

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. paper	Interview of the First Lady by Trude Feldman; RE: personal info [partial] (9 pages)	06/14/1994	P6/b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
First Lady's Press Office (Lissa Muscatine)
OA/Box Number: 20112

FOLDER TITLE:

FLOTUS Press Office Interview Transcripts Volume IV 06/07/94--10/13/94 [Binder] :
[06/14/94 Feldman, Trude]

2011-0415-S
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RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
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- PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).
- RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

06/14/94

FEIDMAN, TRUDE

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

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June 14, 1994

INTERVIEW OF THE FIRST LADY
BY TRUDE FELDMAN

Q (Inaudible) article --

MRS. CLINTON: Okay.

Q -- because I thought he deserved (inaudible). Anyway, do you want to talk about your -- do you want to talk about the first state visit, or should we go into D-Day and make it more foreign, because I (inaudible) the foreign papers. Whatever is good for you. And then we'll (inaudible) something magazine that I proposed in my notes to you.

MRS. CLINTON: Okay. Okay. Well, you just get started.

Q What were your impressions of your D-Day trip, and did it help you make your mission as First Lady any differently? (Inaudible) outlook, you know?

MRS. CLINTON: I was so honored that my husband and I could have a chance to represent all of the people of America at the D-Day ceremonies, because my father was a World War Two veteran. My husband's father was a veteran who actually participated in the Italian campaign. So when we started our trip in Italy, it was very personally moving to my husband. And I was so proud of our country and so honored by all the veterans who had come back, that they would make that trip, and that they wanted to commemorate their service, and I felt the same way in England and in France.

I thought it was a remarkable time for our country to take a step back and not only honor people from World War Two who had saved democracy, but honor them by thinking about what we could do to solve our problems today, because the challenges of war are so overwhelming, and you have to rise to meet them as our country always has, but the challenges of peace in this time, after the Cold War is over, are also ones we have to meet, and that's the message I took back from my time, is that maybe the greatest honor we could give the World War Two generation is not only remembering what they did but

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build on what they did and make our country even better.

Q Well, that's what I -- one of the questions. What did the visit do for America's level of morale, because in 1944 we were seen as invincible, and we were like saving the world and keeping stability. We were really up there. And today we are sort of losing all our respectability, and our image is of deterioration. So in the 50 years that you've seen, you know, that our morale can be picked up because of the visit?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I think that if you go back and read the history of 1944, actually, Hitler thought the United States was very weak. If you read the new book about D-Day by Steven Ambrose, the historian, he argues that we were ill-prepared to get into World War Two, the country was ambivalent about taking that leadership position, we did not have the trained military, and we certainly did not have the materiel that we needed.

And so Hitler thought that America was soft, its best years were behind it, and that they would never be successful. And we proved him wrong. And I think that what has happened in the last 50 years is that occasionally we drift off course. As a democracy, that's understandable. We have many different voices we have to try to accommodate. But when the challenge is put before us as a nation, we always meet it.

And I think that's what we're doing now. In many ways, it was a simpler time between 1944 and the end of the Cold War because we knew exactly who our enemy was, you know. Our enemy was communism, and we had to stand firm against totalitarianism and the threat of Soviet expansionism. Now that is no longer on the horizon. We have new and different challenges around the world. And I'm very confident that America, as it sorts these new challenges out, is going to be ready to meet them, just as we were in 1944.

Q Now that you've seen the remnants of war and all that, what did that do to you emotionally, historically, and (inaudible) those cemeteries?

MRS. CLINTON: It was such an emotional experience all the way through the trip. To see row upon row of crosses and Stars of David, read the names of the missing on the walls of memorials in Italy and Britain and France was overwhelming. But I came away even more convinced that the ingredients for greatness are in the people of America, just as they always

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have been. And we just have to make up our minds that we're going to solve our problems and take on our new challenges, and that we can do that.

Q Did you think we should have more of a peacemaking in the world now? I mean, about -- do you think we should be the (inaudible) -- try to -- like Bosnia, and intervene? Or did you think that because it's a different world today, do you think because of what you saw that we should not intervene in the (inaudible), you know, world problems like Bosnia and (inaudible) and all that?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I don't really --

Q Because of what you saw there?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I don't really have an opinion about those issues. Those are very difficult matters that my husband and the military leaders and others in our country are dealing with. I think that the United States always has to lead, always has to take responsibility, but it has to be carefully thought through so that the decisions that are made will have the support of our nation. And I think that's what this President is doing as he helps chart a new course in the world that is really unknown because we've never had quite the situation where we are in today. But I have no doubt that America will continue to lead.

Q And what impact did the trip have on your perspective as your own role?

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, I didn't really think much about that. I was privileged to be part of it, and felt very honored by the opportunity to be there, and even though it was all very emotional, there were some very wonderful moments, like being on the U.S.S. George Washington with all of those young military representatives from the Navy and the Marines. There may have even been a few Air Force and Army folks snuck in as well. And it was just a great experience. It was very personally fulfilling for me.

Q But it didn't change your views about us being involved as we are now?

MRS. CLINTON: No.

Q And what about the President's image? When you

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came back, it just seemed like it was -- you know, you all were aglow. Do you think it changed his image here in America?

MRS. CLINTON: I think that Americans saw more of the President in his role as commander-in-chief and representative of our nation, and he did a superb job representing America, and I believe that made many in our country very proud. So I hope it helped to fill out the impression that Americans have of him, and made them know more about what he's trying to achieve.

Q Do you think it will help erase the thought that he didn't care to serve or anything like that? Wouldn't that help to erase it?

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, I don't -- I don't know. That's for each person to think about. But certainly the veterans who were there at all of these events were very supportive and appreciative of the role he played and the position he had taken.

