

8

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Mr. Tolson ✓

DATE: January 7, 1953

FROM : L. B. Nichols

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED

HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 1/29/07 BY 60309 uc/TAM/KSR/KCB

- Tolson ✓
- Ladd ✓
- Nichols ✓
- Belmont ✓
- Clegg ✓
- Glavin ✓
- Harbo ✓
- Rosen ✓
- Tracy ✓
- Laughlin ✓
- Mohr ✓
- Winterrowd ✓
- Tele. Rm. ✓
- Holloman ✓
- Gandy ✓

SUBJECT: Dr. JOHN WHEELER
 Princeton University
 Disappearance of Secret Document
 Joint Committee on Atomic Energy

11-1

William Borden, Staff Director of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, called. He stated that some time ago the Joint Committee sent Dr. John Wheeler of Princeton University, whom he described as one of the top atomic energy scientists who had been intimately associated with the program from its inception and who was constantly used by the Committee on a consultant basis, a document classified as secret by the Joint Committee. This document was a summary, from a critical viewpoint, on how the Atomic Energy program stands and attached to it were two pages of an abstract and history of the old MED program.

Last night Wheeler got on a Pullman to come to Washington. He read the document in his lower berth, placed it in an manilla envelope. This morning, when he woke up, he carried the envelope to the washroom. He then carried it into the toilet and placed it alongside of him. He left the toilet and returned to his berth and realized that he had left the envelope in the toilet. He went back to the washroom. The toilet was occupied. He climbed up and looked over the partition. A man was standing in the toilet but apparently the envelope had not been touched. After the man left the toilet Dr. Wheeler retrieved the envelope and then later, after he got off the train, examined the envelope and the secret document was missing.

Dr. Wheeler searched the berth of the Pullman car, went to the lost and found department at Union Station, then went to the offices of the Joint Committee. All of his luggage was searched with negative results. John Walker and former Agent Frank Cotter located the Pullman car in the yards and again searched it with negative results. The conductor and the porter had already gone on to Richmond. They have the details of this, along with a list of those who occupied this particular car.

Borden was considerably concerned. He stated the paper was not insignificant and he did not desire to go into details over the telephone. He asked specifically whether Wheeler had any indication that anybody had attempted to steal the paper and Wheeler stated he did not. Borden stated that whoever got the paper would have considerable information.

cc: Mr. Ladd
 cc: Mr. Belmont
 LBN:hmc

RECORDED - 115

INDEXED - 115

JAN 13 1953

10
1-28

12

Memorandum to Mr. Tolson

January 7, 1953

I told Borden that my first reaction was that this was solely an administrative matter for the Committee to handle and was not a proper matter for the Bureau, however, I would like to do a little checking and would call him back.

Mr. Belmont felt that if the contents of the paper related to the security of the country whether we had jurisdiction or not we should interview Wheeler and check into it and should be governed by the degree of importance of the paper.

After checking with the Director, I advised Mr. Belmont that he should have Agents from the field office contact Wheeler at Borden's office and that it is the Director's desire we check into this. I then called Borden and told him we would have an Agent come down immediately, purely as a matter of cooperation with the Committee. I inquired again whether the paper, for example, gave specifics as to numbers and products on hand. He stated it did not give this; that it was like some of the top secret material the Alsops had been publishing. He was very grateful.

✓
WON

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : MR. LADD

FROM : A. H. BELMONT

SUBJECT: DR. JOHN WHEELER
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
LOSS OF CLASSIFIED ATOMIC ENERGY DOCUMENT, 1/7/53
ATOMIC ENERGY ACT

DATE: January 7, 1953

m-9A-6-1
9-11-1

- Tolson _____
- Ladd _____
- Clegg _____
- Glavin _____
- Nichols _____
- Rosen _____
- Tracy _____
- Harbo _____
- Belmont _____
- Mohr _____
- Tele. Room _____
- Nease _____
- Gandy _____

Based on information furnished by Mr. Nichols, I called ASAC H. B. Fletcher, of the Washington Field Office, shortly after noon today to advise him that William Borden, Staff Director of the Joint Commission on Atomic Energy, had called the Bureau to report the following:

The Joint Commission on Atomic Energy sent a document classified "~~secret~~" to Dr. John Wheeler, of Princeton University, one of the top scientists in the atomic energy field who has been active as a consultant for a number of years. This document summarized the atomic energy program to date. Dr. Wheeler came to Washington last night, January 6, by pullman. In his berth he read the document which he had in an envelope along with other documents, and according to his recollection, placed the document back in the envelope. This morning he went to the men's room in the pullman car and inadvertently left the envelope in the men's room. Realizing this, he went back to the men's room and found it to be occupied. He looked over the partition and saw the envelope. After the occupant left, he recovered the envelope. Subsequently, he looked into the envelope and found that the secret document was missing.

The Joint Atomic Energy Commission is causing a search to be made of the train and has a list of the passengers on the car. Mr. Borden solicited the Bureau's assistance in recovering the documents, as the Commission is greatly concerned over its loss.

