

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Mr. Gallagher

FROM : J. S. Peelman

SUBJECT: MURKIN

DATE: 9/21/76

- 1 - Mr. Held
- 1 - Mr. Adams
- 1 - Mr. Gallagher
- 1 - Mr. O'Connell
- 1 - Mr. Peelman
- 1 - Mr. Helterhoff
- 1 - Mr. Ingram
- 1 - Mr. Mintz
- 1 - Mr. Aldhizer

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PURPOSE: To advise that the U.S. House of Representatives has created a select committee to investigate the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The reported basis for the House investigation re Dr. King was previously investigated by the FBI in 1968 and 1969 and the results were furnished to the U. S. Department of Justice.

SYNOPSIS: This case pertains to the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on 4/4/68. James Earl Ray pled guilty to this murder and presently is in local confinement. As set forth in a J. S. Peelman to Mr. Gallagher memorandum dated 2/18/76, in February, 1976, "Newsday," a Long Island, New York, newspaper reported that Ed Redditt, the Memphis, Tennessee, City Detective guarding King was pulled from his post hours before King was assassinated and told the U. S. Secret Service had learned of a "contract" on his life. Redditt, who protested his removal, reportedly had a "contingency plan" to apprehend any King assassin. On 2/17/76, this article furnished to the Civil Rights Division (CRD), U. S. Department of Justice (USDJ), which, at that time, had the FBI investigation of Dr. King under review, stating FBI was conducting no investigation re this article unless specifically requested by the CRD. Article in "Washington Post," 9/18/76 (copy attached) reported U. S. House of Representatives created a select committee to investigate assassinations of President Kennedy and Dr. King. Reported basis for House investigation re Dr. King deals with ordered removal of Redditt from King security on day of his death due to reported attempt on life of Redditt's family. Order for his removal attributed to Memphis Fire and Police Director Frank Holloman (retired)

Enclosure

HNH:bam (10)

44-38861

CONTINUED - OVER

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FBI/DOJ

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Special Agent of FBI). Reported basis also deals with "sudden transfer" of two black fireman, including Floyd Newsum, from firehouse across the street from motel where King was shot. The FBI civil rights assassination investigative file (Bufile 44-38861) reflects the CRD furnished a memorandum dated 9/23/68 containing results of interviews which J. Harold Flannery, Deputy Section Chief, Central Section, CRD, had with William Sartor, a contract writer for Time, Inc., who as a reporter had been inquiring into possible conspiracy to assassinate Dr. King. Sartor furnished various information, including the "Cosa Nostra" or "Mafia" could be involved, Redditt was moved from assignment at fire station, and two Negro firemen were moved from the station a day or two before the shooting. CRD requested FBI to "follow out" all of Sartor's indicated leads. FBI investigation in 1968 reflects that upon instructions from an Inspector of the Memphis Police Department (PD), Detective Redditt removed from guard duty due to information received from Senator McClellan's Senate Investigating Committee that a Negro detective was to be killed. Inspector believed this another threat against Redditt, who had been previously threatened, and removed Redditt for own protection. Memphis PD determined Negro fireman Floyd E. Newsum active in demonstrations by striking sanitation workers and closely associated with black militants. Newsum transferred to insure safety for Officers Redditt and another officer and to insure no information leaked to black militants. Another Negro fireman routinely reassigned due to manpower shortage. This investigation by FBI reported in Memphis letterhead memorandum (LHM) dated 11/21/68, disseminated to CRD 11/27/68, and by request also furnished to Office of Professional Responsibility Task Force, U. S. Department of Justice, on 6/4/76, which Office is presently reviewing the FBI investigation of Dr. King.

Bufile 44-38861 also reflects on 1/30/69 Rev. Ralph Abernathy, President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, advised that Rev. James Lawson told him two Negro firemen, assigned to fire station across from King motel, were moved leaving fire station unmanned, and a Negro policeman was moved from beat of King's motel. (LHM reporting this furnished CRD 2/3/69). FBI investigation at Memphis PD reflected it had no officers assigned to "walking beat" on day King killed. Rev. Lawson interviewed by FBI on 2/11/69 and stated Floyd E. Newsum and another Negro

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fireman were transferred, and Detective Redditt was removed from fire station, and these occurrences may have some significance. This new select House Committee, to date, has made no requests of the FBI.