Q Well, do you think that, after saying all that, that -- that -- Chelsea said, "Some day when I grow up I'm going to join the service." Would you encourage it?

MRS. CLINTON: Absolutely. In fact, she has talked about that as a possible route that she might be interested in. I took her to the Air Force Academy here in Colorado a few years ago. I think that a career in the military is a very exciting option for young men and women today.

Q So you would encourage her to go?

MRS. CLINTON: Sure. Absolutely.

Q Yeah. I was wondering why she didn't go because I think it was so educational.

MRS. CLINTON: She had her final exams.

Q Yeah. I know. But did you bring her something special?

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, I brought her some gifts from the ballet that we saw in Paris.

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Q In your reflections of your visit with the Pope, can I talk about that with you, I mean, what the --

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I was very honored to have a chance to have that audience. I had met the Pope when he was in Denver last summer, and I admire his strength of character and his faith, and find him a very impressive presence, and was pleased to have a chance to see him again.

Q How does (inaudible) your religion manifest itself?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I try to live by it. It's always a challenge to me to live according to my faith. And I rely on it every day in many different ways.

Q Do you meditate or pray?

MRS. CLINTON: I pray, yes.

Q Does religion help you overcome or cope with all the problems that you are facing now?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I think -- I think religious faith is one of the great rocks of human experience, and for me, it's as -- it's as much a part of my daily life as, you know, breathing or eating. It just is part of what I do and what I try to become. Its just always there for me.

Q And how do you nurture it?

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, by attending church, by reading the Bible, by praying, by reading theologians and religious writers, by talking to close friends and my husband and my daughter. It's just part of my life.

Q Do you have a favorite passage in the Bible?

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, I have many. I have many favorite passages and many favorite stories in the Bible. It's a source of constant reassurance. It's almost like I discover something new every week.

Q Does it help you to cope when you're upset (inaudible)?

MRS. CLINTON: Of course. Oh, of course. I am very

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grateful for my faith.

Q What about Russia? Did you feel that Russia should not have been included? There was a lot of talk (inaudible) during the trip that Russian was not included in the ceremony.

MRS. CLINTON: (Inaudible.)

Q (Inaudible.) There were a lot of demonstrations on it. Do you want to talk about the Japanese visits in Pearl Harbor, not the visit itself, but Pearl Harbor, or something special on the visit other than what you said last night?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I am just grateful that the Emperor and Empress who entertained us at the Imperial Palace when we attended the G7 meeting last July could be here in the United States for a lengthy visit, because it is important for Japan and the United States to develop closer ties of friendship and understanding. And both the Emperor and the Empress are extremely intelligent, learned people who, I believe, help interpret their country to Americans and, in turn, America to their country. So it was a very important visit from our perspective.

Q Do you get involved in foreign affairs or diplomacy? Are you interested in it?

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, I'm interested, as any citizen would be, but I don't get involved in it except, you know, to do whatever my appropriate role is.

Q How do you think you're helping the President enhance his presidency?

MRS. CLINTON: I have no -- I can't answer that, Trude. Somebody else would have to make a judgment on that. But I am trying very hard to help in any way that I can to support him in solving the problems facing our country and in reaching out to people, making them feel involved in the life of our country, giving them reasons to hope about the future. I believe that is a very important part of making our whole nation more positive and forward-looking again.

Q In your view, do you have any thoughts of why the people don't see his values and the fact that they won't change? Do you have any -- I mean, have you thought about it

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much?

MRS. CLINTON: No. I think about half the people do and about half the people don't, but that's par for the course when you have a President trying to change as much as he is. He -- just think of all of the special interests and political opposition that he has taken on. He took on people over the budget. He was right. They were wrong. We have now created more than three million new jobs. We've got the deficit going down. He took on people over NAFTA. He was right about expanding trade.

He took on people over trying to get the Brady bill finally passed and banning assault weapons. He was right to try to get guns out of the hands of criminals and the teenage gang members. He took on established interests to push national service, to push family and medical leave, to push education legislation, to make significant changes in the way we punish criminals and try to prevent crime. He's taken on a whole raft of interests when he advocates universal health care coverage for everybody. And now he's pushing welfare reform.

So, when you take on that many strong interests, they have lots of money, they have unlimited resources to put out propoganda and to mail things to people to get them upset and scared. So I think there's a lot of misunderstanding about what he has already done and what he would like to see done, but if that information gets out, I am very confident that the majority of the people are going to approve of what he is doing as President.

Q What do you think are the misperceptions and misconceptions of you that I could clear up?

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, I don't know. I think that part of what has happened to me is that people are only given a filter to see me that is usually one stereotype or another. Somebody writes about me being a mother and they say that's what I am, or they write about me having been a lawyer, and they say that's what I am, or they write about me, you know, worrying and planning state dinners, and they say, well, that's what I -- you know.

So there's no real effort to see me or many women as whole human beings with many different interests. And I think it will just take time, but eventually people will be able to make their own judgments about me, and they will recognize

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that what I want for my life is what I want for every woman's life, which is for each woman to be able to make the choices that are right for her, and that's what I advocate.

Q Would you like to describe yourself to a stranger?

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, I've never tried to do that.

Q Maybe that would -- you know, or what's the real you?

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, I don't know that there's a way to answer that question, because I think each one of us is real in a beautiful, broad sense of that term. Each one of us has a commitment to our families, our work if we work outside or inside the home, our faith, whatever it might be, and our community and how we want to serve it. And that may change as a woman goes through her life. My concerns at my age are not totally different from what they were when I was 20, but they are different because I am, you know, maturing and growing. I have different responsibilities. So I think it's always very hard to say, well, here is the real me.

