Robert Harper
News-Post
Frederick, MD 21701

3/23/93

Dear Bob,

Sunday's Memphis Commercial-appeal carried a lengthy story on Army intelligence domestic spying on blacks going back to World War I and including the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. CBS net radio news reported it 1 a.m. Monday, when I heard it. The accuracy of the CBS report was later confirmed to me by an old friend who had been a reporter for the folded afternoon sister paper. He was going to try to get a copy for me, for archival purposes.

At 2 a.m. this morning, again listening to the CBS hourly news on a New York station that faded during a follow-up item, that report got me to thinking.

An AP reporter working out of but not part of the Atlanta office interviewed me for their anniversary piece. I would like to get in touch with this man, whose name is Sullivan, because the FBI records I got in my FOIA lawsuit for its King assassination and related files is loaded with leads for similar stories.

If you would please ask AP how I can reach him I can write him. Or if you can get this to him by the modern electronic gadgetry that remains a mystery to me, that would be better. In the event you can, I add more.

The FBI's files about which I am confident these leads exist are those of the Memphis FBI office on a group of young black who took the unfortunate name The Invaders and its file on the sanitation-workers strike in support of which King was in Memphis. I believe there may be some lead in what the FBI calls its MURKIN file, on the assassination.

These leads exist on the field-office records only, but I have those of headquarters, too. The two files represent a rather large domestic-intelligence operation. It is in the distribution of copies of the Memphis records to other government components that there are these leads. I believe distribution was not limited to Army intelligence, I believe also they will reflect the regional collection-point and operations center of this Army (at least) domestic intelligence operation.

If Memphis is typical then the police of the cities were also part of a rather large domestic intelligence net that may not have been limited to blacks but certainly does include them. The spying of the Memphis police extended into the Congressional campaign of a black candidate, Harold Ford, currently under charges I do not recall, to be tried. The Memphis police gave the FBI copies of the spies' reports that I have from the FBI.

Turning the pages of these files to note the distribution to military components should not take much time. Although I do not know that it is possible or that Sullivan would want to have anyone else do it if he is interested, There is a duplicate files of these particular records at Hood, where they have been used by students preparing papers, and in their studies. One I remember that was quite good was by the student who is now

Hood's director of recruiting. (She'd planned to follow her brother to Notre Dame's law school but got married instead.) Perhaps a student could list the military offices to which the FBI routed copies. They are listed on the first pages of the records. The extent of this domestic spying by the FBI itself is indicated by the files to which copies are routed. The names of persons alone on a few of these records are close to a page in length in some instances.

I won't be surprised if anyone gets these Army files if they reflect the domestic spying of the local police, as the FBI's Memphis records do. This might be of interest to some AP members in the areas covered by the files.

Unless during the past 12 years the regulations were changed, the estruction of these Army and similar files is prohibited without the assent of the National Archives.

Of course Sullivan or anyone else who may be interested can use my files and my copier. As he or she might also work more rapidly that Hood by having a student make xeroxes of the first pages of interest as the reporter goes over the files,

If Sullivan wants to know what military distribution is reflected in these records I now do not recall the specific offices. Jerry McKnight might. He did two fine, understated studies, one on each file, published by the South Atlantic Quarterly. He redently finished a book manuscript on King's last major project, one he did not live to direct, the Poor Peoples' Campaign. I have not seen those records. He got them by FOIA. They may also reflect military domestic spying. At 3 a.m. I can't ask him!

I write you instead of phoning later in part on the chance that you can get this to Sullivan and in part because about the time you get to the office I'm having a visit from cousins I've seen only once in more than a decade.

The Commercial-Appeal is Scripps-Howard. This kind of story and the space it was given - Page one plus three full inside pages - is a radical departure for that paper as I knew it when I was there as Ray's investigator, after my book was published. (It is being republished now as a quality paperback by Carroll & Graf, retitled "Martin Luther King: the Assassination, if you or Franklin would like a copy.) The then city editor, who would not let me have copies of pictures but did allow me to look at the morgue, is not, I understand, the top editor.

Our best to you and Elinor,

Harold