



# FBI

## *Law Enforcement* BULLETIN



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Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice  
J. Edgar Hoover, Director

# FBI

## Law Enforcement

### BULLETIN

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## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

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TO ALL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS

THERE ARE DEEPLY HUMANE and merciful phases of law enforcement which are generally overshadowed by the daily clashes of law and order with the criminal underworld. Typical of these significant public services are the day-to-day operations of the FBI Identification Division, which celebrates its 40th anniversary today.

Some months ago a distraught mother wrote the FBI pleading for help in locating a son from whom she had not heard for more than 2 years. She explained that while in the Armed Forces he suffered a head injury which required brain surgery, but that he did not fully recover. Files of the Identification Division revealed that authorities in a neighboring State had recently submitted a fingerprint card on an individual possibly identical with the missing man. This information was furnished to the mother. A few days later, she wrote me a personal note of gratitude, saying she had located her son and that, thanks to the assistance received from the FBI, she now could help him with his problems.

There is nothing earth-shaking about this little act of courtesy. It is merely indicative of the thousands of small favors afforded the public by law enforcement officers and agencies daily in every community of the land. However, to the mother, its value was priceless. We are indeed proud that the FBI can participate in a humane program of this nature, a cause to eliminate anxiety, despair, and grief.

The FBI Identification Division today stands as a monument to the coordinated efforts and mutual cooperation of local, State, and Federal law enforcement agencies across the country. Its stature as the world's foremost identification division is attributable to the support and participation of law enforcement on all levels. The division was established with a nucleus of 810,188 fingerprint cards representing 987 police agencies. Today, there are some 13,700 contributors, and this repository contains more than 170



## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

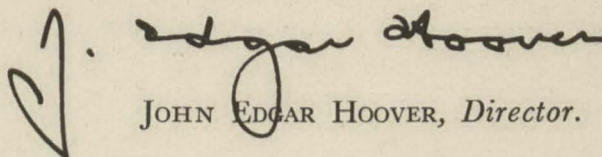
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million sets of fingerprints representing nearly 78 million persons. One hundred twenty-five million of the total fingerprint cards are in the civil files of the division.

The FBI receives over 23,000 fingerprint cards during an "average" working day. About 40 percent of these involve arrests for violations of law. The others are noncriminal and relate to a wide variety of civil matters. Each month approximately 1,600 fugitives from justice are identified through fingerprint records, and local authorities seeking these wanted men are notified of their whereabouts. This is an average of about 53 fugitives every 24 hours.

In 1940 the FBI Disaster Squad was organized. It is comprised of highly trained fingerprint experts. Upon request from appropriate authorities, the squad answers the urgent need for on-the-spot identification of victims of devastating storms, fires, plane crashes, and other major tragedies. In 38 disasters since January 1, 1959, the squad has secured one or more fingerprints from 1,079 adult victims. From this number, positive identifications were made by fingerprints of 871 persons, representing a percentage of 80.7.

The FBI Identification Division is an inexhaustible reservoir of fingerprint records made possible through the willing and intelligent cooperation of police agencies and other organizations having an interest in the science of fingerprints.

  
JOHN EDGAR HOOVER, *Director*.

JULY 1, 1964



## FINGERPRINTS

# *The Infallible Means of Personal Identification*

RECENTLY, THE IDENTIFICATION DIVISION of the Federal Bureau of Investigation received a fingerprint card from a police department in an east coast community showing the arrest of one Leo E. Fine\* for assault and petty larceny.

A search was immediately conducted through the massive fingerprint files of the Identification Division where a positive identification was established against a print in file for one James Emerson Peyton.\*

A review of Peyton's record showed that the fingerprint card containing a wanted notice was furnished to the Federal Bureau of Investigation in 1924. It was one of 810,188 cards received from Leavenworth Penitentiary and the International Association of Chiefs of Police, which were consolidated to form the nucleus of the FBI fingerprint files. Peyton was wanted for escape from a county jail in the East on December 18, 1918, while waiting to be transferred to a State prison to serve a sentence of 4 years for burglary.

Upon completion of the identification of the current print, a wire was immediately sent to the county jail authorities advising them of the apprehension of their wanted subject. Simultane-

ously, the police department was advised of the wanted status of its prisoner.

This interesting identification is typical of the cooperative services offered by the FBI Identification Division which celebrated its 40th Anniversary on July 1, 1964. During the 45 years that Peyton was a fugitive, the FBI fingerprint files expanded to their present size of over 170 million fingerprint cards, representing nearly 78 million individuals. Today, it is the world's largest central repository of fingerprints.

### **Growing Demand**

After the turn of the century, many individual law enforcement agencies established their own fingerprint record bureaus. As the number of these bureaus increased, it became obvious that a clearinghouse of fingerprints available to authorities throughout the Nation was needed. The fingerprint bureau at Leavenworth, originally established in 1904 for Federal prisoners only, soon expanded its operation into a free-exchange service, circularizing criminal records among a growing list of contributing peace officers.

In 1896 the International Association of Chiefs of Police had established in Chicago, Ill. (later

\*Fictitious.



moved to Washington, D.C.), the National Bureau of Criminal Identification for the compilation and exchange of criminal identification data. Still, there was a growing demand by police officials for *one* cooperative system on a national scale available to all authorized law enforcement agencies. The result was the formation of the Identification Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in 1924, consolidating in Washington, D.C., the fingerprint records of Leavenworth Penitentiary and the National Bureau of Criminal Identification.

## History of Fingerprints

Preceding the establishment of the Identification Division files in 1924, the history of fingerprint identification shows that in 1858 Sir William James Herschel, British chief administrative officer for the Hooghly District, Bengal, India, began the first known official use of fingerprints on a large scale. He required natives to add their fingerprints as well as their signatures to contracts.

In 1880, Dr. Henry Faulds, of Tsukiji Hospital in Tokyo, Japan, had an article published discussing his observations of fingerprints and making suggestions as to the future possibilities of the fingerprint science. His ideas are generally used today, such as his recommendation as to the use of a thin film of printer's ink as a transfer medium. He also discussed the potentialities of identification of criminals by their fingerprints left at the scenes of crimes.

## Early Records

The first authenticated record of official use of fingerprints in the United States was in 1882. Mr. Gilbert Thompson of the U.S. Geological Survey, while in charge of a field project in New Mexico, used his own fingerprints on commissary orders to prevent their forgery. It was also in the 1880's that Sir Francis Galton, a noted British anthropologist, began observations which led to the publication, in 1892, of his book entitled "Finger Prints." Galton's studies established the individuality and permanence of fingerprints. He also made another important contribution by devising the first scientific method of classifying fingerprint patterns.

The year 1891 marked the first installation of fingerprint files as an official means of criminal identification. These files were originated by Juan



Director J. Edgar Hoover.

Vucetich, an Argentinian police official who based his system on the patterns typed by Sir Francis Galton. The Vucetich system is the basis of those systems presently used in most Spanish-speaking countries and a number of other countries as well.

The official introduction of fingerprinting for criminal identification in England and Wales occurred in 1901. The system employed was also developed from Galton's observations and was devised by Sir Edward Richard Henry, then inspector-general of police in Bengal and, later, commissioner of London's Metropolitan Police. Henry simplified fingerprint classification and made it applicable to police identification. It is the basic Henry System, with modifications and extensions, which is used by the FBI and throughout the United States today. The New York State Prison system instituted the first practical, systematic use of fingerprints in the United States for the identification of criminals in 1903.

## FBI Identification Division

During the 40-year interval of its existence, the Identification Division of the FBI has maintained pace with far-reaching advances in the science of fingerprint identification. The FBI has liber-



ally drawn upon all branches of science and ingeniously adapted many salient features as aids incident to fingerprint identification. The role of the Identification Division as a cost-free service agency is unquestionably a factor in welding local, State, and Federal law enforcement agencies into a smoothly functioning, cooperative unit. The success of its campaign to enlist the assistance of the Nation's law enforcement officers may be seen in the magnitude of the main files, where receipts are at the rate of 23,000 to 24,000 fingerprint cards daily. The number of contributing agencies exceeds 13,700.

### Importance of Fingerprints

Why are fingerprints important? The indelible markings on the fingers of human beings offer an infallible means of personal identification. Fingerprints remain immutable, ineffaceable, and fixed. Their indisputable nature has resolved a centuries-old quest for a positive method of identification. Earlier civilizations had resorted to such barbaric means as maiming, branding, and tattooing.

Photography has merit as an adjunct to identification, but is vulnerable as a sole source, since personal appearances change and may be altered. Around 1870 the system of recording the dimen-



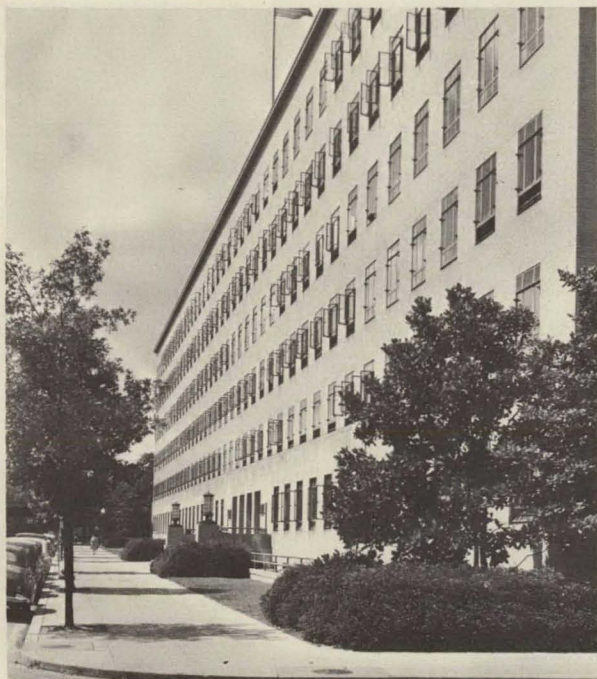
Assistant Director C. Lester Trotter is in charge of the FBI Identification Division.

sions of certain bony parts of the body was devised by the French anthropologist, Alphonse Bertillon, and utilized for approximately 30 years. The system was discarded following a highly publicized incident of mistaken identity, the case of "Will West."

### The Will West Case

In 1903 when Will West was received at Leavenworth Penitentiary, he denied previous imprisonment there, but the record clerk used the Bertillon instruments on him nevertheless. When the clerk referred to the formula derived from West's measurements, he located the file of one William West whose measurements were practically identical and whose photograph appeared to be that of the new prisoner. A closer review of William West's record showed that he was in the same penitentiary serving a life sentence for murder. Subsequently, the fingerprints of Will West and William West were impressed and compared. The patterns bore no resemblance.

In the wake of the "Will West" case, other methods of identification fell by the wayside; the value and prestige of fingerprints became more firmly



Front entrance of the FBI Identification Division.





A new class of fingerprint clerks studies the techniques of fingerprint identification.

entrenched. Sixty years later the superiority of fingerprints continues unchallenged.

No two impressions of the millions of fingerprint records examined by FBI experts have ever been found exactly alike in all detail, unless they both were made by the same finger. Efforts of confirmed criminals to confound documented evidence in the files by self-inflicted mutilation of pattern detail have proved futile. Fingerprints subsequently submitted and subjected to comparison posed no problem in the determination of ownership.

### FBI Classification System

The FBI utilizes a classification system patterned after the system devised by Sir Edward Henry. Henry divided fingerprint patterns into eight basic types. The 10 fingers are considered as a unit to obtain the classification. By translating patterns in all fingers into numerical and lettered symbols, a feasible formula is derived. Modification, innovation, and expansion in the equation have ensued, as FBI technicians sought to accommodate the tremendous influx of fingerprints.

A files system susceptible to multiple expansion segregates prints into groups and smaller subdivisions, on the basis of similar pattern characteristics in corresponding fingers. As a result, a technician can locate a record within a few minutes by examining a limited number of the millions of individual cards on file.

Two basic files are maintained by the FBI. These are the single fingerprint file and the file in which all 10 fingers are impressed on the card.

The single fingerprint file consists of the finger impressions of a selected group of notorious criminals. Each fingerprint is considered as a unit without reference to the other nine fingers.

