

Fortas Kept in Spotlight By Probe of Former Firm

By BARRY SCHWEID
WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal grand jury now meeting in Cleveland will look into a document incident involving Supreme Court Justice Abe Fortas' former law firm, it has been learned authoritatively. The pending probe, kicked off

by the Justice Department, centers on documents found last summer in a safe at Arnold & Porter in the wake of a jewelry theft.

Fortas had long left the prestigious Washington law firm to go on the Supreme Court. His wife, tax attorney Carolyn Agger, is a partner. Otherwise, the

investigation appears to have no direct relation to the justice who severed connections with the law firm in October 1965.

STILL, IT SERVES to train additional attention on Fortas, under severe attack since Life Magazine disclosed Sunday night that while on the court he had been tendered a fee by the family of industrialist Louis E. Wolfson.

The documents were thought missing when they were subpoenaed in a price-fixing investigation by the Justice Department from Irwin Fruchtman, a Toledo steel executive and a client of the firm.

They were found by police last August when Arnold & Porter offices were ransacked and robbed. The intruders took \$22,160 of Mrs. Fortas' jewelry and \$944 in cash.

FRUCHTMAN WAS indicted last summer and sentenced in September to a year and a day in prison, for obstructing justice and destroying subpoenaed documents.

A special grand jury prepared to start deliberations in Cleveland today, but U.S. Attorney Bernard J. Stuplinski had no comment on what matters the panel will consider.

Four representatives of the Justice Department were in Cleveland, and attorneys reported to represent Arnold & Porter also were reported there. The special grand jury was to start deliberations as soon as courtroom space could be found.

The U.S. attorney's office in Cleveland has been handling Toledo area legal matters since January, when the U.S. attorney assigned to that city resigned.

The grand jury investigation is certain to spark political speculation, since it was not begun until the Justice Department passed from Democratic to Republican hands.

Fred M. Vinson Jr., who headed the department's criminal division in the Johnson administration, declined to discuss the matter with a reporter.

OFFICIALS OF the firm also declined comment, but G. Duane Vieth, a partner, said a statement may be issued today.

On Capitol Hill, meanwhile, Republicans continued criticism of Fortas.

Sen. Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., in a telegram to Atty. Gen. John N. Mitchell, said: "I strongly recommend that the Justice Department make a thorough investigation of the matter concerning a grant by the Wolfson Foundation to Justice Fortas.

"HIS INVOLVEMENT in this

and other questionable incidents would appear to be sufficient grounds for legal action and the possible removal of Justice Fortas from the Court."

Vice President Spiro T. Agnew, speaking yesterday in Sacramento, Calif., said Fortas was unwise in considering the fee. But Agnew also said most criticism should be aimed at foundations which divert funds from legitimate humanitarian purposes to political and other unrelated activities.

Life's account was that Fortas accepted a \$20,000 check from the Wolfson Family Foundation in January 1966 and returned the money more than 11 months later.

Wolfson, a former client of the firm, went to prison last month on a federal securities law violation.

Ask Fortas Ouster, La. GOP Chief Urges

LAFAYETTE (AP) — The head of the Louisiana GOP urged the state bar association today to call for the resignation of Justice Abe Fortas of the U.S. Supreme Court.

"A double standard of conduct of Supreme Court Justice Abe Fortas cries out for remedial action," Charles deGravelles of Lafayette said in a telegram to Jacob Landry of New Iberia, president of the Louisiana Bar Association.

"It is imperative that the legal profession take the initiative in helping cleanse the judicial house to restore public confidence in the highest court of the land," deGravelle said.

Landry said he agreed with the recommendation and suggested that the GOP chairman send his statement to Sen. Sam Ervin of the Senate Judiciary Committee, who is spearheading a move aimed at reform of the high court.