

- Mr. Tolson
- Mr. Belmont
- Mr. Mohr
- Mr. DeLoach
- Mr. Casper _____
- Mr. Callahan _____
- Mr. Conrad _____
- Mr. Felt _____
- Mr. Gale _____
- Mr. Rosen _____
- Mr. Sullivan _____
- Mr. Tavel _____
- Mr. Trotter _____
- Tele. Room _____
- Miss Holmes _____
- Miss Gandy _____

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b7c

[Redacted]

Oct 12, 1965.

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

My dear Sir:

While watching the Today Show on Oct 11, 1965, at 8:30 to 9:00 A.M. I was saddened and sickened at the effort put forth by Hugh Downs and Rex Stout to discredit the F.B.I. during the time.

They were discussing Stout's recent book -- THE DOOR BELL RANG. This said book was undoubtedly written for the sole purpose of trying to show up the F.B.I. as an un-American, dictatorial organization.

While telling of the background for this book, Stout made some very personal remarks in regards to the fact that you had spoken out against some of our great men (Martin Luther King) and also, the Attorney General's Office.

As I say, the whole thing seems to be an effort to discredit you and the F.B.I. in the eyes of the public.

I hope that I am not taking too much liberty in writing to you in this regard.

Yours very truly,

[Redacted Signature]

P.S. I am also writing the Hon. Strom Thurmond and telling of this incident.

35 OCT 14 1965

EXP. PROC. 33

ack 10-18-65
DFC:des/jcp

EX-103
REC-69 100-29113-17
OCT 14 1965
ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 4/30/80 BY SP-11
MJA/llh

CORRESPONDENCE



Rex Todhunter Stout

Dear Mr. Hoover-

If you can possibly fit this in I think you will be glad you came-

COPY mpd

①
Rex Stout /s/

+

Handwritten mark

REX TODHUNTER STOUT

Dear Mr. Hoover-

If you can possibly fit this in I think you will be glad you came-

Handwritten signature of Rex Stout

True love 11/15/49 *EMK*

Handwritten vertical text

Handwritten initials

ENCLOSURE ATTACHED

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 4/30/90 BY SP-5 *mpd*

SE 17

100-29113-5

NOV 22 1949

RECORDED - 34

November 15, 1949

RECORDED

100-29113-5

W.B.W.G.

INDEXED - 34

Mr. Rex Todhunter Stout
c/o Writers' Board for World Government
7 East 19th Street
New York 3, New York

12337

Dear Mr. Stout:

Your kind note and invitation to attend "The Myth That Threatens the World," at the Coronet Theater on December 4, 1949, have been received and your cordiality and thoughtfulness are sincerely appreciated.

I regret that I am unable to accept your gracious invitation as previous commitments preclude my attendance at the time specified.

Sincerely yours,

J. Edgar Hoover

NOTE: 100-29113 reflects Rex Stout has been associated with various organizations and activities some of which have had Communist influences. In 1936 the Western Worker carried an article which stated Rex Stout, among others, would be a contributor of articles or stories appearing in the 25th Anniversary issue of New Masses. He was the guest speaker at the annual dinner for the League for Mutual Aid, which group engaged in various activities including that of operating an employment agency and bail fund for members of the Communist Party and allied organizations.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8/30/00 BY SP-5 JML/ldk

DE-INDEXED
DATE: 8/17/59
5

NJC:atp

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION
257 MAILED 3
DEC 22 1949 P.M.
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

NOV 16 1949

W.B.W.G.

[Handwritten signature]

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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Mr. Tolson | ✓ |
| Mr. Belmont | ✓ |
| Mr. Mohr | ✓ |
| Mr. DeLoach | ✓ |
| Mr. Casper | |
| Mr. Callahan | |
| Mr. Conrad | |
| Mr. Felt | |
| Mr. Gale | |
| Mr. Rosen | |
| Mr. Sullivan | |
| Mr. Tavel | |
| Mr. Trotter | |
| Tele. Room | |
| Miss Holmes | |
| Miss Gandy | |

TO : DIRECTOR, FBI
ATTN.: CRIME RECORDS

DATE: 5/12/65

FROM : SAC, NEW YORK (80-216)

SUBJECT: "THE DOORBELL RANG"
RESEARCH MATTER

BOOK

Enclosed is a photostat of the proofs of "The Doorbell Rang" by REX STOUT.

