

SUBJECT

Birth Holiday

FEDERAL BUREAU
OF INVESTIGATION
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/PRIVACY ACTS
RELEASE

SUBJECT: BILLIE HOLIDAY

PAGES REVIEWED: 12

PAGES RELEASED: 10

NOTES: _____

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. Hendon	.....
Mr. Pennington	.....
Mr. Quinn Tamm	.....
Mr. Nease	.....
Miss Gandy	.....

FBI SAN FRANCISCO

1-25-49 #289,489 6-58 PM PST

CFL

DIRECTOR

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 10/21/88 BY SP5 GJ/BBG

EXTREMELY URGENT, IMMEDIATE ATTENTION INSPECTOR JOHN H. HARRIS.
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 [REDACTED] DISTRICT

b7c

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 CIGARETTE OPIMUM PIPE AND BUNDLE OF OPIMUM 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 FLOOR OF THE
BATHROOM BY [REDACTED] AND THE BUNDLE OF OPIMUM FROM THE BOWL.

b7D

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

HARRIS 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

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 FRANK HEINICHOTE 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. [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.

KIMBALL

END AND ACK PLS

1015PM OK FBI WA LS

cc Rosen

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

JAN 27 1949
com
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	✓
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
 "CHANTOUSE 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 IN-
 TRIGUED HER MOST WAS A GENT WHO SAT AT RINGSIDE THROUGH TWO
 SHOWS AND EVEN MADE A COUPLE OF REQUESTS. ~~GOING~~ COL. GEORGE
 H. ~~WIKK~~ WHITE, BOSS OF THE FEDERAL NARCOTICS BUREAU HERE.."

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 11/28/87 BY SP5CE/EGG

KIMBALL

SE 28

RECORDED - 80

12-1720-2

62 FEB 11 1949

EX-76

FEB 11 1949

RECEIVED

✓

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.

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

ack
2/11/49
✓

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 12/28/06 BY SP5CT/RBG

February 11, 1949

12-1720-3

RECEIVED - 12-1720-3

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

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
F B I
U. S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE
FEB 11 3 30 PM '49

RECEIVED FBI ROOM
F B I
FEB 11 3 55 PM '49

- 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

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION
MAILED 3
FEB 11 1949 P.M.
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

RECEIVED DEPT. OF JUSTICE
F B I
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FEB 11 2 13 PM '49

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
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DATE 10/26/88 BY SP5CJ/RBS

Billie Holiday, Singer, Held In Coast Dope Raid

SAN FRANCISCO, Jan. 29 (AP). — Dinky blues singer Billie Holiday and her agent were arrested from a "Sunderland district" hotel room in downtown San Francisco today and charged with possession of opium.

The 39-year-old star of radio, night club 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 trial 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 mechanism in the bathroom, washing her hands beneath the medicine cabinet there they located a small trial of opium.

Book "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 and \$7,000 blue silk coat.

She wore high heels and a derby hat and was flanked by two police officers and another in the 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 apartment last night."

Police Seized Dope 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 trial out of the closet."

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."

Many at Night Club

The dinky Negro songstress, whose record albums feature dinky, world-weary numbers, has been appearing at the Cafe Society Brown in San Francisco's "Starline" district alone. Filmore street.

Levy said he had just arrived in San Francisco on the Coastier 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 former record model and mentor, Beulah Holiday has generally been rated eye in her line. Her albums are best-sellers and her recordings of "Strange Fruit" the world's most famous record of a Negro lynching, because her actual trade.

- Mr. [unclear]
- Mr. [unclear]
- Mr. [unclear]
- Mr. [unclear]
- Mr. [unclear]
- Mr. [unclear]
- Mr. [unclear]
- Mr. [unclear]
- Mr. [unclear]
- Mr. [unclear]
- Mr. [unclear]
- Mr. [unclear]
- Mr. [unclear]
- Mr. [unclear]
- Miss [unclear]

File 103

SE 3
NOT RECORDED
44 MAR 11 1941

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

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face

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 J. W. Ehrlich, Miss Holiday appeared before Superior Judge Albert J. Wollenberg that she was on "day or pay" abstract.

"That means," said Ehrlich, "that if she does not fulfill her contract and appear in Chicago later this month, a penalty clause will ask for payment on 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 11.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 11/23/88 BY SP5CJ/RGG

G.I.R.-7

112-171-7
NOT RECORDED
43 APR 1 1949

SAN FRANCISCO
MAR 11 1949
Bursant

Re: *Billie Holiday*
Miscellaneous Info Concerning

62 APRS 1949

SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINED
MAR 6 1949

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 _____

Handwritten initials:
 L
 J
 J

**Miss Holiday Cleared
 of Opium Possession**
 San Francisco, June 4 (AP)—
 Miss Holiday, blues singer, has
 been acquitted of charges
 of possessing opium.
 A jury of six men and six women
 returned a not guilty verdict yes-
 terday after hearing Miss Holiday
 testify that her manager, John
 Levy, thrust a package of narcotics
 in her hand just before her hotel
 room was raided by Federal agents.
 The defense contended Levy,
 a paid informer on Miss Holiday,
 should be charged with

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
 HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
 DATE 11/20/88 BY SP5 EIR/BBG

83 JUL 12 1949

[REDACTED]

June 28, 1949.

The Director,
Federal Bureau of Investigation,
U.S. Department of Justice,
WASHINGTON, D.C. U.S.A.

Dear Sir:

Re: Miss Billy HOLIDAY

[REDACTED]

RECORDING

b7c
b7D

It would be appreciated if you would
enquire into the matter, advising [REDACTED] of any
information you may have concerning Miss HOLIDAY.

[REDACTED]

Yours truly,

[REDACTED]

ENCLOSURE

12-1770

RECORDED - 4

WISCONSIN
JUL 1 1949
#4855377
7-21-49

JUL 29 1949

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50 AUG 10 1949

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET

2 Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

Deletions were made pursuant to the exemptions indicated below with no segregable material available for release to you.

Section 552

Section 552a

(b)(1)

(b)(7)(A)

(d)(5)

(b)(2)

(b)(7)(B)

(j)(2)

(b)(3)

(b)(7)(C)

(k)(1)

(b)(7)(D)

(k)(2)

(b)(7)(E)

(k)(3)

(b)(7)(F)

(k)(4)

(b)(4)

(b)(8)

(k)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(9)

(k)(6)

(b)(6)

(k)(7)

Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to you or the subject of your request.

Information pertained only to a third party. Your name is listed in the title only.

Documents originated with another Government agency(ies). These documents were referred to that agency(ies) for review and direct response to you.

 Pages contain information furnished by another Government agency(ies). You will be advised by the FBI as to the releasability of this information following our consultation with the other agency(ies).

 Page(s) withheld for the following reason(s):

For your information: _____

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 12-1720- 4 ENCLOSURE

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X DELETED PAGE(S) X
X NO DUPLICATION FEE X
X FOR THIS PAGE X
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

RECORDED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
AIR MAIL

EX-1

DATE: July 25, 1949

TO: [REDACTED]

b7c
b7D

Attention: [REDACTED]

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

SUBJECT: BILLY HOLIDAY

Reference is made to your letter dated June 26, 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

b7c
b7D

[REDACTED] (detached)

(PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL - AIR MAIL)

CC -

[REDACTED]

INSTRUCTIONS SECTION

MAILED 17
JUL 25 1949 P.M.

- 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

#289,487
SPECIALLY DELIVERED BY SP5 CIL/RAG