

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

JAN 25 1949

TELETYPE

Mr. Tolson	✓
Mr. Clegg	✓
Mr. Glavin	✓
Mr. Ladd	✓
Mr. Nichols	✓
Mr. Rosen	✓
Mr. Tracy	✓
Mr. Egan	✓
Mr. Gurnea	✓
Mr. Harbo	✓
Mr. Mohr	✓
Mr. Pennington	✓
Mr. Quinn Tamm	✓
Mr. Nease	✓
Miss Gandy	✓

FBI, SAN FRANCISCO

1-25-49 #289,487 6-58 PM PST

CFB

DIRECTOR

EXTREMELY URGENT, IMMEDIATE ATTENTION INSPECTOR JOHN MOHR.

BILLIE HOLIDAY, NARCOTICS MATTER. REUR TELEPHONE CONVERSATION TODAY.

A CONFIDENTIAL SOURCE IN THE FEDERAL NARCOTICS BUREAU ADVISES THAT

BILLIE HOLIDAY AND HER HUSBAND, JOSEPH LEVY, WERE ARRESTED AT ONE

FIFTY FIVE P.M., JANUARY TWENTY TWO LAST. SOURCE STATES THAT HOLIDAY AND

LEVY ARE KNOWN USERS OF NARCOTICS AND HAVE BEEN UNDER CLOSE OBSERVATION

BY FEDERAL BUREAU OF NARCOTICS DURING THEIR TOUR WHILE IN UTAH

AND CALIFORNIA. INSTANT RAID LED BY COLONEL [REDACTED] DISTRICT

SUPERVISOR, FEDERAL BUREAU OF NARCOTICS, AND PARTICIPATED IN BY AGENTS

[REDACTED] AND SFPD SPECIAL SERVICE DETAIL OFFICERS

[REDACTED] INSTANT RAID TOOK PLACE AT THE HOTEL

MARK TWAIN, THREE FOUR FIVE TAYLOR, ROOM SIX NAUGHT TWO, SAN

FRANCISCO. HOLIDAY WAS INTERCEPTED BY SUPERVISOR [REDACTED] AS SHE

ATTEMPTED TO DESTROY MAKESHIFT OPIUM PIPE AND BUNDLE OF OPIUM IN

TOILET BOWL OF HER ROOM. A PORTION OF THE PIPE, WHICH CONSISTED OF

A RUBBER HOSE AND A GLASS JAR WAS RECOVERED ON THE [REDACTED]

BATHROOM BY [REDACTED] AND THE BUNDLE OF OPIUM FROM THE BOWL. SOURCE

DESCRIBES [REDACTED] OF MINOR VALUE TO THE FEDERAL

NARCOTICS BUREAU IN THE PAST. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] THIS

SOURCE DENIED THAT [REDACTED] IN THIS CASE. THIS RAID

WAS MADE ON HOLIDAY AND LEVY WHEN IT WAS KNOWN BY THE NARCOTICS BUREAU

AT SAN FRANCISCO THAT THEY WERE LIVING TOGETHER AT INSTANT HOTEL.

