

Dear Les,

5/22/84

'Tain't Sam P. Did I goof!!!! And how forgetful I've become!!!

It all came to mind this way:

I let a local college professor friend make copies of the entire Memphis sanitation workers strike and Invaders files that I got in an FOIA suit so he could use them in teaching (Hood College, local) and write a scholarly paper or two. The first of his papers, a professorially-neutralized account of the FBI's intrusions into purely local matters during the strike, has just been published by the Southern Quarterly, published by Duke Univ. He gave me a couple of reprints and we chatted a bit. And then it came back: that character in those CIA files is identified by David Garrow in his book, The FBI and Martin Luther King, Jr., as a whiteman named Solomonick who took the name Jay Richard Kennedy some years ago, had a relationship with and then a feud with Stanley Levison, whose divorced wife Janet he married.

Apparently Garrow got copies of the records I got from the FBI, which did not withhold Kennedy's identification. (They wouldn't because he disliked them and they could get even.)

Books tend to slide on our new copier, but right now my wife is trying to make copies of the relevant pages for you and if they come out I'll enclose them.

In a way this is better for you because it is unlikely that the same character would be both an FBI and a CIA informer.

Hope this reaches you in time to avoid the waste of your and Jack's time and effort.

Meanwhile, you may want to remember that all my stuff is available to college students, too, and is rich for thesis and similar work. Over the years three or four of this professor friend's students have done honors papers and the like, spending as much as a full semester of research and then turning out a paper, and they've all be fine and all the students have, in one way or another, described being turn loose for independent study in original materials as the most educational experience they've had. You may know a student who may have the interest, so I'm letting you know if you do.

I'm sorry if you wasted any time. I should have remembered this but didn't.

Best wishes,



**The FBI and  
Martin Luther King, Jr.  
From "Solo" to Memphis**

---

**DAVID J. GARROW**



W · W · NORTON & COMPANY  
NEW YORK LONDON



Alterman. Stanley returned to New York in the mid-1930s, receiving an LL.B. from St. John's University law school in 1938 and an LL.M. the following year. At that time Janet graduated from medical school, and on June 8, 1939, Stanley and Janet were married. Stanley's and Roy's father, Harry Levison, was working as an accountant for a Brooklyn tool-and-die firm, Unique Specialties Corporation.

By mid-1940 both Stanley and Roy had taken jobs with the firm, Roy as a manager in the plant and Stanley as general troubleshooter and counsel. One of the owners of Unique Specialties also operated a real-estate management firm, where Stanley's and Roy's mother, Esther, was employed. That man went by the name Jay Richard Kennedy.<sup>32</sup>

Actually, as Janet in particular and the rest of the Levison family less directly knew, Jay Richard Kennedy had been Jay Richard Solomonick only since mid-1939. For twenty-eight years prior to that, he had been Samuel Richard Solomonick. Solomonick had been born in a tough area of the East Bronx in 1911. He had left school in the seventh grade, and had gone on to work a variety of jobs, including one stretch on a German-speaking farm in the state of Kansas. By 1929 he was the eighteen-year-old manager of a successful Bronx movie theater. Early the following year he quit that job, and worked intermittently as a bricklayer, before working in a printing plant. Not long after, he attended an organizational meeting of the Industrial Printing Employees Union. A forceful speaker, Solomonick almost immediately became an officer of the union, and took part in a successful strike against a Polish-language fascist paper. The fight against fascism strongly attracted him. By 1935 he had left the printing job to become a full-time organizer for an umbrella group known as the American League against War and Fascism, while also working for the People's Committee against Hearst.

Through these two organizations Solomonick met a number of dedicated antifascists who were active in the Communist party. In 1938 Solomonick became circulation manager for the party paper, the *Daily Worker*. Solomonick, now married, stayed at the paper until the shock of the Hitler-Stalin Pact struck in the late summer of 1939. When that hit, he walked out, but soon found that it was impossible to get new work, apparently because of strong party efforts to punish him for quitting. As his concern about employment

mounted, Solomonick they was the name Loewi.