The main files of the Identification Division are the "10-finger" files. They are labeled criminal or civil according to content.

Prints filed in the criminal files represent individuals charged or convicted of criminal activities. The civil identification files contain impressions transmitted by widely diversified sources, but having in common a singularity of purpose—permanent recording of fingerprints for personal identification only.

The most active identification files in the FBI are the criminal files, although they represent less than 26 percent of the total of the "10-finger" files. They apprise the police officer of prior arrests; guide the judiciary in imposing sentence; aid probation or parole authorities; and assist in locating fugitives.

### Receiving and Recording

Thousands of fingerprint cards showing arrests are received in the Identification Division of the FBI every working day from law enforcement agencies throughout the country. The procedure in handling them must be both accurate and expeditious. Data furnished to the contributor must be absolutely correct and transmitted promptly if it is to be of maximum value.

A dated control record of each incoming print is made to insure against delay before it is started on its journey through the constantly moving "as-



Employees of the Recording Section sort the huge volume of fingerprint cards received daily.





This is a view of the highly efficient card indexing system in the Identification Division.

sembly line" processes of the Identification Division. The date stamp on the back of each print and a distinctive colored tag affixed to those prints to be given preferential attention indicate the relative priority each should be given by the employees who handle it in the various units of the Identification Division.

### Preliminary Classification

When the fingerprint has been recorded, a fingerprint technician places a limited preliminary classification on the card. This initial classification serves a dual purpose. It affords sufficient formula for routing the print to the appropriate section of the files and will be elaborated and extended by a technician where the actual fingerprint search is conducted. It also aids in the search in the name files.

In order to expedite location of any previous record under the same name as that appearing on the current print, the name is first searched in the alphabetical card index files. Electrically operated file cabinets contain the cards. The name and aliases listed for each person for whom a record is on file appear on separate 3 by 5 index cards, together with certain descriptive data. The cards also show the full fingerprint classification and a record of every fingerprint card previously received on that individual. Any cards which appear to refer to possibly identical fingerprint records are attached to the incoming print to facilitate the location of such records. Where an attached index card bears an FBI number, or where the contributing agency has indicated an FBI number on the current print, the fingerprint card is routed from the Card Index Section directly to the Assembly Section.





Fingerprint records are reproduced in Fingerprint Correspondence Section for dissemination to contributing agencies.

Prints which show no contributor-placed FBI number and those on which no record is located by Card Index Section's name search are routed to the Technical Section. The fingerprint technician then refers to those prints in file indicated by any index cards attached to the incoming fingerprint card by the Card Index Section as possibly identical with the current print. The technician determines by visual comparison under his magnifying glass whether one of those on record is actually identical with the current print. If so, the search is ended. If none of the attached index cards refer to a print identical with the incoming, or if the current fingerprint card is one on which no name card was located, the technician conducts a technical fingerprint search dependent entirely upon ridge details. He completes the preliminary classification placed on the print at the start of its journey through the division. He then goes to that section of the file containing prints with similar patterns as shown by their classifications. The technician visually compares the incoming print with all prints in file bearing similar classifications within a margin allowed for possible differences in pattern interpretation. Detailed examination under a magnifier is necessary because two prints may bear exactly the same classification without being identical. If the technician finds an identical print, either with the aid of an index card or by technical search, he pencils an identification symbol on the incoming print. If he finds none, the incoming set is marked "non-ident." "Ids" are forwarded to the Assembly Section. "Non-idents" are sent to the Fingerprint Correspondence Section.

The jackets or case histories of individuals on whom more than one arrest fingerprint has been submitted are contained in the files of the Assembly Section. These jackets are assigned FBI numbers and are filed in sequence according to those numbers. Current identifications are verified with fingerprints in the jacket, and the complete record is assembled and checked before being sent to the Fingerprint Correspondence Section for reply.

### Fingerprint Correspondence Section

This section prepares the replies to the law enforcement agencies which have submitted the current fingerprint cards. If no identification is made, a form reply to this effect is sent to the contributor. If a previous record has been located, it is listed in detail and forwarded to the contributor and other interested agencies. The Fingerprint Correspondence Section also makes index cards for all known names of the subject represented. As additional prints are received on the individuals, entries are made on these cards in abbreviated form to indicate contents of the fingerprint file. Upon completion, the fingerprint and index cards are sent to the appropriate sections where they are filed for future reference.

### Posting Section

To assist in locating fugitives from justice, the Identification Division places "stop notices" against the records of criminals whose apprehensions are sought by municipal, county, State or Federal authorities. Information received concerning the whereabouts of such fugitives is immediately dispatched to the interested agencies. Through this procedure, an average of more than 1,600 fugitives are identified each month by FBI fingerprint technicians.

When notice is received from an authorized law enforcement agency that an individual with fingerprints on file is wanted, the fingerprint card and index card are flagged with small red metal tabs. The master print is also stamped "Wanted card in jacket." The details concerning the wanted notice are then posted on a wanted notice card which is filed in the fugitive's fingerprint record. Should the wanted subject be fingerprinted at any future date and his prints searched against FBI files, his wanted status will be disclosed. The red tab is a signal for immediate

(Continued on page 25)



# *Thieves Along the Highway*

**STEPHEN F. LAGOMARSINO**

*Lieutenant, New Mexico State Police*

*Are stolen motor vehicles and auto thieves becoming as "American" as apple pie and baseball? Over 356,000 cars were reported stolen in 1962. During 1963 there was an estimated 11-percent increase in auto theft. In this article an experienced police officer highlights some of the clues which help identify stolen automobiles and car thieves on the open highways.*

ACCORDING TO J. EDGAR HOOVER, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, "There's an automobile stolen approximately every 90 seconds of every day throughout the year."

During the year 1962 unrecovered automobiles represented a nationwide property loss of about \$30 million. Over the past 10 years the total estimated loss in unrecovered motor vehicles was about \$190 million.

The spotting and recovery of stolen automobiles and the notification of owners of their condition and location are some of the responsibilities most law enforcement officers face during their daily tour of duty. In effecting the recovery of a stolen car, an officer not only relieves the anxiety of its owner, but may also have the opportunity to identify and apprehend the thief with the hope that the action will lessen the theft of cars in the future.

The car thief is so often associated with other crimes, particularly thefts, robberies, and burglaries, that to get him out of his stolen car and off the highway is not only a saving of money, but may also be the saving of a life and the protection of property of law-abiding citizens. Automobile

thefts represent personal loss and inconvenience to owners and monetary loss to insurance companies. They also affect every other car owner in the matter of higher automobile insurance rates.

Spotting a stolen car that has been previously identified over the radio by license number is relatively easy for the officer. Observing the cars as they go by—with frequent study of the "hot sheet"—helps to locate the stolen ones. It is with the suspect cars traveling the highways that the officer can do his most effective work and increase the number of stolen cars he recovers.

## **Informant Program**

One of the most effective programs known to law enforcement in suppressing car thefts is the development of good, reliable informants in the areas where the car thief shows his colors, makes his moves, and arouses suspicion. There are many different kinds of informants, and most are anxious to help; however only a few really take the initiative.

Each service station operator on the highway



immediately calls the officer when the purchaser of gas drives off without paying his bill, but will he call when he notices the license plate wired on, the vent window broken, the trunk lid obviously forced, the lack of keys in the ignition, or when he is offered in trade the jack or spare tire for gas? These are the types of informants that the officer must develop. They are developed through contact with local service stations, garages, restaurants, wrecking yards, and similar places. The officer should get to know these people and gain their trust. They should be urged to call when they are suspicious of a vehicle and its driver. They should be encouraged to call the police regardless of the offense or suspicion. Once their confidence has been developed, their calls should always be answered regardless of how minor the details might seem at the time. One thing is certain, many dry-runs will have to be answered before one pays off.

### Spotting the Stolen Car

Auto theft is a young man's crime. In 1962, 87 percent of the individuals arrested for this crime were under the age of 25, and 62 percent were under the age of 18. Throughout the Nation there were almost 30,000 arrests of young people 15 years of age or younger for auto theft. While the officer is on patrol, he should be especially observant of the young man in the late-model car or the young driver in transit with out-of-State plates on the vehicle he is driving.

To detect possible clues, the officer should select a good stationary location on the highway where he can observe traffic without difficulty. Parking too far from the main traveled road limits the officer's observation. While on moving patrol, he should be aware of any unusual maneuvers of a suspected stolen vehicle.

Not long ago while tailing a California licensed vehicle, an officer observed that the car was occupied by three men who were dirty and unshaven and who appeared to be in transit across New Mexico. On closer observation it became apparent that one of the trio was watching the movement of the patrol car with more than passing interest. A short distance down the highway, the car turned off on a road seldom used by in-transit traffic, although it was a State road. The police officer thought this unusual, inasmuch as the occupants did not appear to be typical sightseers. Rather than follow them, he decided to



Lt. Lagomarsino.

keep on the main highway. After proceeding for about a mile, he parked the police car in a position to get a clear view of passing traffic. In a few minutes, the car in question came by traveling in the same direction as before. The officer pulled the vehicle over, and, after investigating the occupants, he found they were wanted by California authorities for robbery, forgery, and burglary. One of the suspects admitted that they had hoped to give the officer the impression they were merely on a sightseeing tour.

### The License Plate

As of 1963, 16 States required only one license plate be displayed; all others required two plates be displayed. Twenty-two States required that the plates remain with the vehicle when it was traded or sold; in all others the plates stayed with the owner or were returned to the State. In some States, no proof of ownership was required. Forty-six States required some sort of ownership paper be carried in the vehicle or on the owner's person. There are a few nontitle States.

When a car is suspected of being stolen and is licensed in a State where the license stays with the vehicle, close attention should be paid to the



holes in the plate normally used to affix the license to the vehicle. If the plate shows that it has been attached to other holes, in addition to the ones being used at the time of observation, there is a strong possibility that this license has been attached to some other vehicle. This is easily detected in a distinct marking around the holes previously used. In States that require the license to remain with the original owner, this is not too important, because the owner who has several cars throughout the year will have attached and detached his plate several times.

It is always good practice to check all cars on which the license plate appears to have been disturbed. The officer should be especially aware of late-model vehicles when the license plates are attached with wire or material other than the normal bolt. In many cases, the suspect has stolen a license plate and attached it to the stolen vehicle by means of a piece of wire. Special note should be made as to the location of the plate on the suspected vehicle. In haste, the suspect may attach the plate to the grill of the vehicle or other locations not commonly used by the average car owner. This is an outstanding clue on new cars, since it would be unlikely for the dealer to attach the plate to any place on the vehicle other than the one designated.

### **Wind Vent and Trunk Lock**

A broken wind vent may be a clue in determining whether a vehicle is stolen, as the thief frequently uses this means of entry into a locked vehicle. The glass is generally broken near the lock release button and the hole is often plugged with cloth or cardboard.

After theft, in cases where the keys are not available to the suspect, the only means of entry to other areas of the vehicle is by force. Close note of the trunk lock should be made. This is especially true with new cars. The punched-out trunk lock may lead to the arrest of a car thief and the recovery of the car.

### **Keys and Accessories**

In the case of new vehicles, officers should note whether the driver has in his possession the factory-made keys. These are easily identified from the numbers stamped on the upper part of the key. The driver's unfamiliarity with certain keys when asked to open various compartments of the vehicle

may be the only tip the officer will have in suspecting the person of driving a stolen automobile. In some cases the officer will find that the keys do not fit the locks at all.

In the inspection of a new model vehicle, it is most unusual to find it lacking the radio or spare tire. These two items normally are the first to be sold by the financially hard-pressed auto thief.

### **Dealer's Nameplate**

Not often is the dealer's nameplate a factor, but it certainly should not be overlooked. It has been my experience on three different occasions to find that the suspect removed the dealer's nameplate from the trunk lid to disguise the stolen automobile. This was done on two occasions by removing the nameplate completely, leaving nothing but noticeable holes in the lid. In the third case, the suspect used a can of spray paint and covered the nameplate, blending it in with the body of the vehicle. In regard to new vehicles, this nameplate should, in most cases, indicate the town or city of the dealership. Generally, this location will not conflict with the State license plate.