I told Mr. Fletcher that despite the fact that there was extreme carelessness and negligence in the handling of this document, both by Dr. Wheeler and the Joint Commission on Atomic Energy, an Agent should proceed at once to the office of Mr. Borden where Dr. Wheeler was available for interview; that Agents should get the facts of the matter and pin down exactly what had happened and launch an investigation in an attempt to recover the document. I told him this should be handled at once.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
 HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
 DATE 1/29/07 BY 60322uc/jam/ksr/jcb

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SE-11

112-1398-1
JAN 14 1953
[Handwritten signatures]

JAN 28 1953

CC - Mr. Nichols
AHB:tlc

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. LADD

At 3:00 pm, SAC Hood, of the Washington Field Office, advised that Professor Wheeler has been interviewed by Agents and the Agents are pursuing the investigation diligently in an attempt to locate the document.

V. g.

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : MR. A. H. BELMONT

FROM : MR. C. E. HENNRICH

SUBJECT: LOSS OF HIGHLY SENSITIVE DOCUMENT
BY PROFESSOR JOHN WHEELER ON JANUARY 7, 1953;
ATOMIC ENERGY ACT.

DATE: January 8, 1953

Handwritten notes and initials:
 926-1
 9211-1
 Tolson ✓
 Ladd ✓
 Clegg ✓
 Glavin ✓
 Rosen ✓
 Tracy ✓
 Harbo ✓
 Belmont ✓
 Mohr ✓
 Tele. Room ✓
 Nease ✓
 Gandy ✓
 Henrich ✓
 [Signature]

Supervisor Charles Lyons of the WFO advised on the morning of January 8 that the WFO has been informed by the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy they do not intend to notify the Atomic Energy Commission regarding the loss of the document in question. They have, however, placed no restrictions on the FBI in this connection.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the FBI notify both the Attorney General and the Atomic Energy Commission concerning the loss of this document, since it has come to our notice, we are conducting investigation, and it is a matter regarding which the Attorney General and the Atomic Energy Commission should be cognizant.

7

Handwritten signature: James

Handwritten initials: oh

Handwritten initials: el
CEH:LL

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
 HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
 DATE 1/29/07 BY 60309 uc/TAM/KSR/cb

SE 38
 RECORDED-130

117-1398-3
 6 JAN 14 1953

Handwritten signature: [Signature]

56 JAN 28 1953

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

| |
|----------------|
| FD-36 |
| Mr. Tolson |
| Mr. Ladd |
| Mr. Nichols |
| Mr. Belmont |
| Mr. Clegg |
| Mr. Glavin |
| Mr. Harbo |
| Mr. Rosen |
| Mr. Tracy |
| Mr. Mohr |
| Mr. Winterrowd |
| Tele. Room |
| Mr. Holloman |
| Mr. Sizoo |
| Miss Gandy |

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 1/29/07 BY 60309UC/TAM/KSR/CB

Transmit the following Teletype message to:

46-1
AIR-TEL

SAC, RICHMOND 1-8-53

TIME

DEC

DIRECTOR AND SAC, WASHINGTON FIELD

LOSS OF HIGHLY SENSITIVE DOCUMENT BY PROFESSOR JOHN A.

WHEELER, JANUARY SEVEN, NINETEEN FIFTY THREE, ATOMIC ENERGY ACT. RE TELEPHONE CALL FROM SA CHARLES LYON, WASHINGTON FIELD TO RICHMOND, JANUARY SEVEN. MRS. ROSALYE BRYAN, PULLMAN COMPANY OFFICE, RICHMOND, ADVISED DIAGRAM FOR PULLMAN CAR ONE ZERO ONE FOR NIGHT OF JANUARY SIX DASH SEVEN WAS MAILED TO PULLMAN COMPANY, EIGHT FOUR FIVE SOUTH WABASH, CHICAGO, AT CLOSE OF BUSINESS, JANUARY SEVEN. MRS. BRYAN ADVISED GAVE DATA APPEARING ON DIAGRAM TO AEC INVESTIGATOR BY TELEPHONE AND HER RECOLLECTION WAS THAT DIAGRAM SHOWED LOWERS ONE AND TWELVE WERE NOT OCCUPIED, ONLY ONE UPPER WAS OCCUPIED AND THAT BY A SINGLE OCCUPANT AS A SECTION. ALSO THAT DIAGRAM LISTED OCCUPANTS BY TICKET NUMBERS, CODE NUMBERS AND POSSIBLY ONE OR TWO NAMES NOT READABLE. CODE NUMBERS REPORTEDLY REFER TO STATIONS MAKING RESERVATIONS BY CALLING PHILADELPHIA. MRS. BRYAN STATED SHE WAS UNABLE TO DECIPHER SOME OF THE CODE NUMBERS AND SAME COULD BE DECIPHERED AT PHILADELPHIA TICKET OFFICE

END OF PAGE ONE

See index
Dr. John Wheeler

7

63 JAN 30 1953

RECORDED-130
JAN 10 1953

117-1398-2
JAN 10 1953

Approved: _____
Special Agent in Charge

Sent _____ M. Per _____

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Transmit the following Teletype message to:

PAGE TWO

WHERE DIAGRAM PREPARED AS ENTIRE CAR ASSIGNED TO PHILADELPHIA. ROY C. STROUD, TWO EIGHT TWO EIGHT NORTH AVENUE, RICHMOND, WAS PULLMAN CONDUCTOR ON PENNSYLVANIA TRAIN ONE ZERO ONE, NEW YORK TO WASHINGTON ON NIGHT IN QUESTION. HE ADVISED TRAIN PICKED UP CAR ONE ZERO ONE, PHILADELPHIA TO WASHINGTON, AND ANOTHER CAR, NEW YORK TO MEMPHIS, UPON ARRIVAL AT PHILADELPHIA AT TWO TWENTY A.M. CARS WERE SPOTTED AT PHILADELPHIA AND OPENED FOR OCCUPANCY AT TEN P.M. TRAIN LEFT PHILADELPHIA TWO FORTY-THREE A.M. AND ARRIVED WASHINGTON FIVE FIFTEEN A.M. CAR ONE ZERO ONE, PHILADELPHIA TO WASHINGTON, AND NEW YORK TO MEMPHIS CAR SET OUT IN WASHINGTON AND SUBJECT TO OCCUPANCY UNTIL EIGHT A.M. STROUD STATED AFTER LEAVING PHILADELPHIA HE AND TRAINMAN PROCEEDED TO CAR ONE ZERO ONE WHERE HE PICKED UP PAPERS AND DIAGRAMS FROM TOWEL RACK IN SMOKING ROOM, SOLD LOWER THREE TO A MAN, THEN HE AND TRAINMAN RETURNED TO ANOTHER CAR TO COMPLETE PAPER WORK; THAT HE AND TRAINMAN REMAINED IN OTHER CAR UNTIL ARRIVAL IN WASHINGTON WHERE HE LEFT TRAIN AND BOARDED R.F. & P. TRAIN TO RICHMOND. DID NOT REENTER CAR ONE ZERO ONE. ALL OCCUPANTS OF CAR ONE ZERO ONE WERE ASLEEP

END PAGE TWO

Approved: _____
Special Agent in Charge

Sent _____ M Per _____

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Transmit the following Teletype message to:

PAGE THREE

WHEN HE ENTERED CAR AND WHEN HE LEFT TRAIN. PORTER WAS AWAKE HOWEVER. STATES SAW NO PAPERS IN SMOKING ROOM OF ONE ZERO ONE AND THAT ENVELOPE HE PICKED UP ACTUALLY CONTAINED TICKETS AND OTHER MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS WHICH HE WORKED ON TRAIN. STROUD ADVISED MAN TO WHOM HE SOLD LOWER THREE IN CAR ONE ZERO ONE HAD BOARDED TRAIN AT TRENTON OR ELIZABETH, NEW JERSEY WITH FIRST CLASS TICKET AND CHAIR CAR SEAT TICKET STATING HE HAD MISSED EARLIER TRAIN, AND ASKED FOR LOWER IN CAR TO BE SET OUT AT WASHINGTON WITHOUT DESIGNATING WHICH CAR. MAN NOT CONSIDERED SUSPICIOUS OR ENDEAVORING TO ENTER CAR ONE ZERO ONE AND WAS STILL IN SMOKING ROOM WHEN STROUD AND TRAINMAN LEFT. STROUD OF OPINION PHILADELPHIA TICKET OFFICE HAS PINK PAPER COPY OF DIAGRAM FOR CAR ONE ZERO ONE. STATES DID NOT KNOW OF LOSS OF PAPERS UNTIL ARRIVAL, RICHMOND AND QUESTIONED BY MRS. BRYAN. RUC

JOHNSON

BLD:TEC

117-17

REGULAR MAIL

John Heinrich

Approved: _____
Special Agent in Charge

Sent _____ M Per _____

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Mr. Tolson ✓

DATE: February 9, 1953

FROM : L. B. Nichols

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 1/31/07 BY 60309 uc/TAM/KSP/UB

SUBJECT: LOSS OF CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS
JOINT COMMITTEE ON ATOMIC ENERGY

- Tolson _____
- Ladd _____
- Nichols _____
- Belmont _____
- Mohr _____
- Winterrowd _____
- Tele. Rm. _____
- Holloman _____
- Gandy _____

You will recall we recently investigated the loss of certain documents in the possession of Dr. John Wheeler of Princeton University. Today, William Borden, Staff Director of the Joint Committee, called to inquire how we were getting along. I told him to date the results had been negative, but that we were still working on it.

Borden stated the whole thing was a mystery to him and was incomprehensible. He did express the hope that in due time when we had completed our investigation we would either get him a copy of the report or would advise him what had been done.

I think in due time we should send a letter to Borden summarizing the investigation.

cc: Mr. Ladd
Mr. Belmont

LBN:MP

V. M.

Res.

