

Probers reveal anonymous FBI letter urged Dr. King to kill himself in 1964

From wire dispatches

WASHINGTON — Shortly before he was awarded the 1964 Nobel Prize, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. received an anonymous letter written by the FBI suggesting that he commit suicide or be publicly discredited.

The partial contents of the letter to King were released today by the Senate intelligence committee as it began two days of open hearings on 50 years of FBI domestic intelligence operations.

"There is one thing left for you to do," the letter to King said. "You have

just 34 days to do it. You are done. There is but one way out for you and you know it."

Committee counsel Fred Schwartz was interrupted at this point by Chairman Frank Church, D-Idaho.

"This was suggesting suicide?" Church asked.

"Yes sir," Schwartz replied.

Committee Counsel Curtis Smothers said the FBI intent was to "threaten to discredit (King) publicly." Neither Schwartz nor Church gave any information as to the material the letter threatened to expose about King.

Swartz said a draft of the letter was found in the file of former deputy FBI director William Sullivan.

"He claims he didn't write it but that it was a plant by someone else in the FBI," Swartz said. He said that copies were received by both King and his wife.

Earlier, it was disclosed that FBI director J. Edgar Hoover's personal correspondence was moved to his home after his death in 1972 for "subsequent destruction" by a secretary.



Martin Luther King Jr.