AP Enterprise: Justice Found Rumsfeld, Senior FBI Official Took Souvenirs From Sept. 11 Sites

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WASHINGTON (AP) - The Justice Department investigation that criticized FBI agents for taking souvenirs from the World Trade Center site also found that Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld and a high-ranking FBI official kept items from the Sept. 11 attack scenes.

The final investigatory report said the Justice Department inspector general confirmed Rumsfeld "has a piece of the airplane that flew into the Pentagon." The Associated Press obtained a copy of the report Friday.

Investigators learned Rumsfeld had the airplane part after an FBI agent saw the defense secretary on television "holding up pieces of building from the WTC and the Pentagon, saying he kept those items on his desk to remember the terrorist attacks."

A Pentagon spokesman did not immediately return a call Friday afternoon seeking comment.

The Justice Department investigation also collected testimony that Pasquale D'Amuro, FBI Director Robert Mueller's executive assistant director for terrorism until last summer, asked a supervisory agent to "obtain a half dozen items from the WTC debris so the items could be given to dignitaries."

Six items - none needed as evidence - were gathered and sent to D'Amuro, the report said.

D'Amuro, now the head of the FBI's New York office, told investigators that "he asked for a piece of the building as a memento" and that he was aware that agents had taken such items from other terrorist crime scenes over the years.

He said he got a piece of the building in June 2003 but denied asking for items for dignitaries. D'Amuro left the following month from FBI headquarters as Mueller's top terrorism official to become an assistant director in charge of the New York office.

Joe Valiquette, a spokesman for the New York FBI office, declined to comment Friday.

Surviving family members were surprised by the news.

"Unbelievable," said William Doyle, whose son was killed in the World Trade Center.

A New York woman suing local authorities for alleged negligence in the terrorist attacks said any souvenir-taking by officials was part of a larger failure to keep enough material, like steel beams, as evidence.

"Everybody has things that they probably should not have from the World Trade Center site," said Sally Regenhard, whose firefighter son died in the towers. "I'm sure there's probably all kinds of people that have all kinds of artifacts."

The Justice Department's report has not been officially released, but heavily deleted versions of the report began circulating around Washington last month showing 13 FBI agents had taken rubble, debris and items such as flags and a Tiffany crystal globe paperweight.

The bureau announced it was banning agents from taking items from crimes scenes, but no agents were being charged with crimes because the bureau did not have such a policy during the Sept. 11 investigation.

The full report obtained by the AP divulges some senior FBI managers were among those cited for having authorized or asked for mementos from the World Trade Center site.

In addition to D'Amuro, the report stated the now-retired head of the New York FBI office, Barry Mawn, asked and received an American flag and a piece of marble from the debris before his retirement.

The report also states the special agent in charge of the FBI's office in Knoxville, Tenn., Joe Clark, contacted FBI officials in New York requesting a piece of debris to display in an exhibit dealing with hate crimes. A 100-pound piece of steel was sent to Clark, the report said.

The report stated FBI agents who worked in New York repeatedly expressed their disgust that visiting agents and supervisors would seek souvenirs from the terrorist attacks.

Many interviewed regarded the debris as sacred, the reported stated, "and were disgusted by the fact that anyone would want to take items, including pieces of the building which were contaminated with blood and human body parts."

The report discloses that among the items taken, agents had cut World Trade Center security patches from the sleeves of shirt pieces found in the rubble.

One New York agent who worked on the evidence recovery team "stated it was a ghoulish prospect that anyone would want things from a crime scene where people have died," the report said.

Two senior FBI lawyers from New York told the investigators they were never consulted by FBI managers about the propriety of taking items, and they would have objected.

The FBI New York office's ethics officer, Steven Carolotto, "emphatically stated FBI agents could not profit from working any location" and the "calamity of the event was inconsistent with the taking of items for personal use."

Investigators also stated that they found evidence that the agent who ran the recovery effort at the landfill, Richard Marx of Philadelphia, gave "inconsistent" answers during the investigation after several colleagues claimed he had given them permission to take items.

Last summer, Marx was subjected to a lie detector test in which he said he did not recall giving items to Mawn, did not recall giving permission for evidence recovery agents to take items and insisted he was completely true when he gave an affidavit to the investigation.

"The results of the examination indicated that Marx was deceptive in his responses to all three questions," the Justice report said.