

FBI'S DEMOGRAPHICS: NO POT SMOKERS, BUT LOTS OF MIDDLE AGED WHITE MEN

Amid increasing clarity that lots of line FBI Agents are rooting for Trump to win Tuesday's election, Josh Gerstein provides one explanation for why: FBI, demographically, looks like Trump's electorate.

Largely overlooked in the imbroglio is how the fact that the FBI doesn't look much like America is complicating Comey's effort to extricate himself and his agency from the political firestorm.

According to numbers from August, 67 percent of FBI agents are white men. Fewer than 20 percent are women. The number of African-American agents hovers around 4.5 percent, with Asian-Americans about the same and Latinos at about 6.5 percent.

If Trump were running for president with an electorate that looked like that, he'd win in a landslide.

In the rest of his piece, Gerstein describes that his has actually gotten worse after Comey took over in 2013, though it is reversing somewhat this year.

While the FBI director has been mounting an aggressive drive to focus on the FBI's shortcomings in diversity, it's less clear if he anticipated how the make-up of his own work force would complicate the handling politically polarizing investigations.

However, he has described the demographic challenges in stark, urgent terms.

"We have a crisis in the FBI and it is this: slowly but steadily over the last decade or more, the percentage of special agents in the FBI who are white has been growing, ... We are now 83 percent white in our special agent cadre," the FBI director said in a July speech at historically black Bethune-Cookman University in Daytona Beach. "I've got nothing against white people – especially tall, awkward, male white people – but that is a crisis for reasons that you get and that I've worked very hard to make sure the entire FBI understands. That is a path to fall down a flight of stairs."

For the embattled FBI chief and former prosecutor, there is some good news. There are early signs that his focus on diversity – which includes displaying a rainbow flag on the FBI's recruiting website – may be paying off.

The number of African-American agents climbed to 603 in August, up from 581 in March. However, both numbers are lower than the 652 the bureau had four years ago.

The number of Latinos also ticked up slightly, to 888 from 882 in March, but still well below the 983 the FBI had in 2012.

I want to view these demographics in conjunction with something else Comey has said, repeatedly this year.

To have a cyber special agent, you need three buckets of attributes. You need integrity, which is non-negotiable. You need physicality. We're going to give you a gun on behalf of the United States of America, you need to be able to run, fight, and shoot. So there's a physicality required. And obviously

there's an intelligence we need for any special agent, but to be a cyber special agent, we need a highly sophisticated, specialized technical expertise.

Those three buckets are rare to find in the same human being in nature. We will find people of great integrity, who have technical talent, and can't squeeze out more than two or three push-ups. We may find people of great technical talent who want to smoke weed on the way to the interview. So we're staring at that, asking ourselves, "Are there other ways to find this talent, to equip this talent, to grow this talent?" One of the things we're looking at is, if we find people of integrity and physicality and high intelligence, can we grow our own cyber expertise inside the organization? Or can we change the mix in cyber squads? A cyber squad today is normally eight special agents—gun-carrying people with integrity, physicality, high intelligence, and technical expertise. Ought the mix to be something else? A smaller group of this, and a group of high-integrity people with technical expertise who are called cyber investigators?

In conjunction with hiring agents to focus on cybersecurity, Comey has described what he imagines as the "integrity" necessary to be an FBI Agent.

He always uses pot smoking as the example of someone who doesn't have integrity (in spite of the fact that pot is legal in several states and will be in more after Tuesday). Yeah, what he really means by "integrity" is "can get security clearance." But he describes that, consistently, as "integrity."

Perhaps there's a problem there? Perhaps the Director is creating a culture in which he casually impugns a wide swath of America as

lacking integrity that just happens to favor
hiring white men?