

Dear Les,

1/9/84

There just may be much more than the "irony" reported in the column as it appeared in today's local paper, copy enclosed, and it was not only Hoover who "set out to ruin King."

Maybe, just maybe, Pierce, too!

Here's the story.

In 1977 I filed an FOIA suit against the CIA for its King records and I learned that they had a high-level informant of far-right belief who refused to be an informant for the FBI when the CIA tried to shift him. (It was illegal for the CIA, not the FBI.)

He was really cued in, too. And did he want to ruin King, the Chicom, financed by Chicom gold, etc. Absolutely incredible stuff!

The spaces for the obliterated name and the statements attributed to that person could not fit Pierce better.

Do you want to ask the cabinet member who is to receive the King award if he was a CIA informant on and against the man in whose honor he is to receive the award "as the person who best fulfills King's zeal for social justice?"

I can dig the records out if you are interested. I gave them to George Gardner some years ago and he did run something but I don't now recall if it was this or the kind of other stuff I got, copies of what men usually carry in their pockets.

However, even if run, there is today this "supreme irony" bit, no?

And the fink was never identified.

Jim Lesar also may be able to give you copies faster. Mine are put away with the records of that suit. But I can get them.

This guy's "zeal" was for doing something to and about King, ruining him, and it specifically extended to one of King's efforts in support of "social justice" in Washington. Yours for more "supreme irony" and some kind of justice,

JACK ANDERSON

The Washington Merry-go-round

Fred Post
11/9/84

Hoover tried to pick a leader to replace Martin Luther King



WASHINGTON — As the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. approaches, President Reagan's reelection team is trying to figure out a way to convince the country's blacks that the administration is really dedicated to civil rights.

In their desperation the Republicans will consider any suggestion — even the bizarre one offered by Rep. Newt Gingrich, R-Ga. He has advised the president to “invent new black leaders” who will support administration policies.

Crazy as that may sound, the idea was actually tried 20 years ago, not by a political party, but by the autocratic director of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover. He tried to “invent” a black leader to replace King, whom he was determined to destroy. Here's the strong story:

Hoover considered King a dangerous radical, a subversive influence who would tear apart the fabric of American society if he weren't stopped. He detested the black leader more than he loathed any other national figure of that era, with the possible exception of the late Robert Kennedy.

Hoover set out to ruin King. He ordered his agents to tap King's phones, had him kept under constant surveillance and compiled a voluminous file of gossip and half-baked accusations against King.

In his delusion, Hoover was confident not only that he could destroy King, but that he could even choose his successor. He made his selection and ordered his No. 3 man, William Sullivan, to conduct a secret investigation of Hoover's candidate.

Sullivan told my associate Les Whitten about his weird assignment not long before he died in a 1977 hunting accident. Over steaming bowls of homemade soup at his home in Sugar Hill, N.H., Sullivan still expressed wonderment that Hoover thought he had enough power to pick King's successor once the black leader had been disgraced.

The man Hoover picked was a former prosecutor and judge who at the time was with a prestigious New York law firm. He had graduated with honors and earned his law degree at Cornell, done advance studies at Yale and gotten a master's degree in tax law at New York University.

Hoover's candidate had been a tough assistant district attorney and a capable assistant U.S. attorney for the southern district of New York. A law school professor, he had done stints with the labor Department and a House Judiciary subcommittee. An important point: He had done enough civil rights work to earn the respect at least of moderate blacks.

Hoover, Sullivan recalled, was “bowl- ed over” by the happy results of the investigation. But the old man was canny enough not to approach his choice, knowing it would taint him in the eyes of civil rights leaders.

Instead, using the same undercover techniques with which he hoped to destroy King, Hoover planned to use FBI contacts in and outside the civil rights movement to build support for his candidate without the FBI's hand showing, Sullivan said.

Hoover died without ever telling his nominee what he had been plotting in the man's behalf. It was only when President Reagan named him secretary of Housing and Urban Development that Samuel Riley Pierce learned of his peculiar “honor.”

The supreme irony occurred a few days ago. King's widow, Coretta, notified Pierce that he had been chosen by the Martin Luther King Center for Non-Violent Social Change to receive a genuine honor. The man J. Edgar Hoover wanted to “invent” as a black leader will get the Martin Luther King Award this year as the person who best fulfills King's zeal for social justice.