

KEVIN CULLEN

For the Massachusetts State Police and FBI, a reversal of fortune

By [Kevin Cullen](#) Globe Columnist, August 26, 2019, 4:47 p.m.



It used to be the State Police were the FBI's moral compass, writes Kevin Cullen, but now FBI agents keep arresting states on corruption charges. (DAVID L. RYAN/GLOBE STAFF/FILE)

When FBI agents arrested Dana Pullman last week on charges he was [using Massachusetts State Police union funds as his personal ATM](#), it marked a striking reversal of fortune.

For generations, the states were the gold standard for law enforcement integrity, while the FBI was institutionally corrupt — an egregious and repeat offender.

No law enforcement agents did more to bring the FBI's institutional corruption to light and South Boston gangster and protected FBI informant James "Whitey" Bulger to justice than members of the Massachusetts State Police.

In the 1970s, after FBI leaders had encouraged and rewarded Bulger crony and FBI agent John Connolly's recruitment of Bulger as an informant, ostensibly to aid the takedown of the Boston Mafia, State Police leaders like [Jack O'Donovan](#) urged their troopers to take Bulger down, seeing him for what he was, a vicious and venal murderer.

In the 1980s, while FBI agents were socializing with and accepting gifts from Bulger and his murderous sidekick Stevie Flemmi, even as Whitey flooded Southie with the drugs he claimed to keep out of his neighborhood, a cadre of honest and courageous law enforcement agents were trying to take him out.

Prominent among them: the Boston cops Frank Dewan, Jimmy Carr, Kenny Beers, and Chip Fleming; DEA agents Dan Doherty, Steve Boeri, Al Reilly, and Paul Brown; and an army of state troopers led by Bob Long, Rick Fraelick, Arthur Bourque, Billy Powers, and Jack O'Malley.

Alas, Connolly and other FBI agents tipped Bulger off so he could evade State Police and DEA snares.

In the 1990s, after FBI agents helped Bulger murder potential witnesses who could expose their sordid relationship, stables like [Charlie Henderson](#), [Joe Saccardo](#), [Steve Johnson](#), [John Tutungian](#), [Mike Scanlan](#), [Tom Duffy](#), [Pat Greaney](#), and [Tom Foley](#) spent every waking hour lining Bulger up for arrest. Again, the FBI tipped Bulger off, so he could flee. He spent 16 years of bliss on the run, living in a rent-controlled apartment in Santa Monica, Calif., near the Pacific Ocean before he was finally found and arrested.

Fast-forward, and now the FBI is regularly slapping handcuffs on state troopers alleged to have [cheated the system, and the taxpayers](#), by padding their wallets with overtime pay they didn't earn and, in Pullman's case, allegedly using union dues to buy all sorts of personal items, including spending \$4,000 for flowers for his mistress.

This kills honest cops like [Bob Long](#). He is retired now, but once a stable, always a stable. He now avoids wearing anything with State Police insignias in public. "It's too embarrassing," he said. "It's an invitation for others to bring up a sore subject."

To Long, this all comes down to human frailty and [poor supervision](#). The places where State Police corruption took root — the turnpike, the airport, and the union — have historically lacked strong supervision. Long also thinks sergeants should not be part of the trooper's union, because they can be pressured into looking the other way when troopers screw up.

For all his despair, Long took heart while attending the most recent State Police Academy graduation in Worcester. “The whole ethos of the ceremony was about proving ourselves again, about integrity,” he said. “That gave me some hope. I have faith in these kids.”

Disillusioned by the FBI’s coddling of a murderer like Bulger, infuriated by the Justice Department’s disgraceful treatment of Bulger’s victims, I could be accused, and have been, of [sometimes painting the FBI with too broad a brush](#). I know a lot of good FBI agents, including my father-in-law.

There is a similarly broad brush being applied to the State Police right now, that all states are corrupt or looked the other way, that all they care about is job details and overtime.

Broad brushes are good for smearing paint. They’re not good for drawing accurate portraits. Take it from someone who has wielded a brush or two.

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