A perusal of this manuscript reflects that the Bureau and the Director are mentioned on numerous occasions many of which are not favorable to the Bureau's image.

These proofs were obtained on a confidential basis from [redacted], who is a contact of the NYO. The original proofs were returned to [redacted].

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b7C
b7D

Prepare a memo on this 5/12

Requests re: Rex Stout's
of 176 letters 5/20/65

100-29113-10
6-4
2 MAY 13 1965

2 - Bureau (Enc. 1) **ENCLOSURE**
1 - New York (80-216)

RHG:enc
(3)

ENCL BEHIND FILE

CRIME RESEARCH

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 4/30/80 BY SP-5
150/100

70 JUN 9 1965

1 copy filed in [redacted]

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A
[Vertical stamp]

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Mr. DeLoach

DATE: 5-20-65

FROM : M. A. Jones *MW*

SUBJECT: "THE DOORBELL RANG"
NEW MYSTERY NOVEL
BY REX STOUT

Book

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 4/30/80 BY SP-5 JPS/klm

del 10-1-65
(SD)

- Tolson _____
- Belmont _____
- Mohr _____
- DeLoach _____
- Casper _____
- Callahan _____
- Conrad _____
- Felt _____
- Gale _____
- Rosen _____
- Sullivan _____
- Tavel _____
- Trotter _____
- Tele. Room _____
- Holmes _____ b6
- Gandy _____ b7C

SYNOPSIS

The New York Office has furnished the Bureau an advanced proof copy of a new Nero Wolfe mystery novel by Stout which is critical of the FBI. The proof was obtained from a confidential source at "The New York Times."

Review of Book: This vicious book depicts the FBI in the worst possible light. Fred Cook's "The FBI Nobody Knows," plays a significant role in the plot. Nero Wolfe, Stout's hero in the book, is contacted in New York City by a wealthy matron, Rachel Bruner, who desires to hire Wolfe to stop FBI harassment of her. Mrs. Bruner claims the harassment began after she purchased 10,000 copies of "The FBI Nobody Knows" and sent them to prominent people. She states the FBI had been tapping her telephones and had placed her under constant surveillance. Wolfe indicates that she could have expected such treatment from the FBI. He accepts the assignment from Bruner and is paid a \$100,000 retainer fee. In this manner, Rex Stout establishes the FBI as the villain of his book.

EX-102 REC 30/00-2911341

As the plot unfolds, Nero Wolfe receives information from a New York police inspector that three FBI Agents were suspected of having murdered a writer in his apartment after illegally entering his apartment to steal material he had gathered for a series on the FBI. It was suspected the Agents shot the writer when he unexpectedly caught them going through his apartment. This suspicion was increased because the bullet which killed the writer had been removed from the apartment, as had all the writer's notes. Despite harassment by the FBI, Wolfe conducts his investigation in such a manner that he is able to convey the impression to the New York Office of the FBI that he has evidence bearing on the murder. Wolfe arranges a trap for the FBI in his home and this pays off when he and his associates capture two FBI Agents at gunpoint inside the Wolfe residence after they had entered illegally to steal the evidence. Wolfe takes the Agent's credentials and uses his possession of these items as a lever to force the FBI to discontinue its harassment of Rachel Bruner. He deals with one "Richard Wragg" who is depicted as the Special Agent in Charge of the New York Office and Wragg admits

Enclosure *sent 5-21-65*
1 - Mr. DeLoach - Enclosure
1 - Mr. Rosen - Enclosure

1 - Mr. Sullivan - Enclosure
1 - Central Research Unit - Enclosure

ELR:skd/mm (2)

