



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

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In Reply, Please Refer to
File No.

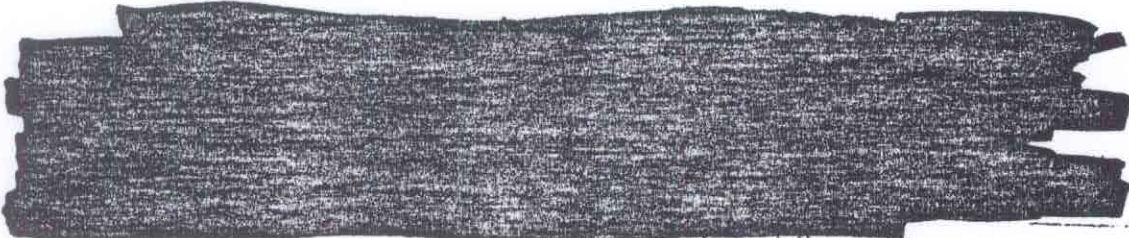
Memphis, Tennessee
June 6, 1969

Re: INVADERS
RACIAL MATTERS

Following is a summary of recent activities involving the Invaders, a Memphis, Tennessee, youthful black power group with headquarters at 271 Vance Avenue, Memphis, Tennessee:

(A characterization of the Invaders is set forth in the Appendix Section.)

On June 2, 1969, Lieutenant E. H. Arkin, Intelligence Bureau, Memphis, Tennessee, Police Department, and a first source both advised that they had learned that Coby Vernon Smith, male Negro, 2240 Brown, Memphis, who in recent months has been the spokesman and adviser and publicity agent for the Invaders, held a party at his home, 2240 Brown, in the garage apartment at the rear thereof. During the course of the party, Robert Leon Worsham, Jr., recently a Memphis State University (MSU) student, a male Negro, who resides at 1500 Davis Street, 'made a play' for Coby Smith's girl friend, Polly McLean (phonetic), and as a result Worsham was thrown out of the party. At approximately 1:40 a.m., June 1, 1969, shortly after being thrown out of the party, Worsham returned to Coby Vernon Smith's home and shot Smith with a .22 caliber pistol, the bullet striking Smith in the upper part of his right leg resulting in a slight flesh wound. Robert Leon Worsham, Jr., was arraigned in City Court on June 2, 1969, Division II, the court of Judge Bernie Weinman. He was held to the state on a not-guilty plea, bond was set at \$1500.00, and Worsham was represented in court by Attorney Phillip Kaminsky.



157-1067

(See Page 1a)

157-1067-1248
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INVADERS

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 - (1 - 157-1067)
 - (1 - 157-556, Possible Racial Violence, Major Urban Areas)
 - (1 - 157-1168, Racial Situation in Tennessee)
 - (1 - 100-4394, [REDACTED])
 - (1 - 157-1626, [REDACTED])
 - (1 - 157-1820, [REDACTED])
 - (1 - 157-1205, Black Panther Party)
 - (1 - 170-70 Sub, [REDACTED])
 - (1 - 157-NEW, [REDACTED])

WHL:gmh
(34)

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[REDACTED]
Polly [REDACTED] (pronounced), girl friend of Coby Vernon Smith, is a female Negro, age 22, and her address is listed as 245 Hawthorne Street, Brooklyn, New York. She has claimed to be employed with a theatrical group called the "Children's Theatre Group," address 35 East 75th Street, New York, New York.

Both Lieutenant Arkin and source one advised that they understood through reliable sources that Coby Vernon Smith, despite his leg injury, was able to graduate from Southwestern College at Memphis on June 1, 1969.

On June 4, 1969, Lieutenant Arkin advised that John Charles Smith, male Negro, date of birth October 12, 1948, FBI Number [REDACTED] who claims residence at 2430 Volland Street, Memphis, in care of his mother, Mrs. John Borders, is being sought on a warrant issued by the Memphis Police Department charging him with attempted homicide, the details of which are as follows:

At approximately 1:36 a.m., June 4, 1969, one Freddie Pruitt, a male Negro, age 20, claiming legal residence 865 South Fourth Street, Apartment 25, Memphis, Tennessee, was found lying on his back on the sidewalk just north of 248 Linden. Various witnesses stated that shortly prior thereto he had been shot by a male Negro, being shot in the back, and that a female companion when she attempted to run into Walker's Lounge, 271 Hernando, had been shot by the same assailant in both legs.

