



J. Edgar Hoover (left, in 1964 photo) lived with longtime aide Clyde Tolson.

Mafia used gay-sex photos to control Hoover, book says

ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Mafia blackmailed the late FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover with photos allegedly showing him engaged in homosexual acts, which effectively delayed a crackdown on organized crime by decades, a new book contends.

"The homosexual thing was Hoover's Achilles' heel," Seymour Pollock, an associate of mobster Meyer Lansky, is quoted as saying in the book by Anthony Summers, "Official and Confidential: The Secret Life of J. Edgar Hoover."

"Meyer found it, and it was like he pulled strings with Hoover. He never bothered any of Meyer's people," Mr. Pollock said in 1990, according to excerpts from the book released Thursday by Vanity Fair.

The book, published by G.P. Putnam's Sons, and a "Frontline" documentary airing Tuesday on PBS detail extensive contacts between Hoover and top organized crime figures.

Some were friendly, stemming from the FBI director's penchant for betting on horse races — many allegedly fixed by mobsters to ensure that Hoover won — and his love of

high living, some of it financed by the mob.

But there was a stick along with these carrots, and that was compromising photos of homosexual activity between Hoover and longtime aide Clyde Tolson that allegedly were obtained by Lansky and mobster Frank Costello.

Hoover, who headed the FBI from 1924 until his death in 1972, was rumored to be homosexual as long ago as the 1930s. The rumors arose in part from his sharing a bachelor house with Mr. Tolson, who died in 1975.

"This was always a rumor within the bureau," Hoover biographer Curt Gentry said in an interview.

Some agents who were in the "greet-Hoover" squads around the country — making sure hotel rooms were the right temperature and stocked with the right liquor when Hoover would visit — never found any evidence he was homosexual, said Mr. Gentry, who wrote the 1991 book "J. Edgar Hoover — The Man and the Secrets."

This is the fifth book written by Mr. Summers, a former British Broadcasting Corp. journalist who

also wrote "Goddess" about actress Marilyn Monroe.

Mr. Summers says the Mafia may have gotten the purported photos of Hoover from the Office of Strategic Services, the forerunner of the CIA. OSS chief William Donovan and Hoover were feuding over control of foreign intelligence, and the two men investigated each other.

Gordon Novel, identified by Mr. Summers as an electronics expert with CIA links, said CIA counterintelligence chief James J. Angleton showed him several compromising photos of Hoover engaged in homosexual sex.

Former OSS officer John Weitz is quoted in the book as saying the host of a 1950s dinner party showed him such a picture and identified those depicted as Hoover and Tolson, but Mr. Weitz didn't recognize them. Mr. Weitz also would not name the host.

Susan Rosenstiel, the fourth wife of mobster and liquor distributor Lewis Solon Rosenstiel, said she saw Hoover dressed in women's clothing and involved in homosexual play with young men at two sex parties at the Plaza Hotel in New York City.