RECOMMENDATION: For information. The CRD is being advised, and the Task Force Leader of the Office of Professional Responsibility, U. S. Department of Justice, presently reviewing the FBI investigation of Dr. King will be advised of the location of this information in Bufile 44-38861.

Ed

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APPROVED: <i>H/200</i>	Ext. Affairs.....	Laboratory.....
Assoc. Dir. <i>H/200</i>	Fin. & Pers.....	Legal Coun.....
Dep. AD Adm.....	Gen. Inv. <i>G/S</i>	Plan. & Eval.....
Dep. AD Inv. <i>J.A.</i>	Ident.....	Rec. Mgmt.....
Asst. Dir.:	Inspection.....	Spec. Inv.....
Adm. Serv.....	Intc.....	Training.....

DETAILS: This case pertains to the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on 4/4/68. James Earl Ray pled guilty to this murder and presently is in local confinement in Tennessee.

As set forth in a J. S. Peelman to Mr. Gallagher memorandum dated 2/18/76, a United Press International Wire Service article dated 2/14/76, stated the following:

"Garden City, N.Y. (UPI) -- The top law enforcement official in Memphis, Tennessee, removed a detective assigned to protect Martin Luther King hours before the Civil Rights leader was assassinated in 1968, Newsday reported Saturday.

In a copyrighted story in its Sunday edition, the Long Island newspaper said Ed Redditt, the city detective guarding King, was pulled from his post and told there was a plot to kill him.

The Memphis Public Safety Director did not replace Redditt after taking him off the assignment and allowed the detective to return to work three days after King was shot to death at the Lorraine Motel Newsday said.

It also said Redditt 'had prepared a contingency plan to enable the police department to apprehend an assassin should an attempt be made on King's life.'

'After Redditt was removed from duty, he was told at a meeting in police headquarters that the U. S.

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Secret Service had learned of a 'contract' on his life,'
Newsday said.

'Redditt protested, saying he wanted to return
to his post, but the city's then Public Safety
Director, Frank Holloman, insisted on the officer's
removal,' the newspaper said.

'Enroute home with his police guard, Redditt
heard over the radio that King had been shot by an
assassin,' the story said.

'Three days later, the round-the-clock guard
watching Redditt was removed and he was allowed
to return to work. The police department never
offered any further explanation of the 'contract'
on his life,' Newsday said.

The story also said Holloman acknowledged
the report of a threat on Redditt's life, but refused
to say who had made the threat.

'Redditt's assassination contingency plan,
according to sources, called for the entire
four-block area around King's Hotel to be
sealed off by patrol cars,' the article said."

On 2/17/76, this article was furnished to the CRD
USDJ, which at that time had the FBI investigation of Dr. King
under review, stating the FBI was conducting no investigation re
this article unless specifically requested by the CRD.

On 9/8/76, an article appeared in the "Washington Post,"
(copy attached), reporting that the U. S. House of Representatives
created a select committee to investigate the assassination of
President John F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
The reported basis for the House investigation re Dr. King
deals with the ordered removal of Edward Redditt from King's
security on the day of his death due to a reported attempt on
the life of Redditt's family. The order for his removal was
attributed to Memphis Fire and Police Director Frank Holloman
(retired Special Agent of the FBI). The reported basis also
deals with the "sudden transfer" of two black firemen, including
Floyd Newsum, from the fire house across the street from the
motel where King was shot.

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DETAILS - OVER

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The FBI civil rights assassination investigative file (Bufile 44-38861) reflects the CRD furnished a memorandum dated 9/23/68 (serial 5197) containing results of interviews which J. Harold Flannery, Deputy Section Chief, Central Section, CRD, had with William Sartor, a contract writer for Time, Inc., who as a reporter had been inquiring into a possible conspiracy to assassinate Dr. King. Sartor furnished various information, including that the "Cosa Nostra" or "Mafia" could be involved. Departmental Attorney Flannery also reported that Sartor furnished him with the following two allegations:

1. "An unidentified Negro policeman was moved from his assignment at the Fire Station (and Police Tactical Unit Station) at about 5:00 p.m. on the day of the assassination. According to Sartor, the Dispatcher told the policeman to move two or three times during the afternoon, but he did not do so until explicitly advised to that effect by a superior. In August, Sartor identified the policeman as E. E. Redditt and said that Redditt had broken off an interview with Sartor after starting to discuss his move from the station."

