

FBI

Date: 2/11/69

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plaintext or code)

Via AIRTEL AIR MAIL
(Priority)

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (44-38861)
FROM: SAC, MEMPHIS (44-1987) (P)
SUBJECT: MURKIN

Handwritten signature/initials

ReBuairtel 2/4/69 directing Memphis to interview Rev. JAMES LAWSON.

Enclosed for the Bureau are 3 copies of an FD-302 reflecting interview of Rev. LAWSON on 2/11/69 at Memphis.

Information furnished by Rev. LAWSON regarding the transfer of the 2 Negro firemen and the Negro police officer from the fire station near the Lorraine Motel just prior to the murder of KING has been covered in Memphis LHM dated 11/21/68, which LHM also reflected the interview of [redacted] by Mr. J. HAROLD FLANNERY of the Justice Dept. LAWSON furnished no new information and it is not felt that this matter warrants further inquiry.

It is the opinion of the interviewing Agents that LAWSON is a dangerous rabble rousing individual not worthy of being considered a leader of any group. He openly admits distrust of the police and of the FBI. He admits to having no facts but does not seem embarrassed to openly advocate his theory that KING's murder resulted from a conspiracy. He mentioned the story that was told early in this investigation by JOHN MC FERREN regarding his having overheard a conversation in a local vegetable market which conversation would indicate that the market owner, [redacted] and persons from New Orleans were part of the murder conspiracy. As the Bureau is well aware, MC FERREN's story has been thoroughly investigated and has been found to be entirely without substance.

Airtel _____

Teletype _____

A.M. ③ - Bureau (Encs. 3)
3 - Memphis (2 - 44-1987)
(1 - 170-98-Rev. JAMES M. LAWSON)

REC-76 44-1987-15557

A.M.S.D. JCH:cjs
(6)

FEB 13 1969

Spec. Del. _____

Reg. Mail _____

Approved: *[Signature]*
Special Agent in Charge

Sent _____ M Per _____

EB 20 1969 *[Initials]*

ME 44-1987

LAWSON was advised that the Bureau would be most interested in receiving any additional information which might come into his possession. In view of LAWSON's attitude toward the Bureau, it is suggested that we initiate no further contact with LAWSON if it can possibly be avoided.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

Date 2/11/69

Rev. JAMES M. LAWSON, JR., Pastor, Centenary Methodist Church, 584 East McLemore Avenue, Memphis, Tennessee, advised that he has no actual evidence of a conspiracy in the murder of Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING; however, he feels that certain occurrences around the time of the murder may have some significance.

Rev. LAWSON said that on about April 2 or April 3, 1968, a Negro fireman, FLOYD E. NEWSUM, was transferred from the firestation near the Lorraine Motel to another station that was already fully manned. He also said that another Negro fireman, name unknown, was transferred from that same station to another station on either Tuesday or Wednesday night before KING was murdered on Thursday afternoon. He said this second fireman was transferred in the middle of his shift and was transferred "out of rotation".

Rev. LAWSON explained "out of rotation" as follows:

When a fireman is assigned to a piece of equipment he remains in that assignment until all the men already assigned to it have been transferred. In other words, the last man assigned is the last man transferred.

Rev. LAWSON stated also that a Negro police officer, Detective E. E. REDDITT, who had been assigned to the same fire station to provide protection for Dr. KING, had been removed from the station sometime prior to the murder.

Rev. LAWSON stated he has made no attempt to verify any of this information except for his interview with FLOYD NEWSUM.

On 2/11/69 at Memphis, Tennessee File # Memphis 44-1987
by SA JOE C. HESTER & SA ROBERT F. BOYLE:JCH:cjs Date dictated 2/11/69

This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

ENCLOSURE 4 5571