NARCOTICS BUREAU POSSESSED NO DEFINITE INFORMATION AS TO THE LOCATION

RECORDED 112-1720-1

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COPIED IN

PAGE TWO

OF ANY NARCOTICS IN THEIR POSSESSION BUT PRESUMED THAT SINCE  
THEY WERE TOGETHER THEY PROBABLY POSSESSED SOME NARCOTICS,  
AND ACCORDINGLY THEY REQUESTED THE ASSISTANCE OF THE SAN FRANCISCO  
POLICE DEPARTMENT IN CONDUCTING THIS RAID BECAUSE OF MORE LIBERAL  
STATE LAWS COVERING SEARCHES AND SEIZURES. THE SOURCE STATES THAT  
BECAUSE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF HOLIDAY IT HAS BEEN THE POLICY OF HIS  
BUREAU TO DISCREDIT INDIVIDUALS OF THIS CALIBER USING NARCOTICS.  
BECAUSE OF THEIR NOTORIETY IT OFFERED EXCUSES TO MINOR USERS. SOURCE  
STATES THAT RAID WAS A LEGITIMATE RAID BASED ON ABOVE AND THAT CLAIMED  
QUOTE FRAME UP UNQUOTE WAS AS MUCH FOR PUBLICITY PURPOSES AS IT  
WAS TO AVERT THE SUSPICION OF GUILT FROM HER INASMUCH AS SHE WAS  
CAUGHT IN POSSESSION OF THE MAKESHIFT PIPE. LT. [REDACTED] HEAD  
OF SPECIAL SERVICES DETAIL, TOGETHER WITH OFFICER [REDACTED]  
WERE CONTACTED AND THEY ADVISED SUBSTANTIALLY THE SAME INFORMATION  
AS SET FORTH ABOVE. HOLIDAY IS CHARGED WITH POSSESSION OF OPIUM AND  
IS BEING TRIED IN MUNICIPAL COURT. HER HEARING IS SET FOR FEBRUARY  
TWO NEXT. NO FURTHER ACTION BEING TAKEN.

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KIMBALL

END AND ACK PLS

1019PM OK FBI WA LS

*cc Rosen*

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

JAN 27 1949

TELEMETER

Mr. Tolson	✓
Mr. Clegg	✓
Mr. Glavin	✓
Mr. Ladd	✓
Mr. Nichols	✓
Mr. Rosen	✓
Mr. Tracy	✓
Mr. Egan	✓
Mr. Gurnea	✓
Mr. Harbo	✓
Mr. Hendon	✓
Mr. Pennington	✓
Mr. Quinn Tamm	✓
Mr. Nease	✓
Miss Gandy	✓

WASHINGTON FROM SFRAN S2 1-27-49 12-33 PM

DIRECTOR ROUTINE -REPEAT-

ATTENTION - INSPECTOR JOHN MOHR *JM*

BILLIE HOLIDAY, NARCOTICS MATTER. RMYTEL JAN. TWENTY FIVE LAST.

A SQUIB APPEARING IN COLUMN OF HERB CAEN, LOCAL GOSSIP COLUMNIST OF SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, ISSUE OF JAN. TWENTY SEVEN READS

"CHANTOOSE BILLIE HOLIDAY, OUT ON BAIL AFTER BEING NABBED ON A NARCOTICS CHARGE SAT., HAD A PACKED HOUSE AS USUAL AT CAFE SOCIETY UPTOWN TUES. NIGHT -- BUT THE CUSTOMER WHO MUST-VE INTRIGUED HER MOST WAS A GENT WHO SAT AT RINGSIDE THROUGH TWO SHOWS AND EVEN MADE A COUPLE OF REQUESTS. ~~GEORGE~~ COL. GEORGE H. ~~WINK~~ WHITE, BOSS OF THE FEDERAL NARCOTICS BUREAU HERE.."

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 11/28/88 BY SP5CJ/EBG

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12-17-20-2

62 FEB 11 1949

EX-76

GRIMM



February 11, 1949

12-1720-3

INDEXED - 92

Miss Tallulah Bankhead  
Hotel Elysee  
60 East 54th Street  
New York, New York

*T. S. ...*

Dear Tallulah:

I have received your kind letter of February 9 and was very glad indeed to hear from you. Your kind comments are greatly appreciated, and I trust that you will not hesitate to call on me at any time you think I might be of assistance to you.

