

## FBI issues standard 'no comment,' swats at emerging conspiracy theories.



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In a tweet, WikiLeaks [announced](#): "Michael Hastings contacted WikiLeaks lawyer Jennifer Robinson just a few hours before he died, saying that the FBI was investigating him."

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In his final article, published June 7 by BuzzFeed, Hastings [wrote](#) of revelations that the National Security Agency was harvesting large quantities of phone and Internet information. "Perhaps more information will soon be forthcoming," the article said.

The FBI declined to say if Hastings was under investigation.

"We can neither confirm nor deny FBI investigative activity," Ari Dekofsky, a spokeswoman for the FBI's Los Angeles field office, told U.S. News. "Sometimes that can change, sometimes it can never change."



For

many journalists it's standard practice to file a Freedom of Information Act request for FBI files on recently deceased public figures. It's possible, however, that documents relevant to an ongoing investigation would be withheld.

A staffer at the FBI's national press office swatted at conspiracy theories that the reporter's death might have been related to an investigation.

"I don't see how killing could be part of an investigation," the staffer told U.S. News. "We're supposed to investigate and that's what we do." The woman declined to provide her name because she is not an official spokeswoman.

The Los Angeles Police Department has not yet positively identified Hastings as the person killed in the Mercedes-Benz C250 that crashed, pending a coroner report. His death, however, has been acknowledged by many news publications, [including](#) his employer, ahead of official confirmation.

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"First of all, we haven't 100 percent identified Mr. Hastings as the driver," Detective Connie White told U.S. News on Thursday. The department's traffic detectives believe speeding contributed to the crash, but White noted the exact cause of the crash is "still under investigation."

The motor of Hastings' car was thrown 100 feet from the crash site, LA Weekly [reports](#).

If Hastings was indeed under FBI investigation he would likely join a growing list of journalists ensnared in anti-whistleblower probes.

In court documents approved by Attorney General Eric Holder, Fox News reporter James Rosen was labeled a possible "co-conspirator" in breaking the law for reporting in 2009 on leaked material. That [revelation](#) was made by the Washington Post in May, days after The Associated Press [revealed](#) that the

Justice Department seized the records of 20 phone lines used by the news agency.

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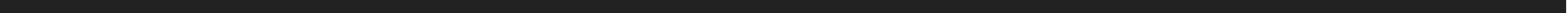
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