Lieutenant Arkin advised that records of the Memphis, Tennessee, Police Department revealed that a report of Officer R. C. Edwards revealed that Edwards, along with Lieutenant J. M. Prescott, proceeded to John Gaston Hospital where they interviewed the female victim, Rosetta Webb, who claims she resides on the third floor over Walker's Lounge located at 271 Hernando which is just around the corner from 248 Linden. The report revealed that she, along with her boy friend, Freddie Pruitt, had about ten minutes before the shooting left the Harlem House on Hernando; walked toward Linden where they stopped to talk to a friend of hers known as "Stuff" who was later identified as Ernestine Johnson, a female Negro; that she began kidding with Johnson regarding some

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money; that Johnson began pulling on her clothes, talking in a loud voice; and that Rosetta's boy friend, Freddie Pruitt, tried to break up the argument which resulted in Johnson striking Freddie. An individual known to her as John C. Smith, later identified by her as John Charles Smith, FBI Number 584 632 F, last known to reside at 2430 Vollentine, pulled a pistol from his blue jeans pants pocket underneath a dashiki shirt and shot Freddie Pruitt in the back. She told Smith and Johnson that she was going to call the police and she ran across Hernando toward Linden. As she crossed Linden, she heard four shots being fired at her, all of the shots missing her. She then ran to Walker's Lounge located at 271 Hernando, started to run up the steps, and through a glass door, when Smith fired through the glass door striking her in one leg, the bullet penetrating into the other leg.

Lieutenant Arkin advised that Rosetta Webb's condition is not serious; that the condition of Freddie Pruitt is quite serious; and that he is in the Intensive Care Ward at John Gaston Hospital, Memphis, Tennessee. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

On June 4, 1969, sources one and two both advised that during recent months Rosetta Webb has been considered by them to be a member of the Invaders and that she spends much of her time in the Invaders Headquarters, 271 Vance Avenue, and in association with various Invaders in the city of Memphis. They advised that Freddie Pruitt and Ernestine Johnson are not known to them to have any formal connection with the Invaders.

On June 4 and again on June 5, 1969, Lieutenant Arkin advised that John C. Smith is currently in a fugitive status and has not been located.

Lieutenant Arkin pointed out that John C. Smith recently had the title of Assistant to the Minister of Defense of the Invaders but that in reality this was a title in name only. He advised that Smith is currently on parole from the State of California where he was charged on or about April 23, 1965, with Assault With a Deadly Weapon and that he had in anger fired at a theater manager through the theater door and hit a customer in the buttocks, using a hand gun as the assault weapon.

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Lieutenant Arkin further advised that John C. Smith was recently arrested in Memphis, Tennessee, on a charge of issuing fraudulent payroll checks drawn on a fictitious television company in Memphis and is currently free on bond on this charge.

