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THE ASSASSINATION OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

The two attached articles are by the Pulitzer Prize winner Les Payne, a black investigative reporter with Newsday. They represent one of the most significant pieces of information made available on the circumstances of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in Memphis April 4, 1968. Subsequently Mark Lane, a Washington, D. C., assassinologist, re-interviewed some of the same sources mentioned in these articles and claimed that he had discovered this new information.

For further information on the assassination of Dr. King read: Harold Weisberg, Frame-Up. The Martin Luther King/James Earl Ray Case. Containing Suppressed Evidence. New York: Outerbridge & Dienstrey, 1971. Copies of this hard to find book are available from the author, who also lectures on the subject, for \$10.75 which includes postage.

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FBI Tied To King's Return To Memphis

By Les Payne

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The FBI continues to turn up in unexplained circumstances surrounding the assassination of Martin Luther King.

Newsday has learned that FBI informants actively participated in the rioting in Memphis in 1968 which drew the Rev. Dr. King back to the city where he was killed.

Several FBI informants and at least one undercover agent for the Memphis Police Department were among the most active members of a young, violence-prone black group which openly opposed King's peaceful march supporting the city's sanitation workers.

According to some witnesses, the 100-member group called the Invaders led the March 28 riots which attempted to discredit King's efforts. Following the riot, in which one youth was killed, scores injured and 238 arrested, King vowed that he would return to prove that he still could lead a nonviolent demonstration.

"Dr. King would never have returned to Memphis if the violence had not happened," said the Rev. Jesse Jackson, who was one of King's aides in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. "We never intended to get bogged down in Memphis."

The Invaders created major disruptions among local blacks supporting King, according to his aides. They criticized King for his nonviolent approach and urged local blacks to "burn, baby, burn." On April 4, the day King was killed, the groups met with him and his staff and threatened renewed violence unless they were given \$750,000 to redevelop their community. "They just got louder and louder," one aide who was at the meeting recalled. "We told them we didn't have access to that kind of money. We had to put them out."

Two sources said FBI agents and Memphis policemen admitted that they had "penetrated" the Invaders with several informers. One of the informants reportedly planned a large portion

of the group's violent confrontations. Police and FBI officials were regularly provided with detailed information about the group's plans, activities and meetings. "They knew everything that went on at Invaders' meetings," one source said. "It was as if they had a tape recorder there." The undercover Memphis policeman who joined the Invaders was at the scene of the violence on the day of the riot, several sources said. He is reportedly still a member of the Memphis force.

"Weston [not the real name of the undercover police agent] was very vocal, very active," said a former leader of the Invaders who has talked to the policeman since he was discovered to be a member of the force. "He had a 7.62 Russian automatic rifle and he was armed every time we were armed. He was always suggesting actions that we should take; I never saw him physically attack anyone. But he was one of the most provocative members of the Invaders."

The Invaders, who wore jackets with their names printed on the backs, were organized in late 1967. The youths were led mainly by college students at nearby Memphis State and LeMoyne Colleges. The Invaders denounced the nonviolent strategy, but offered protection for King and his staff members. "They, like other blacks in the country, were naturally frustrated by the slow pace of change," said the Rev. Hoseah Williams, Atlanta SCLC director. "We usually put them to work as parade marshals or security guards. They would never have hurt Dr. King. But those who infiltrated our groups, and we could never identify them, tried to exploit the youngsters' frustrations and neglect and turn them against us."

The FBI and Memphis police verified recently that they had informants among the Invaders in 1968. However, Henry Lux, who was the assistant police chief in Memphis, downplayed the group's role in the March 28 violence. Robert G. Jensen, who was the FBI agent in charge at the time, said, "I

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wouldn't be surprised if we had informers in the group. I'm sure there was adequate coverage of the Invaders."

It is reliably reported that the bureau, an Memphis police shared intelligence about the Invaders.

In addition to being involved with the March 28 violence, the Memphis police undercover agent was providing security for King at the Lorraine Motel on the day he was assassinated, according to knowledgeable sources. The officer was a member of the Invaders' four-man security force that had agreed to provide protection for King while he was in Memphis.