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117-1398-135

FEB 20 1953

*Let to Borden
2-13-53
KWD:PW*

D. B. [unclear]
D. [unclear]

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : D. M. LADD

FROM : A. H. BELMONT

SUBJECT: LOSS OF HIGHLY SECRET ATOMIC ENERGY
DOCUMENT BY PROFESSOR JOHN A. WHEELER
JANUARY 7, 1953
ATOMIC ENERGY ACT

DATE: February 12, 1953

Tolson _____
 Ladd _____
 Clegg _____
 Glavin _____
 Nichols _____
 Rosen _____
 Tracy _____
 Egan _____
 Gurnea _____
 Harbo _____
 Mohr _____
 Tele. Room _____
 Nease _____
 Gandy _____

At 6:30 P.M. on February 12, 1953, SAC Hood came over from the Washington Field Office at my request concerning this case. I told him in substance the nature of the information contained in the document lost by Professor Wheeler which is, of course, at variance with the original information we received. I told him that it is imperative that this document be located and until it is located we must take the attitude that the document was stolen and turned over to the wrong hands. I advised him that this case is to be handled as a Special and that he should pick his best investigator to handle the case as a Special. This Special Agent is to coordinate the investigation and participate in any important investigation or interviews regardless of the location. He is to be provided all necessary assistance in the way of manpower both in Washington, D. C., and elsewhere.

I told Mr. Hood that the investigation must include a complete breakdown of every movement and activity of Professor Wheeler from the time he obtained the document in question until he discovered its loss, in order that we may pin point exactly what has happened. His associations at Princeton must be explored, any persons he contacted, the servants at his house, any telephone calls he made; in fact, every movement he made must be accounted for. I told Hood that the agents will have to dig in and get all possible information until this case is solved. Mr. Hood will give me the identity of the agent on the morning of February 13, 1953, after which I will brief the agent. The agent and Supervisor Dissly will go over the case in complete detail separately for leads and then will hold a conference to have a meeting of the minds as to the immediate steps to be taken. This will be done on February 13, 1953. Supervisor Dissly is presently going over the file.

AHB:je

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 FEB 20 1953

56 FEB 27 1953

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
 HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
 DATE 1/30/07 BY 60304UC/TAM/KSP/ab

I told Mr. Hood that I will personally alert the SACs in other offices to insure that this matter is handled as a Special and the agent coordinating the case is given full support and assistance.

We are contacting Commissioner Murray of AEC to get an exact description of the document in question, its classification, when and how it was sent to Professor Wheeler and why. We will ascertain exactly what security precautions are required and whether these have been broken.

I will also follow this case personally.

8:45am 2/13 - SAC Hood has designated
SA Charles W. Lyons,

- Q
1. I can stress too strongly the importance of this.
 2. I think it would be well to send photo memo & copies for information of the President - Enclosed one to A-G.
- H.

February 18, 1958

LETTER BY *W204 WJTHM/KSR/105*

VIA LIAISON

RECORDED-60

135

Mr. William L. Borden
Executive Director
Joint Committee on Atomic Energy
U. S. Capitol Building
Washington, D. C.

delivered to Borden's office. He is ill. His letter is there and is to be opened by him only
2-16-53
CMB.

Dear Mr. Borden:

Regarding your conversation with Mr. L. B. Nichols of this Bureau on February 9, 1958, I would like to furnish you with the following summary of our investigation into the loss of a highly secret atomic energy document by Professor John A. Wheeler on January 7, 1958. An extensive and thorough investigation was immediately conducted by this Bureau on the basis of your telephonic request for an investigation on January 7, 1958.

In addition to the thorough search of the Pullman car which was made in conjunction with members of your Staff on January 7, 1958, extensive investigation has been conducted. Interviews have been conducted with railroad employes. A thorough search was made of trash collections and lost and found departments at junction points on the route taken by Dr. Wheeler from Princeton to Washington. Maintenance employes, elevator operators, track cleaners, and other individuals who might have had information concerning the matter were interviewed on January 7 and 8, 1958. On the return of Dr. Wheeler to Princeton University on the evening of January 7, 1958, he was reinterviewed in detail as to his movements during the pertinent period. With his cooperation, a search was made of his home and car and his office at Princeton University was searched on the following day, January 8, 1958.

KWD:eme

FEB 18 9 45 PM '58

~~SECURITY INFORMATION - TOP SECRET~~

Mr. William L. Berden
Executive Director
Joint Committee on Atomic Energy

An extensive investigation was also conducted in an effort to identify passengers occupying space on the Pullman car occupied by Dr. Wheeler. As a result of the investigation, all but four of the fifteen passengers have been identified and interviewed. To date, no information has been developed as to the location of the missing document.

On February 6, 1958, nearly a month after the loss was reported to have involved a secret atomic energy document, Mr. Gordon Dean, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, advised that the missing document contained the most recent developments in thermonuclear devices. According to Mr. Dean, the document was highly important and the possession of the document by a foreign power would seriously affect our national security.

An Agent of this Bureau has been instructed to contact your office for additional data and information regarding the content and handling of the missing document. In view of the high importance placed on this document by the Atomic Energy Commission, every possible investigative device will be utilized in order to locate the missing document.

I will advise you of the pertinent developments in connection with our efforts to locate this document.