JUN 27 1965

Continued
CRIME RESEARCH

UNRECORDED COPY FILED IN 62-46855-A

M. A. Jones to DeLoach memo
RE: THE DOORBELL RANG

harassment of Mrs. Bruner and agrees to discontinue this to preclude Wolfe's using the credentials in prosecutive action against the FBI. Wolfe, during the investigation, had determined that the writer had actually been killed by his girl friend but he forces Wragg to give the police the bullet which had been removed by his agents from the writer's apartment. Rex Stout concludes this book with a contemptuous reference to the Director. Although not mentioning him, he writes that the "big fish" from Washington (an obvious reference to the Director) attempted to call on Wolfe at his home in New York but that Wolfe refused to see him and left him standing outside his door ringing the bell.

Rex Stout, who is 79 years old, has been a member of or affiliated with numerous organizations which have been connected with communist groups or identified as communist fronts. In 1941, an informant reported that Rex Stout was allegedly a member of the Communist Party. The files do not reflect previous criticism by Stout of the Director or the FBI and on 12-7-62 Stout wrote the Director inviting him to become a member of the Authors Guild of the Authors League of America. This invitation was declined. The Viking Press is a reputable publisher with which we have had little contact

but we declined to become involved.

b7D

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That Stout be designated as a person not to be contacted without prior Bureau approval.

written 5/27/65
not to contact
needed 5/26/65
OK V.

2. That the attached letter to all SAC's be approved and returned to the Crime Records Division for appropriate processing. This letter advises of the forthcoming release of "The Doorbell Rang" and instructs that any inquiries received concerning the book should be answered with a statement that the FBI has no comment other than that the book is a fictional work which presents a false and distorted picture of the FBI and that any Agents conducting themselves in the manner depicted in this book would be subject to immediate dismissal.

OK JPM V.

gmc

M. A. Jones to DeLoach Memo
RE: THE DOORBELL RANG

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DETAILS

The New York Office has furnished the Bureau a Photostat of the advanced proofs of a new mystery novel by Rex Stout, "The Doorbell Rang," which is critical of the FBI. This is another in a series relating to Stout's chief mystery character, Nero Wolfe. The book, which is being published by Viking Press, was obtained by the New York Office confidentially from [redacted] a contact of that office. It is noted this is an uncorrected proof of the novel for advanced review and the book is not scheduled for release until October, 1965.

REVIEW OF BOOK:

This is a vicious book which puts the FBI in the worst possible light. Within its scope as fiction, it is almost as scurrilous an attack on the Bureau as Fred Cook's "The FBI Nobody Knows." Cook's book, in fact, plays a significant role in the plot of this novel, and it appears that Stout may have taken some of his material from that book for developing his plot as it relates to the FBI.

The hero of the book is, of course, Nero Wolfe, and the story is told by Wolfe's close assistant, Archie Goodwin, a literary device which Stout has used throughout his Nero Wolfe series. In substance, the book involves the following action:

A wealthy New York matron, Rachel Bruner, contacts Wolfe at his residence in New York City claiming she is being harassed by the FBI, that her phones are being tapped and that she and her associates are under constant surveillance. She engages Wolfe for \$100,000 to have the harassment stopped. Wolfe is at first reluctant to take the job because the FBI is a powerful antagonist but the large retainer persuades him. Mrs. Bruner claims the harassment began after she purchased 10,000 copies of "The FBI Nobody Knows" and sent them to prominent people all over the country. In this regard, she asks of Wolfe (concerning the Director), "Does that megalomaniac think he can hurt me?" Wolfe indicates that she could have expected no other treatment from the FBI. Wolfe also states that he was impressed by Cook's book and, with minor qualifications, agreed with Cook's opinion of the FBI and Mr. Hoover.

