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Hewitt, Steve. *Spying 101: The RCMP's Secret Activities at Canadian Universities, 1917-1997*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002. Pp. xvi + 295; illus. CDN\$38.00 (cloth). ISBN: 0802041493.

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Despite the title, Steve Hewitt's recent book has far more in common with an episode of the Columbo television series than the cloak-and-dagger of a James Bond film. The tale begins with a critical incident of happenstance that Hewitt describes in the preface. Sitting in the National Archives of Canada avoiding work on his dissertation, he reviews a finding aid and notes a reference to a group of Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) files on Canadian universities. On a whim, he requests access to the material related to his home institution, the University of Saskatchewan, and learns that there are over 2,000 pages of documents. A review of these records leads to an article on the RCMP's activities at his university, which in turn generates considerable media attention, and a suggestion that he expand the project and write a book.

The story itself is interesting and masterfully told. Hewitt begins by providing an overview of prior research, reviewing the motivation for police monitoring of university faculty and student activities, and describing the central themes underscoring the history of the RCMP and its intelligence activities. The remainder of the book is organized into three sections: the early years (1920 to 1960), the 1960s (which are the focus of almost half the book), and the period from 1971 to 1997 (including the creation of CSIS). The project chronicles the evolution of RCMP intelligence activities on university campuses, analyzes the changing nature of how this role was understood and interpreted, and provides a detailed account of how information was obtained, stored, and compiled. This is a thoughtful analysis of the RCMP Security Service based largely on archived files supplemented by a few interviews.

The book is also fascinating because of the level of detective work that underscores the tale. Like Columbo, the story of how Hewitt finds the pieces of the puzzle, and then puts them together, is intriguing. Multiple copies of the same document are compared to sometimes reveal that different sections have been deleted on different versions and an almost complete text can be reconstructed. Administrative reports provide a wonderful source of information on activities by region. Interview data are used to complement and contextualize historical records. Every point is meticulously documented and much of the story is told through direct quotations from primary source material. The book even includes photographs of key figures, important events, sample documents, and a few

cartoons. In short, this is history as detection in the hands of a skilled investigator, and the book would be a great addition to the reading lists of historical method courses.

The final, and more unfortunate, similarity with the television series relates to the level of seriousness the reader assigns to the drama at hand. In the early years, few within the ranks of the RCMP had attended university and this revealed a limited understanding of the environment that was being investigated. When a campus club of the Communist Party of Canada was formed at the University of Toronto in 1935, the events were summarized in a report of a Detective Corporal: "During this investigation, it was observed that several officials of the University do not make any attempt to disrupt the radical movement in their Houses [deleted], and go out of their way to encourage it . . . At Hart House, the radical element have a library at their disposal, where they can retire and enjoy their reading of Communistic literature without fear of interruption" (53).

With the professionalization of the RCMP, the situation changed, especially as the level of formal education among officers increased. In fact, many officers became part-time university students and, occasionally, informants who would write reports based on their observations of "radical" activities on-campus. This new generation had a much greater understanding of the university context, but reports continued to focus on over-stated threats involving misguided assumptions. In many respects, this is a story of a bumbling, ballooning bureaucracy where tremendous energy is devoted to justifying the importance of devoting tremendous energy to monitoring the activities of faculty and students. It is the story of reports based on innuendo and questionable evidence being sent to a central office with limited capacity to synthesize and organize the mammoth documentation that was submitted. At times, I found myself reading the book as a multi-layered game involving Hewitt's masterful sleuthing and analysis of the rule-bending and exaggerated narratives of a bureaucratic, frequently paranoid Security Service.

The problem, of course, is that it isn't a game at all. Hewitt reminds us of the seriousness of the subject in the concluding pages of the volume, both by highlighting the implications of intelligence gathering at the University of British Columbia prior to the events associated with the Asia-Pacific Economic Development Conference, and by foreshadowing the possible consequences associated with the "War on Terrorism" following September 11, 2001. As we now know, the repercussions of the latter have tremendous implications for human rights, not to mention the careers (and lives) of Canadians caught in the current web of paranoia and racial profiling.

The serious nature of RCMP activities chronicled in the volume is less explicit until this final section largely because the book focuses almost completely on Hewitt's analysis of RCMP archival material and we learn little from those who were the subjects of the Security Service's clandestine activities. With few exceptions, individual subjects remain anonymous and invisible; we receive only a glimpse of the impact of the RCMP's interventions on their personal and professional lives. What lines of scholarly inquiry were abandoned after learning that the Security Service had been making discrete inquiries? It is important to note that Hewitt actually tried to include these voices in the project, and it is more than a little ironic that he had far more success finding former RCMP Security Service members willing to be interviewed than in obtaining cooperation from those who had been on the receiving end. In the absence of such voices, Hewitt could have extended his analysis to the implications of these surveillance activities on the role and work of the university.

This book makes an enormous contribution to our understanding of the RCMP Security Services during this time period and it will be of considerable interest to those who study higher education and intellectual history. The book also provides a wonderful foundation for what I hope will be further research on the situation post-9/11. Given what we learn from Hewitt's work, and what we are now reading in contemporary headlines, the genre of the next chapter may be horror.