On June 5, 1969, Lieutenant Arkin advised that, according to Police Department records, at approximately 4:40 a.m., June 5, 1969, Police Department Officers R. W. Sojourner and W. R. Rutherford while cruising in the vicinity of Vance and Hernando found on the north side of Vance at Hernando a group of Negroes crowded around a male Negro and heard some of the crowd yell that the male Negro had just been stabbed. This male Negro was found bleeding from the right chest and right cheek. Two female Negroes, namely Joyce Smith, age 20, of 841 Saxon, and Mary Helen or Mary Ellen (last name unknown), according to officers, had gotten into a fight inside the Twilight Zone Lounge at 299 Vance. Joyce Smith was located and stated that this was true. Joyce Smith also stated when the fight at the Twilight Zone Lounge, which occurred shortly before the stabbing, broke up, she and Mary Helen left and went to 271 Vance, the headquarters of the Invaders, and that a few minutes later one Otis Parnell (identified by sources one and two as an Invader) told her that Lance Watson had been stabbed by a female Negro, Mary Helen or Mary Ellen (last name unknown). The officers thereafter determined that the stabbing victim was Lance "Sweet Willie Wine" Watson (Memphis Police Department No. 64208, FBI Number 209 402 D), date of birth February 3, 1938, at Memphis, Tennessee, a male Negro, who lists his legal address as 333 Webster, Memphis, Tennessee. The officers proceeded to John Gaston Hospital where Watson was taken. He told them that he had broken up a fight between the two female Negroes, Joyce Smith and Mary Helen or Mary Ellen, and that when he turned around Mary Helen or Mary Ellen stabbed him in the right chest with a broken beer bottle and stabbed him a second time on the right cheek. He stated that when he ran to an oncoming car to seek assistance, she hit him on the head with the bottle. He stated that he did not want to prosecute this individual.

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Lieutenant Arkin stated that he had determined from officials at the John Gaston Hospital that Watson's condition was not serious and that as of the afternoon of June 5, 1969, he was in the Intensive Care Ward of John Gaston Hospital as a precautionary measure. The chest wound had not been sufficient to penetrate his lung and the wound was somewhat superficial as was the wound on his cheek.

[REDACTED]

On June 2 and 3, 1969, sources one and two advised that the Invaders are in a state of confusion; that they have no finances; that they are remaining at 271 Vance Street, a store front, on a day-by-day basis, being some two months in arrears with their rent; that there is no real leadership; and that Lance "Sweet Willie Wine" Watson has apparently become somewhat disenchanted with his position of Chairman of the Invaders and recently has been spending most of his time in an effort to make some money by taking orders for dashikis, an Afro-type shirt, which are being handmade by a group of Negro women at 241 Linden. They stated further that Lance Watson and another Invader, Johnnie Lee Frierson, former Memphis State University (MSU) student, had written the lyrics to a song "I Have Got A Feeling," recorded by the Stax Recording Company, Memphis, Tennessee, by one "Ollie and the Nightingales," a singing group.

[REDACTED]

Lieutenant Arkin, on June 4, 1969, advised that the dashiki shop at 241 Linden is listed in the name of the Carodine Furniture Distributing Company and that according to records of the Memphis Light, Gas and Water Division, Memphis, Tennessee, the utilities at 241 Linden are in the name of the Carodine Furniture Distributing Company. Lieutenant Arkin advised that a confidential source of the Memphis Police Department advised that other services at this company list a phone under Number 527-2998 and that records of the City Tax Office, Memphis, revealed that 241 Linden is listed under the name I. E. or Jeanette Andreuccetti of 1849 East Brooks, Memphis, Tennessee.

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The 1968 Memphis City Directory reveals that Alonzo Carodine lives at 230 Linden Avenue and a Carodine Furniture Distributing Company is listed at 199 Linden. Alonzo's wife is listed as Grace; his daughter is listed as Yvonne, a student, 220 Linden.

On June 4, 1969, the first source advised that Yvonne Carodine married one Richard Bonhart, male Negro, age 24, and that they did recently live at 342 Tampa Cove. Richard Bonhart has recently attended Memphis State University and is currently employed as a Reporter for the "Memphis Commercial Appeal," a daily newspaper at Memphis, Tennessee. The source advised that Richard Bonhart has been a member of the Black Student Association (BSA), a small but militant black group at Memphis State University, which engaged in sit-ins in the Office of the Memphis State University President on April 23 and April 28, 1969, resulting in some 105 arrests on the latter date, during which the participants in the sit-in were charged with Trespassing on School Property, a state charge, and they have been indicted by the Shelby County Grand Jury but the trials have not as yet been set. The same source advised that Bonhart has been associating in the dashiki shop at 241 Linden Avenue with two other BSA members and MSU students, Isaac Taylor and Floyd Peete.

Source two confirmed this information adding that Isaac Taylor has allegedly told Lance "Sweet Willie Wine" Watson that he will pay him a 10 per cent commission on any dashikis which Watson is able to sell.