But it's like when somebody moves into the neighborhood, you know, you judge them by the superficials, you know. What kind of car do they drive? What kind of clothes do they wear? And then you get to know the person, and then you get to make a judgment about who this person is in different settings. What are they like when you sit and have a cup of coffee? What are they like when you are driving car pool with them? What are they like when you are having dinner in their home? What are they like when you are working on a community project? So you get a full picture.

And I feel like I moved into America's neighborhood, and, you know, if somebody reads one thing about me they say, "Oh, well, you know, that's what she is," and then they read something else, and they say, "Oh, no, wait a minute. That's what she is." And I think it's just a question of getting to know (inaudible).

Q But for the first six months you had a very popular thing. I remember because I was in Moscow watching every day (inaudible). So if you had the past year, let's say, to live over, what would you do differently to get back your image?

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MRS. CLINTON: I don't think I've lost it. I mean, I wouldn't do anything different. I am who I am, you know, and I try to do the best I can every single day.

Q You wouldn't do anything different in the past year. Well, then, where -- what do you suppose started all this negativism, and why is it being perpetuated?

MRS. CLINTON: Because people have political and financial reasons for trying to tear down the President. I think it's very simple, Trude. I don't think it's at all complicated. I think that the groups that are opposed to the President's policies know they cannot beat him on the policy changes he wants to make for America.

They couldn't beat his responsible budget, and it worked. They couldn't beat the efforts he made against the gun lobby. He won. They lost. You could just go down the list. These groups don't want change the way the President wants it. If they can't beat him on the merits of the issue, how, then, do they say to themselves, they try to stop him? Well, they try to personally destroy him and me, and that's the way they play the game. I don't think it's very complicated, but I can't worry about those people.

People who get up every day and want to tear down and destroy instead of build up are people that I don't understand. They have a perfect right to do what they choose to do. But I'm not going to worry about them. I believe that what my husband is doing is the most important work a President has done in many years to try to get our country back on the right track, and people are trying to stop him from doing that. And I'm going to do everything I can to help him get the job done that he has started.

Q Well, that's what I meant. How are you enhancing this? I'll ask him, if he'll let me, how he is enhancing you, and --

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I'm trying to, you know, speak on behalf of his policies. I'm trying to work very hard on health care. I'm trying to make sure that I take care of him personally so that he has the personal support that any person needs in a terribly stressful job like this.

Q Do you comfort each other and say, "Oh, what a terrible story that was"? Do you give each other that kind --

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MRS. CLINTON: We don't -- we don't -- I mean, we certainly comfort each other, because we love each other very much, but we don't spend a lot of time worrying about what other people say, especially since so many of the people who are trying to tear this President down have reasons for doing it that have nothing to do with him personally. They just don't want him to cause the changes that he wants to bring about in the country. So, that's why they do it. So we really don't spend a lot of time paying attention to it.

Q What does change constitute to you? What do you mean by change and leadership?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, that this President ran for office saying that the American people are going to be put first, and that we were going to start dealing with problems that had been ignored for too long. And it means doing what he has done. I mean, it took five years to pass family medical leave. He got there and it got passed. It took years to pass Motor Voter. He got there and it got passed. Now, the reason it took so long is, people were opposed to those things.

It took years before we had a President who sent an honest budget to the Congress. This President did that, and then he fought as hard as anybody has fought for anything. And we got it passed, and the results speak for themselves. People are going back to work. Real middle class people have jobs again. They can refinance their houses. They can buy cars again. He is doing what needs to be done for the average working American, and that's what I mean by leadership. It's leading this country again, and putting the interests of the average working American first again. And that's why I'm so proud of him.

Q What should I do as far as communicating to the world what you are and what you propose to do? Let's say this is the beginning of your term and I came in, or, let's say, start all over again, the second half. What would you do? Like, for instance, they write that you want to be President. Okay, that's not true, but it got written, and it's kind of, you know, (inaudible).

MRS. CLINTON: Some people write -- some people write that the earth is flat, Trude.

Q Would you like to -- would you like to see a

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woman President in your time?

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, in my lifetime, I think it would be an excellent step if a woman were to run for President and be elected. But that's up to the individual woman, and what I'm interested in is what my husband is interested in. I'm interested in making my contribution to this country. I feel very strongly about it. I am lucky person. I had wonderful parents. I had a great public school education. I had terrific teachers. I had a lot of support and love all the way through my life. I am married to a supportive, wonderful man, and I have the best child in the world.

So I feel very, very blessed. And I want to give something back. And by that I mean, I want to try to give every child in America the chance to have the opportunity to live up to their own God-given potential. And that means I want them to have health care from the time the mother is pregnant all the way through their lives. I want them to have a good education, starting with the Head Start program, if that's what they need. Those are the --

Q Yes. I was asking you about the goals (inaudible).

MRS. CLINTON: Yes. Those are the kinds of things that I would like to have for every child. And so that's what motivates me. That's what gets me up and gets me going and enables me to ignore all of this silly talk and criticism, because it is meant to divert us from trying to achieve the hopes that I have of helping to create a country that is healthier and better educated, safer in our streets and our homes, and really leading the world again.

VOICE: Trude?

Q Is it time to leave?

VOICE: Yes. If you --

Q She says such beautiful things.

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, thank you, Trude.

Q I mean, you know what I told you last week.

VOICE: I know.

