

File #:

62-116395

Serial Scope:

231 THRU 235

236 THRU 1ST NR 237

1ST NR 238, 239

241, 242

244, 245

247

249, 1ST NR 249

252 THRU 254

255 THRU 260

262 THRU 265

Released under the John F.
Kennedy Assassination Records
Collection Act of 1992 (44 USC
2107 Note). Case: NW 55020
Date: 01-17-2017

Alan G. Sentinella

May 21, 1975

The following represents the writer's recollection of testimony given this date before the Senate Select Committee (SSC) pursuant to subpoena. The session commenced at 10 a.m. 5/21/75 in Room 607, ^{former} Carroll Arms Hotel. Present was Senator Robert Morgan (North Carolina); Lester B. Seidel, Staff Member; Mr. Jack Smith, Staff Member; Mr. John Bailey, Assistant Minority Counsel, and a male reporter. Senator Morgan placed the writer under oath. Approximately four or five minutes later Senator Morgan excused himself with a general statement to the effect he had other pressing matters. The entire proceedings with only two exceptions were conducted by Lester B. Seidel.

Seidel explained the writer was entitled to counsel, had the privilege of invoking provisions of the Fifth Amendment, and would have the privilege of making an opening and closing statement. Seidel inquired whether the writer understood his rights and the Committee's rules and regulations, a copy of which he had made available.

The writer acknowledged receipt of the Committee's rules and regulations as furnished by Seidel at 9:31 a.m. 5/21/75. He also acknowledged he had been informed of the right to counsel but inasmuch as this Committee was not understood

1-7-75
 AG; K. Williams
 Intelligence
 Coordination
 5/21/75
 6/9/75
 LHM
 2-14-75
 Sens Study

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ENCLOSURE

62-116395-265

to constitute a grand jury and in the absence of any charges or allegations of a violation of law on his part, he did not insist on the presence of counsel.

Seidel was advised ^{that} as a former Special Agent the writer had contacted the Bureau's Legal Counsel Division and as of this date had been advised by Mr. Paul Daly thereof that he had been cleared by the Attorney General (AG) to testify to matters relating to investigation of Martin Luther King, Jr., Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and Stanley Levison.

Seidel was advised that during his interview of the writer in Atlanta, Georgia, on 5/12/75 he had asked a question as to how long after the assassination of King did the telephone surveillance continue on the King residence. On 5/12/75 the writer responded it was his recollection this coverage continued until a short time subsequent to the assassination. Following that interview, the writer recalled that either shortly before or shortly after that case was assigned to the writer, the King family had moved from one residence to another and that continuation of the telephone surveillance from the former residence to the latter one was not authorized. Secondly, Seidel on 5/12/75 had asked when the King and SCLC cases were

assigned to the writer, the writer recalled such assignment was in the early part of 1965; that it was now the writer's recollection this assignment was made in May, 1965.

"Set forth below are questions asked by Seidel (unless otherwise indicated) and the writer's answers. These questions and answers are not set forth chronologically.

"Q. Why was continuance of the telephone surveillance not continued to the Kings' new residence?

"A. Continuance was not authorized by the AG.

"Q. What telephone surveillance was there conducted by Atlanta of Stanley Levison?

"A. There was no such coverage per se only such as afforded by contacts made of King or members of the SCLC staff by Levison.

"Q. Was there telephone surveillance of Levison in New York?

"A. Any contacts of King by Levison while in New York would have been covered.

"Q. Did the New York Office maintain telephone surveillance of Levison?

"A. I do not directly know.

"Q. During the Atlanta interview you indicated you had read New York reports concerning Levison. Is that correct?

"A. Yes.

"Q. During Atlanta interview you indicated you presumed these reports set forth information concerning Levison from a telephone surveillance. Is that correct?

"A. Yes.

"Q. What was the basis for your presumption?

"A. The appropriate administrative portion of such report would have so indicated.

"Q. What evidence of CP connections did your investigation develop concerning Levison?

"A. None.

"Q. What information did you have establishing CP connection re Levison?

"A. Such information as was set forth in what was then referred to as a characterization of Levison. Such characterization was a part of each report submitted to the Bureau.

"Q. What was the nature of this characterization?

"A. I do not remember the precise language. It is my recollection the statement was brief and set forth information establishing past and/or present CP affiliation by Levison.

"Q. Where did you obtain this characterization?

"A. A characterization of an individual or organization at that time was prepared by the field office concerned, submitted

to Bureau Headquarters for its approval, and such was made available to offices having a need-to-know this information.