Sincerely yours,

- 2 -

~~SECURITY INFORMATION - TOP SECRET~~

cc - Mr. Belmont

The Attorney General

February 13, 1953

Director, FBI

~~PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL~~

LOSS OF HIGHLY SECRET ATOMIC ENERGY
DOCUMENT BY PROFESSOR JOHN A. WHEELER
JANUARY 7, 1953
ATOMIC ENERGY ACT

DECLASSIFIED BY 60309 UC/TAM/KSR/CB
01/29/2007

Reference is made to our memorandum dated January 9, 1953, addressed to the Criminal Division, and the reports of Special Agent Frank J. Liddy, Jr., dated February 4, 1953, Washington, D. C., and Special Agent Alekso Poptanich, dated January 23, 1953, Chicago, Illinois, concerning the loss of a secret document by Dr. John A. Wheeler of Princeton University of January 7, 1953.

For your information, the investigation of this matter was initiated as the result of the telephonic request of Mr. William Borden, Staff Director of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy on January 7, 1953. Mr. Borden at that time described the missing document as a summary of the Atomic Energy Program and a history of the Manhattan Engineer District Program. On February 6, 1953, Mr. Gordon Dean, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, advised that the missing document contained the most recent developments in thermonuclear devices. Mr. Dean stated that this document was highly important and the possession of the document by a foreign power would seriously affect our national security.

With regard to the circumstances surrounding the loss of the document, Dr. John A. Wheeler stated that the document bearing a secret classification was sent to him by mail by Mr. John S. Walker of the Joint Congressional Atomic Energy Staff for Dr. Wheeler's study and remarks. Dr. Wheeler stated that he signed the document out of the depository at "Project Matterhorn," Princeton University, at 4:30 P.M., on January 6, 1953. He stated that he placed the missing document together with another secret document pertaining to Naval Research in a Manila envelope which he placed in a small overnight suitcase containing

- Tolson _____
- Ladd _____
- Nichols _____
- Belmont _____
- Clegg _____
- Glavin _____
- Harbo _____
- Rosen _____
- Tracy _____
- Laughlin _____
- Mohr _____
- Tele. Rm. _____
- Holloman _____
- Gandy _____

KWD:eme

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FEB 17 1953

56 FEB 20 1953
COMM-FBI

Notes
K

personal and other official unclassified papers in addition to clothing. Dr. Wheeler stated that he was unable to lock the suitcase since he had no key. He stated that he read and made notations on the missing document while in his Pullman berth on the train which traveled from Philadelphia to Washington, D. C., on January 7, 1953. He stated the following morning prior to leaving the Pullman car at Washington, D. C., he checked the manila envelope and found the Atomic Energy document missing.

In an effort to locate the document a thorough search was made of the Pullman car on January 7, 1953, including a search of vents, hoppers, linens, washroom, and other parts of the car. In addition, floor coverings were removed, the undercarriage of the car was checked, and the surrounding yard area was examined. The Pullman porter, conductor, and other railroad employees were interviewed on the same date but were unable to furnish information concerning the document. A search was made of Dr. Wheeler's home, car, and office at Princeton, and searches were made through trash collections and Lost and Found Departments at junction points from Princeton to Washington. In addition, maintenance employees, elevator operators, track cleaners, and other individuals who might have information concerning the matter were interviewed. An extensive investigation was required in order to identify passengers occupying space on the Pullman car occupied by Dr. Wheeler. As a result of the investigation, all but four of the fifteen passengers have been identified and interviewed.

Information concerning this matter has been furnished to Honorable Robert Cutler, Administrative Assistant to the President, and the Atomic Energy Commission.

The investigation is continuing in an effort to locate this document.

117-1398

cc - 1 - Assistant Attorney General
Warren Olney III

~~PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL~~

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : D. M. LADD

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE: February 14, 1953

RA FROM : A. H. BEERMONT

DATE 1/29/07 BY 60309UC/TAM/KSR/CB

SUBJECT: LOSS OF HIGHLY SECRET ATOMIC ENERGY
DOCUMENT BY PROFESSOR JOHN A. WHEELER,
JANUARY 7, 1953.
ATOMIC ENERGY ACT

- Tolson _____
- Ladd _____
- Clegg _____
- Glavin _____
- Nichols _____
- Rosen _____
- Tracy _____
- Harbo _____
- Belmont _____
- Mohr _____
- Tele. Room _____
- Nease _____
- Gandy _____

Dissly

Prohagan

I briefed Special Agent Charles W. Lyons, February 13, 1953, concerning the extreme importance of the information contained in the document lost by Professor Wheeler. I told him of Commissioner Murray's visit to the Director on February 12, 1953. I told him that he has been selected to take charge of the investigation to locate this document or find out what happened to it and that absolutely no stone must be left unturned to accomplish this. I advised him that he is to personally coordinate and take charge of the investigation and in other than routine investigation, he is to go to the scene in the investigation and participate in it. I advised him that he will receive full cooperation from the offices concerned and in order to insure this I wanted to be advised of those offices which he will have to visit or secure assistance from in order that I could call the SAC and make sure that the importance of this was realized.

I told SA Lyons that as soon as he and Supervisor Dissly have gone over the case and the appropriate course of action has been decided on, he should proceed at once. I advised him that such manpower as he needed in both Washington and other offices would be made available to him. I also advised him that what we want is imagination and thoroughness and attention to detail to be sure that every possible phase of investigation is pursued. I told him that the FBI must find the answer to this problem.

