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## How FBI Tried to Ruin, Replace

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The FBI decided in 1963 to attempt to develop a "national Negro leader" to step into the role of Martin Luther King Jr. if the bureau succeeded in its effort to destroy his reputation.

The Senate Intelligence Committee was told of an exchange of memos between former FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover and former assistant director William Sullivan concerning a seven-year effort to take King "off his pedestal."

The committee's top lawyers, chief counsel Fritz Schwarz and Republican counsel Curtis Smothers, summarized for 2½ hours the staff's investigation of FBI domestic intelligence activities.

Although the FBI campaign against King has been known for some time, Schwarz and Smothers supplied considerable detail to what has been previously made public.

**SMOTHERS SAID** the bureau planted at least 16 hidden microphones, all in hotel rooms, in efforts to collect information about King, and used techniques ranging from anonymous letters to press leaks in an effort to tarnish his reputation.

In 1963 Sullivan wrote to Hoover

that destroying King should not be difficult and that when the job is completed, "Negroes will be left without a leader. It was at this point that Sullivan suggested the FBI develop its own national black leader.

Smothers declined to reveal the name of the individual the FBI had in mind. He said the man was not known in civil rights activities although he was prominent in another field.

Smothers said the individual apparently was not informed of the plans the FBI had for him and "he was shocked to hear about it."

**SMOTHERS**, who is black, also related a previously disclosed exchange of letters between former President John F. Kennedy and Hoover inquiring about the number of black special agents on the FBI payroll.

Smothers said there were no blacks as special agents, but in order to avoid telling Kennedy that there were none, the FBI gave the title to five chauffeurs.

"This is the FBI that was presumptuous enough to decide it could determine who should be a national

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Negro leader." Smothers said.

Schwarz also revealed that a month before King was to go to Stockholm to receive the Nobel Peace Prize he received an anonymous letter — ostensibly from within the civil rights movement but actually written by the FBI — suggesting that he commit suicide. The letter was accompanied by other material which Schwarz would not describe.

**SCHWARZ AND** Smothers said the campaign against King was the most bitter of all FBI efforts to undermine individuals and groups. But they also cited numerous other examples.

One memo sent by Hoover to the special agents in charge of the bureau's local offices describes methods that should be used to disrupt New Left groups.

Among the 12 suggested techniques was "creating of impressions that certain New Left leaders are informants for the bureau or other law enforcement agencies." Hoover also urged bureau agents to attempt

## Dr. King

whenever possible to have New Left leaders arrested for drug violations. He suggested anonymous letters to the "parents, neighbors, and parents' employers" of New Left activists.

Hoover also recommended attempting to aggravate hostility between various groups of the left.

**AT ONE POINT**, Schwarz said, the attempt to aggravate rivalries reached the point of fanning the flames of a battle between the Black Panther party and a Los Angeles black nationalist group headed by Ron Karanga.

Schwarz said the bureau apparently decided "the promotion of violence is an acceptable technique" for damaging groups the bureau considered undesirable.

Schwarz also listed several examples of what he referred to as FBI "disinformation."

Prior to the Democratic National Convention in

Chicago, the FBI counterfeited 217 offers to supply housing, thus sending potential demonstrators on long and useless efforts to find the addresses. The same technique was used later prior to the inauguration of former President Richard M. Nixon in 1969.

During the May Day demonstrations of 1971, Schwarz said, the bureau used the Citizens Band radio frequency being employed by demonstration marshalls to provide misinformation and countermand orders.

**EARLIER** today, the committee was told most of the documents in Hoover's most secret filing system were destroyed, probably shortly after his death.

Schwarz said the filing system — labeled "personal file" — apparently contained documents more sensitive than those in Hoover's previously disclosed secret files, which were labeled "Official and Confidential."

In spite of an FBI report last July that none of Hoover's files was destroyed, Schwarz said the committee has developed evidence that everything in the personal file from the letter D through the end of the alphabet was destroyed.

"Before his death, Hoover went through at least letters A through C of the personal file and put some of the documents in the Official and Confidential file," Schwarz said. "All the rest of the personal files were destroyed."

Schwarz said the committee became aware of the personal file by studying a memo made public earlier this year concerning FBI burglaries to obtain information. The burglaries were labeled by the bureau "black bag jobs." The memo was filed under B and was one of the documents which Hoover apparently transferred from the personal file to the Official and Confidential file where it was discovered.

SCHWARZ SAID THE staff's analysis indicates the bureau collected information in broad subject categories, often having no relationship to criminal activity, and continued to investigate even when preliminary studies showed no illegal activity.

For instance, an FBI memo dated May 11, 1970, details an investigation of the women's liberation movement.

Although the memo indicates the FBI agent found only legal purposes for the movement, the memo concludes with the notation "will continue to follow and

report the activities of the women's liberation movement."

In the memo, the FBI agent reported of members of the women's movement: "They wanted a purpose and that was to free women from the hum-drum existence of being only a wife and mother. They wanted equal opportunities that men have in work and in society. They wanted their husbands to share in the housework and in rearing their children. They also wanted to go out and work in whatever jobs they wanted and not be discriminated against as women."

THE COMMITTEE made public a number of documents from the FBI's counterintelligence program (COINTELPRO) which included efforts to disrupt groups considered subversive or violence prone.

The documents indicated a favorite method was the anonymous letter to a husband or wife charging sexual misconduct with a member of one of the groups.

For instance, an anonymous letter signed "a God-fearing Klanswoman" was directed to the wife of a Ku Klux Klan member whose name was removed before the documents were made public.

"He has been committing adultery," the letter said.

"My men folk say they don't believe this but I think they do. I feel like crying. I saw her with my own eyes. They call her Ruby. Her last name is something like (deleted) and she lives in the 700 block of (deleted) Street in (deleted). I know this. I saw her strut around

at a rally with her just filled eyes and smart aleck figure."

ANOTHER LETTER, written in a scrawling long-hand to the husband of a white social action agency volunteer said the woman, whose name was removed, had been "living with our black men in ACTION, you dig? Like all she wants to integrate is the bedroom and us black sisters ain't gonna take no second best from our men." It was signed "A Soul Sister."

Schwarz said the FBI seem to consider all subjects for surveillance to be guilty unless conclusively proved innocent. He read from a memo concerning a report on a New York civil rights leader whose name was not disclosed. Schwarz said the agent who had conducted the investigation concluded there was no evidence the leader was involved in Communist activities.

But Schwarz said the FBI's headquarters responded, "While there is no evidence Mr. X is a Communist, there is no evidence he is anti-Communist. Keep investigating."