

gation tactics to defeat these lawsuits that, at best, can be characterized as contrary to respect for the rule of law.

- The use of murderers as government informants created problems that were, and continue to be, extremely harmful to the administration of justice.
- Incalculable damage to the public's respect for the rule of law has been done by the actions of federal law enforcement personnel in Boston from 1965 until the present.

II. WHY THE COMMITTEE INVESTIGATED THESE MATTERS

Edmund Burke said: "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." No truer words could have been written about federal law enforcement in Boston from the 1960s until the mid-1990s. While it is undoubtedly true that some things done by federal law enforcement in Boston can be cited with justifiable pride, it is also true that there was an undercurrent of failure and corrupt practices. Unfortunately, that undercurrent traveled to Washington and through the highest levels of the FBI. It also had significant negative consequences for many states.

Perhaps the greatest tragedy of the Boston debacle is the doubt cast on the integrity of the men and women who work for the Justice Department and, particularly, the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The United States Department of Justice is, without a doubt, the finest federal law enforcement organization in the world. The men and women of the Justice Department are dedicated, professional public servants. The integrity of the vast majority of these men and women is beyond reproach. Nevertheless, what happened in New England over a forty year period raises doubts that can be dispelled only by an obvious dedication to full disclosure of the truth. It is the greatest strength of our democratic system that the mistakes of the government can be assessed and placed before the American people. This report attempts to serve this end, not only for the purpose of informing, but also as a preamble to future legislative action.

At a time when the United States is faced by threats from international terrorism, and a number of law enforcement tools are being justifiably strengthened, it is particularly important to remember that Lord Acton's words are true: "Every thing secret degenerates, even the administration of justice."¹ Federal District Court Judge Mark Wolf began the landmark decision *U.S. v. Salemm*² with Lord Acton's words, and it is fitting that they be repeated here because Judge Wolf began the oversight process that led to this Committee's investigation. He is owed a significant debt of gratitude by everyone devoted to law enforcement in a democratic society.

¹ JOHN EMERICH EDWARD DALBERG ACTON, LORD ACTON AND HIS CIRCLE 166 (Abbot Gasquet ed., 1968).

² *U.S. v. Salemm*, 91 F. Supp. 2d 141, 148 (D. Mass. 1999), *rev'd in part sub nom. U.S. v. Flemmi*, 225 F.3d 78 (1st Cir. 2000).