Lieutenant Arkin advised that the Johnnie Lee Frierson, with whom Watson has been engaged in the writing of songs, is the same Johnnie Lee Frierson currently under indictment, having been charged a few months ago with the severe physical assault on the MSU campus of a white male student, during which Frierson severely injured the student in the face, resulting in plastic surgery and bone surgery being performed on the victim.

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On June 1, 1969, the first source advised that on May 31, 1969, Melvin Smith, Minister of African Culture and History of the Invaders, was walking around the downtown area of Memphis with four male Negroes whom he identified as being from Chicago, Illinois, and being connected with the Black Panther Party in Chicago. Melvin Smith had quite a discussion with this group regarding the problem of organizing black militants in Memphis, indicating that there was a lack of organization and a lack of unity, and one Reverend Henry Logan Starks, male Negro, pastor of St. James AME Church, told this group of alleged Black Panthers that the Black Panthers were not wanted in Memphis, Tennessee, by the mass of the Negro race.

(A characterization of the Black Panther Party is set forth in the Appendix Section.)

This group was not known to be traveling by automobile. All of these so-called Black Panthers appeared to be in their twenties; one was extremely tall, about 6 feet 4 inches, weighing approximately 190 to 200 pounds, with medium brown complexion, full beard and goatee, black hair worn in a high Afro hairdo, dressed in a green dashiki and black bell-bottom trousers, and could have been 30 years of age or possibly older. This individual wore dark glasses. A second individual was described as a male Negro in his middle thirties, about 5 feet 10 inches tall, weighing 160 to 170 pounds, with dark complexion, small goatee on his chin and a mustache, wearing his hair in a very long Afro hairdo, and wearing a blue jeans suit, jacket and pants. A third member was described as male Negro, about 24 or 25 years of age, 6 feet tall, weighing 180 pounds, with dark complexion, clean shaven but having a mustache, with medium-length Afro hairdo, wearing a blue jeans suit over which he wore a dashiki. The fourth member appeared to be somewhat younger, possibly 21 to 23, 5 feet 11 inches in height, weighing 200 pounds, with light brown skin, short Afro hairdo, mustache with a Van Dyke type beard, wearing a black shirt and pants.

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One of the so-called Black Panthers indicated that the group would leave Memphis on June 1, 1969, and they were merely looking over the town with regard to the possibility of organizing in Memphis.

Source one stated that he had no specific proof that this group actually was members of the Black Panther Party.

This information was corroborated on June 2, 1969, by a second source who advised that the above four individuals were first seen in Memphis as early as May 30, 1969, according to information furnished by Lance "Sweet Willie Wine" Watson, who claimed that this group had pulled their guns and shot at a police helicopter but that Wine told them to stop because the police might put him back in jail.

(Lieutenant Arkin has advised that he has been able to make no determination that anyone has recently shot at a police helicopter.)

The second source advised that on the evening of May 31, 1969, the above four described alleged Black Panthers were in contact with some of the Invaders. The largest individual of the four indicated that the group would leave town on June 1, 1969, and might return to Memphis at a later date. They left the Invaders headquarters on foot and according to source two have not been seen since.

Source two similarly pointed out that he has no specific proof that this group were members of the Black Panther Party, pointing out that many visiting Negroes in an effort to impress individuals will claim that they are with some nationally known black power group.

Also on June 2, 1969, source one advised that on that date a white prostitute, name not known, who works the downtown Beale Street-Hernando-Vance-Linden black neighborhood, appeared in the area with a patch over her eye, claiming that a group of young Invaders physically assaulted her and "worked her over,"

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apparently not wanting her in their area.

On June 3, 1969, [REDACTED] advised that he had been reliably informed by some of the Invaders that some of them had in fact severely whipped this unknown white prostitute.