Richard

With changed together or two, Manage Stanley ties to tl sonal m Stanley tion. Wi subsequ ful man: ing it in Merkin,

Kenn program ment as through antifasci story wa ularity t nedy's internati producer ing on c member: made an the life ment.<sup>34</sup>

Janet of the R Stanley



mounted, so did the attraction of a pseudonym. One afternoon Solomonick raised the question with a close friend, Andrew Loewi, as they walked down a New York street. On a billboard up ahead was the name Kennedy. Solomonick saw it, liked it, and tried it out on Loewi. Within a few moments the decision had been made: Samuel Richard Solomonick became Jay Richard Kennedy.

With a new identity, and now on his own, Kennedy's luck changed. He and another acquaintance, Charles Newman, put together some \$50,000 and bought into Unique Specialties. In a year or two, Kennedy's success grew further, and he established Kennedy Management Corporation, a real-estate management business. Soon Stanley Levison, with his law degree, moved from Unique Specialties to the management firm. At the same time, however, some personal matters had not been going well, and in December of 1941 Stanley and Janet divorced, though with no animosity or recrimination. Within several years time, Janet and Jay Kennedy married, and subsequently moved to California. Kennedy maintained the successful management firm nonetheless, with Stanley and Roy administering it in New York. Stanley himself soon remarried, to Beatrice Merkin, and the entire group remained on friendly terms.<sup>33</sup>

Kennedy's attention now turned to writing and producing a radio program entitled "El Mysterioso," which, with some State Department assistance, was beamed into Central and South America throughout the mid-1940s for the purpose of disseminating strong antifascist themes. An English-language version of the same basic story was developed for American radio, and achieved striking popularity as "A Man Called X," featuring Herbert Marshall. Kennedy's success in this work led him to a movie project on international drug trafficking, entitled "To the Ends of the Earth," produced with assistance from the Bureau of Narcotics. Then, relying on contacts that both he and Stanley had made in 1944 as active members of "Business Men for Roosevelt," Kennedy in 1946-47 made an unsuccessful attempt to organize a major motion picture on the life of Franklin Roosevelt, with Roosevelt-family endorsement.<sup>34</sup>

Janet Kennedy wanted to return to New York, and after the failure of the Roosevelt venture, Jay too was ready for something new. Stanley had continued to look after Kennedy's New York interests



The end of the wiretap on King's home did not signal any decrease in the Bureau's interest in his personal life. Microphone surveillances of his hotel rooms continued. One was installed in mid-May when King spent two days at the New York Sheraton Atlantic. In line with the new policy, Attorney General Katzenbach was advised of it, though only after the fact. The purpose of the coverage, Katzenbach was told, was to obtain evidence of Levison's, Jones's, and Rustin's "influences upon King as well as information concerning the tactics and plans of King and his organization in the civil rights movement." A report based on that bug was sent to the White House. It stated that Levison was urging King to speak out publicly against American military involvement in Vietnam. Another bug was installed in early June when King and Andrew Young spent one day at the Americana in New York. "No intelligence information was obtained," Bureau records show, and Katzenbach was not notified of this attempt.<sup>53</sup>

In the spring of 1965 a familiar figure reappeared in the King case: Jay Richard Kennedy. Over the previous decade Kennedy had continued to work as an entertainers' agent and novelist; he also had continued his active support of civil rights causes. He had served as moderator of a television special on August 28, 1963, featuring the leaders of the March on Washington; he had become a particular acquaintance of CORE Executive Director James Farmer. Jay Kennedy also had become an excellent and regular source of information for the Central Intelligence Agency.

