

LJ - Withholdings in C.A.75-1996 and re my PA requests HW 8/20/78

I received, in stages but still incompletely, false records generated by the FBI after I reported what Stoner had told me about FBI informers trying to induce him to acts of racial violence. Compliance is incomplete under both requests. Several of the records only were delivered by the FBI, including an Internal Security Division memo. No records were provided from the files of those to whom copies were sent. I have not received response to my repeated requests for full compliance. There has been no action of which I am aware on the appeal.

After receiving the original records and being shocked at what the FBI had done I went through my own records, because I remembered the corrupted incident clearly, and sent the FBI (John Harting) contemporaneous records proving that the FBI had fabricated what it then disseminated, as I recall to all the AGs and Deputies thereafter in connection with my FOIA requests. I believe that this fabrication was instrumental in the Department's decision, which is apparent, to endorse the FBI's decision not to comply with my requests. I knew that once I started proving that all the FBI's vicious records relating to me were entirely false or deliberately distorted the providing of records ceased entirely. Since then I have provided repeated proofs of the existence of records that a ter going on three years remain withheld.

The attached story from today's Washington Post bears on all of this. It recounts that the FBI had responsibility for the assaults on Freedom Riders in Alabama.

(Parenthetically, a former network reporter told me late last night, when we were discussing other matters, that two years ago his network knew the story of FBI Informer Rowe and of the then ongoing police investigation and opted not to report or look into it.)

Because I believe all of this is relevant to non-compliance I add more information for the Shea office and for any use you consider proper in court in C.A. 75-1996.

At the time there was a federal neutrality act indictment for planned invasion of Haiti, about the summer of 1969, Bill and I were in Washington. We had stopped off to visit with friends, Louis and Diana Herrmann. Louis was the butler for the late Lily Vogel (A Lewisohn and quite a social figure in Washington, well connected politically) and Diana the secretary. Actually, they were much more because the old lady required much looking after and protection, as did her family. When Louis referred to the current news of the indictment I told him of having taped interviews with Hemming and Howard in which they laid out their plans for invading Haiti. Louis suggested that I tell DJ, so I used his phone to call Criminal Division, which appeared to be a bit excited. It asked me to await a callback. When they did call they asked me to keep a 2 p.m. appointment at ISD. Bill and I did. Contrary to what the FBI's fictions say the lawyer I spoke to was excited and asked if he could come up on Monday. I had told him the local SA could have whatever I had because the stuff was not confidential but he said he wanted to come up. I knew none of the details of the indictment so I asked for a copy of it. In the course of this, because the Stoner call was then recent, I also told ISD that the Department should be aware of the acts of FBI informers as represented to me by Stoner. This, of course, was before we knew there was such an incredible operation as Cointelpro.

There is little doubt in my mind that the vigor and extremity of the FBI's reaction accounts for the ISD lawyer never coming and that to protect Cointelpro it had to take some such extreme course as its vicious fabrications about me.

The passing of time has not relieved what bothers the FBI because for part of the period of these extreme activities in Birmingham and Alabama Clarence Kelley was SAC there. (From there, as I recall, he went to Memphis, or the other way around, as SAC.)

What this story includes about Eugene Hall Connor also is not new. What it means is that the man who was later head of the FBI had to have had involvements with Connor. Kelley was Director at the time the 1996 case was filed and during its earlier stages.

Connor was investigated by the Senate committee for which I worked in 1937. As I now recall the relevant testimony is in the third volume of hearings as I printed them. The investigation was of the brutal, almost fatal flogging of a college professor named Joe Gelders. Gelders was for educating blacks and other similar subversions. Connors, as I now recall, then was director of security or whatever they called the chief cop of a U.S. Steel subsidiary, Tennessee Coal & Iron. His major function was to prevent unionization. Connor was responsible for this and other floggings and I believe was a sadistic participant. In any event, there was no secret from anyone in the Alabama FBI about Connor's past, regardless of what he was up to contemporaneously.

As the Post story shows, the FBI was working with such people during the Freedom Rides. Actually, from what Stoner told me and since has been partly confirmed, it was worse. The FBI was giving such stuff to Al Lingo, then head of the Alabama highway patrol or whatever the State police is called. He also was a virulent racist. He was friendly with Stoner. So he showed Stoner the FBI reports on him, which made identification of the FBI's informers simple for Stoner.

And all of these people were very much involved in operations against King as well as investigations relating to the assassination. FBI and local police both.

(If the figleaf of Hoover's distaste against King is true, that most southern SAs were not southern born, it is irrelevant because they were anti-black, which was King's point.)