There have been a series of disclosures recently concerning covert FBI activities against King. This has led to a Department of Justice investigation. The inquiry started after the Senate Intelligence Committee discovered an FBI memorandum, dated March 28, 1969, which detailed a plan to portray King as a hypocrite for staying at a white-owned motel—the Rivermont Holiday Inn—where he fled after the violence erupted. The Justice Department investigated to see if the memo had anything to do with King's return to the black-owned Lorraine Motel, where he was killed. They found no evidence linking the FBI to a plot to have King return to the Lorraine motel. However, Newsday has learned that the Invaders heatedly discussed King's stay at the white motel among themselves—some threatening violence over the issue.

A source at the Justice Department told Newsday that the FBI memo was part of then FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover's Counter-Intelligence Program (Cointelpro) against "Black Nationalist-Hate Groups." The plan, outlined in

an FBI Domestic Intelligence Division memo, was put into effect March 4, one month before King was killed. It was designed to "prevent the rise of a 'messiah' who could unify the militant black nationalist movement." An overall goal of Hoover's plan was to "discredit" black leaders and their movement among both blacks and whites.

The violence at Memphis, perhaps more than anything else, began to erode King's credibility among moderate blacks. King and his group were preparing to lead a nonviolent "Poor Peoples' March" on Washington later that month. After the Memphis riots some national black leaders attacked King for the violence. On the day before he was killed, NAACP leader Roy Wilkins attacked King in a story printed in the Memphis Press-Scimitar. Wilkins said he doubted that King could keep the Washington march nonviolent: "If a maverick of the rear ranks of the march decides to throw a brick through a window, there's nothing Dr. King up front can do to stop it."

Jensen, who was in charge of the FBI in Memphis, said that the "ultimate decisions [for Cointelpro] were made in Washington D.C. and then they came to the field office." He denied that his office ever received the hotel memo. "I have no recollection of a memorandum dated March 28," he said. "If it was an intra-office memo I wouldn't have seen it anyway. It would have come to us as general instructions."

The Senate Intelligence Committee said that it uncovered no evidence that the FBI was implicated in King's murder or any cover-up. The committee chairman, Frank Church (D-Idaho), has reportedly called for a federal special prosecutor to investigate the assassina-

tion to resolve "many unanswered questions," including whether the bureau "vendetta" against King was related to his murder in Memphis.

Some of King's staff members over the years, have charged that the Invaders were responsible for the riots which indirectly led, they say, to King's death in Memphis.

"The violence was definitely responsible for Martin's being in Memphis on April 4th," said Cong. Andrew Young (D-Ga.). "The Invaders themselves have taken responsibility for the violence. Now if the FBI was involved with the Invader, then it would bear looking into."

FBI officials deny any involvement in King's death. "The FBI did an excellent job in the investigation," Jensen said. "There are still a lot of theories, but no new evidence. . . ."

However, former FBI agent Arthur Murtagh said that Hoover's relentless surveillance of King influenced the way individual agents approached the murder. For a time Murtagh directed the bureau's intelligence unit in Atlanta which tapped the civil rights leader's telephones and bugged his rooms. "The bureau under Hoover believed that King was a foreign Communist agent," he said. "He was the enemy. In this sort of atmosphere, the bureau's investigating King's murder was like the CIA investigating the assassination of a Russian premier."

Murtagh said that some agents were "ecstatic" after King was shot. "When King was shot, an agent I knew in Atlanta went on a 30-minute high. We were in the bureau's parking lot when the news came and this fellow kept saying, 'They got Zorro [King's code name] . . . they got Zorrow. They finally got that son of a bitch.'"

Pro-King Cop Removed Before Slaying

By LES PAVNE
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GARDEN CITY, N. Y. — Hours before the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. was killed in Memphis in 1968, the city's top law enforcement official removed from his post one of two detectives assigned to watch the civil rights leader.

The action was taken in the presence of men the official identified as federal agents.

Authorities said the removal was part of an emergency plan to protect the detective's life.

Ed Redditt, the black detective who was removed, had prepared a contingency plan to enable the police department to apprehend an assassin should an attempt be made on King's life while he was at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis.

Redditt's plan, never put into effect, called for the four-block area around the Lorraine being sealed off by patrol cars. All streets were to be closely watched in the event of an assassination attempt.