Kennedy's assertions that he had never gone to the FBI in the 1940s and 1950s concerning Stanley Levison are correct. However, beginning in perhaps 1959 or 1960, Kennedy spoke regularly with an officer of the Liaison and External Operations Branch of the CIA's Security Research Staff. The two men spoke about a wide range of subjects; by early 1965 one of their major topics of conversation was the conflict between the FBI and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Jay Kennedy strongly believed that a number of Communist elements were seeking to take advantage of the civil rights movement. He also was well aware of the information about King's personal life, information that Kennedy felt could be used against King by either the FBI or a host of others. Kennedy feared the damage that either "red" influence or public exposure of King's personal life could do to the civil rights movement. Hence, Kennedy felt very



strongly that it would be best for the movement if the other major black leaders would encourage King to step aside and relinquish his leadership position.<sup>54</sup>

Kennedy detailed his sentiments in a conversation with his CIA friend on May 11. The CIA officer described Kennedy's comments as follows:

In summarizing Kennedy's point of view, the problem appears to be something like this. The Communist left is making an all out drive to get into the Negro movement. If through any mechanism they can link prominent Negro leaders to illegal activities and activity which is against President Johnson's policy, this may cause a serious break between Johnson and the Negro leadership which, in turn, may create a violent disruption in the Negro Civil Rights Movement which would give the Communists an opportunity to cause chaos and disruption.

Furthermore, if the above is coupled with an exposure of Martin Luther King, Jr., by other than members of his own race, the damage to the Negro movement would be impossible to estimate. Kennedy is gravely concerned that King may be exposed by white sources, official or otherwise, which would have no good effect and would probably only make King a martyr. Kennedy was also concerned that King might possibly be assassinated before his exposure which would have the effect of making him a martyr and would not be at all helpful to the Negro movement. It is Kennedy's belief that somehow or other Martin Luther King must be removed from the leadership of the Negro movement, and his removal must come from within not from without. Kennedy feels that somewhere in the Negro movement, at the top, there must be a Negro leader who is 'clean' who could step into the vacuum and chaos if Martin Luther King were either exposed or assassinated.

In summary, Kennedy feels that unless the Negro leaders, other than King, are informed and are capable of intelligent maneuvering, the Communists or Negro elements who will be directed by the Communists may be in a posi-

Why does he not give  
FBI, then the  
and the

tion to, if  
disrupt it  
the Gove

All evidenc  
analyses with  
alerted FBI h  
immediately  
Kennedy. If  
CIA, why we  
Refuse the  
of the FBI's  
office visited  
versation wit  
York agents  
Kennedy off  
contact, he  
Bureau repr  
On June  
Hilton from  
Kennedy's  
described th

Somet  
decide  
ned  
Right  
partic  
event  
faster  
wher  
who.  
areas  
Ja  
com  
ment  
beca  
mov  
bein



Why does he not give the Negro movement the credit it deserves? He is shifting blame to the  
FBI, but the CIA is the one who is really behind it. This was alleged by the CIA, but it is not true.  
Just another lie. "THEY ARE OUT TO BREAK ME" 141

tion to, if not take over the Negro movement, completely disrupt it and hence cause extremely critical problems for the Government of the United States.<sup>55</sup>

All evidence suggests that the CIA treated Kennedy's remarks and analyses with the utmost seriousness. The following day the Agency alerted FBI headquarters to Kennedy's comments, and the Bureau immediately asked its New York office to obtain an interview with Kennedy. If Kennedy would readily provide his information to the CIA, why would he refuse the FBI?

Refuse the Bureau Kennedy did. He long had had an active dislike of the FBI's style and tactics. When agents from the New York office visited him on May 24, he declined to have a substantive conversation with them. Bureau headquarters was advised, and the New York agents were instructed to visit Kennedy once again. Although Kennedy offered a few comments when the agents made their second contact, he again declined to have any extensive conversations with Bureau representatives.<sup>56</sup>

On June 8 Kennedy met with his CIA friend at the Washington Hilton from 1:15 p.m. until 5 p.m. The two men began by discussing Kennedy's reluctance to deal with the FBI. The CIA officer described this discussion, and its background, as follows:

Sometime back, Chief, SRS [Security Research Staff] decided that it would be advantageous to have Jay Kennedy give information, particularly regarding the Civil Rights Movement, to agents of the FBI in New York City, particularly if this information concerned domestic or local events and activities. Chief, SRS, felt that it would be a faster means of communication than heretofore used wherein Mr. Kennedy communicated with SRS officers who, in turn, passed the information to either the FBI or areas where it was useful.