I told him that Professor Wheeler had not been sufficiently interviewed and that he should be reinterviewed to ascertain his every action from the time he secured the document until he found it was gone. By this I meant every step he had taken, persons with whom he had talked, whether he had gone home after receiving the document, how he had gone to the train, whether he had called anyone, how long he had been at each place, what he did with the document at every step and, in fact, his actions should be traced minute by minute. I told him we must regard this as a theft or possible espionage until proved otherwise and consequently, Wheeler's associates at

AHB:rw

RECORDED - 28

117-1398-46

FEB 17 1953

56 FEB 18 1953

Breidenbach

SR

Princeton should be determined and who had knowledge that he was going to Washington and could have tipped off someone else; who had access to the document; who had a questionable background at Princeton; and particularly, the Matterhorn Project. The associate with Wheeler on the train should be explored fully. I pointed out that it is most necessary that the period be narrowed as much as possible as to the time when the document was last seen to the time it was known to be lost; that this was important as our efforts to locate it would be concentrated on that period; and this information would have to be secured from Wheeler and corroborated from other possible sources.

I told Mr. Lyons that another aspect of this matter which must be covered is whether Atomic Energy security regulations were violated by anyone, including the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy, the sending of the document by mail to Wheeler, the handling of the document at Princeton and the handling of it by Wheeler and we would want this phase covered completely also. I told him that Bureau Liaison Agents would assist him insofar as getting information from the Atomic Energy Commission or the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy.

I told Mr. Lyons that the key to this matter is speed and above all, thoroughness. I told him we wanted a daily teletype from the Washington Field Office and any other office where there were leads outstanding. I told him that there was a possibility, of course, that the right-of-way would have to be checked over which the train traveled to see if the document could have been lost from the train while in motion. I told him this step would depend on whether it was logical as it would be a terrific job.

Inasmuch as SAC Hood advised me on the night of February 13 that SA Lyons would be going to Trenton, New Jersey, on the morning of February 14 to reinterview Professor Wheeler, I called SAC McKee on the morning of February 14 and instructed this matter be given most careful attention and that the utmost cooperation be afforded SA Lyons. I gave Mr. McKee the necessary briefing without going into detail to impress upon him the importance of this matter.

included
in AC memo
4/17/53
H

On the morning of February 14, we received word from Newark that Professor Wheeler was leaving at noon February 14 for Los Alamos and would not be back until the following Thursday. Upon my instructions, Liaison contacted Commissioner Murray of AEC and told him that we considered it most important that Wheeler be interviewed again at once; and that if Wheeler's trip to Los Alamos was more important, we would bow to the wishes of the Commissioner. Commissioner Murray called back to advise that Wheeler's trip was being canceled. Wheeler then called to advise that he would come down to Washington to be interviewed as he would be able to make better connections to Los Alamos from Washington. I instructed Washington Field to recontact him and advise him that we desired to conduct the interview at Princeton in order that we could better trace the steps he took after receiving the document; that we regretted this personal inconvenience; but due to the importance of the investigation we desired it this way. Washington Field is doing this.

ACTION:

We will advise you of further developments.

D

9

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 1/29/07 BY 60301uct/ank/sej/as

February 16, 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. TOLSON
MR. LADD
MR. NICHOLS

Auth

John A. Wheeler

The Attorney General sent for me this afternoon and stated that he had advised the President of the contents of our memorandum to the Attorney General dated February 13, concerning the missing document which was lost or stolen from Professor Wheeler who was en route from Princeton University to Washington, D. C., on January 6 and 7. The Attorney General stated that the President was considerably concerned about this matter and intended to see that proper action was taken against anyone who broke the security regulations in connection with the handling of this document. The President did not understand how such a document could be forwarded by a Committee of Congress to a Professor employed by the Atomic Energy Commission. I informed the Attorney General that under the law of Congress, the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy had the right to ask for information and documents from the Atomic Energy Commission and to, in fact, conduct certain inquiry of their own.

I would like to have prepared for the Attorney General a memorandum about the authority of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy and also the actual origin and method of transmission of the document in question.

The President also desires to receive, as soon as our investigation will enable us to present it, a list of specific security regulations which have been broken and by whom. He also wants any suggestions for the correction of the condition which brought about the improper handling of this particular document. It is the intention of the President to personally handle this matter with the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy of Congress.

The Attorney General has asked that we submit to him, the Attorney General, a daily report of our progress in this investigation in order that he may bring the same to the attention of the President who wants to be kept informed daily of its progress.

The Attorney General also wants to have copies of the two memoranda, which he cannot find in the files, that were sent to the Department upon this matter, other than the memoranda of January 9 and February 13. I have spoken to Mr. Belmont and asked him to procure the memoranda and transmit them to the Attorney General immediately.