It is my recollection that there are large and significant voids in the records from the Birmingham and Atlanta Field Offices. The FBI had both from Suie and from what he published what Ray had written Suie via Arthur Moses. Suie gave the FBI what he did not publish. This is to say information from Ray that was not in Look. One example is of current interest from Ray's testimony before the House assassins. This example is that the man he calls Raoul (he calls him Rgual) was registered at the Travelodge Motel in Birmingham. I recall no investigation to identify this person or his vehicle. Likewise in New Orleans, there was investigation of Raul Esquivel for periods of time when Ray was not in New Orleans, not when Ray was there. Now my reporting of Esquivel in Frags-Us is accurate in that it recounts precisely what "erry" Cohen had from Charlie Stein. However, Stein did not level fully with Cohen. He did not get the phone number when he saw Ray use a pay phone en route to N.O. from Los Angeles. He got the phone number from Ray in Ray's cup writing when, as you know typically for Ray, Ray wrote a number for Stein on the back of that slip of paper. No records provided relate to any Esquivel investigation as of that period of time or when Ray later returned on the trip on which King was killed. Yet there had been civil rights complaints made against Esquivel, a State trooper. (The possibility of a link similar to those in Alabama cannot be entirely ignored if there is no proof of it. Similar incidents were plentiful in La., where among those not bothered by the FBI were the Leander Terres. He was ex-communicated over them.)

So, I believe there is a FBI motive for its continued withholding, which extends to the Department.

It may interest you to know that it was about the time of the Gelders/Connor hearing that Hugo Black's sister, ^{Virginia} Virginia Burr became intensely interested in the committee's work. She attended the hearings, read the galley proofs and asked me to explain the meaning of hearings almost daily after they ended. She was the driving force behind the anti-poll tax drive. She wanted me to head that group. I opted instead for the anti-Nazi work, especially on cartels, that I did in that period after the committee. Her husband, the late Cliff Burr, was involved with King and was Ibsen Park's white lawyer. Cliff broke with Truman over the "loyalty" program and returned to Ala. to represent clients who had trouble getting lawyers.

FBI Knew Policeman Was Leak to Klan on Freedom Riders

By Paul Magnusson
Special to The Washington Post

DETROIT—The FBI supplied information on the progress of two busloads of Freedom Riders through the South in 1961 to the Birmingham, Ala., police department even though it knew the department had been infiltrated by the Ku Klux Klan, according to FBI documents released to the American Civil Liberties Union.

Shortly before Klansmen intercepted and burned one bus and severely beat passengers on the other, the chief of the Birmingham FBI bureau called a known Klan agent in the police department to tell him of the exact location of the buses, the documents show.

bers of white hate groups were eventually charged in connection with the violence that day, the policeman passing information to the Klan was never changed.

The FBI documents were released to ACLU attorneys for Walter Bergman, who says he was left partially paralyzed by the beating he received May 14, 1961, at the hands of the KKK in Anniston, Ala., 50 miles east of Birmingham.

Bergman, 78, a former Wayne State University professor and Detroit school board official, is suing the FBI for \$1 million for allegedly failing to prevent the Klan violence.

The 3,000 pages of FBI letters, memos and teletypes clearly show that the FBI knew that Sgt. Thomas Cook, of the BPD intelligence branch, was passing information on the activities of the civil rights workers directly to the top leadership of the Klan.

An FBI informant who infiltrated the Klan identified Cook and then Birmingham Public Safety Director Eugene (Bull) Connor as conspiring with Klan leadership to arrange for an attack on the Freedom Riders as their buses pulled up.

Connor reportedly told the Klan leaders that police would not be present at the Greyhound and Trailways bus terminals and that police would

allow Klansmen 15 to 20 minutes to beat the civil rights workers.

Light sentences were promised for any Klansman caught afterwards, according to the informant, Gary Thomas Rowe Jr., who was the FBI's chief informant in Alabama from 1960 to 1968.

Connor, according to Rowe, told Klan officials to beat the Freedom Riders "and make them look like a bulldog got a hold of them."

In fact, news accounts and FBI reports show that when the Trailways bus arrived at the Birmingham terminal, no police were present. Klansmen attacked civil rights workers, news

photographers and reporters, beating them with chains, pipes and baseball bats.

Earlier that day, Klansmen intercepted the Greyhound bus at Anniston and set it on fire. Freedom Riders on the Trailways bus, including Bergman, were also beaten. The Trailways bus was allowed to continue to Birmingham after the black passengers agreed to sit in the back.

Freedom Riders were beaten again in Birmingham. Rowe, the FBI's informant, was cut across the throat during the fighting. Police made no arrests at the scene.

Because of Rowe's double agent

role, the FBI knew at least 10 days before the attack in Birmingham that Sgt. Cook was a Klan agent. Cook was instructed by Imperial Wizard Robert Shelton to travel to Anniston to watch for the buses and to notify the Birmingham Klan of their progress, Rowe told the FBI.

Instead, Cook relied on the FBI to keep track of the buses.

An FBI spokesman refused comment on the charge.

Rowe's work as an FBI informant is the subject of a claim against the FBI for \$2 million by the ACLU and the family of slain civil rights worker Viola Liuzzo.

Rowe was in the car from which the shots that killed Liuzzo were fired. He refused from his undercover FBI role to testify in the trials of three Klansmen who were eventually convicted of violating Liuzzo's civil rights. The three were sentenced to 10 years.

Alabama authorities have recently reopened the investigation to determine if Rowe also fired shots into the Liuzzo car.

The Justice Department is also investigating whether Rowe was an agent provocateur, helping to plan the Klan violence that he reported on to the FBI.