War, what was it? Was it the Russians had a real net that was going into all of this and getting everybody excited at the same time? Was it the Chinese? Who was doing all this? And I made a specific trip to Europe, to England and to all of Western Europe, and talked to all the security services and so forth and what came out at the end was just Simple Simon. It wasn’t any conspiracy at all. It wasn’t any ganging up of any kind. It wasn’t the Russians. It wasn’t the Chinese. It turned out to be the television.

R. Jack Smith [Interview](#) of Richard Helms, 22 June 1983, released under the Freedom of Information Act.

[15] Rafalko, *MH/CHAOS*, 154.

[16] *Ibid.*, 4.

[17] That is, about two-thirds of the 1,000 incidents over a year and a half. In another discouraging statistical exercise he says that in about 36 percent of cases law enforcement agencies were able to categorize the perpetrators. He says they “also discovered” that 56 percent were attributable to campus disturbances, 19 percent to black extremists, 14 percent to white extremists, etc. I assume he means 56 percent of the 36 percent of the incidents that could be attributed, or about 20 percent, were campus disturbances, and about 7 percent were black extremists. I don’t know that the numbers matter much but it would be interesting to see if within these totals there was the same steep decline after 1968.

[18] Rafalko, *MH/CHAOS*, 5.

[19] The FBI’s covert war against black activists: I hate to put it so bluntly. The Church Committee’s [report on COINTELPRO](#) is one of the most horrifying documents ever published by the US government. The reader may recall the FBI’s attempt to blackmail Martin Luther King into committing suicide, or its planting of information falsely showing that members of violent groups like the Panthers were informants so that they would be murdered by other members. Rafalko mentions Hampton’s death but treats complaints about it as rhetorical exploitation of an unintended shooting.

[20] Regulation by FISA: The terrorist surveillance program during the Bush administration was an exception.

[21] Richard Helms, with William Hood, *A Look Over My Shoulder: A Life in the Central Intelligence Agency* (New York: Random House, 2003), 282.