Very truly yours,

J E H

John Edgar Hoover
Director

- Tolson _____
- Ladd _____
- Nichols _____
- Belmont _____
- Clegg _____
- Glavin _____
- Harbo _____
- Rosen _____
- Tracy _____
- Laughlin _____
- Rohr _____
- Tele. Rm. _____
- Holloman _____
- Gandy _____

FEB 24 1953

JEH:mpd

SENT FROM D. O.
 TIME 9:50 A
 DATE 2-17-53
 BY *J E H*

UNRECORDED COPY FILED IN 62-83651-1

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Mr. Tolson

FROM : L. B. Nichols

SUBJECT: LOST DOCUMENT
JOINT COMMITTEE, ON ATOMIC ENERGY
PROFESSOR JOHN WHEELER

DATE: February 17, 1953

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 1/30/07 BY 60324UC/BAK/STP/015

Tolson
Ladd
Clegg
Glavin
Nichols
Rosen
Tracy
Harbo
Belmont
Mohr
Tele. Room
Nease
Gandy

Senator Hickenlooper called me late on the afternoon of February 17, to advise he had learned only last night of the missing documents from Professor Wheeler several weeks ago. He further stated that he saw "Mr. Big" this morning and that the President was very much agitated about this situation; that there was a meeting of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy scheduled for Wednesday morning. He was wondering if there were any developments.

I told him there were none that we could talk about. He then inquired whether there had been a strict accounting for Dr. Wheeler's movements from the time he left Princeton until he arrived in Washington. I told him that my recollection was that this had been done. He then inquired whether there was any evidence that Dr. Wheeler had been drinking and could have been doped. I told him I did not recall; that I frankly could not state without checking. He stated if and when it was possible he would like to talk to me about this.

I have talked to Mr. Hennrich, who tells me that Dr. Wheeler's movements have been accounted for; that around 5 o'clock on the evening that he came to Washington he went to a friend's house, where he did drink one or two glasses of sherry, then had dinner and a couple of hours later left for Washington; that he took three trains before he got to Washington; that a friend of his was on the train--a Professor Burger--but that he avoided Burger as he wanted to read.

If approved, I will call Hickenlooper early in the morning and tell him I checked and that Wheeler's movements had been accounted for; that aside from having a drink or two of sherry around 5 o'clock in the evening there was no evidence of drinking and that Wheeler denies this; that, further, we have identified, located and interviewed all but five of the people who were on the car with Wheeler; that they bought tickets at the last minute and the possibility of identifying them is very remote. I will further tell the Senator that the letter the Bureau sent to William Borden, staff director of the Committee on February 15, gave a summary of developments to date.

cc: Mr. Ladd
cc: Mr. Belmont

LBN:hmc
FEB 27 1953

RECORDED - 56

FEB 20 1953

I don't think we should give these details out until we can put them in report form

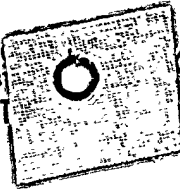
*General Valbert...
...for President with...
...at 5:00*

*memo...
...1/27/53*

FIXE



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



FEB 23

TELETYPE

2-23-53

- Mr. Tolson _____
- Mr. Ladd _____
- Mr. Nichols _____
- Mr. Belmont _____
- Mr. Clegg _____
- Mr. Glavin _____
- Mr. Harbo _____
- Mr. Rosen _____
- Mr. Tracy _____
- Mr. Egan _____
- Mr. Mohr _____
- Mr. Winterrowd _____
- Tele. Room _____
- Mr. Holloman _____
- Mr. Johnson _____

FBI PHILA

DIRECTOR AND SAC WFO

URGENT

LOSS OF HIGHLY SECRET ATOMIC ENERGY DOCUMENT BY PROFESSOR

WHEELER, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, JAN. SEVEN FIFTYTHREE, AEA.

WFO, BY SA LYONS OF INVESTIGATION AT PH TODAY. PORTER ROBERT

JONES THOROUGHLY INTERVIEWED. RECALLS WHEELER ARRIVING SHORTLY AFTER

TEN PM ON BETTSVILLE. RECALLS BERGER ARRIVING ABOUT TWENTY OR

THIRTY MINUTES LATER, AND ASKING FOR NAMES OF OTHER PASSENGERS, STATING

HE WAS LOOKING FOR FRIENDS. RECALLS WHEELER SITTING IN SEAT SIX NEXT

MORNING. JONES SAID WHEELER TOLD HIM HE MISPLACED A LETTER IN HIS

BERTH JONES SEARCHED ALL LINEN AND AREA OF BERTH. JONES STORY GENERALLY

FITS DETAILS OF WHEELER AND BERGER STORIES. JONES SAYS HE MADE A GOOD

SEARCH BECAUSE HE KNEW WHEELER INTENDED TO REPORT TO PULLMAN LOST AND

FOUND, AND HE DID NOT WANT PULLMAN OFFICIALS TO FIND THAT HE HAD NOT

MADE THOROUGH SEARCH SINCE IT WOULD BE REFLECTION ON HIS EFFICIENCY.