When stopping a suspected vehicle, the officer should make certain the driver turns the engine off and hands over the keys. Surrender of the keys prevents the suspect from taking off or using the vehicle as a weapon against the police officer. By



Chief Kenneth K. Miller, New Mexico State Police.



having the driver turn the engine off and surrender the keys, the officer can tell whether or not the vehicle is hot-wired.

Recently, a State police officer asked the driver of a late-model car to hand him the keys. When the switch was turned to the "Off" position and the keys released to the officer, the motor was still running. Investigation disclosed a hot-wire—plus a stolen vehicle! The suspect was using a set of keys in the switch as a decoy. None of the keys was connected with the car in any way.

### **Gas Service Record**

The gas service record, usually located on the door casing, will sometimes lead the officer to the origin of the theft if he does not know where the car was stolen. Most of these tabs bear the name of the city where the gas station is located and the service was performed. This can be used to question the suspect as to when and where he had the car last lubricated, how many miles ago, or approximate date, if he insists the vehicle is his.

### **Questioning the Suspect**

The initial questioning of the suspect usually concerns his driver's license and is directed primarily toward his true identity. Items which give some verification of the information on the driver's license are his social security and selective service cards for those in the appropriate age group. Any gasoline credit cards should be examined, as more and more stolen credit cards are being used by thieves. They are usually accepted for service station purchases, as well as for identification.

Examination of evidence of ownership of the car usually comes next, along with verification of the owner's name and vehicle identification number. This provides the opportunity to examine the vehicle identification number plate on the doorpost or the stamped number on the block or frame. Notice should be taken of possible erasures on any of the papers, disturbances of the vehicle identification number plate on the post, evidence of grinding on the block and frame, or irregularly stamped numbers. Here, the officer must be well informed and knowledgeable of the identifying numbers, and he must be familiar with the locations of stamped-in numbers or attached plates.

A complete identification number tells many things, and the officer should know whether all information applies to this car. Symbols in the

number designate various things on different makes of cars. For instance, on a 1959 Ford the first symbol designates engine type; the second, model year; the third, assembly plant; and the fourth, body style. The last, a sequential production number for each assembly plant, usually has six numbers. The entire number is protected by inclusive asterisks.

During the interrogation, the officer seeks all information that a legitimate driver can reasonably verify as opposed to the nonverification by a thief. While the officer is questioning the suspect, he looks for loose, hanging wires in the switch area, lack of a switch, or missing accessories, particularly the radio. Any noticeable missing item furnishes facts for further questioning.

Questions should be asked relating to mileage on the vehicle, when the car was last lubricated, where the service was done. On questioning a driver at night on the highway, the officer might ask him the year, make, and color of the vehicle. It is surprising to discover that a percentage of thieves arrested in stolen cars can tell neither the year, model, nor the color of the car. This is quite common when the thief is apprehended within a short time after the theft.

### **Examining the Car**

During the examination of the front of the car, the officer looks for outdated inspection stickers where applicable, as well as for a front license plate issued in those States requiring two, and its current validation. Examination of the rear of the car will show whether the license plate is current and if it is attached in such a manner as to indicate it belongs to this car or another. The driver should be requested to open the trunk, which will verify whether or not he has a key to it and whether or not he is acquainted with that key. Examination of the trunk lid before it is opened will show whether or not a forcible attempt has been made on it. An examination of the inside of the trunk will reveal whether or not there is a spare tire, or tools, or whether there is indication of contraband therein.

During the interview with the driver, the officer will observe the entire interior of the car and its contents. If there is indication that the back of the rear seat has been pulled forward, this may have been the way the thief got into the trunk. The condition of the floor and the contents thereon may be the subject for questioning.





Some points to look for when auto theft is suspected.



Recently, an officer was questioning a driver and conducting the usual examination of the car. The officer noted a great deal of blood in the trunk of the vehicle and a portion of bone. The officer also noted splatterings of blood on the inside of the vehicle. The subject admitted the car was not his and claimed it belonged to a friend at a military base in eastern New Mexico. Subsequent investigation established that the bone was part of a human skull. This officer not only spotted a stolen vehicle but also uncovered a murder and apprehended the slayer.

### The Parked Car

The patrol officer should always be suspicious of vehicles parked along the highways at odd hours of the night or early morning. This includes secluded spots off the highway proper. Often the thief will choose to stop for rest, far outside the confines of the city where he is not apt to be questioned. It also is known that many car thieves will not have the price of motel or hotel accommodations. In questioning these people, it is surprising to find that many have spent the nights sleeping in the cars, on the road, without being approached or questioned by police. An early morning hour is the best time for this type of observation and checking.

### The Abandoned Car

Cars without drivers should always be checked. These are the abandoned cars along the highway. Here, the officer does not have the advantage of the interview during investigation, but he does have the advantage of having the car all to himself for a thorough examination. The license plate may not belong to the car, which adds to the difficulty of identifying the owner. The make, model, and motor number of all such cars must be obtained for identification. If the number is stamped, it should be examined closely for alteration and compared with known data to see whether it fits this particular make and model. The vehicle identification number, too, should be closely scrutinized and compared with known data. Slipping the fingernail under the plate and prying a little may help to determine whether or not it was placed there at the time of manufacture.

The car should be processed thoroughly for fingerprints, particularly behind the rear view



Lt. Lagomarsino interrogates a suspect driver.

mirror, on the dash, and around the rear of an attached license plate. There are few persons who get into a strange car and do not adjust the rear view mirror. The car should be thoroughly searched for items that give information as to its origin and the identity of its owner. Mail is often found under the seat. Maps, newspapers, books of matches, and similar articles may tell the story of the thief's travels and contain his fingerprints. When a recently abandoned car is located, a radio message ahead for hitchhikers may catch the thieves before they get away. And vice versa, hitchhikers along the highway and the later locating of an abandoned car may provide an opportunity to catch the thieves before they leave the area.

The abandoned car is not always found on the highway. Often it is towed to the nearest garage or left at the nearest cafe almost out of gas.

The most essential items in the recovery of stolen vehicles are:

1. Increased motorist contacts.
2. Knowing what to look for in relation to the vehicle.
3. Proper interrogation of the driver and occupants.

### Increased Motorist Contacts

Not only is this essential in the apprehension of the car thief, but it works hand in hand with a good traffic enforcement program. Many cases



have been solved and criminals apprehended merely because the suspect violated some minor traffic regulation and, unfortunately for him, was observed by an ambitious, alert police officer.

### What To Look for

The police officer should always be on the alert for that one little unsuspecting item that might lead him to believe the car is stolen, such as the missing radio or spare tire, the missing serial plate, and other items mentioned previously. A little bit of craftiness on the officer's part can turn the case in his favor, whereas not knowing what to look for may allow a criminal to continue on his way undetected.

### What To Ask

The initial questions addressed to the driver should concern identity and ownership. The observations made during this questioning furnish additional material for further questions. In questioning the occupant of a vehicle, it is suggested that this be done individually and not in a group.

Spotting the stolen car is the work of the officer. To be effective he must stop cars. Roadblocks, driver's license checks, violations, and public relations or suspicion stops are the excuses the officer has. Hard work and long hours pay off.

It has often been said that certain officers seem to locate more stolen vehicles or uncover more crimes than others. They are usually labeled as being just plain "lucky." It appears more appropriate to say that the officers recovering more stolen vehicles or uncovering more crimes associated with motor vehicles are the ones who are more ambitious, more alert, have greater knowledge and enthusiasm about their jobs, and are dedicated law enforcement officers. They are the officers who return more stolen cars to their rightful owners and put the car thieves in the penitentiary.

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### ENGINE SWITCH

An enterprising individual, shortly after having purchased an old rundown compact car, rented a 1963 model car of identical make from a rent-a-car agency. He then switched the engines and returned the altered car to the renting agency.

July 1964

Boston CRIMDEL, DATED 11-5-63

BUFI, # 63-4296-5

## "Tourist" Burglars Take to the Highways

One of four individuals arrested for participating in numerous burglaries advised law enforcement officials of their method of operation.

The four men traveled together in a station wagon equipped with a rack on the top. In the rack were kept empty suitcases and cardboard boxes covered with a tarpaulin to give the impression they were tourists. They also carried suitcases, boxes, and items of clothing in the back end of the station wagon to add to the illusion. Their forays, usually at night, were made at locations near major highways where they could be absorbed into the traffic with bona fide tourists.

The burglary equipment—some of which were power tools—was hidden in the boxes and suitcases. After a burglary, the group would drive a short distance from the scene of the crime, pull the station wagon over to a side road, and park there to fringe sleep until morning if necessary. If questioned by police, they would reply that they were motoring through the area and dispel any suspicion of their connection with the burglary. When morning came, they would drive back onto the main highway and get lost in the heavy rush-hour traffic.

KANSAS CITY CRIMDEL, DATED 1-29-64

BUFI # 63-4296-23

### TURNPIKE THUGGERY

A young college coed was beaten and robbed on an eastern turnpike recently by an unknown man. The young woman was alone in her car when another automobile pulled alongside, and the driver motioned to her indicating something was wrong with her car. Believing that the motorist was trying to help her, she stopped, got out, and bent over to look under her car, whereupon the man hit her over the head and fled with her purse.

Boston CRIMDEL, DATED 1/28/64

BUFI, # 63-4296-5.

### NO INTERFERENCE, PLEASE

The New York City Council recently passed a law giving their fire department officials the right to hand out summonses to anyone interfering with firemen in the performance of their duties.

NEW YORK CRIMDEL, DATED 1/21/64

BUFI, # 63-4296-34.

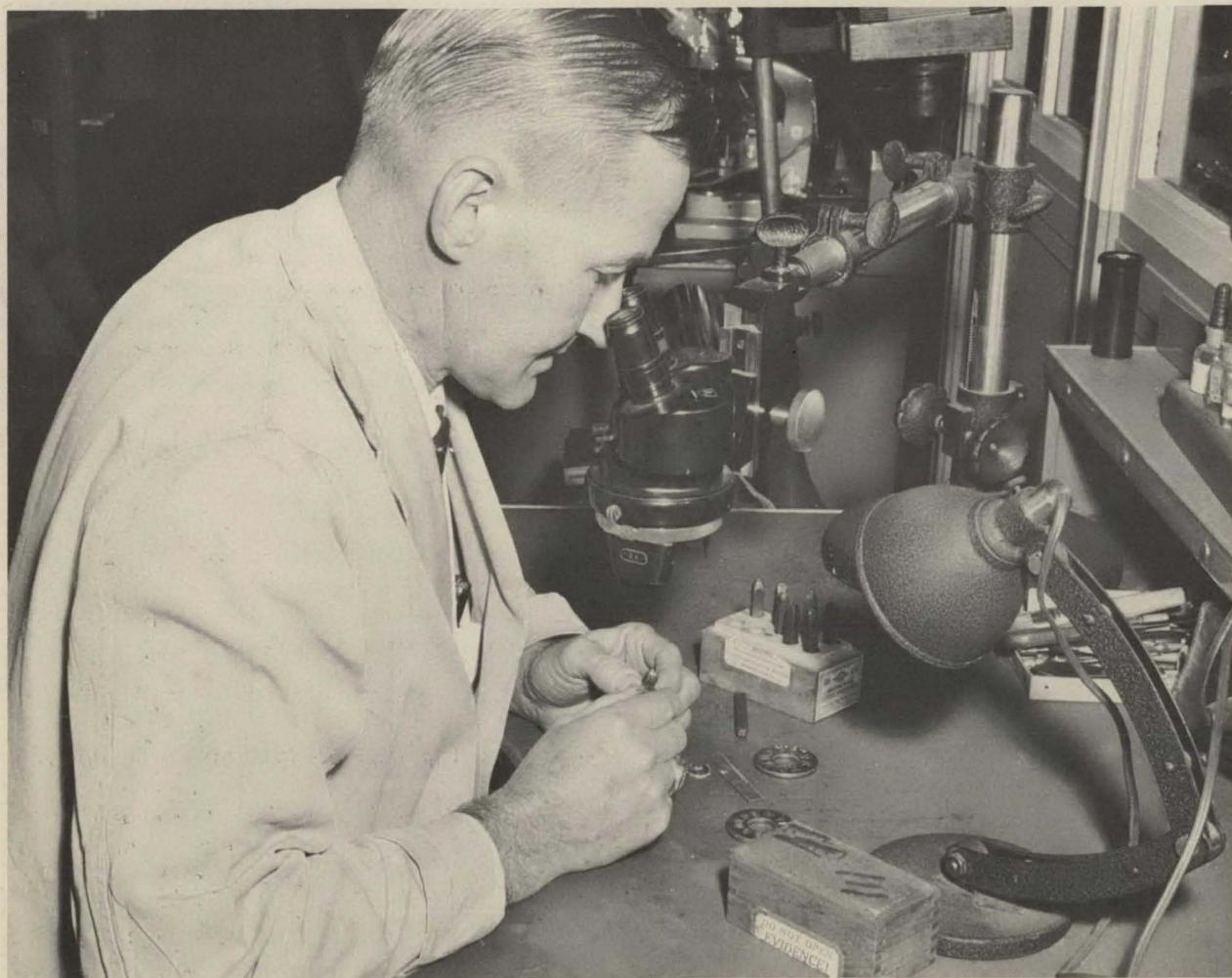


# *Is the Car Thief Using You?*

**J. EDGAR HOOVER**

*Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation*

*This report on car thieves by Director Hoover appeared in the January-February 1964 issue of The Ford Dealer Magazine, a publication circulated to some 6,400 Ford dealers. Because of the widespread interest indicated by law enforcement agencies and insurance companies, it is being reprinted in the Bulletin.*



FBI expert carefully examines a die used in changing identification numbers.