2. "Two Negro firemen were moved from the station a day or two before the shooting. One of them has reportedly told friends that, two or three days before Dr. King was shot, a telescope or binoculars were set up on a tripod in the fire station and focused on the Lorraine Motel balcony. In August, Sartor said that one firemen left the Department or was suspended shortly after the shooting, and that he has been unable to locate either of them. He did not have their names."

The CRD requested the FBI to "follow out" all of Sartor's indicated leads.

By LHM, the Memphis Office of the FBI reported the results of the investigation re the above two items as set forth below (serial 5387):

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"In this regard, Inspector G. P. Tines, Intelligence Unit, Memphis Police Department, advised on 11/18/68, that on 4/3/68 he assigned Detective E. E. Redditt and Patrolman W. B. Richmond, Negro officers, both of whom are assigned to the Inspection Division of the Memphis Police Department, to a security detail at the Memphis Fire Station, Engine House #2, located at Butler and Main Streets. This location is approximately one block from the Lorraine Motel. The purpose of this assignment was to observe the activities of the "Invaders," local Black Power group at Memphis. A number of the "Invaders" were rooming at the Lorraine Motel at this time. These two officers were equipped with binoculars and were stationed in a room at the rear of the fire station with a view that included the room later occupied by the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.

In connection with this assignment, and prior to the time Officers Redditt and Richmond physically proceeded to this assigned location, it was determined by the Intelligence Unit of the Memphis Police Department that a Negro fireman stationed at the Fire Station and named Floyd E. Newsum had taken an active part in demonstrations by the striking sanitation workers in February and March, 1968, and had been closely associated with black militants connected with the strike. In order to insure security for Officers Redditt and Richmond, and to insure that no information regarding the Memphis Police Department Intelligence Unit's efforts to keep abreast of the activities of the "Invaders" was leaked to the black militants in Memphis, the Chief of the Memphis Fire Department was requested to temporarily transfer Fireman Newsum to another fire station. This was done on 4/3/68.

In addition, on 4/4/68, Negro Fireman Norvell E. Wallace was routinely assigned from Fire Station #2 to Fire Station #31, due to a manpower shortage at Fire station #31.

On 11/18/68, Fire Chief Hamilton advised that by letter dated 5/18/68, Fireman Newsum resigned from the Memphis Fire Department after thirteen years of service, giving as his reason for leaving "Personal Reasons." Chief Hamilton advised it is his understanding that Newsum has become an active worker with the NAACP at Memphis subsequent to his resignation from the Memphis Fire Department.

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At approximately 4:15 p.m. on 4/4/68, Lt. E. H. Arkin of the Intelligence Unit of the Memphis Police Department, on instructions from Inspector Tines, proceeded to Fire Engine House #2 and removed Detective Redditt from this station, leaving Officer Richmond at this post. The reason for the removal of Officer Redditt was due to the receipt of a telephone call on the morning of 4/4/68 by Philip Manuel, Chief Investigator for Senator McClellan's Senate Investigating Committee, Washington, D. C., to the effect that information had been received by the Committee that a Negro detective on the Memphis Police Department was to be killed.

Due to Detective E. E. Redditt's activities in attending meetings of the striking sanitation workers in February and March, 1968, Redditt had been threatened on several occasions. Inspector Tines therefore believed the telephone call received by the McClellan Committee was another threat directed against Redditt. He therefore ordered Redditt removed from his lookout post at Engine House #2 for Redditt's own protection. A police guard of two officers was assigned to Redditt and his family as a result of this threat.

A review of the tapes of the Memphis Police Department radio transmissions for April 4, 1968, failed to reflect any transmissions from Police Dispatcher ordering Redditt to move from his observation post and, in fact, it has been ascertained that no radio equipment was maintained by the police officers at this observation post with which to receive radio transmissions."

This Memphis LHM also disseminated to the CRD on 11/27/68 and by request was also furnished to the Office of Professional Responsibility Task Force, USDJ, on 6/4/76, which office is presently reviewing the FBI investigation of Dr. King.

An LHM from the Atlanta Office of the FBI dated 1/31/69 (serial 5531) reflected that Rev. Ralph Abernathy, President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, was interviewed by the FBI on 1/30/69 and he advised that several months previously, Rev. James Lawson told him the day before the assassination of Dr. King that two Negro firemen, who had been assigned to the fire station across the street from the motel where Dr. King was killed, were moved to another fire station.