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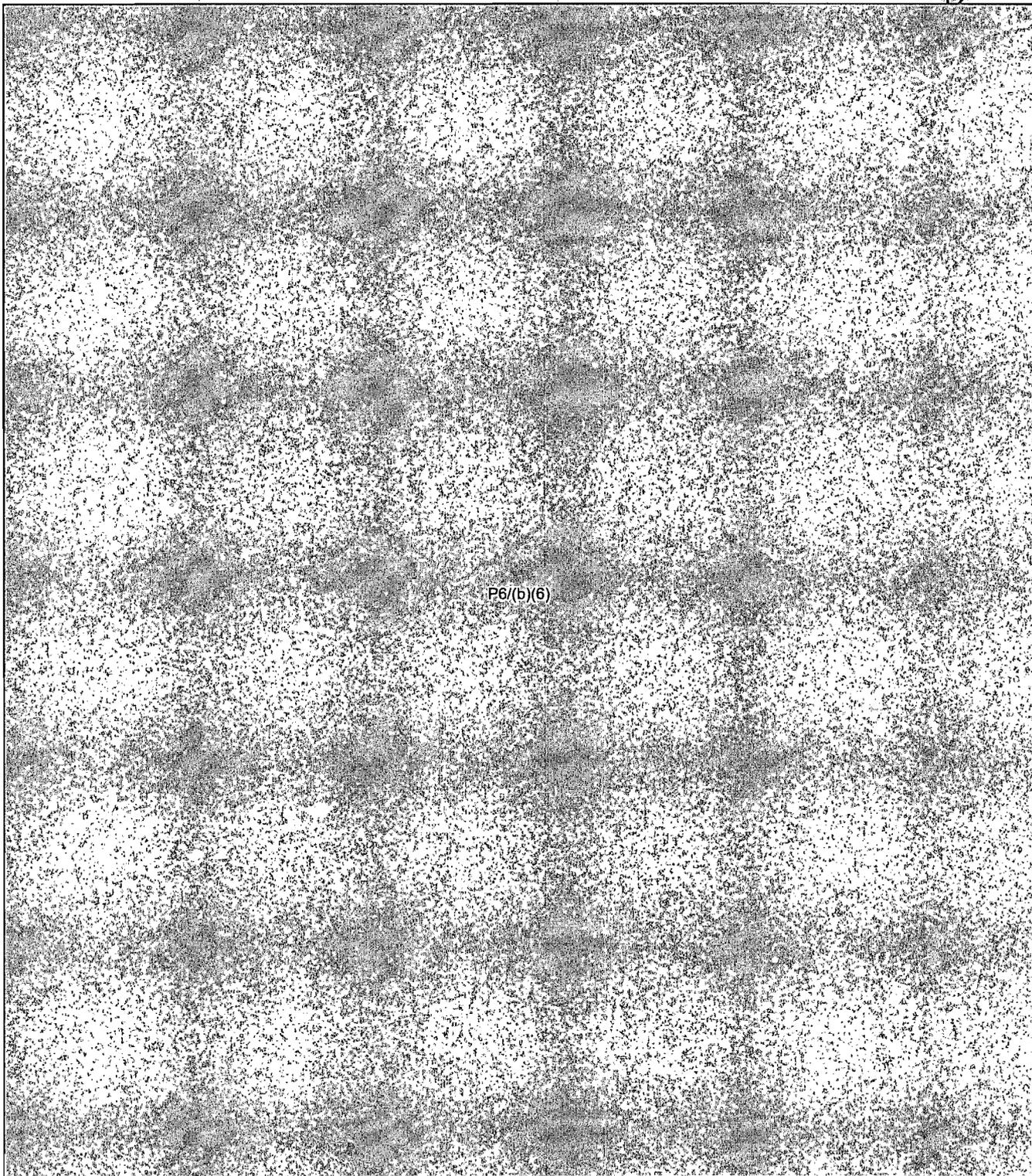
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