"Now here is a real 'cream puff,'" the auctioneer chanted as a clean, current-year automobile was rolled under the lights at a car auction in a Northern State.

The typical July heat was intensified by the bright floodlights bathing the car and reflecting off its polished surface. The bidding also was quite heated among the shirt-sleeved used car dealers. But it halted promptly when one of them opened the car door. A tiny piece of metal clinked to the floor. The vehicle identification plate, which was supposed to be welded to the left front door hinge pillar post, had come loose.

*A quick look revealed this particular plate had been glued instead of welded to the post, a good indication to the assembled car dealers that this car might be even "hotter" than the combined temperature of the glaring lights and July weather.*

The inability of the glue to hold up under heat saved some car dealer from the embarrassment and possible financial loss of purchasing a stolen car. It also led the FBI to another major car-theft ring.

### "Hot" Car

The "hot" car was traced to a used car dealer in another State. A check of the vehicles in his possession disclosed two others which had improper identification plates glued in place. All three of these cars had been obtained by the dealer from the same source—an auto sales firm in a large Eastern city. Further checking revealed the dealer already had sold several other automobiles from this source.

FBI Agents discovered that the firm actually was a front for a dealer in wrecked cars. Investigation of the activities of this firm led to the recovery of 60 stolen automobiles in 7 States. Over 40 of these cars had been transported interstate, a violation of a Federal law which is under the investigative jurisdiction of the FBI.

The procedure followed by this gang was a fairly common one among professional car thieves. It is generally referred to as the "salvage racket."

There are variations of this scheme, but basically it is worked as follows:

A badly wrecked vehicle is obtained by a member of the gang. With it, he gets registration and/or title documents for the wrecked car. The vehicle identification plate—also referred to as serial plate—is removed, and the men who actually steal cars for the group are told to locate and steal



The paraphernalia pictured was taken from an eastern car thief. It includes a dealer's license plate, three sets of master keys, a special knife for cutting off identification plates, and stolen vehicle registration blanks—all tools of the car thief.

a vehicle of the same make and model as the demolished automobile.

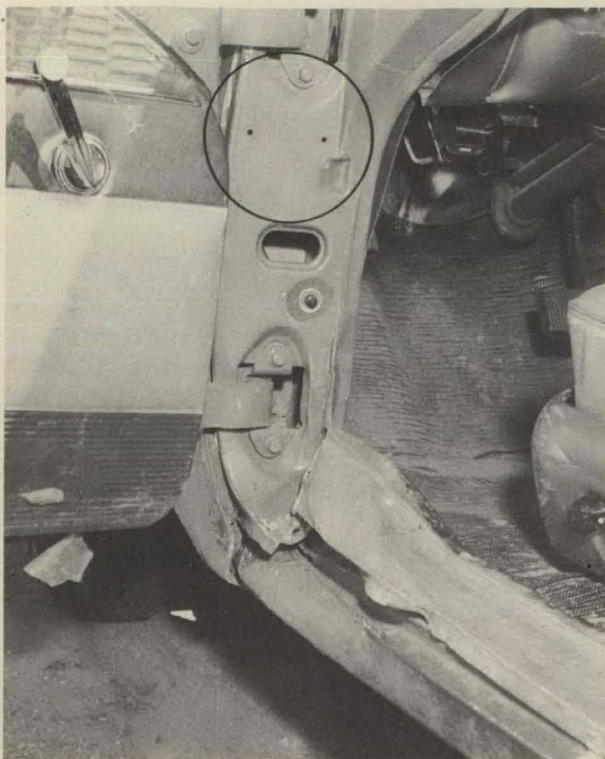
The identification plate of the stolen car then is removed and replaced by the one from the wrecked auto. If necessary, other alterations, such as repainting, are made. Often the registration or title documents taken from the wrecked car are changed to comply with the stolen vehicle. The "new" car then is ready for sale through an automobile auction to a used car dealer, or to a private individual.

### Dealers Were Careless

In the case just outlined, three used car dealers were victimized by the gang. Investigation indicated they were not involved in the operation *but were so careless in their activities that they were easily duped into buying the stolen cars.* Eleven persons were convicted as a result of the FBI investigation of this particular gang.

There are approximately 80 million motor vehicles in America today. They are a tremendous temptation to the professional car thief or to anyone else inclined toward dishonesty. This temp-





Identification plate of a wrecked car is often removed and placed on a stolen vehicle.

tation is greatly increased by the obvious ease of stealing an automobile and the almost equal ease of selling it, or any of its parts, for profit.

The facility with which an automobile thief can operate is attributable, in great measure, to the seeming total lack of concern many owners have for the safety of so valuable a piece of property. Selling stolen vehicles is simplified by inadequate laws in some States and lack of knowledge of laws and vehicle identification methods and/or carelessness on the part of potential buyers.

### Car Thefts Up 63 Percent

The magnitude of the automobile theft problem can be seen from the fact that approximately 356,000 cars, valued at about \$308 million, were stolen during 1962. This was an increase of 9 percent over 1961. The problem is continuing to grow with a 15-percent rise in the first 9 months of 1963 over the same period in 1962.

*Automobile thefts increased four times faster than population in the United States during the 10 years preceding 1963. While automobile registrations went up 42 percent in the same period, car thefts jumped 63 percent.*

Law enforcement agencies have an excellent record with respect to the recovery of stolen vehicles. Nationally, slightly more than 90 percent of all stolen autos are recovered. Even so, there still is a considerable financial loss. Automobiles worth over \$30 million were *not* recovered in 1962. Over the last 10 years the value of unrecovered stolen vehicles has been about \$190 million.

### Financial "Beating"

But these figures represent only a portion of the financial "beating" Americans are taking from car thieves. Damage to stolen cars runs into the millions. Increased insurance rates, resulting from the many thefts, put an added financial burden on all automobile owners.

*On the average, there is an automobile stolen almost every minute of every day throughout the year! Most of them are stolen by young men—62 percent of those arrested for auto theft in 1962 were under age 18 and another 25 percent were under 25 years of age. Almost 30,000 of the arrests for auto theft in 1962 involved children who had not yet reached the age of 16. This fact alone attests to the simplicity of stealing a car.*

The professional car thief, of course, does not need much help from the owner, but he certainly does not overlook the "easy mark." Entering and starting a locked automobile take little time or effort on the part of the professional. Often, however, he does not have to expend even this time and effort, due to careless owners leaving their cars unlocked, many with the keys inside.

There are two types of professional car theft rings operating in the United States today—those who steal to strip the vehicle and sell it part by part and those who steal to sell the car intact. The steal-to-strip gangs are becoming increasingly more of a problem. Some of them operate on a "strip-to-order" basis. But these crooks are a minor problem when compared to those who sell the stolen vehicles intact. At the present time the FBI is investigating about 65 car-theft gangs, and only a few involve stripping.

### Counterfeit Certificates

In addition to the "salvage racket" which was previously outlined, there are two other major methods used by auto-theft gangs. A gang captured by FBI Agents in February 1959, was using the method of stealing vehicle identification plates as

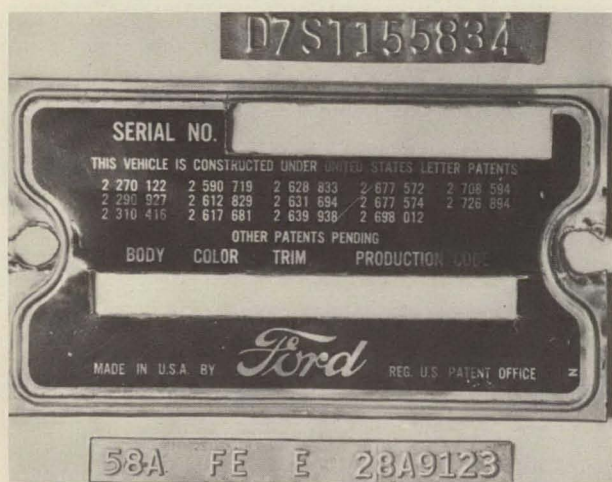


well as cars. This group also had available to it expertly counterfeited Manufacturer's Certificates of Origin and bills of sale or invoices which they filled out to match the stolen automobiles.

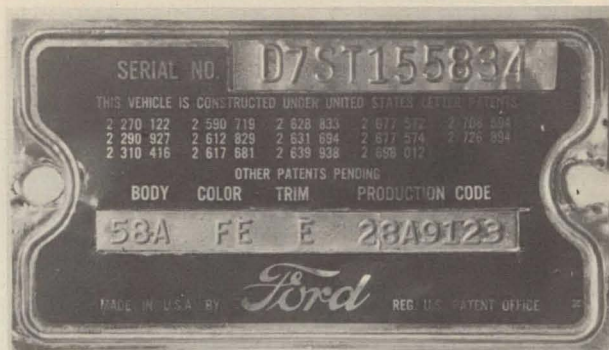
Destination of the cars stolen by this gang was Guatemala in Central America where a deal had been worked out, through a fictitious American firm, for an unsuspecting car dealer to buy them. Eighteen late-model cars of various makes had reached Guatemala before this gang's operation was discovered. The break in the case came when an alert customs officer in a port city became suspicious of expensively dressed men who had delivered five cars to a dock for shipment to Guatemala. He reported his suspicion and a trace was instituted on the automobiles, based on their identification numbers. Back came the puzzling report that the vehicles were not stolen and were, in fact, still located in a distant Midwestern city.

An inspection of the automobiles revealed that the identification plates were attached with liquid solder, rather than being spot welded in accordance with factory specifications. Further inspection disclosed the true identification numbers which made possible an accurate trace. This revealed the five cars had been stolen in two Midwestern States. Each bore an identification plate which had been stolen from a similar car in the Midwestern city.

While FBI Agents and local police maintained a watch on the stolen vehicles at the dock, others began a check of parking lots and garages in the city. This netted three other stolen cars which were traced to the same gang. In the meantime, FBI Agents had identified three gang members



The Ford identification plate in this photo has had the vehicle number and data strip cut out in preparation for altering the numbers.



After the numbers have been altered, the strip is replaced and paint is used to conceal the cut in the plate.

and traced them to a hotel. One was arrested when he went to the dock. The other two were taken into custody at the hotel.