JONES WITH PULLMAN COMPANY IN PH DIVISION SINCE NINETEEN TWENTY

CONTINUOUSLY. JONES IS FIFTYSEVEN YEARS OLD AND IS TWENTYNINTH ON

ROSTER OF PULLMAN PORTERS. SAYS HE HAS TURNED IN LITERALLY THOUSANDS

OF ITEMS, MANY OF GREAT VALUE. NEVER HAS HAD ANY INCIDENT DURING

THIRTYTWO YEARS OF EMPLOYMENT WHICH WOULD REFLECT ON HIS HONESTY OR

INTEGRITY. JONES MARRIED AND HAS OWNED HIS PRESENT HOME SINCE

NINETEEN TWENTYSEVEN . SAYS IF HE HAD EVER COME IN CONTACT

WITH DOCUMENT HE WOULD HAVE TURNED IT IN.

ABBATICCHIO

RECORDED-86 112-1398-15
FEB 26 1953

ACK PLS

TWO COPIES WFO

FEB 27 1953
FBI PHILA

Handwritten signature

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 2/11/07 BY 60309 uc/ram/kse/lab

SUMMARY
B-BREWIGAN

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

RA

TO : MR. D. M. LADD

FROM : A. H. Belmont

SUBJECT: LOSS OF HIGHLY SECRET ATOMIC ENERGY DOCUMENT BY PROFESSOR JOHN A. WHEELER, JANUARY 7, 1953
ATOMIC ENERGY ACT

DATE: February 13, 1953

Tolson ✓
Ladd ✓
Clegg ✓
Glavin ✓
Nichols ✓
Rosen ✓
Tracy ✓
Harbo ✓
Belmont ✓
Mohr ✓
Tele. Room ✓
Nease ✓
Gandy ✓

WAF
Rosen
Gandy

Reference is made to memorandum to you dated February 12, 1953, in which it was pointed out that we were contacting Commissioner Murray of the Atomic Energy Commission to get the exact description of the document in question, its classification, when and how it was sent to Professor Wheeler and why, and also, what security precautions are required and whether these were broken.

Agent Bates contacted Commissioner Murray this morning and the following information was obtained in answer to the questions:

- Exact description of document - This document was prepared by the Joint Committee and is not an AEC document. However, Mr. Murray advised it contained 6 or 7 pages and was not one complete document but was composed of several unrelated pages. Mr. Murray commented he felt the Bureau would desire to obtain a copy of the document from the Joint Committee and in the event this could not be done to let him know.
- Classification of document - The document in question bore a classification of "~~Secret~~." This classification was placed on it by the Joint Committee without consulting AEC. It is the feeling of several AEC officials that the document should be classified "~~Top Secret~~."
- When and how was document sent to Professor Wheeler - Murray did not know the date the document was sent to Wheeler. The only information he had was that it was sent through the mails by the Joint Committee to Wheeler.
- Why was document sent to Wheeler - Mr. Murray stated he assumed the Joint Committee sent this document to Wheeler since he is recognized as an expert in the field of thermo-nuclear development.
- What security precautions are required - were any of these violated -- Mr. Bryan LaPlante of AEC Security

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 1/29/07 BY 60309 uc/fam/KSK/ab

CWB:lw

FEB 18 1953

RECORDED-77

117-1398-43

FEB 12 1953

5A

advised that AEC regulations [redacted] X

[redacted]
possible, [redacted] X

[redacted] The regulations further require that
[redacted]

[redacted] These regulations have been brought to the attention of all AEC personnel and Consultants, according to LaPlante.

b7E

Mr. Murray also advised that he understood Gordon Dean, Chairman, AEC, intended to talk to the Joint Committee immediately.

L

Get after all phases
of this.
d.

February 24, 1953

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 1/29/07 BY 60309/uc/TAM/RSR/CS

4:15

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. TOLSON
MR. LADD
MR. NICHOLS
MR. BELMONT

Governor Sherman Adams called me from the White House today and stated he had a memorandum from the President in connection with the document recently lost by Professor Wheeler, about which Congressman W. Sterling Cole had made a suggestion to the President with reference to an Executive Order referring to the use of the mails in transferring certain documents. The Governor said the President handed him the following memorandum:

'Here is a letter which makes certain suggestions about the reclassification of documents, and about the regulations applying to the handling of documents when they are classified. Will you please read Mr. Cole's communication and have someone who can give us recommendations on the point he raises; thereafter, will you notify him of what is done.'

Governor Adams asked if it would be agreeable to me if he sent me this request and I told him I would be very glad to try to handle it for him. I stated when he sent it over I thought we would probably want to talk to the security people in the Atomic Energy Commission, as there apparently was friction between the Commission and the Committee. The Governor said he would send me a copy of the Cole letter because he thought it brought the point at issue out a little bit and he also thought it was more general a matter than simply referring to the AEC questions; that he thought it involved the use of the mails for all security information. I stated I would be very glad to take care of this matter and send him a report.

Very truly yours,

John Edgar Hoover
Director

RECORDED-60

J E H

5:37 PM

- Tolson _____
- Ladd _____
- Nichols _____
- Belmont _____
- Clegg _____
- Glavin _____
- Harbo _____
- Rosen _____
- Tracy _____
- Laughlin _____
- Mohr _____
- Tele. Rm. _____
- Holloman _____
- Gandy _____

JEH:mpd