Hoping to see you in the not too distant future and with kindest regards,

Sincerely,

*J. Edgar Hoover*

RECEIVED - DIRECTOR  
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FEB 11 3 55 PM '49  
RECEIVED RIA 40 ROOM  
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COMMUNICATIONS SECTION  
MAILED 3  
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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 11/26/88 BY SP5CJ/RBG

- Mr. Tolson \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Clegg \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Glavin \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Ladd \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Nichols \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Rosen \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Tracy \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Egan \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Gurnea \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Harbo \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Mohr \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Pennington \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Quinn Tamm \_\_\_\_\_
- Tele. Room \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Nease \_\_\_\_\_
- Miss Gandy \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Tolson	✓
Mr. Clegg	
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Mr. Nichols	✓
Mr. Tracy	
Mr. Egan	
Mr. Gurnea	
Mr. Harbo	
Mr. Mohr	
Mr. Pennington	
Mr. Quinn Tamm	
Mr. Nease	
Miss Gandy	

Hotel Elysee  
 60 East 54th Street  
 New York, N. Y.  
 February 9, 1949

J. Edgar Hoover  
 Federal Bureau of Investigation  
 Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Hoover:

I am ashamed of my unpardonable delay in writing to thank you a thousand times for the kindness, consideration and courtesy, in fact all the nicest adjectives in the book, for the trouble you took re our telephone conversation in connection with Billie Holiday.

I tremble when I think of my audacity in approaching you at all with so little to recommend me except the esteem, admiration and high regard my father held for you. I would never have dared to ask him or you a favor for myself but knowing your true humanitarian spirit it seemed quite natural at the time to go to the top man. As my Negro mammy used to say - "When you pray you pray to God don't you?"

I have met Billie Holiday but twice in my life but admire her immensely as an artist and feel the most profound compassion for her knowing as I do the unfortunate circumstances of her background. Although my intention is not to condone her weaknesses I certainly understand the eccentricities of her behaviour because she is essentially a child at heart whose troubles have made her psychologically unable to cope with the world in which she finds herself. Her vital need is more medical than the confinement of four walls.

RECORDED - 92 12-1720-3

However guilty she may be, whatever penalty she may be required to pay for her frailties, poor thing, you I know did everything within the law to lighten her burden. Bless you for this.

kindest regards,

*Tallulah Bankhead*

Tallulah Bankhead

DEFERRED RECORDING

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ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
 HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
 DATE 11/28/78 BY SP5 CI/RBG

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# Billie Holiday, Singer, Held In Coast Dope Raid

SAN FRANCISCO, Jan. 22 (UP). Dusky blues singer Billie Holiday and her agent were arrested in a "tenderloin district" hotel room in downtown San Francisco today and charged with possession of opium.

The 29-year-old star of radio, night clubs and recordings was booked at the Hall of Justice with John Levy, 40, of New York and Los Angeles, and both were released on \$500 bail each.

## Charge: Opium Found

Police charged a vial of opium was found in her apartment. Both promptly denied they knew the opium was there.

A five-man squad of officers, including federal agent Gene White and four police from a special San Francisco detail, raided her apartment in the Mark Twain hotel in San Francisco's night life area.

White said the detail found the colored song enchantress in the bathroom, washing her hands beneath the medicine cabinet where they located a small vial of opium.

## Took "Cure" in New York

Miss Holiday, only recently released from a federal institution at Alderson, W. Va., as "cured" of drug addiction, appeared at the city prison for fingerprinting and booking in a black dress beneath a \$7,000 blue mink coat.

She wore high heels and a perky hat and was flanked by Levy, hatless and coatless in the chill San Francisco weather. Throughout the proceedings Miss Holiday remained virtually silent.

But Levy indignantly denied the charge.

"We both deny everything," he said. "She didn't even sleep in her room last night."

## Claims Friend Used Room

Levy said Miss Holiday "lent" the room to a girl he knew only as "Mandy," a Negro girl friend of the singer.

He charged the officers "apparently were tipped" and said they went "directly to the bathroom and took the vial out of the chest."

Levy said he first got suspicious "something was up" when he got a call from the lobby downstairs that said: "Are you the Levy who is a stocking salesman?" He said "No" and hung up, and a few minutes later the police knocked on the door and he admitted them.

## Sang at Night Club

The chubby Negro songstress, whose record albums feature smoky, world-weary numbers, has been appearing at the Cafe Society Uptown in San Francisco's "Harlem" district along Fillmore street.

Levy said he had just arrived in San Francisco on the Coaster, an overnight passenger train from Los Angeles, and that he had been in his client's room only about an hour before the law burst in.