Q. What was the source of this information regarding Levison.

A. I do not recall that I was ever apprised thereof. A characterization would not indicate the source of the information, unless public source information was utilized, otherwise the reliability or lack thereof of the source or sources would be indicated but not their identity.

Q. What prompted you today to amend your answer on May the 12th '75 as to how long telephone surveillance continued on the King residence? Did you seek the advice or an answer from someone?

A. ^{ONLY} To the extent that subsequent to May the 12th I conferred with a former Agent, Charles Harding, ^P prior to ^{the} ~~that time which~~ ^{it} had concerned me, that my initial answer ^{to that question} for some reason did not impress me as being completely correct. I mentioned this to Harding and he informed me that my answer was incorrect and mentioned the change in the King residence and the fact coverage had not been thereafter authorized. When he informed me of this I immediately recalled the change in residence which previously had escaped my memory.

Q. Why would Harding know this information?

✓
A. For a period of time he was in a supervisory capacity.

Q. Was he in a supervisory capacity when the change in residence was made?

A. He was in a relief supervisory capacity at that time.

Q. Why did you rely on Harding's recollection? Is his recollection better than yours?

A. I am not suggesting his recollection is better or worse than mine. What he said to me merely served to jog my memory upon which I based my earlier statement today.

Q. You recall when I interviewed you in Atlanta most of my questions were taken from prepared notes?

A. Yes.

Q. You recall that I told you that I would make notes during the interview in order that I might later refresh my recollection as to your testimony?

A. Yes, and Mr. Seidel, you recall that I did not take any notes (to which he answered in the affirmative).

Q. Did you make any recording of that interview at the time?

A. I did not.

Q. Did you make any subsequent written recording of the interview?

"A. Yes, I did so for my personal information.

'Q. Is such writing available to this Committee?

'A. I consider it a personal item for my personal use.

I realize that you have the perogative of subpoenaing it.
In the absence thereof, I prefer not to make it available.

"Q. How long after King's assassination did the telephone surveillance of SCLC continue?

'A. I cannot be certain. It continued for a period of time which may have been one, two, possibly three months. I simply do not remember.

'Q. Who handled SCLC and Levison case after you left the Bureau?

'A. Richard Hamilton.

'Q. When did he assume these cases?

'A. I cannot recall precisely. I am not even sure whether they had been administratively reassigned to him prior to my departure.

'Q. Who else besides Stanley Levison was in contact with King who you understood to have some type of CP connections?

'A. There was Hunter Pitts O'Dell, Bayard Rustin, and Harry Wachtel.

'Q. Hunter Pitts O'Dell, the same as Jack O'Dell?

'A. Yes, he was.

'Q. What evidence of CP connections or domination by Moscow of O'Dell, Rustin, Wachtel, did your investigation develop?

" A. It did not develop any such information.

" Q. How did you know of whatever their CP affiliation may have been?

" A. In the same manner as in regard to Levison.

" Q. What investigation did Atlanta conduct of O'Dell, Rustin, and Wachtel?

" A. There was no active ongoing investigation conducted of these individuals other than during such periods when they were in contact with King or members of SCLC.

" Q. Was Coretta King ever the target of an electronic surveillance?

" A. Not to my knowledge beyond such coverage as might have occurred from the telephone surveillance when it applied to the King residence or on such occasions when she might have been present in SCLC headquarters.

" Q. Do you know when the telephone surveillance of King and SCLC were initiated?

" A. I did not have the cases at that time.

" Q. Did you not learn of such information while you had these cases?

" A. Yes.

" Q. How?

" A. From information in the appropriate file.

" Q. What communication transpired between the Bureau and Atlanta relative to the initiation of these telephone surveillances,

airtels, letters, memoranda?

"A. I am certain there were airtels, letters, possibly teletypes in the file..

"Q. What was the ^{of} list of such communications?

"A. Advisement that such installation had been authorized, instructions to initiate the coverage.

"Q. Who installed the surveillances, Al Miller; was he not a technician, a wireman?

"A. Your answer to that question is not entirely correct. Alden Miller was an Atlanta Agent who had certain technical ability. It is my recollection the surveillance was installed by an Agent who was not from the Atlanta Office. I do not remember his name.

"Q. Did you monitor any of these surveillances?

"A. No.

"Q. Did you monitor any such surveillance during this period of time?

