

- 1 - Mr. Mintz
Attn: Mr. Coulson
- 1 - Mr. Bailey
- 1 - Mr. Foster

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

June 30, 1978

**HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS
U. S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES (HSCA)**

Former Special Agent James F. Bland was interviewed by the HSCA on June 5, 1978, and thereafter furnished a memorandum reflecting that interview as follows:

**RE: HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS
INTERVIEW OF FORMER SA JAMES F. BLAND
6/5/78.**

I was interviewed on 6/5/78 by Kenneth McHargh and Mitch Mars representatives of the Committee at Annex 2, 3rd and D Streets, Washington, D. C. The interview lasted from approximately 10:30 a.m. - 12:40 p.m.

They began the interview by asking the break down of supervision into Sections in the Domestic Intelligence Division (DID) and what type work the Subversive Control Section (SCS) handled during the period I was Section Chief in the 1960's until I was transferred to the Crime Records Division in late August or early September, 1967. They were advised the Section handled security investigations of individuals and racial intelligence (riot) matters. They asked if the Security Index (SI) and Reserve Index (RI) were handled in the Section and were told they were. They asked if Dr. King was on the SI and then said, possibly on the RI. I advised them I did not remember. I didn't believe he was on the SI, possibly the RI. They were advised that

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Assoc. Dir. _____ ORIGINAL AND ONE SENT TO ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL,
 Dep. AD Adm. _____ CRIMINAL DIVISION, ATTENTION: MR. ROBERT L. KEUCH.
 Dep. AD Inv. _____
 Asst. Dir.:

Adm. Servs. _____
 Crim. Inv. _____ NOTE: See Director, FBI, letter to the Assistant Attorney General
 Ident. _____ Criminal Division, Attention: Mr. Robert L. Keuch, dated
 Intell. _____ June 30, 1978, captioned as above.
 Laboratory _____
 Legal Coun. _____
 Plan. & Insp. _____ 1 - Personal file of James F. Bland.
 Rec. Mgnt. _____
 Tech. Servs. _____ ENCLOSURE
 Training _____
 Public Affs. Off. _____
 Tele. Rm. _____
 Director's Sec'y _____

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INTERVIEW OF FORMER SA JAMES F. BLAND

although the Section handled the supervision of the bulk of security investigations of individuals other Sections did supervise the investigations of a number of top leaders of domestic organizations and individuals in the Espionage and/or Foreign Intelligence field. They asked about the routing of memoranda and handling of tickler copies within the DID.

In this connection they then asked concerning the investigation of Dr. Martin Luther King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). In this connection they had a number of copies of memoranda from F. J. Baumgardner to W. C. Sullivan with tickler copies designated to a number of people including J. F. Bland (JFB). They wanted to know if the SCS supervised the above investigations and what was the significance of the tickler copy designated to JFB. They were advised to the best of my memory the 2 investigations were never supervised by the SCS while I was Section Chief. That organizations were supervised by the Internal Security Section and usually the top function areas of the organizations were supervised with the organizations. They were advised that the tickler designation of the FJB memos' was for information purposes. That assignments of cases in the SCS were by office covering a person's residence and that the tickler would normally be routed to the Agent handling the office covering Dr. King's residence. They desired to know if the memos would be routed through for approval by those shown as getting ticklers such as JFB and they were advised that would not normally be the practice - That it could happen but there would need to be more of a reason for the routing than just for information.

Mr. McHargh then asked regarding my transfer to Crime Records Division (CRD). He asked concerning who was Ass't Director then - if Tom Bishop was - when was Mr. Wick - Mr. De Loach in the Division - The organization of the Division - What was handled particularly was Congressional Liaison and contact with the press handled by the CRD. He asked if I had passed any information to the press to discredit Dr. King. I advised him that I had no recollection of passing any information to discredit Dr. King to the press. He asked if I had knowledge of a 35 page document prepared under the counter-intelligence program attacking Dr. King and prepared in such a fashion as to be given out to the press. I told him I had no recollection of seeing such a document or giving such a document to the press. He asked if I know whether

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Tom Bishop gave such a document to the press. I told him I could not answer for Bishop but that I had no such knowledge. Mr. McHargh made the statement that it was well documented that the FBI and Mr. Hoover had an active roll in trying to discredit Dr. King.

Mr. McHargh had a copy of a memo from Bishop to De Loach with my initials (JVB). The memo was written prior to Dr. King's death in April, 1968, and referred to a memo from W. C. Sullivan to Mr. De Loach recommending DID prepare material showing the communist connections of Dr. King for dissemination to the press. The memo then set forth the receipt of a clipping from a Birmingham paper of an article by a James Free and stated that it set forth very well the communist connections of Dr. King. Action of the memo was for information. The memo did not say - but apparently the clipping was sent in by the Birmingham Office. He asked if I recalled this memo. I advised him I had no recollection of the memo - however, since my initials were on the memo it was obviously written by me. The memo said nothing about the DID material having been disseminated to the press but it did show an interest in exposing Dr. King's communist connections and that James Free had written such an article.

They asked about the Special Correspondence List maintained by the FBI. Was it for people only friendly with the FBI and who were given information not available to others - was it a list used by Mr. Hoover to reward friends. He was advised that to my recollection it was not a secret list for outsiders to receive unauthorized information. - That people were on the list who had indicated an interest in receiving FBI releases and publications of all types, on a continuing basis, including annual reports, press releases, law enforcement bulletins, crime statistics, etc.

He asked if people such as Mr. Tolson, Mr. Belmont, and Mr. De Loach kept separate files. He was advised that to my knowledge they might receive tickler copies of memoranda addressed to them in the regular course of business, but that I have no recollection of their keeping separate files.

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He asked if I knew of the Society of Former Special Agents. I said I did that I was a member. Also asked if I knew if Mr. Hoover asked former Agents to work on cases for the FBI. I told him that I didn't quite understand what he meant but that I had no personal knowledge of such. That the Society is a social group but does fully support the FBI and if called upon would do its best to assist the FBI. That the Society is now collecting funds to support the legal defense of former Agents.

Mr. McHargh said he had a copy of a memo showing there was an effort by the FBI and Mr. Hoover to prevent Dr. King's birthday from becoming a national holiday - That the memo showed Mr. Hoover's approval to contact Congressmen in this regard. He asked if I had knowledge of this. I told him I probably had such knowledge but didn't know when I acquired it.

Mr. McHargh asked me if while I was in the Crime Records Division did I disseminate to the press confidential information on Subversive matters normally not disseminated outside the Bureau. He was advised that I had no such recollection of engaging in such activity.

He said they were interviewing a number of people and he did not think it would be necessary to call me again for clarification but he took my address and phone number.

(s) James F. Bland