On June 6, 1969, Lieutenant E. H. Arkin advised that on the afternoon of June 5, 1969, a male Negro known as T. C. Jones, 256 Pauline, also known as T. Winfred James, 256 Pauline, but who gave the police his address as 271 Vance, which is the address of the Invaders Headquarters, was walking a German shepherd dog on Vance near the Invaders headquarters at about 3:20 p.m. and as a Mrs. Ruth Washington, female Negro, of 267 Pontotoc came along with her 4-year-old son, Danny Washington, the big dog suddenly jumped at Danny, bit him on both legs, and Mrs. Washington had to "beat the dog off." Danny Washington has been treated for the dog bites at the John Gaston Hospital, Memphis. Lieutenant Arkin stated that Negro witnesses to the incident stated that Jones or James made no effort to restrain the dog; that in the confusion following the biting incident the dog disappeared; and that a Negro male who witnessed the incident proceeded to soundly thrash Jones or James because the dog attacked the boy while he stood idly by. Lieutenant Arkin stated that James is currently being held in Memphis City Jail without charges and that he admits knowing the dog's whereabouts but will not tell the police, despite the fact that the Police Department officials have explained to the arrestee that if the dog is not located and quarantined for ten days to determine the presence or nonpresence of rabies that the victim, Danny Washington, will have to undergo a series of painful rabies shots.

James told the police, "If you want to find out where the dog is, go to 271 Vance."

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On June 6, 1969, sources one and two advised that the dog in question has been hanging around the Invaders Headquarters; that it is a German shepard, mangy, not being properly fed or cared for; and that as recently as the night of June 3, 1969, Lance "Street Willie Wine" Watson had the dog with him in downtown Memphis.

Both sources one and two identified T. C. Jones, also known as James, as being an invader, who only recently became affiliated with the group.

BLACK PANTHER PARTY

According to its official newspaper, the Black Panther Party (BPP) was started during December, 1966, in Oakland, California, to organize black people so they can take control of the life, politics, and the destiny of the black community. It was organized by Bobby George Seale, BPP Chairman, and Huey P. Newton, BPP Minister of Defense. Newton is presently serving a sentence of 2 to 15 years on a conviction of manslaughter in connection with the killing of an Oakland police officer.

The official newspaper, "The Black Panther," which further describes itself as the "Black Community News Service," states that the BPP advocates the use of guns and guerrilla tactics in its revolutionary program to end oppression of the black people. Residents of the black community are urged to arm themselves against the police who are consistently referred to in the publication as "pigs" who should be killed.

"The Black Panther" issue of September 7, 1968, contains an editorial by BPP Minister of Education, George Mason Murray, which ends with the following:

"Black men. Black people, colored persons of America, revolt everywhere! Arm yourselves. The only culture worth keeping is a revolutionary culture. Change. Freedom everywhere. Dynamite! Black Power. Use the gun. Kill the pigs everywhere."

Included in the introduction to an article appearing in the October 5, 1968, edition of "The Black Panther" is the statement. "...we will not dissent from American Government. We will overthrow it."

Issues of "The Black Panther" regularly contain quotations from the writings of Chairman MAO Tse-tung of the People's Republic of China and feature MAO's statement that "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun."

The national headquarters of the BPP is located at 5103 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley, California. Branches have been established at various locations throughout the United States.

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INVADERS also known as
Black Organizing Project

On May 7, 1969, [redacted] source advised that a militant black nationalist group of young Memphis, Tennessee, Negroes, now known as Invaders, was originally formed in the summer and fall of 1967 by three Memphis Negroes, Coby Vernon Smith, John Earl Smith, and Charles Laverne Cabbage. During the fall of 1967, [redacted] it assumed the name of Black Organizing Project. [redacted] subsidiary cells known as Afro-American Brotherhood at Owen College; Black Student Association (BSA) at Memphis State University; Lemoyne Intercollegiate Chapter of the NAACP (LIC, NAACP) at Lemoyne College; Invaders, primarily consisting of high school students and school dropouts; and City Organizers, consisting of young non-student adults, all having a combined average membership of about one hundred. The ostensible purpose was to create pride in black identity, to teach black culture and black history, and obtain employment for young blacks.