Jay Kennedy made it very clear that he did not wish to communicate with FBI agents, that the Civil Rights Movement should be regarded as an international situation because of the Communist directed infiltration into the movement, and that he felt in some respects that he was being downgraded by being used as a source by the FBI



and not in a higher echelon of Government. While Mr. Kennedy did not absolutely refuse to cooperate with the Bureau, he made it obvious that only if there was a matter which he felt was of interest directly to the Bureau locally, would he furnish this type of information; otherwise, he would furnish it as he has done previously or cease altogether. The writer attempted, more or less unsuccessfully, to discuss jurisdiction with Mr. Kennedy, but Mr. Kennedy maintained his position that the matter was not one of jurisdiction for the FBI or any single Government agency, but was one that the Government, including CIA, should be interested in; namely, the international Communist efforts at corrupting and seizing the Negro Civil Rights Movement.

*i.e., illegality*

Having resolved that subject, Kennedy proceeded to bring the CIA officer up to date on developments in the civil rights movement. The CIA man recounted this part of the conversation in a memo to his superiors as follows:

For background information, it is to be recalled that Jay Kennedy has long provided information on the Negro Civil Rights Movement and its various leaders. Mr. Kennedy's position is one of complete sympathy with the Negro and the Civil Rights Movement, but holds that only through legal means and peaceful means should the Negro aims be accomplished. Mr. Kennedy, who is a violent anti-Communist, has been alarmed at the Communist movement into the Negro Civil Rights field and the Communist penetration into the various Negro organizations. He has undeniably done everything in his capacity to help the Negro leaders, particularly [deletion]. It is worth noting that Mr. Kennedy has been involved with various Negro leaders since as early as 1934; and he has known a number of the leaders, on a very close personal basis, since that time.

Mr. Kennedy's main concern has been that the highly derogatory information, of which [*sic*] he is familiar, concerning Martin Luther King, Jr., will be exposed to the



public by the wrong people and at the wrong time which, in Mr. Kennedy's opinion, will set the Civil Rights Movement back years and would perhaps give the Communists a chance to either further disrupt it or to seize control of the movement.

To make certain that this report reflects as accurately as possible the derogatory information on Martin Luther King, Jr., here are three main categories:

- (a) Highly derogatory information on [deletion] which have taken place within the United States and overseas;
- (b) A possible theft of money; and
- (c) Association with identified Communist or pro-Soviet types on an intense personal basis, particularly [deletion].

The CIA officer went on to summarize the public eruption of the Hoover-King dispute, and how Jay Kennedy had reported that both he and James Farmer feared that the Bureau might succeed in publicly leaking the damaging personal information it possessed on King. Farmer and other black leaders had discussed among themselves what they might do to resolve the problem, but no action had been agreed upon.

Jay Kennedy also gave his CIA friend an extensive analysis of the strengths and shortcomings of the major black leaders. He went on to explain that he had attempted to persuade both Farmer and Urban League President Whitney Young to take some action to persuade King to step aside from his leadership role, but that neither man, especially Young, had endorsed this suggestion. Kennedy also related his knowledge that the editors of several publications, including a major black magazine, knew the details of the personal information concerning King, but had resolved not to publish it.

The CIA official then asked Kennedy whether the assorted “Communists” around King, including “both the Moscow and the Peking types,” knew about King's private life. If so, what might they do with that information? Kennedy answered that the real danger lay with the “Peking-line Communists,” who might use it either to blackmail and control King, or to expose and ruin him. King's public



exposure. Kennedy theorized, would so disrupt the civil rights movement that the "Peking Communists" would have a substantial opportunity to increase their own influence in the aftermath of King's demise.