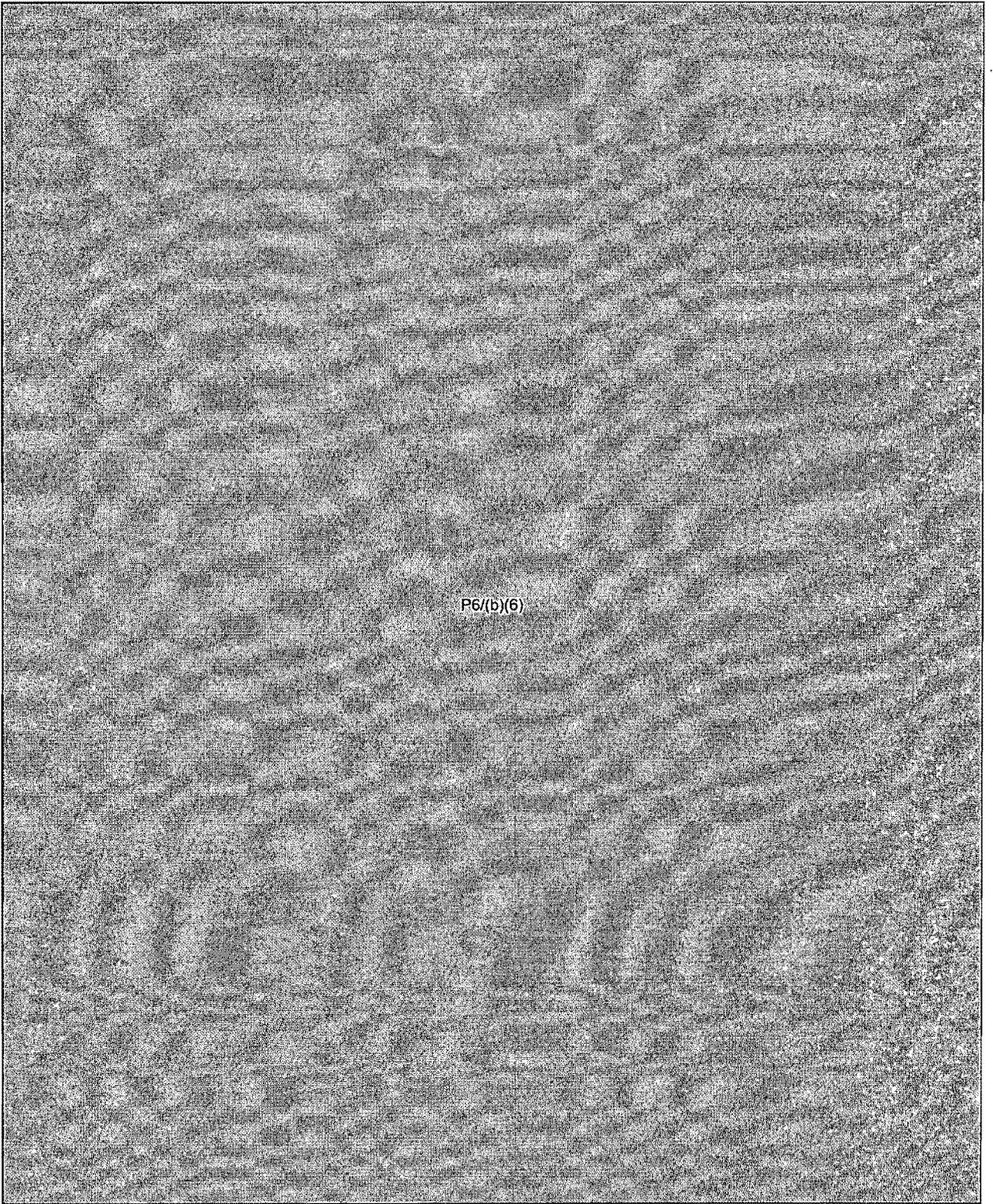
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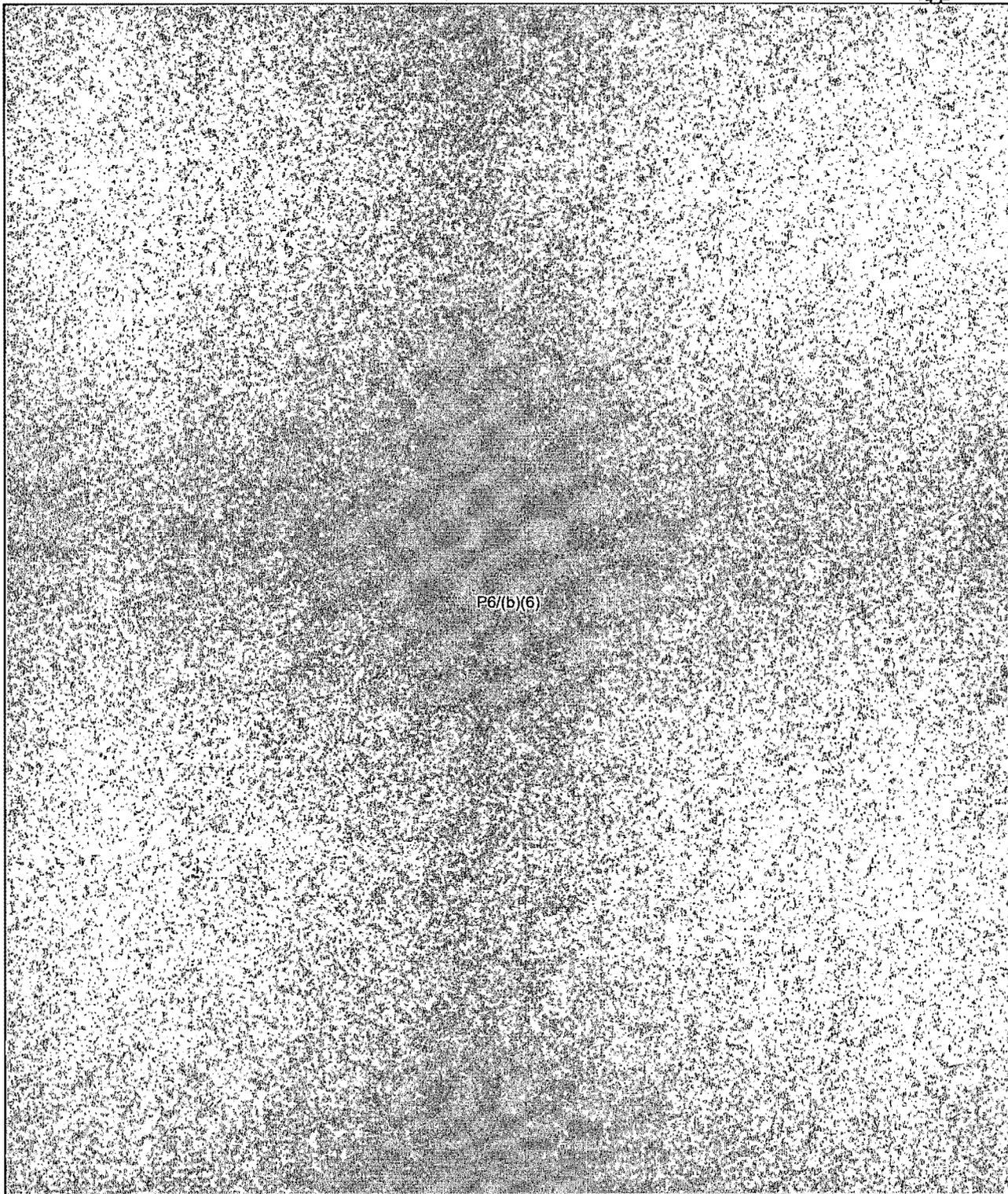
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