With this interview, Rex Stout establishes the FBI as the arch villain, arrayed in all its power against Wolfe who single-handedly sets out to beat it. Through a New York City police inspector, who is antagonistic toward the Bureau, Archie Goodwin learns that three FBI Agents were strongly suspected of having murdered

M. A. Jones to DeLoach Memo
RE: THE DOORBELL RANG

a writer who was gathering material for a series of articles on the Bureau. This man's body was found in his apartment, and through investigation, the inspector determined that three FBI Agents had illegally entered the writer's residence on the night he was killed for the purpose of stealing the material he had gathered on the FBI. It was suspected that the writer caught the Agents going through his apartment, drew a gun and was shot to death by one of the Agents. This suspicion was increased by the fact that the bullet which killed the writer had been removed from the apartment, apparently by the murderer, and that all the writer's notes were missing.

Based on this information Wolfe begins his investigation, although harassed by the FBI which attempts to have his private detective license revoked, puts him and his associates under surveillance and apparently places a tap on his telephone.

Wolfe is not concerned with whether or not the FBI did commit the murder, but he perceives that he can use this incident to convince the New York Office of the FBI that he has evidence bearing on the crime. Through a series of moves, he is able to convey this impression. Having done this, Wolfe arranges a trap for the FBI in his home, fully expecting that an attempt will be made to illegally enter his residence to steal the evidence. His trap pays off when he and his associates capture two FBI Agents at gunpoint inside the Wolfe home after they had entered by picking a door lock. Wolfe takes the Agents' credentials, explaining that these gave him incontrovertible evidence that FBI Agents had committed a felony in entering his home.

Wolfe uses his possession of the credentials as a lever to force the FBI to discontinue its harassment of Mrs. Bruner. He deals with one "Richard Wragg," who is depicted as the Special Agent in Charge of the New York Office. Wragg admits to Wolfe that the FBI had been harassing Mrs. Bruner and agrees to discontinue this activity to preclude Wolfe using the credentials in prosecutive action against the FBI.

During their investigation, Wolfe and Goodwin had determined that the Agents who broke into the writer's apartment had not killed the writer but that he had been shot by his girl friend. Wolfe furnishes this information to the New York Police Department and forces Wragg to give the police the bullet which his Agents had removed from the dead writer's apartment.

The book concludes with the FBI slandered as an organization which is not above committing almost any illegal act to destroy its enemies or protect its reputation. On the last page, in a few paragraphs of contemptuous writing that do nothing to develop the plot, Rex Stout expresses his personal hostility toward the

M. A. Jones to DeLoach Memo
RE: THE DOORBELL RANG

Director without actually mentioning him by name. He writes that the doorbell rang at Wolfe's home and Goodwin looked out to identify the caller. He tells Wolfe that the "big fish" from Washington was at the door (an obvious reference to the Director). Goodwin states that the visitor is honoring Wolfe with a visit but Wolfe states, "I have nothing for him. Let him get a sore finger." The book then ends with this sentence: "The doorbell rang."

INFORMATION IN BUFILES:

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Our files reflect that Stout, who is 79 years old, has been a member of, affiliated with or has lent his name and prestige to numerous organizations which have been affiliated with communist groups or identified as communist fronts. In 1941, a confidential informant of the New Haven Office reported that Rex Stout and [redacted] were allegedly members of the Communist Party. The files do not reflect previous criticism by Stout of the Director or the FBI, and, in fact, on 12-7-62 Stout wrote the Director inviting him to become a member of the Authors Guild of the Authors League of America. Stout was membership committee chairman at that time. Stout was advised by letter of 12-13-62, over Miss Gandy's signature, that Mr. Hoover was unable to accept his invitation.

The Viking Press is a reputable publisher with which we have had little contact in the past. [redacted]

[redacted] but we declined to become involved in the matter.

b7D

OBSERVATIONS:

The plot of this book is weak and it will probably have only limited public acceptance despite Stout's use of the FBI in an apparent bid for sensationalism to improve sales. The false and distorted picture of the FBI which Stout sets forth is an obvious reflection of his leftist leanings as indicated in our files. It is believed that Stout should be placed on the list of persons not to be contacted and that a letter should be sent to all SACs advising of the forthcoming release of this book in order that any inquiries concerning the book can be answered.