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According to Rev. Lawson that move left the fire station unmanned and they were moved to a station which was already fully manned and equipped. Also according to Rev. Lawson, a Negro policeman, who worked the beat which included the motel where Dr. King was killed, was moved off of that beat the day Dr. King was killed, April 4, 1968, but prior to the killing. This Atlanta LHM was furnished to the CRD on 2/3/69.

An airtel from the Memphis Office of the FBI, dated 1/31/69 (serial 5533) reflects information from the Memphis PD that it had no officers assigned to a "walking beat" in Memphis on the day Dr. King was killed.

An airtel from our Memphis Office dated 2/11/69 (serial 5557) reflects that Rev. Lawson was interviewed by the FBI on 2/11/69 and he advised he feels that certain occurrences 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.

This new select House Committee, to date, has made no request of the FBI.

Washington Post
September 18, 1976

House Votes 280-65 to Probe Kennedy, King Assassinations

By Mary Russell

Washington Post Staff Writer

The House created a select committee yesterday to investigate the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The 12-member committee, established on a 280-to-65 vote, will be headed by Rep. Thomas Downing (D-Va.) for the remainder of this Congress. Speaker Carl Albert (D-Okla.) said. Downing, however, is retiring, and Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez (D-Tex.), with Downing a prime sponsor of the committee, is expected to become chairman in the new session next January.

Downing said he would ask for \$230,000 to get the committee started and hire staff, but Rep. Frank Thompson (D-N.J.), chairman of the House Administration Committee which must authorize the funds, indicated yesterday he might be reluctant to approve that amount.

Because the select committee expires at the end of this year and will have to be re-established by the House next year, it should wait until then for funding, Thompson said.

Downing said the committee would not hold public hearings before the Nov. 2 elections, to avoid charges of capitalizing politically on the investigation, but he said it might hold some closed hearings "in order to preserve testimony."

Reasons for looking again at the 1963 Kennedy assassination, he said,

are revelations by the congressional intelligence committees that information about CIA attempts to kill Cuban Premier Fidel Castro was withheld from the Warren commission, "the murder of two Mafia members enlisted by the CIA to help assassinate Castro, and the destruction of notes on Kennedy's autopsy and a note by assassin Lee Harvey Oswald to a member of the FBI.

The commission headed by Chief Justice Earl Warren investigated the assassination of Kennedy in Dallas and concluded that Oswald acted alone.

But Downing said yesterday, "I am convinced there was a conspiracy involved. I do not know the identity of the conspirators or their motives. That should be investigated in depth."

Downing promised "to engage in no witch-hunts" and "not blame those who may have made mistakes in the original investigation."

Rep. B. F. Sisk (D-Calif.) called the planned investigation a waste of taxpayers' money to satisfy "the melodramatic desire of the morbid to create an incident."

Though Downing and Gonzalez set out more than a year ago to create the committee, they were going nowhere until they received a push from members of the Congressional Black Caucus, who felt they had received "new information" in the 1968 killing of Martin Luther King Jr. that called for a congressional investigation.

D.C. Del. Walter Fauntroy and Rep. Yvonne Burke (D-Calif.) confirmed that the information came from writer and TV producer Abby Mann, who is working on a documentary on King's death, and from writer Mark Lane, one of the first to doubt the Warren Commission conclusions.

Reportedly the information has been known since 1963 but never investigated by the FBI.

It deals with the removal of King's black security chief from his side shortly before he was killed in Memphis, and the sudden transfer of two black firemen from the firehouse across the street from the motel where King was staying and was shot.

Edward Redditt, in charge of security for King, was ordered to go home about 4 p.m. on the day of King's death, because of a reported attempt on the life of Redditt's family.

The order was attributed to Memphis Fire and Police Director Frank C. Holloman, who had worked for the FBI for 23 years, part of the time in the office of the late Director J. Edgar Hoover, who had tapped King's phone and ordered surveillance of the civil rights leader.

Floyd Newsom, one of the black firemen abruptly transferred from the fire station across from the motel, said he had attended a King rally in Memphis and, though he publicly told of the transfer at the time, says he was never interviewed by the FBI.

ENCLOSURE

44-38861-6133