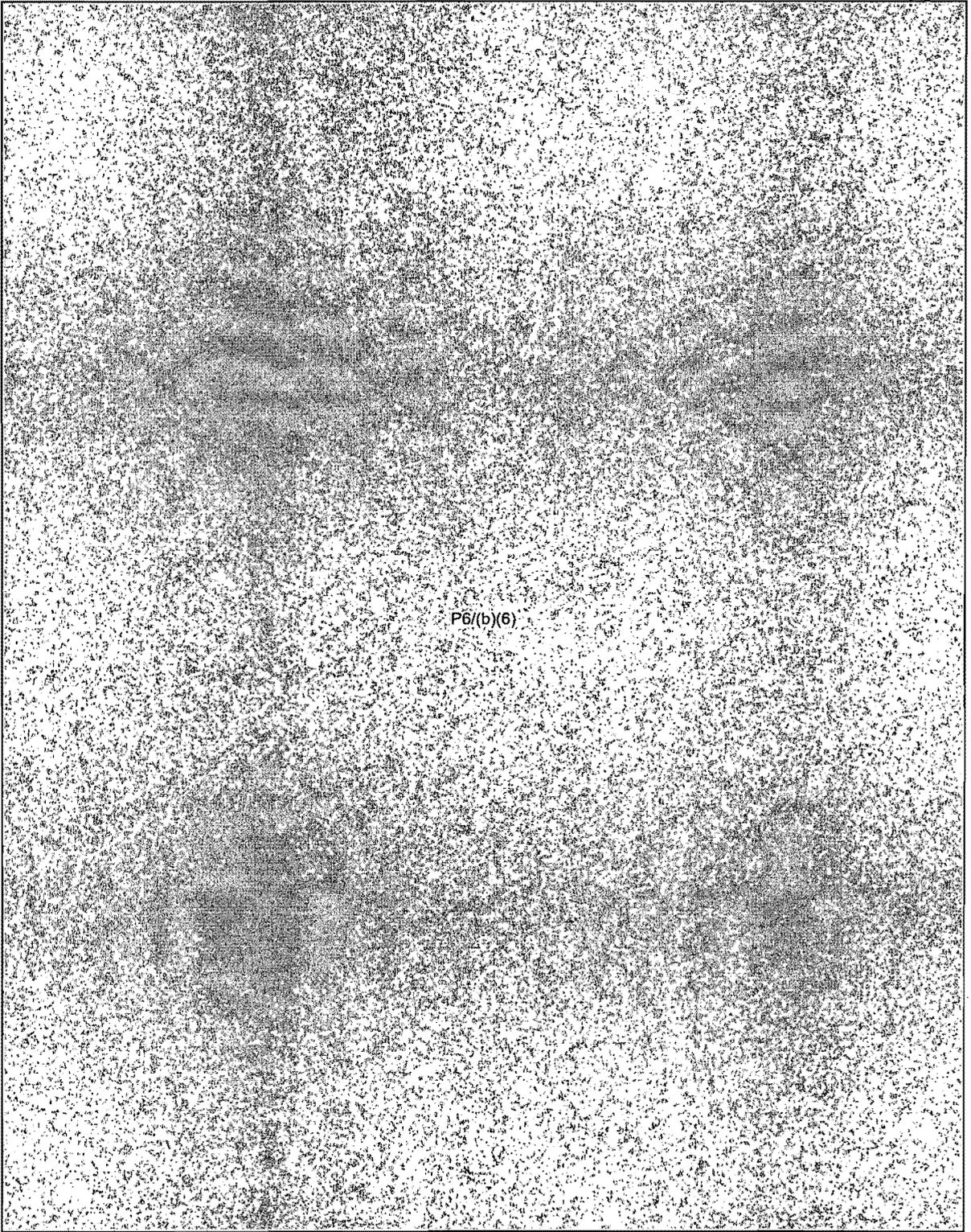
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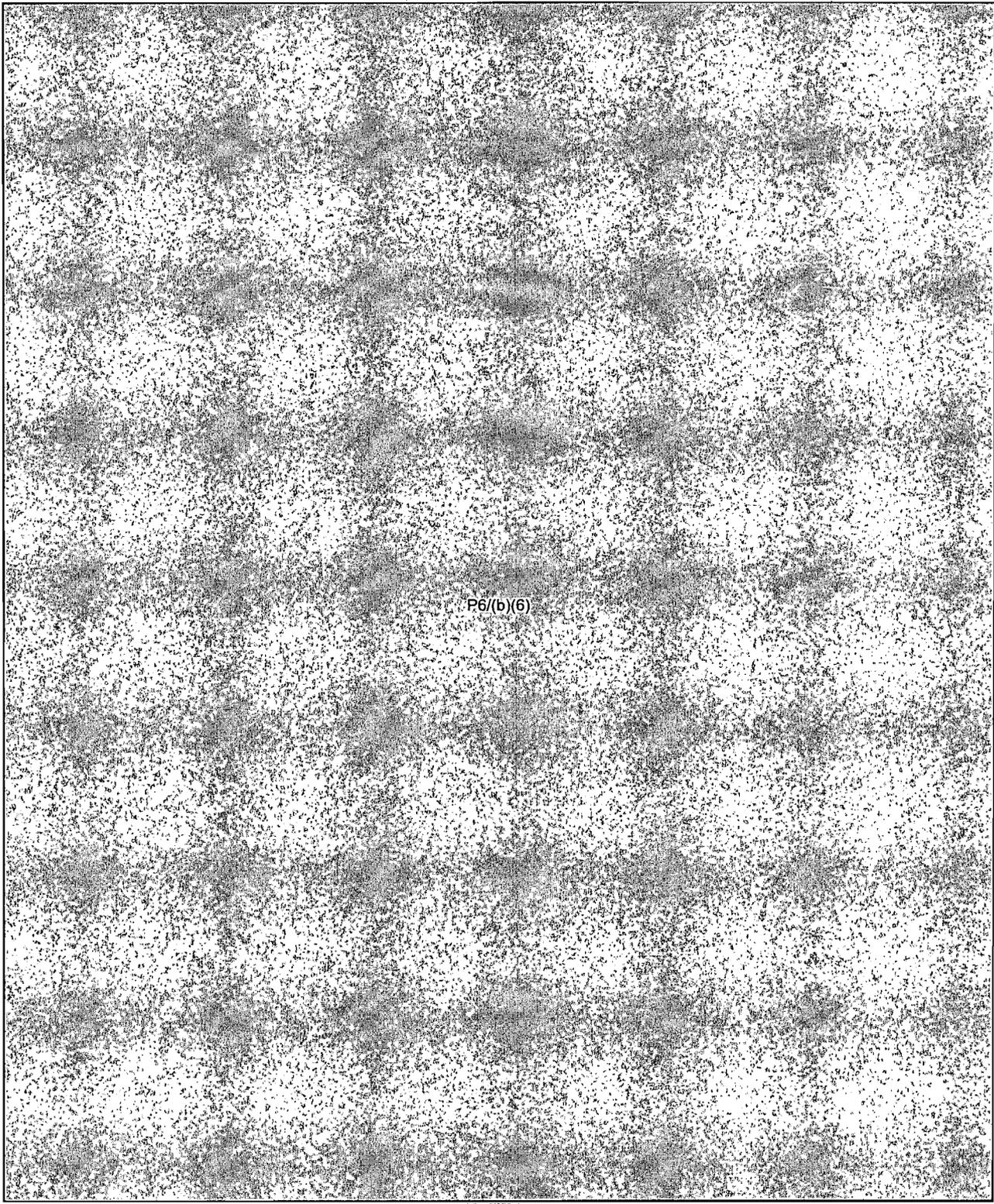
