

FBI

Date: 1/31/69
PLAINTEXT

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

Via AIRTEL _____
(Priority)

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (44-38861)

FROM: SAC, MEMPHIS (44-1987) (P)

SUBJECT: MURKIN

OO: ME

Re Atlanta teletype to Bureau, 1/30/69, concerning the interview of Reverend RALPH ABERNATHY, SCLC Headquarters, Atlanta, Georgia.

The results of the investigation conducted by the Memphis Division in regard to the reference of ABERNATHY re Citizens Band radio transmissions and the removal of Negro firemen and policemen from the immediate area of the Lorraine Motel shortly prior to the shooting of Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., were forwarded to the Bureau by Memphis airtels to the Bureau dated 7/29/68 and 11/21/68.

The only item mentioned by ABERNATHY that has not been fully explained to the Bureau is the fact that Reverend JAMES LAWSON, Memphis, advised ABERNATHY that a Negro policeman who worked the beat which included the motel where Dr. KING was killed was moved off that beat the day KING was killed.

On 1/31/69, [redacted] Intelligence Unit, Memphis PD, advised that the Memphis PD does not maintain any officers on a "walking beat" other

3-Bureau
1-Atlanta (44-2386) INFO
2-Memphis

RFB:PEH
(6)

REC 44

5533

Approved: R. Jensen
Special Agent in Charge

Sent _____ M Per _____

ME 44-1987

than on special occasions and that from a review of the Memphis PD records he ascertained that there were no Memphis police officers assigned to a "walking beat" in Memphis on the day Dr. KING was killed.

In this regard it is believed that Reverend LAWSON was referring to Detective E. E. REDDITT, Memphis PD, who was removed from a lookout position at engine house #2 of the Memphis Fire Department on 4/4/68 due to the fact a number of threats had been made on REDDITT's life as a result of REDDITT's activities in attending meetings of the striking sanitation workers in Memphis in February and March, 1968. REDDITT was removed from this fire house and two officers of the Memphis PD were assigned at that time to protect REDDITT and members of REDDITT's family.

In view of the above, the Memphis Division does not anticipate interviewing Reverend JAMES LAWSON concerning the information LAWSON furnished to ABERNATHY.

A copy of this airtel is being submitted for the information of the Atlanta Division as Atlanta obtained the information in question as a result of the interview of Reverend ABERNATHY at Atlanta.

2-4-69

AIRTEL

1 - Mr. Long

To: SAC, Memphis (44-1987)
REC 44
From: Director, FBI (44-38861) - 5533

MURKIN

ReMEairtel to the Bureau dated 1-31-69.

Memphis should interview Reverend James Lawson for details of any information he possesses regarding the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. and conduct all necessary investigation to thoroughly resolve.

REL:jms
(4)

NOTE: Article appeared in "The Washington Post" on 1-29-69. The article in part stated that the head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Reverend Ralph David Abernathy, indicated that a conspiracy existed in the Martin Luther King, Jr. assassination. We instructed our Atlanta Office to interview Abernathy and upon interview Abernathy advised that what he told the press was that he believed in view of the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, Medgar Evers, and Martin Luther King, Jr. there would be indication to him that there may be a conspiracy among the forces of evil to do away with any young militant who stands for righteousness. Abernathy stated he had no evidence indicating a conspiracy and it is only his belief or fear on his part that such a conspiracy exists. Abernathy during interview advised that Rev. Lawson of Memphis told him about some personnel of the Memphis Fire Department and personnel of the Memphis Police Department that were moved to different locations of the city on 4-4-68 (date of assassination of King) and this may be significant..

Memphis advised that they resolved all issues as set forth by Abernathy in his conversation with Rev. Lawson. Memphis being instructed to interview Rev. Lawson in order to thoroughly resolve this matter and to obtain all information.

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