

Dear Jim, 75-1996, first 5 FBI HQ Volumes - impressions 12/12/76

The straight police work ranged from good to excellent. In these areas there is little room for doubt that had it not been preoccupied with insane political objectives over the years the FBI could have been an effective agency for enforcing the law and before crime became a national industry a major force in prevention of it. Aside from the competence of individual agents and the preceptiveness of the different field offices, which to this point cannot be criticized from these records, there is ample indication that the FBI is equipped for fine scientific work and when it turns manpower loose can be diligent in following all trails no matter how unpromising they may seem. Here I have particular reference to the laundry-tape machines. By far it is the largest subject in these volumes. I am not critical of this. It should have been done and the FBO seems to have done it well, even if it led to nothing. It was one of the few early leads outside that package.

What is beginning to seem to be apparent is the exclusion of delicate materials from the headquarters file and the index to it. (I have the indexes in 9 large binders and stored but I will not go over them until the FBI has responded to my questions about identifying each.) Whether or not this is decentralization it is a means by which hq can dissemble and mislead.

From these it also appears that Hoover never gets into the central files. It is not possible that he was not in the King case from the beginning. For this I take it that there are other headquarters files for his stuff.

From the role played by the Washington Field Office it does appear that it is much more than a field office, more of an adjunct of headquarters for some of the touchy stuff and perhaps as a handy means of keeping materials out of the central files but convenient. These records do show it performing functions one would ordinarily assume to be those of headquarters.

The dates covered by these non-chronological records are about the first two weeks. In that time the headquarters files do not, for the sequential filings in these volumes, have a single report of a single witness into review. If this is the reality it would seem to be quite exceptional, leaving much too much to phone contact. I am suggesting that from the first there was a covering machine and this is a vital part of its engine.

That the lab kept what it examined is not as unusual, but it does seem that there would be a much greater reflection of the work the lab did than these volumes hold. Some of the records have stamped numbers I take to be those of the lab files. Here they are six digits beginning with 560. Highest number to date 560,791. (I am spotting other file numbers and other filing indications it is not possible to take time to record.)

There was much less indebtedness to Huie than I had thought. My notes indicate what I noticed. Their own work led them to Galt in B'ham and Los Angeles fairly early. It appears to me to have been good work.

At the same time this good work led them to viable leads the files show no real interest or pursuit of. Perhaps later volumes will. They appear to have records of phone calls and the names of subscribers called. They had the Ray name (and Riley) before "onebrake's" supposed first identification of the prints. They found two hot Lowmgers, in an Illinois jail when Jimmy could have been from what I recall and another in L.A. with a criminal record. What I am saying is that to this point, with hot leads to others there is almost no indication of interest in them and none of real searching. No Director's directives.

Jimmy was pretty successful at not leaving prints, amazingly so. When I tried to tell him that the FBI surely got prints at the flophouse and the motels or other than him he deprecated, saying criminals - Raoul et al - are experienced at not leaving them. There appear to have been only two at the flophouse but more than I'd expected at the New Rebel-25 not Jimmy's and none of his in that room.

Among the many omissions a significant one is any reference to the DeSoto Motel. My own work establishes the FBI was there in less than a day, but when they traced Jimmy's beer to an easy walk from it on that road nothing else. Hastily,