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**COVER
STORY**



Apple's boss, Tim Cook, and James Comey, the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

APPLE AND THE FBI

The American Congress (or parliament) has two elected houses, or chambers: the House of Representatives and the Senate. Some members of the House of Representatives sit on, or are part of, committees. One is called the House Judiciary Committee. It advises on laws and checks that they are fair. On 1st March James Comey, the director of the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation), and a lawyer who works for the Apple Company attended a committee meeting.

Members of the committee asked them questions about the dispute between the FBI and Apple. The FBI wants Apple to help it unlock, or break into, one of its iPhones. The FBI's request is part of an investigation into a serious shooting incident, which happened two months ago. Tim Cook, Apple's boss, or chief executive officer (CEO), has said that his company is unable to help.

Each of America's 50 states has its own police department, or police force. The FBI is often described as a security and law enforcement organisation. It operates in every state. FBI agents take over investigations that are too big or complex for local police departments. Often these crimes involve people, or criminals, in more than one state. Mass shootings, kidnappings, drug trafficking, and terrorism are examples of crimes that the FBI investigates.

The FBI headquarters is in Washington DC, the country's capital city. The organisation was set up over 100 years ago. However, it was not called the FBI until the 1930s. Today, over 35,000 people work for the FBI. Its boss is known as the 'Director'. The American president appoints this person.

Steve Jobs (1955 - 2011) and a friend founded the Apple Company in 1976.

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At first, Apple was based in Jobs's home. As it grew, the company moved to a nearby city called Cupertino, in California. This is where Apple still has its headquarters.

In 1985 Apple launched its Macintosh computer. This was the first small computer to have a mouse and to use onscreen icons. Thirteen years later the company began selling its iMac computers. Apple produced its first iPhone in 2007.

Jobs died aged 56. He had been ill for over one year. By this time, Apple had become one of the world's most valuable companies. Tim Cook took over as Apple's CEO. Jobs had persuaded him to work for the company in 1998. Before joining Apple, Mr Cook worked for several large American computer companies.

On 2nd December 2015 a married couple carried out a mass shooting in the city of Redlands, in California. The man was a Pakistani-born American. His wife also came from Pakistan. Yet she had spent most of her life in Saudi Arabia. The husband worked for a government-run organisation. It helps people with disabilities.

After attending a party at the disability centre, the man left and drove back to his house. There, he picked up his wife and several guns. The couple returned to the centre. After entering the building, both started shooting. Sixteen people were killed and 24 wounded. The man and his wife then drove off. About four hours after the attack, the husband and wife were killed in a shoot out with police.

The FBI is investigating the incident. The couple seem to have become supporters of several Islamic militant groups. The incident was the worst terrorist attack in the USA since 2001. Then, hijacked

passenger planes were deliberately flown into buildings in New York City and Washington DC. These attacks are known as 9/11. This is because they took place on 11th September.

After searching the couple's car and home, the FBI found the man's iPhone. It was a work phone. So the disability centre owned it. The FBI wants to check what's stored on the iPhone. It believes that it could help with their investigation. For instance, the information may include who the man had been speaking with and to where he had travelled.



Supreme Court building in Washington DC

It was possible to access stored information on older Apple phones. Yet the company's latest iPhone has some new security features. The owner has a pin number. The phone only allows ten incorrect pin entries. After the tenth attempt, the phone automatically erases, or wipes, all its stored data. Therefore, a thief would be unable to use one of these phones if they did not know the pin number.

The FBI wants Apple to turn off the 'only ten attempts' security feature on the iPhone they found. The FBI can then set up a computer programme. It will keep trying lots of different numbers. Eventually, the programme will find the right numbers and unlock the phone. Yet Apple says that it cannot switch the

security feature off easily. The only way to do this is to make a new 'special' version of the phone's operating system. Then, after it's loaded onto the phone, the software would disable the security feature.

Mr Cook does not want to do this. He claims that it would be very risky. If a special version of the phone's software existed, all of Apple's new iPhones could be unlocked. Once written, the software could always be 'lost', stolen, sold, or copied. Mr Cook believes that creating this software for the FBI would set a dangerous **precedent**. He says that it would threaten the security of all Apple customers. What's more, if it were done once, Apple would probably be asked to do it again in future.

Other big technology companies agree with Apple. They include: Amazon, eBay, Google, and Twitter. However, many people don't. They say that the FBI must be able to fully investigate serious crimes such as terrorism. These crimes, they argue, could be a danger to the whole country. Surveys seem to show that half of Americans agree with Apple and half agree with the FBI.

Some lawyers think there could be a **compromise**. If it were not possible to get information from a phone or computer, technology companies would have to help. However, they would only have to do so for very serious crimes. Others believe a compromise is unlikely. This means the dispute may have to be judged by the Supreme Court. This is the USA's most senior court. One of its jobs is to decide who is wrong and who is right when opposing legal arguments are finely balanced. ■