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AGENTS ADMIT DOING WIRETAP

No Reason Is Given at
Clay Case Hearing

By MAX B. SKELTON

HOUSTON, Tex. (AP) — Witnesses in the Cassius Clay wiretap hearing testified Thursday that telephone conversations of Elijah Muhammad, head of the Black Muslim religion, had been monitored as early as 1960.

Wednesday, witnesses had indicated Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had been under wiretap surveillance at least four years prior to his death last year.

FBI Agent C. Barry Pickett of Jacksonville, Fla., testified Thursday he monitored Elijah Muhammad conversations from 1962 to 1966 while working as a clerk in the Phoenix, Ariz., FBI office.

Frederick A. Brownell, former special agent at Phoenix, said he had supervised the surveillance there prior to his retiring in late 1965.

"I cannot recall when the case was opened, but it probably was around 1960," Brownell said.

FINAL WITNESS

Brownell was the government's final witness.

T. Oscar Smith, former chief of the Justice Department's conscientious objector section, testified Thursday that he had recommended on Nov. 25, 1966, that Clay's claim be rejected because many Black Muslim beliefs "rest on grounds primarily political and racial."

"He objects not to all wars but to specific types, Smith said. "He had not established that he was opposed to war in any form."

Brownell said those handling the monitoring had instructions to maintain logs on Elijah Muhammad's activities and write summaries on any information they thought important.

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 and thus exempt from military duty.

Agent C. Barry Pickett of Jacksonville, Fla., did not give Thursday 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 instructions to obtain information on the religious beliefs of this defendant," Morgan told U.S. Dist. Court Judge Joe Ingraham.

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

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.