The third major method used by car-theft gangs involves the actual altering of the identification number on the vehicle when it is stolen. Some follow the practice of cutting the number out of the identification plate and replacing it with a new number. Others have ground the number off the plate and stamped a new one in its place. Still others have simply altered one or more of the digits in the number, such as changing a 3 to an 8. Documents concerning the automobile—titles and/or registrations—also are altered or new ones forged.

### Keys Make It Easy

The key to a car thief's success is the key to another person's automobile. In far too many cases the owner "gives" the key to the thief by leaving it in the car or otherwise readily available. This is true of many automobile dealers.

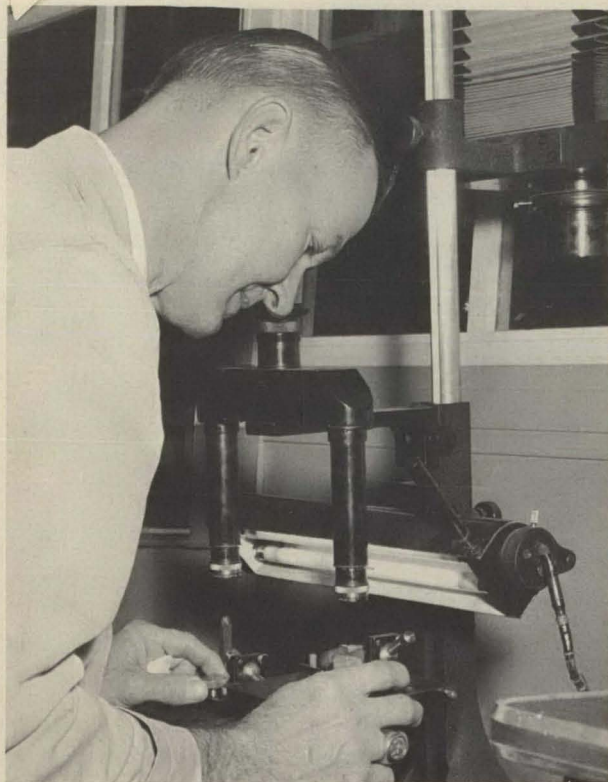
Following are some of the methods FBI Agents have discovered car thieves using to obtain keys to vehicles on new and used car lots:

Having a duplicate made while unaccompanied on a "test ride."

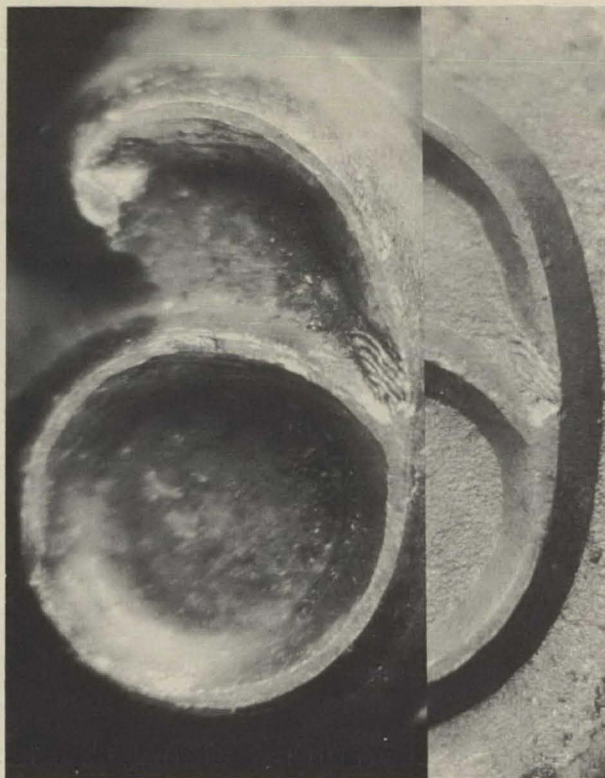
Securing the key code from the owner's manual left in the car or from the ignition switch, door, or glove compartment locks. Many professional car thieves possess key code books and can have keys made once they learn the code number.

By stealing or "borrowing" the keys either from the car or an unattended keyboard, often concealing the theft by leaving some other keys in place of the proper ones. Where "borrowing" is involved, the thief generally has a duplicate made and returns the originals before they are missed.





Here a suspect die and a portion of vehicle identification number are compared.



Here FBI camera records what agent sees through the lenses of the microscope.

Key security should be the first concern of all automobile owners whether they own one car or many, as in the case of dealers.

Another important consideration for the dealer is lot security. Over 65 percent of vehicle thefts from car lots occur at night. A lighted, fence-enclosed lot could greatly reduce this figure. Even a heavy chain, locked into place around the lot, would impede the night thief. Some dealers who do not have enclosed lots follow the practice of parking their cars in close order with the front row turned perpendicular. These front cars, which block all the others, then are locked.

Even locked automobiles on an unlocked and unguarded lot at night are easy prey to the professional car thief, however. A number of car thieves possess so-called test or master keys which are capable of unlocking and starting about 95 percent of American-made automobiles. A complete set of these keys can be purchased for about \$60.

Lot security also should include certain precautions during the day. Where possible, potential customers should be accompanied on test rides. Keys should not be left in vehicles on the lot. They should be under the control of some person

who can check them in and out and account for them at all times. Vehicles with ignition systems which can be started without keys when left in an unlocked position should be checked after each test drive to insure the switch is turned to the locked position. Where possible, a daily inventory of all cars on the lot should be made. There have been cases where automobiles have been stolen from dealers and not missed for days, even weeks.

*Employee security is the third matter which should receive careful consideration of all automobile dealers. A dishonest dealership employee is a valuable tool to the professional car thief. He can supply keys to the dealer's cars, identification plates which can be used on stolen cars, and documents which can be used to facilitate the sale of stolen vehicles.*

### Don't Be His "Customer"

The automobile dealer probably is in more danger of being victimized by the professional car thief *as a customer* rather than *as a supplier*. Automobile auctions and used car lots are major outlets of car-theft rings.



Reasonable caution generally will discourage their efforts to sell one of their "hot" cars. Usually, the gangs entrust the sale of their "products" to their sharpest operators—men who know automobile values and sales techniques.

The first lesson to learn is to never be lulled into thinking you can spot a "shady" character. For example, rarely would any dealer class a man accompanied by his wife and children as "shady." Salesmen for car-theft rings often have used women and children to reduce suspicion.

Every dealer naturally should know the laws of all States with respect to the legal transfer of ownership of an automobile—there are 10 States which do not have title laws. It most certainly would be to the advantage of all dealers to know the appearance of authentic titles, registration certificates, or bills of sale used in the various States, especially those States in the dealer's area. There have been cases reported to the FBI wherein very crude forgeries of titles were used to sell stolen vehicles. The dealer making the purchase had no idea what the genuine document should look like.

Often simple questions put to the seller can have a most upsetting effect on him. Inquiries like, "Where did you buy the car?" . . . "Where have you had it serviced?" or "What is the mileage?" may take him by surprise, an indication that he is not the rightful owner.

### Be Sure To Check

A careful examination of the vehicle identification plate and the documents relating to the automobile being offered for sale is the most important precaution to be taken. Every dealer should know the proper method by which identification plates are attached to the various automobiles. Any plate not attached to the car in accordance with factory specifications should be cause for grave suspicion. Altered numbers on the plate frequently can be detected by misalignment of the digits. Coded data on the plate, which indicate such things as body style and color, should be checked to see whether the car matches these specifications.

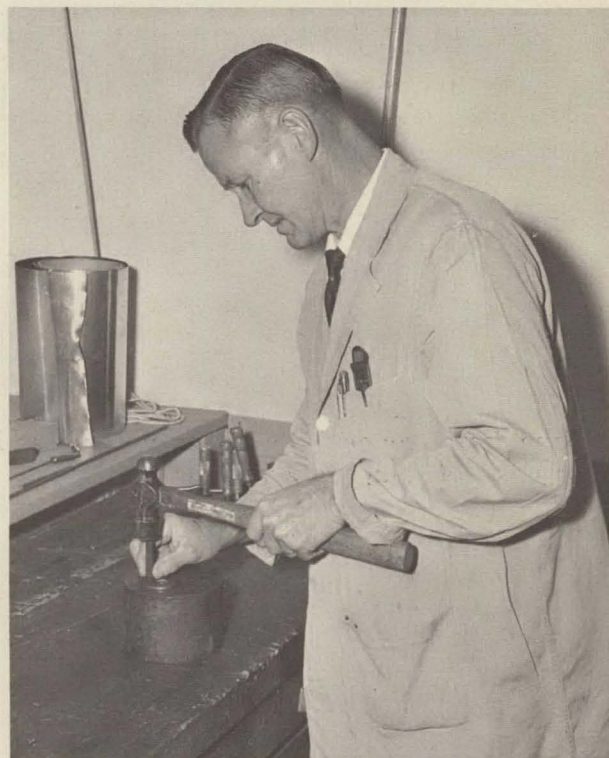
Documents relating to the vehicle should receive careful scrutiny in an effort to detect any change of information. The vehicle number on the document naturally should be checked against the number actually on the automobile. Where bills of sale are involved in the transaction, the

dealer might look with suspicion on any such document which has been notarized. Rarely are legitimate bills of sale notarized, but some car thieves have their fake bills of sale notarized in the hope of making them appear authentic.

Duplicate keys instead of original keys for the automobile being offered for sale should be cause for an even more careful check of the vehicle. This also would be true for a used car with new tags on it in the middle of a registration year, or new tag bolts on old tags. A recent registration of the vehicle also could be regarded as good reason for suspicion. A legitimate owner is not likely to re-register his automobile just before he offers it for sale.

### If in Doubt . . .

Reasonable suspicion of any vehicle offered for sale should be resolved by a prompt report to the local law enforcement agency. Trained investigators can quickly determine whether a particular vehicle has been stolen and will know how to proceed if the law has been violated. If the vehicle has been transported interstate after being stolen, the nearest FBI office should be notified.



Agent is shown making a test impression with a die taken from a suspect.



Early detection of the operations of professional car theft gangs is a vital ingredient in the drive to reduce automobile thefts. Alert dealers can provide this element.

## Response

Following is a statement released by the Ford Motor Co. on May 6, 1964, concerning response to the foregoing article.

Dearborn, Mich.—Law enforcement officials from throughout the country are praising an article recently published in The Ford Dealer Magazine on automobile thefts—a crime increasing four times faster than the population growth.

Written by J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the article points out the scope of the car-theft problem and a number of the tricks used by professional car thieves who now are stealing cars at the rate of almost one thousand a day. The article points out that although 90 percent of all stolen cars are eventually recovered, last year cars valued at more than \$30 million were not recovered.

Since the publication of the article, J. L. Naylor, editor of The Ford Dealer Magazine, has received requests for more than 60,000 reprints from insurance companies and law enforcement agencies throughout the country. The Ford Dealer Magazine is published by Ford Division and is circulated to 6,400 Ford dealers.

## HIGHWAY ROBBERY

Some highway robbers in a Southern State are using a bold technique in approaching their victims. A truck route man making his round of deliveries was driving along a Federal highway when the bandits, driving a red sedan and using a siren, forced him over to the side of the road. The group threatened him with a .45-caliber pistol and took some \$700 in cash and checks.

KNOXVILLE CRIMDEL, DATED 1/21/64  
BUFI, #63-4296-24

"FILL 'ER UP"

It is known that some criminals in the commission of a crime using a stolen car on which they have "jumped" the ignition will always buy gasoline immediately after stealing the car. On occasion when the ignition has been "jumped," the fuel gage becomes inoperative, and the criminals do not want to take a chance that the stolen car may be low on gas.

22

WFO Crimdel, DATED 12/31/63  
BUFI, #63-4296-52

## Truck Terminal Thefts Difficult to Trace

Thieves operating around truck terminals have a new method of disguising the time and place of their crimes. They steal the waybills accompanying the merchandise they take. In this way, the shipment is not missed until the consignee at the destination point places a complaint that the merchandise has not been delivered. This frequently results in the theft not being discovered for as long as a month after it occurs.

If the freight has passed through several terminals, it is even more difficult to determine just where the theft occurred. Usually, it cannot be determined who handled the shipment, or even if, in fact, it was unloaded unless there is a waybill as a record.

