

A Black Said to Aid FBI Anti-King Plan

FBI, From A1

Dated Dec. 1, 1964, and addressed to the late FBI assistant director William C. Sullivan, the memo alludes to a discussion the anonymous leader had had a few days earlier with another high-ranking FBI official, Cartha (Deke) DeLoach.

"[Deleted] stated to DeLoach that he was faced with the difficult problem of taking steps to remove King from the national picture," the FBI memo said. "He indicates in his comments a lack of confidence that he, alone, could be successful."

As a consequence, the memo suggested that DeLoach "have a further discussion with [deleted] an offer to be helpful to [deleted] in connection with the problem of the removal of King from the national scene."

DeLoach, it was added, could also suggest the [deleted] might desire to call a meeting of Negro leaders in the country including, among others, civil rights leaders such as James Farmer and A. Philip Randolph as well as some prominent black judges, ministers and public officials.

"These men could be called for the purpose of learning the facts as to the bureau's performance in the fulfillment of its responsibilities under the civil rights statute, and this could well be done at such a meeting, the memo, composed by FBI official J. A. Sizoo, continued. "In addition, the bureau, on a highly confidential basis, could brief such a group on the security background of King (deleted). The use of a tape, such as contemplated in your memorandum, together with a transcript for convenience in following the tape should be most convincing," Sullivan was told in a sentence that was crossed out by pen or pencil.

The memo concluded by stating that those invited to such a meeting might then see "the danger of King to the overall civil rights movement."

"(Deleted) is already well aware of this," the FBI memo emphasized. "This group shall include such leadership as would be capable of removing King from the scene if they, or their own volition, decided this was the thing to do after such a briefing. The group should include strong enough men to control a man like James Farmer and make him see the light of day. This might have the effect of increasing the stature of (deleted) who is a capable person and ambitious."

The Dec. 1, 1964, date of the memo coincides with the peak of the FBI's campaign against King, who was about to receive the Nobel Peace Prize to Hoover's great chagrin. The allusion to the "tape" was evidently a reference to a recording of compromising, sexually explicit, excerpts from King's FBI-bugged hotel rooms.

There is no indication that the meeting of black leaders proposed in the FBI memo was ever held, but according to the Senate Intelligence

King smear campaign, information "about Dr. King's private life" was TR AD 5 FBI made available at the time to various people.

The FBI first installed a concealed microphone in King's room at the Willard Hotel here on Jan. 6, 1964, and during the next two years installed at least 14 more "bugs" in hotel rooms King occupied across the country.

On Jan. 8, 1964, two days after the first bug was installed, the FBI's Sullivan proposed that the bureau pick "the right kind of a national Negro leader" who could eventually "assume the role of leadership of the Negro people when King has been completely discredited."

In that same memo, Sullivan also nominated a candidate, name still unknown, who, the FBI assistant director said, was "truly remarkable for a man so young."

Other documents obtained from Hoover's files by the Center for National Security Studies include:

- A 1969 memo disclosing that the FBI had picked up a conversation between King and "Cassius Clay" five years earlier. Clay was appealing his 1967 Selective Service conviction on various grounds, including the charge that his case had been tainted by "illegal government eavesdropping."

- In a 1966 memo apparently referring to the King bugs, then-Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach warned Hoover that "these are particularly delicate surveillances and we should be very cautious in terms [of] the non-FBI people who may from time to time necessarily be involved in some aspect of installation."

Black Reportedly Worked With FBI To Discredit King

5/29/78

By George Lardner Jr.
Washington Post Staff Writer

The FBI apparently worked with a black leader in its long undercover campaign to discredit the late Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., according to newly disclosed FBI documents.

The tentative scheming was disclosed in one of a series of memos from the "Official and Confidential" files of the late FBI director J. Edgar Hoover. The Center for National Security Studies obtained them under the Freedom of Information Act.

Senate investigators have previously revealed that the FBI's campaign against King included a proposal to groom a new "national Negro leader" to take his place.

But in making that discovery some two years ago, the Senate Intelligence Committee also said that it had contacted the proposed successor to King only to be told that "he was not aware of the FBI's plans for him or of any attempts by the FBI to promote him as a civil rights leader."

The newly declassified FBI memo suggests otherwise although it is far from conclusive. The name of the man the FBI had secretly anointed has never been made public. In addition, the FBI deleted the name of the black leader from the memo obtained by the center.

See FBI, A7, Col. 1