

But such a deconstruction is unfair. Borstelmann is a historian, and his work should be evaluated on its merits. As a historical narrative, it is provocative and impressive. I learned a great deal by reading the book and will recommend it without reservation.

JEFFERY A. JENKINS
University of Virginia

The FBI's Obscene File: J. Edgar Hoover and the Bureau's Crusade against Smut by Douglas M. Charles. Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 2012. 200 pp. \$24.95.

In the four decades since J. Edgar Hoover's death, scholars have taken advantage of access to FBI files to sketch out an ever-more-detailed portrait of the director's 48-year tenure. Building on a framework of prior studies that provided a broad picture of FBI history, authors like Douglas M. Charles have turned to narrower topics in an effort to fill in more-detailed features of that portrait. Charles's book, based on the FBI's administrative file chronicling its work to classify and investigate obscenity, traces eight decades of bureau interest in obscenity, encompassing the pre-Hoover era, focusing extensively on Hoover's interest in the topic, and including the post-Hoover decades as well.

This is not a narrative history, but is instead an effort to review and contextualize eight decades of FBI work in the area of obscenity. The author's goal (clearly stated in his introduction) is to place the bureau's work on the subject within the broader contexts of FBI history and the history of obscenity regulation. There are, however, several interesting narrative anecdotes sprinkled throughout the text. FBI agents' attempts to determine whether or not the garbled lyrics of the popular song "Louie, Louie" were obscene is one such example. Agents' undercover efforts to ensnare Los Angeles mafiosos by creating a fake pornographic film distribution company, Forex, in the mid-1970s is another intriguing tale.

According to Charles, Hoover and his agency were the first federal authorities to seriously take up the effort to control obscenity after moral crusader Anthony Comstock exited the stage in the early twentieth century. It was Comstock who, first as a lobbyist for obscenity laws and then as a postal inspector, turned his personal morality crusade into a federal government anti-obscenity enforcement campaign in the 1870s. With the 1910 passage of the Mann Act, which regulated prostitution, immorality, and human trafficking, the FBI's precursor agency first began collecting materials thought to be obscene. In 1925, Hoover, who had been named director the year before, formalized procedures for collecting and cataloging those items in a file that, beginning in

the 1940s, became a resource for comparing and identifying the sources of obscene materials.

From there, the FBI's interest in obscenity became part of its domestic and international intelligence function as the agency mirrored Hoover's own narrow and intolerant worldview, targeting homosexuals, mounting an "education" campaign on issues of morality, and assisting allies like Richard Nixon along the way. This chronicling and contextualization of the administrative history of FBI obscenity investigation is the primary focus and most-important contribution of Charles's book.

The author is clear about the limitations of any such study that relies on FBI files as primary source material. The files are often incomplete, many dossiers having been incinerated by the FBI as part of its routine document destruction protocols. Extensive redactions limit an author's ability to identify the subjects of FBI interest and the sources of its information. The amount of primary source material that could be obtained from the FBI is thus limited, because the author cannot know specifically which additional subject files to request.

Despite those limitations, Charles's slim but detailed study makes a significant contribution to understandings of obscenity law and has added another useful volume to an expanding list of studies dealing with neglected aspects of FBI history.

MATTHEW CECIL

South Dakota State University

The Immigration Crucible: Transforming Race, Nation, and the Limits of the Law by Philip Kretsedemas. New York, Columbia University Press, 2012. 232 pp. Paper, \$27.50.

This ambitious book is more a collection of essays than a tightly woven monograph. Philip Kretsedemas is interested in how the U.S. government constructs illegality, and in the larger context in which immigration debates occur. It is significant, he argues, that anti-immigrant rhetoric and policy have arisen in a time when social and employer benefits have diminished. Economic and social stratification is growing, and not, he points out, because immigrants are taking jobs at the bottom of the employment ladder. Anti-immigrant rhetoric and policy is thus a diversion from the debate that should be occurring over the corporatist approach that the United States is taking to enhance its global competitiveness.

The federal government is attempting to satisfy the apparently unquenchable thirst for more enforcement by steadily ramping up deportations, a project it began in the late 1980s. Nearly 400,000 people are now deported