

# MISSING F.B.I. DATA IS UNDER INQUIRY

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## Documents Held by Hoover Removed After His Death

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WASHINGTON, June 6—The Justice Department is looking into the possibility that letters and documents removed from the office of J. Edgar Hoover immediately after his death in 1972 contained sensitive information on public figures or otherwise bore on the F.B.I.'s operations, according to a spokesman for the agency.

The existence of "secret" files maintained by the late director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, long rumored in Washington, was confirmed for the first time last February by Attorney General Edward H. Levi.

Testifying before a subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee, Mr. Levi reported that 164 file jackets, marked "O.C." for "Official and Confidential," some of which contained derogatory information on Presidents, members of Congress and others, were taken from Mr. Hoover's office to that of W. Mark Felt, then the associate director, shortly after Mr. Hoover's death on May 2, 1972.

### Other Data Dispersed

At the same hearing, however, Clarence M. Kelley, the current F.B.I. director, testified that the O.C. files subsequently recovered by the Justice Department had not been the only documents dispersed from the director's office after Mr. Hoover's death.

There were "some files," Mr. Kelley said, "which were not transferred and which were destroyed prior to the move to the associate director's office."

Others were "taken out to his home and placed in his home, they being historical, I presume, to some extent," Mr. Kelley added. "There is no indication that they were other than personal files."

It is these documents, the Justice Department spokesman said, in which the department is "interested."

An F.B.I. spokesman said this week that Mr. Kelley had based his remarks on assurances by Hoover associates that the documents removed to Mr. Hoover's home in Washington, had included only his personal effects and nothing of any official significance to the bureau.

### Investigation Started

The Justice Department spokesman said, however, that his agency was nonetheless "taking steps to find out what, if any, files were removed" along with the letters and other papers.

He would not say precisely what form the investigation had taken, or whether the whereabouts of the papers, or even their existence, had been positively established.

Shortly after Mr. Hoover's death, Clyde Tolson, Mr. Hoover's long-time personal associate and the bureau's No. 2 official, moved into the late director's home.

Several past and present F.B.I. officials said they understood that Mr. Tolson, J. P. Mohr, another Hoover associate, and various bureau secretaries, including Helen W. Gandy, Mr. Hoover's personal assistant for many years, spent "weeks" in the house going through the materials that had been removed.

### Office 'Sealed Off'

One former F.B.I. official said that, upon hearing of Mr. Hoover's death, Mr. Tolson called Richard G. Kleindienst, then the Attorney General, and asked him to order Mr. Hoover's office "sealed off."

The office was closed, the man recalled, and L. Patrick Gray 3d, who had taken over as acting director of the bureau, gave Mr. Hoover's aides a week to clear out his personal effects.

In addition, these officials said, Miss Gandy had begun, about a year before Mr. Hoover's death, and on his instructions, to purge the files that were then in his office. Some files, the officials said, were destroyed during that period.

Mr. Tolson, to whom Mr. Hoover left an estate valued at more than \$500,000—including the \$100,000 house to which the papers were taken—was the executor of the late director's will, and thus retained control over all of his "personal" belongings.

There are no indications that the documents—if they indeed remained in existence—left the Hoover house before Mr. Tolson died last April. The nominated executor of Mr. Tolson's will, to whom Mr. Tolson reportedly left about \$25,000, is Mr. Mohr, who is now retired from the F.B.I.

A second former F.B.I. official said it was Mr. Mohr who had originally "engineered" the transfer of documents from the bureau's headquarters to Mr. Hoover's house, and he suggested that, in his capacity as nominated executor of Mr. Tolson's estate, Mr. Mohr might have knowledge of their current whereabouts.

Mr. Mohr dismissed the suggestion, however, and said he had no knowledge of any documents having been removed to Mr. Hoover's house upon

his death or from the house upon Mr. Tolson's death.

The second former official described some of the papers believed to have been removed to Mr. Hoover's home as "supersensitive," and cautioned that the use of the word "files" by those searching for them might lead to a semantic trap. Although the O.C. files and possibly some others were designated by that term, the former official said Mr. Hoover had amassed "many, many documents—they ran into the thousands."

"Don't call them files, because there were documents, not always put in a regular F.B.I. file," he continued. "They were documents put in these special containers."