

## U.S. Releases Copies Of 'Pumpkin Papers'

NYTimes AUG 1 1975

By TOM GOLDSTEIN

Copies of the "pumpkin papers," a set of five microfilms used to implicate Alger Hiss as a Soviet spy, were released by the Justice Department yesterday.

One film had been overexposed and was totally blank. Two others turned out to be faintly legible copies of Navy Department documents relating to such subjects as life rafts, parachutes and fire extinguishers.

"I could not possibly have seen those memos," Mr. Hiss said yesterday at a news conference at which copies of the microfilms were displayed.

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"They certainly are useless for espionage purposes."

The two other microfilm rolls were photographs of State Department documents and had been introduced as evidence at Mr. Hiss's two trials in 1949 and 1950. Mr. Hiss, who was convicted of perjury and subsequently imprisoned for almost four years, repeated yesterday what he had always contended—that he never passed those papers in 1938 to Whittaker Chambers, his chief accuser.

The release of the microfilms came nearly 27 years after Mr. Chambers, an editor at Time magazine, led investigators from the House Un-American Activities Committee to a garden patch behind a barn at his Maryland home and produced the microfilm reels from a pumpkin shell where he had kept them.

Mr. Chambers contended that he had been given the films and other documents by Mr. Hiss.

Although they played only a minor role at the trials of Mr. Hiss, the pumpkin papers were crucial to an investigation by the House committee that was spearheaded by Richard M. Nixon, then a young Republican Representative from California.

### Committee Statement Recalled

When the microfilms were discovered, the committee issued a statement saying that they had "furnished the link of evidence which was needed to establish that the organization of Soviet espionage conducted in cooperation with members of the Communist party in America has been amazingly successful for 10 years."

Asked yesterday what he thought of former President Nixon's role in the Hiss-Chambers case, Mr. Hiss smiled, puffed on his pipe and replied: "I didn't come here either to bury or praise Caesar. In my opinion, he was an opportunistic politician. That's as far as I wish to characterize him."

On Dec. 13, 1948, Mr. Nixon personally appeared before a Federal grand jury in Manhattan and produced the five rolls of film. At the trials, though, three of the rolls were never introduced—apparently, Mr. Hiss said yesterday, because they had no evidentiary value and did not link him to Mr. Chambers.

The jury at Mr. Hiss's trial was deadlocked, but a second jury found him guilty of perjury after he denied that as a State Department official in 1938 he had given Mr. Chambers classified Government papers.

Mr. Hiss is also seeking Government documents that he says will show that the key typewriter introduced at his trials was not the one that had been in the Hiss home. The Government claimed that the typewriter had been used by Mrs. Hiss to transcribe secret documents.

Mr. Hiss, who is 70 years old and a printing salesman, was joined at the news conference by his lawyer, W. Randlett



The New York Times

Alger Hiss, left, and William A. Reuben, who is aiding him, at a news conference here about the Justice Department's release of the "pumpkin papers." In foreground is a picture showing Richard M. Nixon, who at time of the Hiss case was a House committee member.

Walster, William A. Reuben, Stephen W. Salant and Peter H. Irons, three researchers who have filed additional lawsuits for some of the 53,000 pages of documents in the case. Mr. Hiss appeared calm during the crowded, often boisterous conference that was held at the office of the National Emergency Civil Liberties Foundation at 25 East 26th Street.

Earlier in the day, the group spent more than two hours examining the original microfilms at the Foley Square office of Paul Curran, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York.

### Film's Contents Released

Last month, Attorney General Edward H. Levy directed MR. Curran to make available the microfilms, subject only to national security or other "compelling" reasons. Miss Walster said the entire contents of the films had been released, and that the group had been al-

lowed to take away copies.

The Attorney General's action came after Mr. Hiss and Mr. Reuben sued for the documents on June 5 under the Freedom of Information Act. Mr. Hiss's lawyer has requested permission from the Justice Department to obtain a small segment of the original microfilms, in order to conduct chemical tests to determine the date they were manufactured.

The age of the films has long been a subject of keen interest among those who believe Mr. Hiss is innocent.

Mr. Chambers, who died in 1961, testified that he took the film in 1938, the year that he said Mr. Hiss had given him the documents. At a point before the trial, a spokesman for Eastman Kodak the manufacture of some of the film, said it had been manufactured 10 years later. Later, the spokesman modified his statement and said that the film could have been made earlier.