The lapse of time between theft and discovery gives the thieves ample opportunity to dispose of the stolen merchandise.

CLEVELAND CRIMDEL, DATED 7/11/62  
BUFI, #63-4296-11

## AUTOMOBILE SWINDLE LOSSES SUFFERED BY BANKS

An auto swindling scheme has been successfully carried out in areas on the eastern seaboard with a minimum of risk for the swindler.

He purchases a car outright for full payment and obtains a clear unencumbered title. A duplicate title is then solicited on the false premise that the original is lost, and a substantial loan is obtained from a bank or lending institution on this duplicate title.

The car with the original title is sold out of the State free and clear. One or two payments on the falsely obtained loan are made and then discontinued. The bank or lending institution is unable to locate the car for repossession and suffers the loss of the money.

NEWARK CRIMDEL, DATED 10/5/62  
BUFI, #63-4296-31

## BLOOD DONATIONS

In lieu of paying a fine for parking meter violations, offenders in an Eastern city will have their fine canceled if they consent to give a pint of blood to the Red Cross during its annual drive.

PITTSBURGH, CRIMDEL, DATED 6/5/62  
BUFI, #63-4296-39



## Hijacking Activities Come Under FBI Jurisdiction

SINCE 1913 THE FBI HAS had jurisdiction over thefts of cargoes moving in interstate or foreign commerce. Theft and hijacking cases involving goods not moving in interstate shipment are handled by State and local police authorities.

Briefly, violations of the theft from interstate shipment statutes which fall within the investigative jurisdiction of the FBI are:

1. The theft or embezzlement of any goods or chattels which are moving in interstate or foreign shipments as specified in the statute;
2. The buying, receiving, or possessing of such goods, knowing they have been stolen or embezzled;
3. Unlawfully breaking the seal or lock of, or entering with intent to commit larceny, any railroad car, motor-truck, aircraft, vessel, or other vehicle which contains interstate or foreign shipments; and
4. The embezzlement of moneys of any firm engaged in interstate or foreign commerce as a common carrier by employees or officers of that firm, when such moneys arise, accrue from, or are used in such interstate or foreign commerce.

### Maximum Penalty

The maximum penalty provided for violations of the theft from interstate shipment statute is a \$5,000 fine or imprisonment for 10 years, or both.

Hijackings are usually accomplished at the point of a gun or threat of force and violence. Most hijackers are hardened criminals, ready to resort to violence if necessary to obtain their objective.

Too, they are striking for thousands of dollars and must have merchandise that is not bulky in content, can be fenced easily, and will bring generous financial returns. Preferred cargoes are those containing liquor, cigarettes, electrical appliances, furs, clothing, etc.

Hijackers do not always know what their stolen cargoes may contain.

One hijacking gang held up a tractor-trailer unit under the impression they were getting a load of piece goods—materials for the manufacture of clothing which can be easily disposed of at a fairly good price. Instead, they found the trailer contained \$10,000 worth of cookies. Another stolen cargo consisted of 1,000 cases of cranberry sauce. Still others had cargoes of golf balls, tennis balls, and toys.

### Unusual Cargoes

Within 48 hours after the hijacking of another cargo, a truckload of women's clothing valued at \$300,000 was recovered by FBI Agents. In addition to solving the crime, recovering the loot, and arresting seven men, the Agents also acted swiftly to release a portion of the loot which included wedding dresses for several brides who were anxiously awaiting the arrival of their gowns at exclusive shops in the city.

A number of years ago, several hoodlums were being prosecuted in Federal court for the hijacking of a truckload of cigarettes. The hoodlums were unaware that motion pictures were taken by Special Agents as they transferred the cargo from the hijacked truck to another truck parked in a garage off an alley. Among those gleefully anticipating illicit profit, as he hoisted one large box after another, was a husky hoodlum who stoutly asserted later at the trial that he could not possibly have participated in the crime because of a severe hernia which prevented his lifting anything but the lightest objects.

Caught completely by surprise by the introduction of the motion picture evidence, the defense objected strenuously but was overruled, and the pictures were duly projected in the darkened courtroom. When the reel had been run off, and the Agent was about to rewind the film, the pre-



siding judge suggested that he run the film in reverse so that another opportunity might be had to view it. As the "clients" appeared on the screen again, only in reverse action, defense counsel loosed a flood of objections, only to be drowned out by laughter as the judge remarked, "After all, I do not see why you gentlemen are objecting. Your men are now merely putting the cigarettes back where they belonged."

The plea of the erstwhile "hernia" victim was changed to guilty the same day, with the trial resulting in convictions of a majority of the defendants.

## DOG "POINTS" THIEF UNDER STACK OF DOG FOOD

Boto is a German Shepherd police dog especially trained for police work. He is the property of a west coast police department for which he has compiled an enviable record in investigations where sensitive nose work has been required.

For a short time recently, however, Boto was wrongly discredited by members of the sheriff's office who borrowed him for searching a grocery store. At first, it appeared that his natural instincts had transcended his police training.

Boto was assigned to flush out a burglar deputies were certain they had trapped inside the large supermarket. He sniffed the market from garlic bins to frozen meat sections without losing his composure. He finally "zeroed in" on some sacks of dog food in a mezzanine storeroom.

The doubting handler withdrew the dog from his "point" on three different occasions and gave him a stern lecture for his lapse in discipline. Each time, however, the dog returned to "point" at the stack of dog food. He was finally banished to a patrol car while the officers waited in the store for something to develop.

After an hour, the officers decided to investigate the stack of dog food, and out from under the pile scrambled the thief. He had assembled some 200 pounds of meat which he was preparing to take from the store when he was surprised by the officers and decided to hide in the dog food.

Boto was warmly praised and rewarded by the officers who had underestimated his unerring judgment in "pointing" out the thief under the dog food.

## INTERSTATE TRANSPORTATION OF FIREWORKS

Customarily, fireworks are associated with holidays and other festive occasions in our country. Regulations and laws governing their sale and their use vary from one community to another and from one State to another. However, there is a Federal statute, Title 18, U.S. Code, Section 836, which became effective July 1, 1954, pertaining to the transportation of fireworks into a State prohibiting their sale and use. It states:

"Whoever, otherwise than in the course of continuous interstate transportation through any State, transports fireworks into any State or delivers them for transportation into any State, or attempts so to do, knowing that such fireworks are to be delivered, possessed, stored, transshipped, distributed, sold, or otherwise dealt with in a manner or for a use prohibited by the laws of such State specifically prohibiting or regulating the use of fireworks, shall be fined not more than \$1,000 or imprisoned not more than one year, or both."

Violations of this law come within the investigative jurisdiction of the FBI.

MANUAL OF INSTRUCTIONS, VOL 4,  
PAGE 115 A-B.

## DOUBLE JEOPARDY

While shopping in a local department store in a large Midwestern city, a young housewife had her purse stolen. Among other items in the handbag were the keys to her house. She reported the theft to the store detective and then returned home, gaining entrance into the house with the help of a neighbor.

Shortly after her arrival, she received a telephone call from a man identifying himself as the store detective, stating her purse had been located and she should promptly return to the store and claim it. On arriving at the store, she was told by surprised store officials that her purse had not been recovered and that no employee had called her.

The housewife rushed back home to find her suspicions confirmed. Someone had entered the house and taken away the television set, radio, other electrical appliances, and a small amount of cash and jewelry.

ST. LOUIS CRIMDEL,  
FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin

DATED 2/15/63

BoF. # 63-4796-47



## FINGERPRINTS

(Continued from page 8)

notification to the wanting agency as to subject's present whereabouts. The agency submitting the current print is also notified of subject's wanted status.

A typical example of this service is the case of James Preston,\* a prison escapee. Preston had run afoul of the law in a Southern State in 1956 and received sentences of 10 years for robbery and 3 years for burglary, grand larceny, and assault with intent to rob.

In 1958, while serving these sentences, Preston received an additional term of one year and one day for escape. Early in November 1961, he escaped again.

At the request of State prison authorities in the Southern State, a "stop notice" was posted against Preston's record at the Identification Division. This "stop notice" had been in effect for more than a year when, on May 6, 1963, the fingerprints of one Joseph Smith\* were received from the police department in a Midwestern city. Smith, a husky 27-year-old laborer, had been arrested for murder. When his fingerprint card arrived at the Identification Division, an FBI technician determined that Smith and Preston, the prison escapee, were the same man.

A telegram was immediately sent by Director J. Edgar Hoover to the State prison authorities advising of the apprehension of their fugitive. In addition, the arresting police department was furnished the true identity of the killer it had in custody.

Preston presently is confined to a State penitentiary, where he is serving a life term for murder.

### Missing Person Notices

The Posting Section also receives requests from all over the world for the placement of missing person notices in its Identification Division files. These notices are posted at the request of members of the immediate family, and information received by the Identification Division concerning the whereabouts of the individual involved is furnished to the interested relatives.

A "Missing Person Notice" posted in 1961 produced results late in 1962 when the wayward

\*Fictitious.

nephew of a woman in a Southern State was arrested on a "drunk" charge in a city on the west coast. Unknown to the missing man, he had been named heir to part of the estate of his deceased grandmother.

"It was due to your information that we found him," wrote his aunt and her husband. "He has started a new life and (we) think he will be a credit to the community."

### Civil Identification Files

Over the past 40 years, the impact of the fingerprint files of the FBI's Identification Division has had a devastating effect on the lawless forces of the underworld. In 1924, when the division was established, the purpose was to provide a central repository of criminal identification data for law enforcement agencies throughout the Nation. Criminal identification has become only one phase of the Identification Division's functions. In 1933 a Civil Identification section of the FBI fingerprint files was established. The 45 million sets of fingerprints in the criminal files and the 125 million sets in the civil files enable the FBI to render a number of identification services. Unknown dead and amnesia victims are identified, and missing persons are located. The security of the Armed Forces and the Government service generally is promoted through the processing of the fingerprints of military personnel, civil employees, and applicants for Government positions.

The Identification Division of the FBI also renders a number of other services, such as:

### International Fingerprint Exchange

In 1932 the International Exchange of Fingerprint Data was initiated with a number of other nations. Today, on a cooperative basis, the FBI exchanges fingerprint information with 83 friendly noncommunist countries and U.S. possessions outside the continental limits.

During the 1963 fiscal year, the FBI received 9,510 sets of fingerprints from other countries under the international exchange program. A total of 1,336 of these were identified with records on file at the Identification Division. During the same 12 months, 209 fingerprint cards were sent abroad—and 76 identifications resulted.

Prominent among the participants in this program is New Scotland Yard which, in November 1963, submitted the fingerprints of one Peter John-



son\* who had been convicted in England as a sex criminal. At the Identification Division, it was determined that Johnson was identical with a hoodlum whose record in the United States included theft from the U.S. mail, contributing to the delinquency of a minor, and grand larceny. A summary of Johnson's record—including the fact that he was wanted in a west coast city for failure to appear for sentencing on a grand larceny charge—was furnished to New Scotland Yard in London.

### Latent Fingerprint Section

As a cooperative service to other law enforcement agencies, the Identification Division performs latent fingerprint examinations free of charge. This service includes: (1) Examining specimens of evidence to determine whether latent finger impressions are present; (2) comparing latent finger impressions with the fingerprints of suspects; and (3) making available as witnesses in court the FBI experts involved.

During 1963 a total of 111,695 specimens were processed for latent fingerprints by the Identification Division. These resulted in the identification of 1,040 suspects who were involved in 911 separate cases.

### The Latent Fingerprint Expert

The Latent Fingerprint Section was instituted in 1933 for making technical examinations of latent prints or of inked prints on an individual basis. The technicians in this section are expert FBI fingerprint identification specialists, and their as-



Evidence is examined for fingerprints in the Latent Fingerprint Section.

signments generally involve the examination of fragmentary latent finger, palm, or foot impressions developed by appropriate processes on objects associated with various crimes. A comparison is made of such latent impressions with the known fingerprints of criminal suspects or other persons who might have left the latent prints on the object under examination. When necessary, a fingerprint expert will testify in local court as to his findings.

