

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Michael Shaheen, Counsel
Office of Professional Responsibility

DATE: October 8, 1976

FROM : Fred G. Folsom, Leader
Martin Luther King, Jr., Task Force

SUBJECT: Task Force Access to Stanley Levison FBI File

As you know, the review of FBI activities with respect to Martin Luther King, Jr. has become closely involved with the relationship which both King and the FBI had with Stanley Levison. This has necessitated a review of the Levison file by the Task Force particularly in light of the reliance which the Bureau places on the Levison history as a justification for its surveillance of King.

The Task Force has sought access to the file as a group not only because of its size (7029 serials) but because of the collective approach which we have employed in discharging our responsibilities. The Bureau position was to limit access to me alone as an additional precaution to protect the security of their informants. Such an approach is unwarranted. It would be burdensome to an expedited review and would hinder the free discussion among the attorneys which has prevailed thus far.

In keeping with the ground rules of permitting free access to all relevant files, the Bureau was to have taken this issue to the Attorney General for resolution. This apparently has not been done. Indeed, we thought that a compromise had been reached some four weeks ago which would have rendered the appeal unnecessary. In August, the FBI agreed in a rather inconsistent fashion to provide the Task Force with a security briefing concerning the informants involved in the Levison case while at the same time continuing to deny us access to the file. At the close of the briefing on September 2, 1976, the Bureau asked if we would object to an excision of the names of the informants from the file prior to its delivery. We agreed as a group to permit this as long as only the names were excised and on the assumption that the review itself did not disclose facts which would render it necessary for the identities of the informants to be divulged.



It was our understanding up until last week that as a result of the agreement on excision, we would be given access to the Levison file as a group. We have now been informed that the Bureau wishes to remove the informants names as well as permit only one attorney to see the file. At this point we would ask that a resolution be made so that we may proceed with a review of the Levison role in this matter.