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Mike Royko

*If FBI offers
food, skip it*



Here, taken from actual case files, is another thrilling segment of the FBI Story — the real life version, not TV.

The setting is Newark, N.J., a very tough town with a well-entrenched Mafia, many grafters holding political office, and a wide variety of thieves, swindlers and cutthroats. It's a big job for those who fight evildoers.

The special agent in charge of the Newark FBI office is behind his desk, thinking hard.

About big-time gangsters?

No. About food.

Not his own food. Somebody else's.

Over in Jersey City, the Black Panthers were collecting free food. It was to be eaten at a convention the Panthers were going to hold. The FBI didn't like that.

Suddenly the agent had an idea. He quickly dictated a message to J. Edgar Hoover himself.

A subordinate sent the message on to Washington. The message read:

To: Director, FBI

From: Special Agent in Charge, Newark.

The following counterintelligence proposal is submitted for consideration.

It is proposed that a telegram be sent from Oakland, Calif., to the Jersey City, N.J., Black Panther Party headquarters, 9 S. Summit Av., and to all Black Panther Party headquarters.

The text of the telegram should read similar to the following:

"Word received food donated to Party by anti-liberation white pigs contains poison. Symptoms are cramps, diarrhea, severe stomach pain. Destroy all food donated for convention suspected of poison, however, still required you meet quota." (signed) Ministry of Information.

It is suggested that the Bureau then consider having the Laboratory treat fruit such as oranges with a mild laxative-type drug by hypodermic needle or other appropriate method and ship fruit as a donation from a fictitious person in Miami, to Jersey City headquarters.

This plan will at first cause confusion and suspicion within the Black Panther Party and will cause a time-consuming search for the sender of the telegram.

Even after Oakland denies sending the telegram, some Black Panther Party members will fear poison by donated food and the Jersey City headquarters will be hard pressed to make sure donated food is not poisoned.

When some Jersey City members react to the laxative

and suspect poisoning, Oakland will suspect that someone at Jersey City is a spy since obviously some foreknowledge of the event was present at Jersey City but not at Oakland.

Confusion, intra-Black Panther distrust and hunger at the upcoming convention would be the results.

IT WAS A REMARKABLE crime-fighting innovation — giving a lot of black people the runs.

Even national crime syndicate chieftains such as Gambone, Ricca and Accardo never faced so fearsome a weapon as FBI-induced diarrhea.

And to the best of my recollection, Efrem Zimbalist Jr., the TV FBI agent, did not include a dose of the fast trots in his investigative techniques. If he had, he would not have ended most of his shows crouching behind a car and demanding that the fugitive surrender. He would have been crouching behind a urinal.

HOOVER READ THE BLACK diarrhea plan and responded. His message said:

To: Special Agent in Charge, Newark

From: Director, FBI

The Bureau cannot authorize the treating of fruit to be shipped to Jersey City because of the lack of control over the treated fruit in transit.

However, Newark's proposed telegram regarding food collected for the Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention has merit.

THAT'S GOOD THINKING. HOOVER didn't say there was anything wrong with drugging some fruit in order to give black people diarrhea.

But he was worried that somewhere along the way from Miami to their black tummies, somebody else might eat the fruit. Maybe a bum.

It wouldn't be a good idea to give somebody diarrhea by accident.

It's easy to see why — with that kind of executive ability — Hoover was the top man.

But even though he overruled the plan to spread diarrhea in Jersey City, Hoover did see "merit" in the plan to scare the Panthers with false telegrams saying that their food was poisoned.

Why not? If you scare somebody enough, he might get the trots anyway.

The FBI in peace and war. And in the john, too.