In one of the most unusual cases handled in 1963, a deputy sheriff in a Western State submitted several fragments of skin to the Identification Division. These bits of skin, together with about 3 pounds of human flesh and two teeth, were the sole remains of the occupant (or occupants) of an automobile in which a load of stolen dynamite had exploded. From a license plate found at the scene, it had been determined that the car belonged to Richard Brown,\* a 34-year-old hoodlum who had served time in a State prison for grand larceny.

An expert in the Latent Fingerprint Section of the Identification Division found sufficient ridge detail on the fragments of skin to determine that they came from the left middle and little fingers of Brown. Investigation by local authorities confirmed that Brown had neither been seen nor heard from since the explosion occurred.

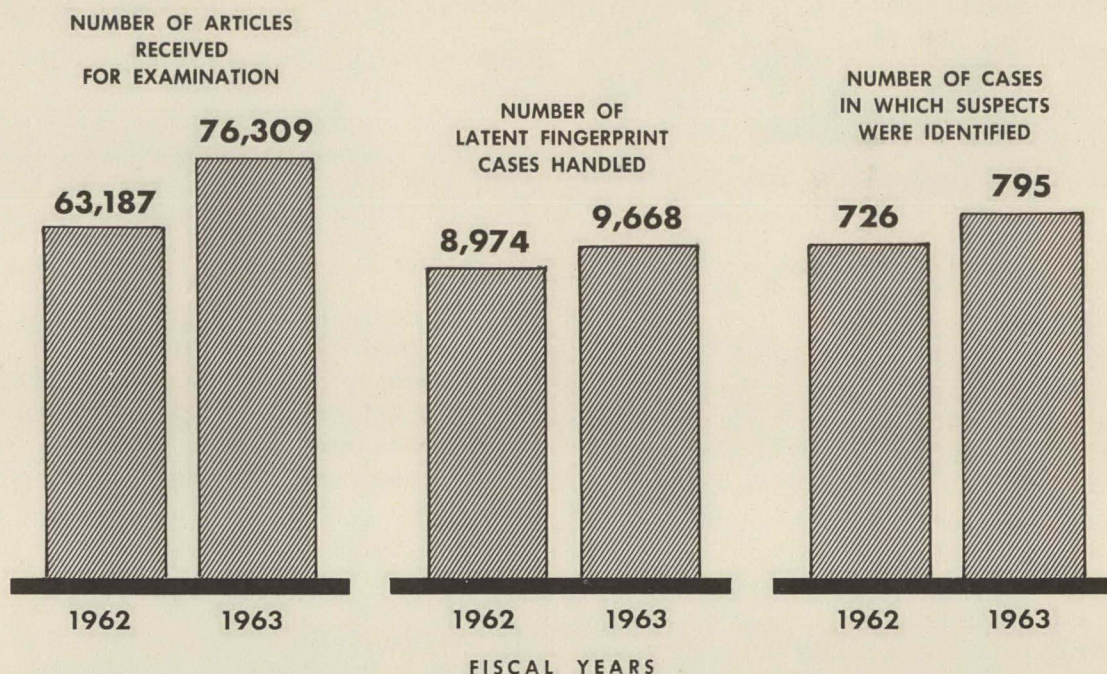
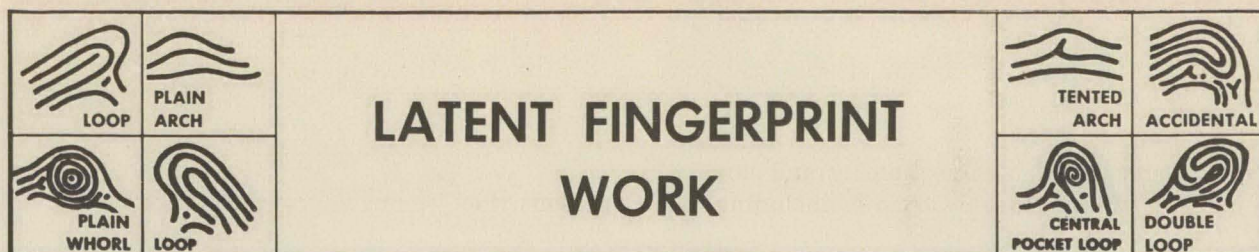
### General Appearance File

The Latent Fingerprint Section also has the General Appearance File of photographs and descriptive data on more than 1,700 known confidence-game operators and major thieves. Searches are made in this file on the basis of physical characteristics, such as age, height, weight, color of hair and eyes, and other distinctive physical features. The photographs and other available material are furnished to interested law enforcement agencies to assist them in identifying confidence men and major thieves who operate in their jurisdictions.

Each year, the Identification Division receives hundreds of sets of fingerprints of unknown dead persons—finger impressions obtained from bodies washed ashore or found floating in rivers and lakes; fingerprints of disaster victims whose identification papers have been destroyed by fire or have otherwise disappeared; prints of unidentified suicide victims, murder victims, and the like.

\*Fictitious.





During the 1963 fiscal year, the FBI was called upon to assist in identifying 1,279 unknown dead. It succeeded 1,030 times—a “batting average” of .805.

### FBI Disaster Squad

To help answer the urgent need for on-the-scene aid in meeting identification problems which often arise in connection with devastating storms, fires, plane crashes, and other major tragedies, the *FBI Disaster Squad* was organized in 1940. The Disaster Squad is comprised of experts from the Identification Division who are ready at all times to travel wherever their identification services are needed.

Possible known fingerprints of the victims located in the FBI's files through name checks are taken directly to the disaster scene for rapid comparison with prints obtained from bodies. The

squad also aids in assembling other types of identification data.

In 38 of these disasters which have occurred since January 1, 1959, the squad was able to secure one or more fingerprints from 1,079 adult victims. From this number, positive identifications were made by fingerprints of 871, representing a percentage of 80.7.

This is a cost-free cooperative service offered to assist local law enforcement agencies. Any law enforcement or common carrier agency requiring the service of the FBI Disaster Squad may contact the nearest field office or headquarters of the FBI.

### Speedphoto Transceiver

In October of 1950, a Speedphoto Transceiver was installed in the Identification Division. Fingerprint comparisons can be made in a matter of min-





A fingerprint expert verifies an identification.

utes with its use when time is of the essence and regular mail service will not provide the rapid response required.

Several law enforcement agencies utilize the Speedphoto Transceiver which transmits fingerprints and identification data over direct telephone lines at the same cost rate as a long-distance telephone call. This service is offered to law enforcement agencies 24 hours a day by a specially trained staff of employees.

Over the years, a growing list of hoodlums have gone to unusual lengths—often at great expense and extreme pain—to “beat” the infallible science of fingerprint identification. The notorious John Dillinger, for example, submitted to the sadistic mutilation of his fingertips early in June 1934 by an underworld doctor in Chicago. Homer Van Meter, one of Dillinger’s criminal henchmen, joined him in having the same operation “committed” on his hands by this physician.

To both hoodlums, this proved an excruciating waste of money and time. When FBI Agents killed Dillinger while he was resisting arrest, on the night of July 22, 1934, his body was positively identified by fingerprints. Van Meter met his death in St. Paul, Minn., less than 5 weeks later. Both gunmen had discovered—to their intense anger and frustration—that even after the mutilated parts of their fingers healed, their fingerprints could be identified easily.

### Master Checkpasser Belew

Despite the failures of others before them, there remains in the underworld an undaunted “smart set” which is supremely confident of its ability to

hoodwink law enforcement officers and evade justice. One such criminal is George Lester Belew, a nomadic passer of bad checks who devised his “better mouse trap” during an extensive check-passing spree in the mid 1950’s.

Belew’s new approach involved affixing a “thumbprint” to his fraudulent checks. Document examiners of the FBI Laboratory had no trouble identifying Belew’s handwriting on these checks. Yet, in each instance, FBI experts found that the “thumbprint” matched none of the finger impressions in Belew’s extensive identification record.

The Identification Division quickly surmised that the checkpasser actually was making his “thumbprint” with one of his toes. Thus, instructions were issued that, when he was arrested, prints of Belew’s toes should be obtained.

In January 1955 this theory was confirmed. Belew’s flight from justice ended at a motel in the Midwest, and subsequent examination of his toe prints showed that the “thumbprint” on the bad checks he had passed was actually the impression of his right great toe.

While awaiting trial, Belew wrote a poem lamenting the years he had wasted in criminal pursuits and urging “all the youth of America” to follow the path of honesty and decency. In June 1961, Belew was given an opportunity to follow his own advice. Released from the Medical Center for Federal Prisoners at Springfield, Mo., he soon returned to his criminal specialty; and in June 1963, another fraudulent check bearing the impression of Belew’s right great toe was received at the Identification Division. Once again, he is being sought by the FBI and other law enforcement agencies on bad-check charges.

### Innocence Established

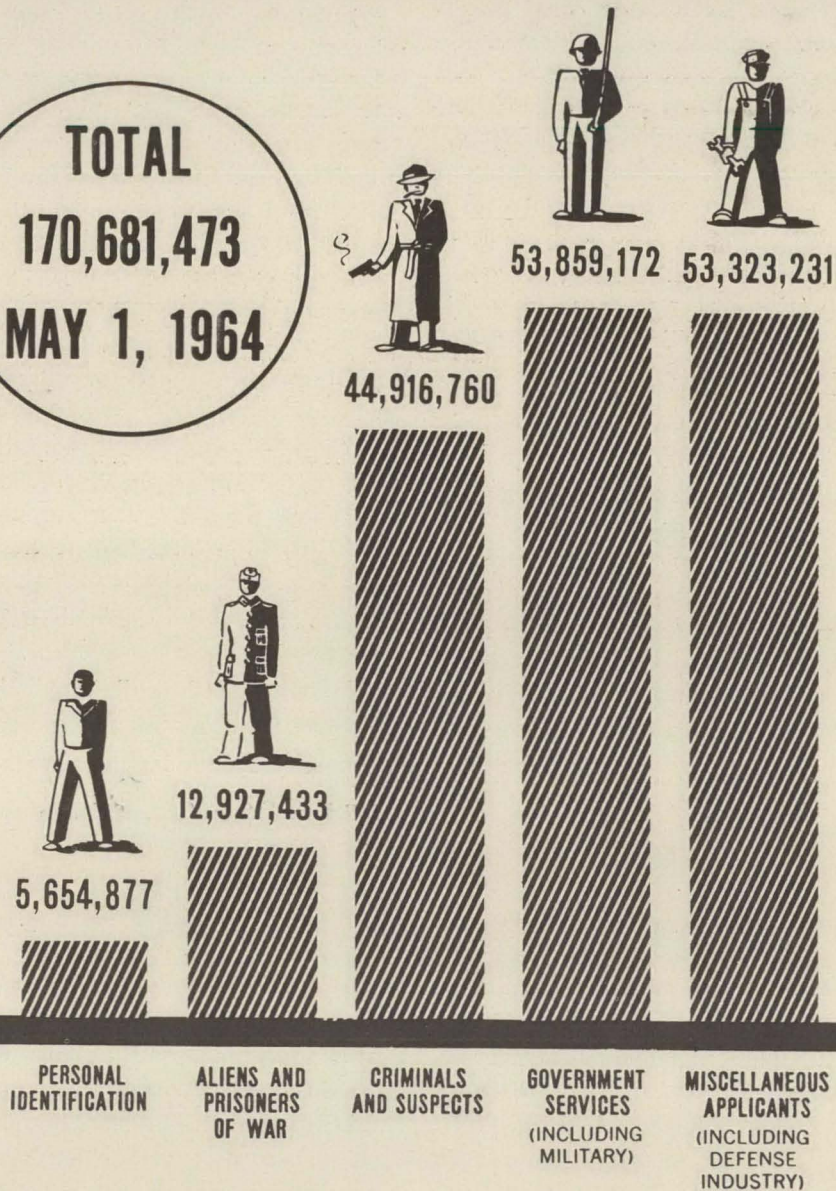
On repeated occasions over the years, fingerprints have also assisted FBI experts to establish the innocence of falsely accused persons. For example, during an armed robbery carried out by a lone bandit, a businessman in an Eastern State was killed and his wife brutally beaten. Within 72 hours a suspect had been identified and picked from a police lineup by the murder victim’s widow. This man loudly protested his innocence. To resolve the matter, local authorities sent the suspect’s fingerprints to the Identification Division for comparison with latent finger impressions found at the scene of the murder-robbery. Re-



FBI IDENTIFICATION DIVISION

# TYPES OF FINGERPRINTS IN FBI POSSESSION

**TOTAL**  
**170,681,473**  
**MAY 1, 1964**





sult: The man picked from the police lineup was released; an impression of the left index finger of another suspect appeared on a vital item of evidence!