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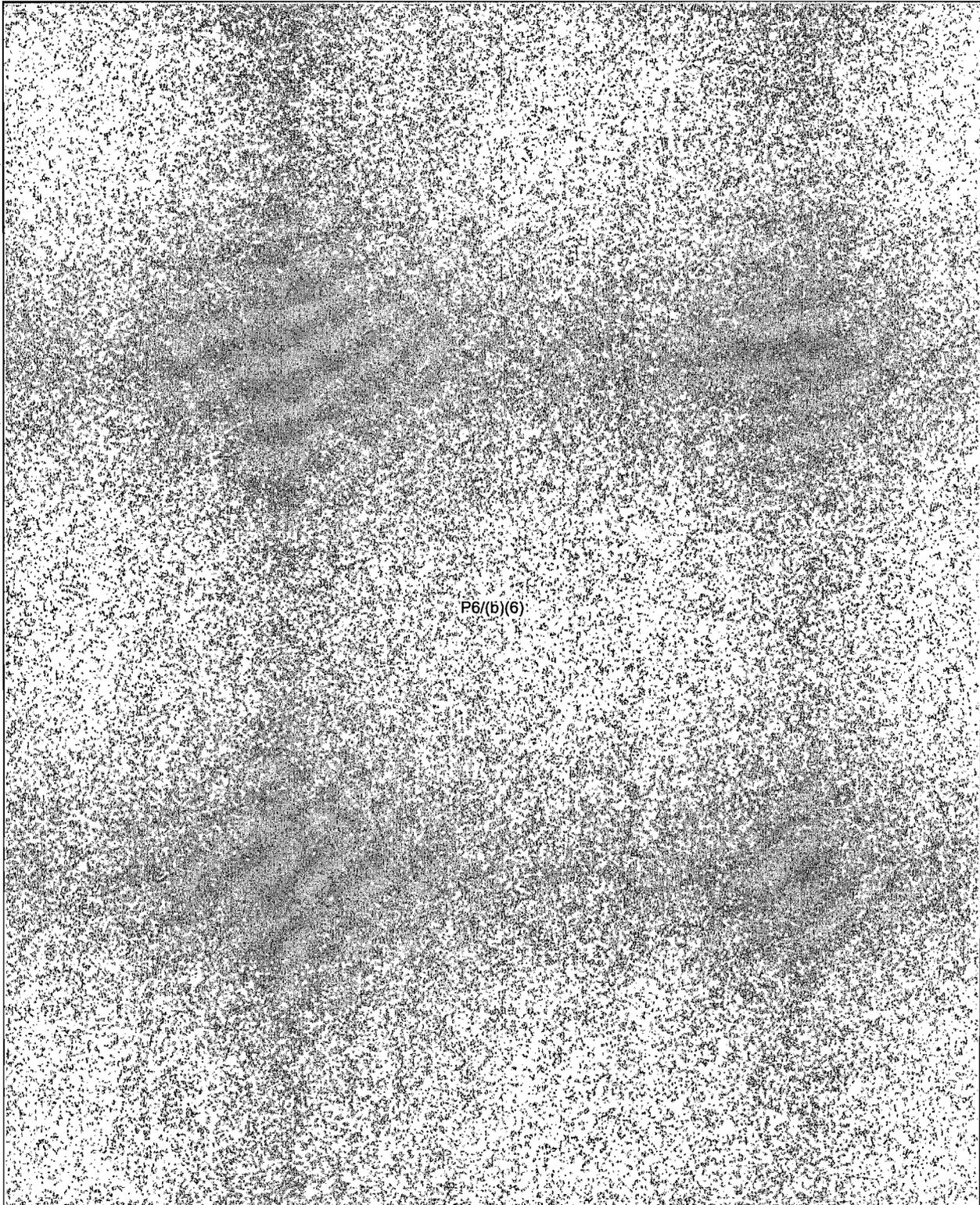
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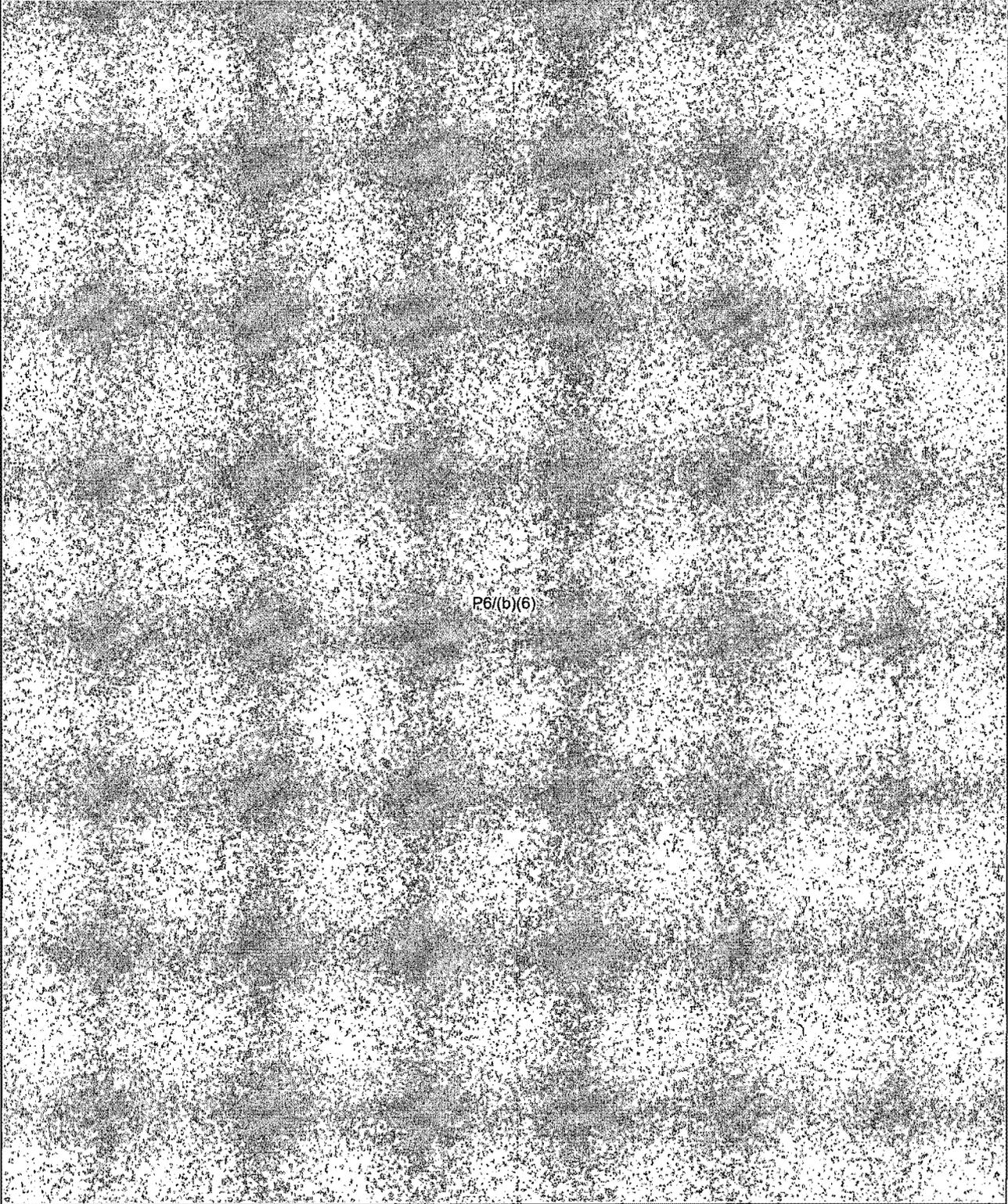