The CIA officer eagerly pressed Kennedy for more information about the supposed and unnamed "Peking-line Communists" who were eagerly moving to seize control of the movement. The two men discussed this subject extensively, citing the opposition of a number of movement activists to American involvement in Vietnam as evidence that "Peking-line Communists" were playing a growing role in the movement. Both men agreed that this posed an increasing danger for the future.

On that note Kennedy's long conversation with the CIA officer ended. Kennedy, the officer reported to his superiors, "stated that he would be continuously in touch with either Chief, SRS or the writer as he obtained information of interest." Twice in early July Kennedy called the CIA officer to pass along further observations on the subject of "Peking-line Communists" and the civil rights movement, especially as it related to movement opposition to the Vietnam war. Although the particular concern about the FBI-King flap gradually receded, Kennedy continued to provide information to his friend at the CIA throughout the balance of the decade.<sup>57</sup>

The fact that the CIA treated Kennedy's observations and analyses with the utmost seriousness is far more important than the issue of whether many of Kennedy's impressions bore any close resemblance to what actually was happening within the civil rights movement. The CIA officer was just as fascinated with "Peking-line Communists" as was Kennedy, and how many officials in the higher echelons of the Agency were as captivated with Kennedy's views as was his immediate friend remains unknown. Whether the CIA utilized Kennedy's information in its own briefings of even higher level government officials also is unknown at present.

While the CIA was busy talking with Jay Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., himself was deciding that he had made a grievous error some twenty months earlier when he had severed most of his direct contact with Stanley Levison. Faced in the anonymous tape with a vicious attempt to intimidate him, King realized that he had in effect allowed the FBI to drive him and Levison apart. Now, in the late spring of 1965, he resolved to correct that mistake.

Kir  
of the  
asked  
gove  
woul  
natio  
frigh  
advic  
belic  
King  
miss  
Kin  
Kin  
mal  
of t  
of t  
me  
era  
oth  
an  
an  
thr  
of  
Lu  
ha  
m  
  
ti  
cr  
a  
S  
S  
i  
L  
V  
t



mation on King. Kuettner's resulting story stated that "King has many critics. They privately, and sometimes publicly, question his sources of income, his private life and his political leanings." When shown a copy, Hoover scribbled, "a 'whitewash' if there ever was one." See Joseph A. Sizoo to Sullivan, "Martin Luther King, Jr., SM-C," 24 May 1965, 100-106670-1403; and an unserialized teletype copy of Kuettner's 15 June text in file 100-438794. The unactivated April bug at the Americana is detailed in SAC, New York to Director, "Martin Luther King, Jr., SM-C (JUNE)," 5 April 1965, 100-106670-1195. Another Bureau report on King went to White House aide Marvin Watson on 30 March 1965.

53. Director (by Phillips) to SAC, Atlanta, "CIRM (JUNE)," 19 April 1965, 100-442529-933; SAC, Atlanta to Director, "CIRM (JUNE)," 19 May 1965, 100-442529-illegible; Joseph A. Sizoo to Sullivan, and SAC, New York to Director, both captioned "Martin Luther King, Jr., SM-C (JUNE)," and both dated 13 May 1965, 100-106670-1346 and 1347; Hoover to Watson, 15 May 1965, 100-442529-1073; Hoover to Katzenbach, "Martin Luther King, Jr.," 17 May 1965, 100-106670-1373; and SAC, New York to Director, "Martin Luther King, Jr., SM-C (JUNE)," 7 June 1965, 100-106670-1444. Two similarly captioned items dated 21 and 28 May 1965, the first from Hoover to New York and the second from New York to headquarters (100-106670-1382 and 1407) indicate that King and his aides now searched their hotel rooms for listening devices. An Atlanta report of 16 July ("CIRM, IS-C," 100-442529-1218) indicated that King had suggested to Young putting scramblers on SCLC's phones.

