

(wiretapping, RFK, JEH)

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Merry-Go-Round**Bobby Kennedy and
Wiretap Controversy****Drew Pearson**

Today's column is by Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson

THE QUESTION of whether Bobby Kennedy, when Attorney General, ordered wide-scale wiretapping and eavesdropping by the FBI has become the subject of some controversy. It is also very important in gauging Kennedy's qualifications to be President, and whether he is telling the truth. After all, the matter of the credibility gap has become something of an issue these days.

In this connection, this column has learned that, when Attorney General, Kennedy ordered a wiretap put on the phone of Dr. Martin Luther King.

Kennedy denies this and other statements that he ordered or condoned the wide-scale wiretapping or eavesdropping undertaken by the FBI while he commanded the Justice Department. He states that nowhere in the Justice Department is there to be found a single eavesdrop order signed by him.

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HOWEVER, the facts in the eavesdropping on Dr. King are irrefutable and we can report them in detail.

Attorney General Kennedy first ordered Dr. King bugged on July 16, 1963. His reason was that King was in touch with Communists and was being influenced by them.

The order caused surprise in the FBI. During the 1960 election campaign both

Bobby and his brother, the late President, had offered to help Dr. King when he was arrested in Atlanta October 19 and refused to post bond in connection with a civil-rights sit-in.

John F. Kennedy even issued a press release offering to help King, a gesture which had important effect on the Negro vote three weeks later. In Cook County it was the Negro vote which gave John Kennedy his slender 8000 vote margin in Illinois and won him the presidency.

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WHEN, THEREFORE, the brother of the President ordered a wiretap on Dr. King's phone, the FBI was amazed and opposed it. Courtney Evans, who served as liaison officer between J. Edgar Hoover and Bobby Kennedy, told the Attorney General that King traveled a lot, so a wiretap might not be too effective. Also he said that the wiretap would have a bad reaction among Negroes if discovered. The Attorney General remarked that he was not in the least interested in repercussions.

He did not press the matter, and so the FBI did not place any taps on King's wire in July, 1963.

However, in October of that year Bobby Kennedy signed an order for a tap on King's wires, and thereafter King's phone conversations were monitored.

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