On May 7, 1969, source one and source two advised that Black Organizing Project (BOP), beginning in the spring of 1968, degenerated into a group of approximately 30 to 35 young Memphis blacks who increasingly adopted a philosophy of hatred of the white race, hatred of capitalistic system, and all constituted legal authority, particularly law enforcement agencies. There is a philosophy of nihilism and anarchy.

Both sources added that beginning in the summer of 1968 the Invaders became a dominant group. LIC, NAACP disbanded, AAB disbanded, BSA at Memphis State University became an autonomous organization with no current formal relationship with the Invaders, and the City Organizers ceased to exist.

Since Jan. 1968, approximately thirty Invaders have committed various local crimes, including arson, robbery, larceny, forgery, prostitution, narcotics violations, and shooting of police officers, as well as inciting to riot in

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public schools. Over 25 have been convicted for these offenses, most of them making bond and appealing convictions. For example, John Burrell Smith has been convicted for inciting a high school riot and possession of a pistol. Charles Laverne Cabbage has been convicted of carrying a pistol, third degree burglary, and refusal to report for Armed Forces induction.

Both sources added that the arrests and the attendant publicity have weakened the influence of the Invaders and caused them to become vocal and publicly contentious. Their membership is estimated as thirty with only about twenty hard-core members. The Invaders have no financial resources of consequence which further restricts their activities. Sources one and two added that the Invaders primarily engage in public relations work by attempting to convince the community that they are far more powerful and potentially violent than is actually the case. Sources one and two advised that on occasion the Invaders refer to their group as the SOF but actually the only active cell is the Invaders.

APPENDIX

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Memphis, Tennessee

June 6, 1969

In Reply, Please Refer to
File No.

Title: MURDERS

Character: RACIAL MATTERS

Reference: Memorandum dated and captioned
above prepared at Memphis,
Tennessee

All sources (except any listed below) whose identities
are concealed in referenced communication have furnished
reliable information in the past.

This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of
the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your
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your agency.

F B I

Date: 6/6/69

Transmit the following in _____
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Via AIRTEL _____
(Priority or Method of Mailing)

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (157-840)
FROM: SAC, MEMPHIS (157-1067) (P)
INVADERS, aka. (4)
RM

Enclosed herewith for the Bureau are 11 copies of LHM dated and captioned as above.

Copies of the enclosed LHM are being furnished to the United States Attorney and U. S. Secret Service, both at Memphis, and to Regional Offices of Military Intelligence.

Source one is [redacted]
Source two is [redacted]

The enclosed LHM is classified CONFIDENTIAL due to the necessity of protecting informants of continuing value to the protection of the security of the United States.

- 2 - Bureau (Encs. 11) (RM)
- 3 - Chicago (Encs. 3) (RM)
 - (1 - 157-Invaders)
 - (2 - 157-Black Panthers)
- 1 - San Francisco (Enc 1) (Info) (RM)
- 2 - New York (Encs. 2) (RM)
- 10 - Memphis
 - (1 - 157-1067)
 - (1 - 157-556, Possible Racial Violence, Major Urban Areas)
 - (1 - 157-1168, Racial Situation in Tennessee)
 - (1 - 100-4394, [redacted])
 - (1 - 157-1626, [redacted])
 - (1 - 157-1820, [redacted])
 - (1 - 157-1205, Black Panther Party)
 - (1 - 170-70 Sub [redacted])
 - (1 - 157-NEW, [redacted])
 - (1 - 66-1687 Sub A, Dissemination)

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(18)

157-1067-1249

Approved: [Signature] Sent _____ M Per _____
Special Agent in Charge

ME 157-1067

LEADS:

CHICAGO DIVISION

AT CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Chicago is requested to identify the four visitors to Memphis and to furnish any identifying data.

SAN FRANCISCO DIVISION (INFORMATION)

Information copy is being furnished San Francisco since it is origin in the case re the Black Panthers.

NEW YORK DIVISION

AT NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Will identify POLLY MC LEONARD, Negro female, 245 Hawthorne Street, Brooklyn, New York, and the Children's Theatre Group, 35 East 75th Street, New York, N. Y.