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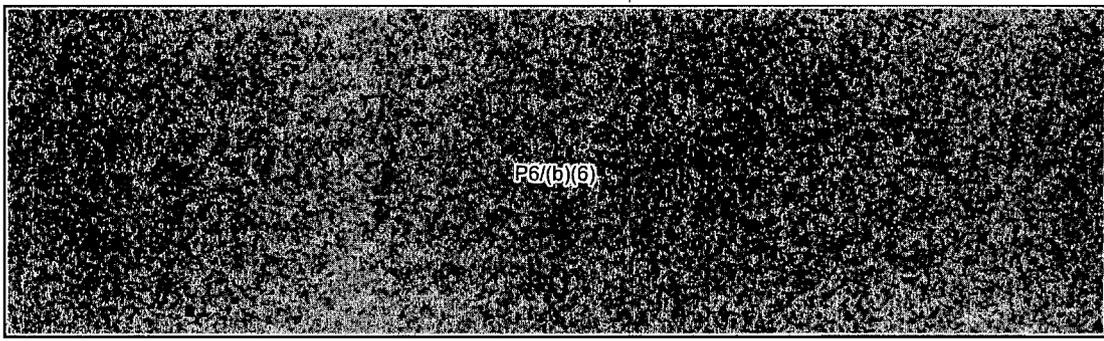
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