Redditt is known to believe that had his plan been in effect it would have been impossible for an assassin, shooting from the suspected flophouse across the street, to have escaped.

Police did not assign a replacement guard for King. But they did leave the detective's partner on duty.

It has been learned that Redditt and

his partner, both members of the Memphis police intelligence unit, watched King and his staffers at the Lorraine through binoculars from the fire station across the street.

The two-man unit earlier had provided security for King and his party and they continued to keep the police department informed of their movements and their visitors.

Redditt and his partner, W. B. Richmond, who is also black, had withdrawn from what would have been their normal positions with the King party because of their presence, following recent riots in Memphis, had angered young local blacks.

The police were particularly concerned about a violence-prone black group called the Invaders. Although friendly with the nonviolent King and his associates, the Invaders led the outbreak of violence and looting a week earlier.

It was recently disclosed that some of the leaders of the Invaders were FBI informants and had touched off the violence which was directly responsible for King's return to Memphis the day before his assassination.

Ironically, on the day King was shot, April 4, the four armed members of the Invaders, who were providing security for King and his staff in the Lorraine, were seen leaving the motel — for unexplained reasons — just before 6 p. m., minutes before King was shot.

Although King himself never agreed to have the Invaders stand guard, some of his aides had agreed to their presence. One of the Invaders' standing guard was an undercover Memphis police detective who provided information for the police and the FBI.

After Redditt was removed from duty, he was told at a meeting in police headquarters that the U.S. Secret Service had learned of a "contract" on his life.

Redditt protested, saying that he wanted to return to his post, but the city's public safety director at the time, Frank Holloman, insisted on the officer's removal. White driving home with

his police guard, Redditt heard over the car radio that King had been assassinated.

For the next two days following the assassination, Redditt asked to return to work. Each request was denied. On the third day, a Sunday, he returned to work.

No further explanation of the "contract" on his life was ever offered by the police department. Redditt has refused to discuss the affair.

About a week before King was killed, sources said, FBI informants had told the Memphis police department that Redditt had shown some sympathy for King's cause by encouraging striking garbage workers — who were being supported by King's nonviolent marches — to stay away from work.

Redditt's partner on the King surveillance team was considered more loyal to the department, sources said. The partner remained at his post and reportedly was watching King through binoculars when the civil rights leader was shot.

The entire Redditt affair is another link in a chain of curious circumstances surrounding King in the days and hours prior to his assassination.

Recent disclosures that the FBI conducted massive surveillance on King have prompted several government inquiries. The Senate Intelligence Committee

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Pro-King Cop Withdrawn

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mittee said that its investigation uncovered no evidence that the FBI was implicated in King's murder or coverup.

However, the committee chairman, Frank Church, D-Idaho, has called for a federal special prosecutor to investigate the assassination to resolve "many unanswered questions," including whether a bureau "vendetta" against King was related to his murder. The Justice Department is reviewing the FBI's file on King and will soon make recommendations to Attorney General Edward Levi.

Redditt and the officials identified as having been present at the April 4 meetings at which Redditt was told of the "contract" on his life have refused to discuss the meeting.

Holloman acknowledged the report of a threat. "I did receive a report that there was a threat on Officer Redditt's life. Where it came from, I can't say."

Asked about the April 4 meeting with Redditt in the presence of a man identified by Holloman as a U.S. Secret Service agent and other federal authorities, Holloman said haltingly, "I

don't recall. Even if I did I don't think I would say."

An official of the U.S. Secret Service said he had checked the agency's records and found no indication that an agent had been sent to Memphis at that time.

At the police headquarters meeting, Holloman, according to sources, introduced Redditt to a Secret Service agent down from Washington, D.C., a man about six feet tall and weighing about 220 pounds.

A Mississippi highway patrolman, Holloman said, had overheard someone threatening to go to Memphis to kill Redditt. The threat allegedly had been relayed to the Secret Service, and the agent had flown down to deliver the message to the Memphis police and Redditt.

The man identified as the Secret Service agent verified Holloman's account, sources said.

Also present, according to sources, were the Memphis police chief, an FBI liaison agent, two military intelligence officers, an official from the sheriff's office, a National Guard official and a representative of the Tennessee State Highway Patrol.

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