54. Author's conversations with Jay Richard Kennedy.

55. "Memorandum for the Record," 11 May 1965, Office of Security, Central Intelligence Agency. King's CIA "security file" was numbered 353-062. An earlier memo in the same file, entitled "Notes Made During Conversations with [deletion] in New York City, 26 February 1965," may well relate to Kennedy also, as may a "Memorandum for the Record" dated 10 March 1965.

56. Director to SAC, New York, "CIRM, IS-C," 13 May 1965, New York serial 100-153735-1449; SAC, New York to Director, "CIRM, IS-C," 25 May 1965, New York serial 100-153735-1484; SAC, New York to Director, "CIRM, IS-C," 1 June 1965, New York serial 100-153735-1546; and SAC, New York to Director, "CIRM, IS-C," 1 June 1965, New York serial 100-153735-1547. An internal New York memo of 21 June 1965, serialized as 100-153735-1560, may also relate to a conversation with Kennedy.

57. "Memorandum for Chief, Security Research Staff," 9 June 1965, CIA King security file 353-062. The July conversations are the subject of



Chief, Liaison & External Operations Branch, SRS, to Chief, Security Research Staff, 7 July 1965, and an untitled memo of 21 July 1965. Three memos dated 8 February 1968, 5 April 1968, and 8 April 1968, and all directed to the Chief, Security Research Staff, also in all likelihood concern information that was provided by Jay Kennedy. Both the first and the last contain references to "Chicom" or "Peking communists." CIA memos written in 1975 contain Agency denials of ever engaging in any electronic surveillance or "mail covers" against King, plus a statement that no Agency representatives reported on King's activities when King was overseas. Office of Security, CIA, "Memorandum for Chief, Security Analysis Group," 28 November 1975.

58. Author's conversations with Harry Wachtel; Victor Navasky, *Kennedy Justice* (New York: Atheneum, 1971), p. 146; SAC, New York to Director, "CIRM, IS-C," 5 March 1965, 100-438794-unserialized; SAC, New York to Director, "COMINFIL SCLC, IS-C; Stanley Levison, IS-C," 15 April 1965, 100-438794-296; SAC, New York to Director, "CIRM, IS-C; SCLC, IS-C," 11 June 1965, 100-438794-unserialized; and SAC, Richmond to Director, "CIRM; COMINFIL SCLC, IS-C," 11 June 1965, 100-438794-unserialized. Levison had opposed the general economic boycott of Alabama that King announced in late March, and also feared that SCLC was moving into the summer months without a well-planned program. No fan of Hosea Williams, Levison believed that spreading SCOPE workers across seventy counties was extremely inadvisable. Bureau intercepts also indicated that Bayard Rustin strenuously opposed the Alabama boycott plan. See SAC, New York to Director, 23 April 1965, pp. 27-28, cited at n. 51 above; SAC, Atlanta (by Al F. Miller) to Director, "COMINFIL SCLC, IS-C," 8 July 1965, 100-438794-393, pp. 29-30; SAC, New York to Director and SAC, Baltimore, "CIRM, IS-C; COMINFIL SCLC, IS-C," 1 April 1965, 100-438794-unserialized; SAC, New York to Director, "CIRM, IS-C; COMINFIL SCLC, IS-C," 2 April 1965, 100-438794-unserialized; and Hoover to Katzenbach, "Boycott of Alabama by the SCLC to Protest Voting Discrimination, RM," 2 April 1965, 100-438794-279. Additional reports on King went to the White House on 2 and 15 (100-106670-1238) April and 8 and 17 (100-106670-1489) June 1965. At Warrenton, headquarters learned, "the discussions centered around the moving of SCLC operations North, specifically New York and Chicago. The purpose for moving North . . . would be to make gains in housing, schools, and other basic needs." SAC, New York to Director, "CIRM, IS-C; SCLC, IS-C," 15 June 1965, 100-438794-unserialized.

59. Director (by Phillips) to SAC, New York, "COMINFIL SCLC, IS-