The distinctive nature of fingerprints has been recognized for many centuries. Finger impressions on clay tablets were used in recording business transactions by the ancient Babylonians; and Chinese documents more than a thousand years old refer to a similar use of fingerprints in the Far East. However, the technical and highly exacting science of fingerprints was founded less than a hundred years ago.

Back on July 1, 1924, shortly after J. Edgar Hoover was named Director of the FBI by Attorney General Harlan F. Stone, few persons could envision the high degree of efficiency and utility which would be attained by the newly formed branch of the FBI—the Identification Division. Today the Identification Division stands as a hallmark to the resourceful cooperation so prevalent in modern-day law enforcement.

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### TRUCKDRIVER STEALS TO SATISFY DRUG HABIT

Investigation of a Theft From Interstate Shipment (TFIS) violation by FBI Agents located an individual whose name was used by a truckdriver for the victim company. It was determined that this man was not identical, however, with the person who had committed the theft.

Several more similar violations of the statute were reported, and in each case the truckdriver gave the same name and worked only one day at each terminal.

All terminal managers were alerted to this individual and the name he was using. Later, he made an appearance at one of these terminals. The manager immediately notified the FBI.

Interviewed by agents, the man admitted his guilt and stated he had been a truckdriver all his life. In order to escape detection in the TFIS cases, he had assumed the identity of a person whose driver's license he had appropriated from a mail box. This was the only identification required by the trucking companies.

His reason for stealing from the shipments: To obtain money to supply his narcotics habit which cost him as much as \$30 a day.

## Printing Troublesome Fingers

FINGERPRINT SUBMISSIONS to the Identification Division of the FBI continue to increase in both the arrest and civil categories, and the continued close cooperation of all contributors is essential in order for the FBI to handle its heavy workload.

The success and value of the FBI's fingerprint files to all law enforcement agencies are dependent, in a large measure, on the legible inked fingerprints taken by law enforcement agencies. Every fingerprint card filed in the FBI files is of value to the particular law enforcement agency which forwarded it as well as to all other law enforcement agencies which rely on its being correctly classified and filed. Therefore, time and attention devoted to legibility of the fingerprint cards submitted to the FBI Identification Division increase the effectiveness of the service provided to the fingerprint contributor.

Various suggestions have been made with regard to reprinting one or more troublesome fingers when the majority of the impressions on the card are legible. One of the more practical ways to do this is to reprint the fingers on the back of the card and identify them appropriately. This allows the fingerprint technicians to use these impressions in obtaining accurate classifications and makes them a permanent part of FBI files.

All fingerprint contributors should make every effort to submit legible fingerprint cards in order to assure the maximum efficient service available through the FBI identification program.

IDENT. DIV.

### LATENT PRINTS ON BANANAS LEAD TO ROBBER

An individual in a Midwestern city was arrested recently because he left his fingerprints on a bunch of bananas. A complainant whose food store had been robbed reported to an investigating officer that the robber handled a bunch of bananas. The officer carefully dusted the fruit for latent fingerprint impressions and was successful in matching one of the lifted latent prints with the fingerprints of the suspect, thus definitely linking him with the robbery of this store and possibly the robbery of at least five other food stores in the city.





Right index finger in 1948.



Same finger in 1951 showing beginning of wart.

## Warts Come and Go; Fingerprints Remain Unchanged

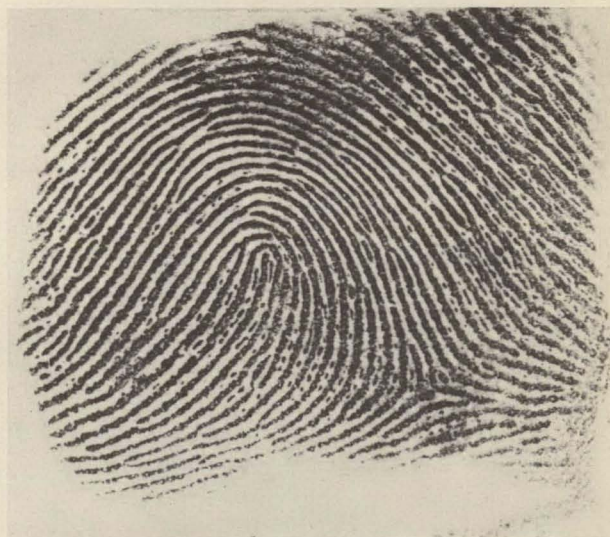
WE DO NOT KNOW why warts come or why they go—and we are not likely to use Tom Sawyer's cure of spunk-water and a dead cat in a cemetery at midnight to remove them—but recently the Identification Division of the FBI had occasion to note the results of a wart in the center of a fingerprint.

The accompanying illustrations are photographs of the right index finger of an individual taken in 1948, again in 1951 (the small white space in the

center is the beginning of the wart), and in 1953 (the wart at its largest stage). The last photograph, which was taken in 1963, shows that the wart completely disappeared and has not permanently damaged one single ridge. The person did nothing to remove the wart or cause its disappearance. The fingerprint before, during, and after the wart reveals that a positive identification can be made by adjacent ridge detail. Thus, the infallibility of fingerprints passes another test.



In 1953, the wart at full growth.



Disappearance of wart leaves no trace, 1963.

July 1964

IDENT. DIV.



## WANTED BY THE FBI

**JAMES THOMAS RILEY, also known as: James Thomas Parker.**

### **Unlawful Interstate Flight To Avoid Prosecution—Murder**

JAMES THOMAS RILEY, wanted for murder in Florida, is currently the object of a nationwide FBI manhunt. A Federal warrant was issued on July 14, 1960, at Miami, Fla., charging him with unlawful interstate flight to avoid prosecution for murder.

### **The Crime**

This 39-year-old fugitive allegedly shot and killed his wife in Miami, Fla., while she was holding their 19-month-old child. The murder weapon, a 16-gage shotgun, was fired at close range.

Riley, a frequent gambler and card player, is con-



James Thomas Riley.

sidered to be an excellent metal "burner." His occupations have included iron cutter, laborer, metal grinder, and truck driver.

### **Caution**

Since Riley is being sought for murder committed with the use of a shotgun, he should be considered very dangerous.

### **Description**

|                     |                                                                             |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Age-----            | 39, born December 3, 1924, Jackson, Miss. (not supported by birth records). |
| Height-----         | 5 feet 10 inches.                                                           |
| Weight-----         | 190 pounds.                                                                 |
| Build-----          | Medium.                                                                     |
| Hair-----           | Black.                                                                      |
| Eyes-----           | Brown.                                                                      |
| Complexion-----     | Medium.                                                                     |
| Race-----           | Negro.                                                                      |
| Nationality-----    | American.                                                                   |
| Occupations-----    | Iron cutter, laborer, metal grinder, truck driver.                          |
| FBI No.-----        | 555,994 D                                                                   |
| Fingerprint         |                                                                             |
| Classification----- | 3 S 17 W MOO 5                                                              |
|                     | S 1 U IIO                                                                   |

### **Notify the FBI**

Any person having information which might assist in locating this fugitive is requested to immediately notify the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, D.C., 20535, or the Special Agent in Charge of the nearest FBI field office, the telephone number of which appears on the first page of most local telephone directories.

### **"GOOD SAMARITANS" INSURED**

Private citizens who go to the aid of police officers performing their duties in Glasgow, Scotland, will now be covered by insurance in the event they are killed or injured as a result of their actions. If the citizen is killed, his survivors will receive a payment of \$5,000. If he is injured, he will receive \$5,000 for the loss of two limbs, two eyes, or one limb and one eye. The loss of one limb or one eye will bring a payment of \$2,500, and total disability, an annuity of \$500 for not more than 10 years.



## FOR CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Complete this form and return to:

DIRECTOR

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20535

(Name)

(Title)

(Address)

(City)

(State)

(Zip Code)

### "East Side, West Side, All Around the Town"

The policeman heard the car approaching at racing speed. Fastening his goggles on more securely and taking a firm hold on the handle bars of his motorcycle, he took off after the speeding car on the streets of New York.

The officer told the police magistrate he followed the man from Eighth Avenue, through 110th

Street, and down the west drive of Central Park where he took a spill on muddy ground, completely ruining his uniform.

The erring motorist admitted he was going fast but denied he was traveling anywhere near 18 miles an hour. He was fined \$10, which he reluctantly paid—July 31, 1905.

NEWSPAPER CLIPPING, COURTESY OF MISSOURI HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

Helpful  
Hints

HANDWRITING  
SAMPLES



IN OBTAINING HANDWRITING SAMPLES, DUPLICATE WRITING CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH QUESTIONED WRITING WAS PREPARED INSOFAR AS POSSIBLE; i.e., WRITING POSITION, INSTRUMENT, PAPER, WORDING, ETC.

FBI



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20535

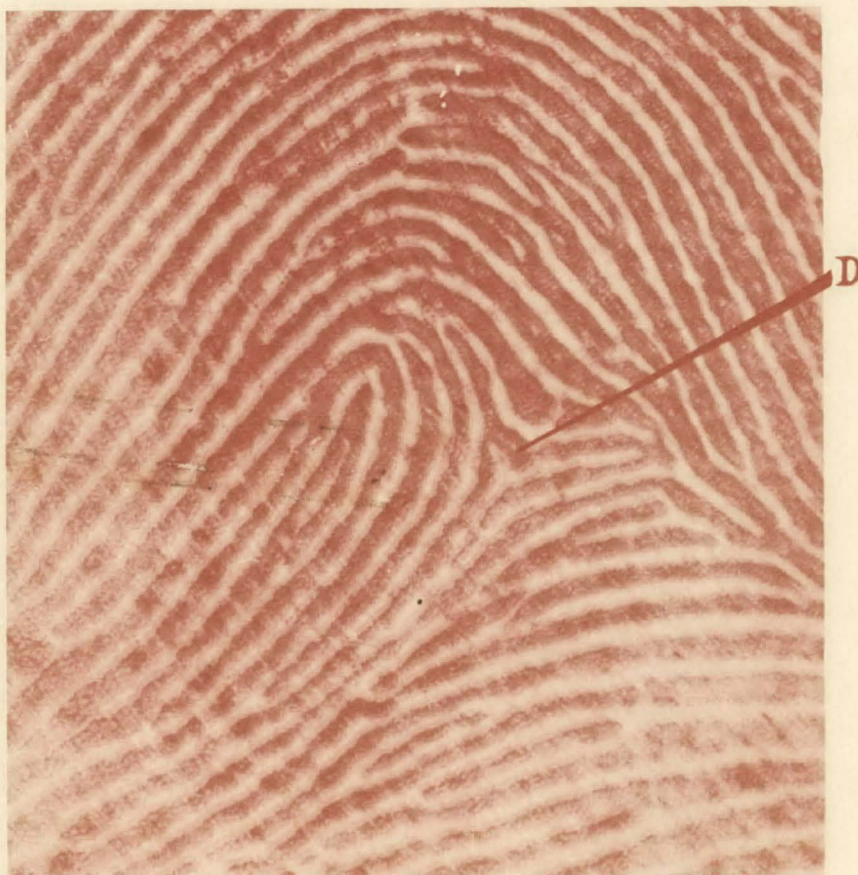
OFFICIAL BUSINESS

RETURN AFTER 5 DAYS

POSTAGE AND FEES PAID  
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

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## INTERESTING PATTERN



This impression contains an unusual ridge formation to the right of the delta which is located at point D. In the Identification Division of the FBI, the pattern is classified as a loop with four ridge counts.