

FBI Agent Testifies On Muslim Wiretap

HOUSTON, Tex., June 5 (AP) — An FBI agent testified in the Cassius Clay wiretap hearing today that telephone conversations of Elijah Muhammad, head of the Black Muslim sect, had been monitored by Federal agents at least four years.

Similar testimony Wednesday indicated that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the civil rights leader, had been under electronics surveillance from 1964 until his death in 1968.

The hearing was ordered by the U.S. Supreme Court to determine whether the wiretaps affected the trial in which Clay was convicted of refusing to be inducted into the Army.

The former heavyweight boxing champion contended he was a Black Muslim minister and thus exempt from military duty.

Agent C. Barry Pickett of Jacksonville, Fla., did not give the specific reasons for the surveillance of Elijah Muhammad.

Charles Morgan Jr., Clay's chief counsel, sought repeatedly to obtain specific reasons, but Pickett insisted his instructions were general.

"I am trying to prove he had specific instruction to obtain information on the religious beliefs of this defendant," Morgan told U.S. District Court Judge J. Ingraham.

Summaries of seven taped conversations involving Clay were admitted into evidence Wednesday. One involved King and three involved Black Muslim officials.

Ingraham had a fifth summary in a sealed envelope but refused to admit it into the record on grounds such action could endanger national security.

The monitored conversations were not revealed by the

Justice Department until Clay appealed his 1967 conviction. Clay then received the maximum sentence of five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

Pickett said he monitored conversations of Elijah Muhammad while working as a clerk in the FBI office in Phoenix, Ariz., from 1962 to 1966.

"You spent four years of your life listening to conversations of the leader of the Muslim religion?" Morgan asked.

"Yes, sir."

Testimony Wednesday indicated the three Black Muslim conversations had been monitored in Phoenix. Pickett testified that he had prepared a March 24, 1964, summary of a conversation between Clay and Elijah Muhammad. The Black Muslim leader was quoted as advising Clay to keep quiet after telling him he would make a better minister than fighter.

"My instructions were to monitor conversations both in the home and by telephone and make notes of conversations by Elijah Muhammad," Pickett said. "I recorded all conversations I heard but prepared only pertinent facts to go into the log."

"You obtained the information by electronics bugging?" Morgan asked.

"Correct."

Pickett said only summaries were prepared on each conversation.

"What to you was pertinent?" Morgan asked.

"Whatever I considered of value."

"What criteria did you employ for determining what you considered pertinent?"

"There were written instructions but not for a particular case. They were general, a guideline as to what we were to listen for; facts relevant to the case were working on."



Associated Press

Cassius Clay acknowledges a greeting from a bystander as he leaves Federal Court building in Houston. The hearing is reviewing his conviction for draft evasion.