Immediately after the booking, the pair left for the cafe with the words, "The show must go on."

Since the death of her acknowledged model and mentor, Bessie Smith, the husky-voiced Miss Holiday has generally been rated tops in her line. Her albums are best-sellers and her recording of "Strange Fruit," the weird, minor-key lament of a Negro lynching, has become her virtual trademark.

Mr. Tolson \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Clegg \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Glavin \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Ladd \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Nichols \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Rosen \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Tracy \_\_\_\_\_  
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Mr. Gurnea \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Harbo \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Mohr \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Pennington \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Quinn Tamm \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Nease \_\_\_\_\_  
Miss Gandy \_\_\_\_\_

*[Handwritten initials]*

*[Handwritten initials]*

*File for*

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NOT RECORDED  
44 MAR 11 1949

50 MAR 21 1949

JAN 23 1949  
WASHINGTON TIMES-HERALD  
Page 3

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
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DATE 11/28/88 BY SP5CT/RBG

Mr. Tolson \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mr. Clegg \_\_\_\_\_  
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 Mr. Pennington \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mr. Quinn Tamm \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mr. Nease \_\_\_\_\_  
 Miss Gandy \_\_\_\_\_

*Handwritten initials and scribbles*

**Billie Holiday Cleared Of Opium Possession**  
 San Francisco, June 4 (U.P.) — Billie Holiday, blues singer, has been declared innocent of charges of possessing opium.  
 A jury of six men and six women returned a not guilty verdict yesterday after hearing Miss Holiday testify that her manager, John Levy, thrust a package of narcotics into her hand just before her hotel room was raided by Federal agents. The defense contended Levy turned informer on Miss Holiday to avoid marriage.

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ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
 HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
 DATE 11/20/88 BY SP5 CI/RBG

JUN 5 1949  
 WASHINGTON POST  
 Page 6M

JUN 5 1949

- Mr. Tolson
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- Mr. Tracy
- Mr. Egan
- Mr. Gurnea
- Mr. Harbo
- Mr. Mohr
- Mr. Pennington
- Mr. Quinn Tamm
- Mr. Nease
- Miss Gandy

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# BILLIE HOLIDAY TRIAL RE-SET

The narcotics trial of Billie Holiday, colored singer, was reset yesterday for April 15 to save her financial loss in pursuing her career.

Appearing with her attorney, W. Ehrlich, Miss Holiday explained to Superior Judge Albert C. Wollenberg that she was on "play or pay" contract.

"That means," said Ehrlich, "that if she does not fulfill her contract and appear in Chicago later this month, a penalty clause will call for payment from her."

The judge moved the trial date from March 14 to April 15. The singer was indicted for possession of narcotics by the grand jury on January 22.

G.I.R.-7

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 11/28/88 BY SP5CJ/RB6

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NOT RECORDED  
43 APR 1 1949

FBI - SAN FRANCISCO  
MAR 11 1949  
Bursant

Re: Billie Holiday  
Miscellaneous Info Concerning

62 APR 8 1949

SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER  
MAR 4 1949



RECORDED - 4

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
AIR MAIL

EX-1

DATE: July 25, 1949

TO:

[Redacted]

Attention:

[Redacted]

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b7D

FROM: John Edgar Hoover - Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

SUBJECT: BILLY HOLIDAY

Reference is made to your letter dated June 28, 1949 requesting information regarding the above-captioned individual.

Enclosed herewith are two copies of the Identification Record of Billie Holiday as it appears in the files of the Identification Division under FBI#-4855389.

Enclosure

CC -

[Redacted]

(PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL - AIR MAIL)

CC - Foreign Service Desk (Detached)

MLF:mk

- Mr. Tolson \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Clegg \_\_\_\_\_
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- Mr. Quinn Tamm \_\_\_\_\_
- Tele. Room \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Nease \_\_\_\_\_
- Miss Gandy \_\_\_\_\_

MAILED 13

JUL 25 1949 P.M.

#289,480