A. Yes. I recall on two occasions filling in for another employee in connection with telephone surveillance of the headquarters of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. I did not monitor the King or SCLC telephone surveillance.

"Q. What was the nature of the investigation of SNCC?

JFK Law 10(a)1

JFK Law 10(a)1

Q. Can you give an example of such reference?

A. There is only one particular conversation that comes to mind at the moment and I have no recollection with whom the conversation was held; during which reference was made to a wonderful sermon they had preached together on somebody's kitchen floor.

Q. Kitchen floor?

A. Yes.

Q. What surreptitious entry was made in respect to the King residence or SCLC headquarters?

A. During the period I was concerned with these cases there was none.

Q. Supposing an Agent wanted some item from either location to use against King or SCLC. Would he not have made a surreptitious entry to obtain it?

A. No such entry was made at any time to my knowledge. I say this very firmly because the Bureau policy before the late 1950s concerning such a technique had changed.

Q. (By Jack Smith) What do you mean by saying this policy had changed?

A. During my period with the Bureau, from the beginning, such activity had to be approved by the Bureau. ^{with} reference to the period of time ^{when} the policy ~~had~~ ^{it changed} changed to the extent that obtaining authority was virtually impossible.

↑
therefore

Q. Prior to 1965 in what way were you involved in any surreptitious entry?

A. Mr. Seidel, as I stated earlier I have been informed that I was released by the AG to testify before this Committee concerning King, SCLC, Stanley Levison, and matters related thereto.

Q. Did you develop any information establishing CP connection on the part of King?

A. Not beyond his affiliation with Levison and the other individuals previously mentioned.

Q. What was the objective of the investigation of King and SCLC?

A. To determine possible communist influence of King and SCLC.

Q. If, as you state, you did not develop information that King was a communist, was not this investigation in vain?

A. Not in my opinion. It is correct it did not establish that King was a CP member. It did establish that he was in contact with individuals then having past or present CP affiliation which was the objective of the investigation. *See ITEM III of attached pages.*

Q. Do you remember during 1963 King alleged that Bureau Agents were not responsive to civil rights ^{Complaints} complications in the vicinity of Albany, Georgia, and other South Georgia locations?

A. Yes, I recall news media information concerning such allegations.

Q. In response to these allegations by King, do you remember that Mr. Hoover became very concerned with King's allegations?

A. Yes. I definitely remember ^{the} news media indicating that Mr. Hoover was extremely upset.

Q. You have stated you were assigned to King and SCLC case in May, 1965, is that correct?

A. Yes.

Q. You previously stated these cases were initiated 12 months or perhaps a little longer prior to your receiving them. Is that correct?

A. Yes.

Q. Was there not then a connection between Director Hoover's concern with King's statements in 1963 regarding lack of attention to civil rights matters in South Georgia by the Bureau and the initiation of the investigation of King and SCLC?

A. ~~Yes.~~ I did not discuss that matter with Mr. Hoover or *with* any Bureau official.

Q. Do you deny there was any such connection?

A. I cannot deny that there might have been such a connection. This was a situation in which I recall the news media on more than one occasion suggested such to be the case.

Q. From 1965 until 1971 was there any electronic surveillance of any other individual or organization in addition to King, SCLC, and SNCC?

A. To the best of my recollection there were none except as may have pertained to some strictly criminal investigations with which I had no connection.

Q. What about prior to 1965?

A. There was one concerning an individual or individuals having ~~King~~ *KLAN* connections believed to have been involved in an earlier church bombing, I believe in Birmingham, involving the death of several children.

Q. During our interview in Atlanta you stated you did not have any contact with members of the news media or clergy regarding King or SCLC. Is that correct?

A. Yes, I did not have any such contact.

Q. What discussion was had with members of the Atlanta Police Department concerning King, SCLC, and Levison, and what was the extent of their electronic coverage regarding these matters?

A. During the period of time I was concerned with King, SCLC, Levison, I had no discussion with any member of the Atlanta Police Department concerning these matters. Bureau instructions regarding these matters ~~or~~ *were* that any discussion was on a strictly need-to-know basis and I have absolutely no recollection that members of the Atlanta Police Department fitted into this category.

I do not have any knowledge as to what electronic surveillance may ever have been conducted by the Atlanta Police Department.

Q. While in Atlanta you were assigned to what was referred to as the Security and Racial Squad, is that correct?

A. That is correct.

Q. Essentially this squad was concerned with security matters, racial matters, is that correct?

A. Yes and it was also concerned with civil rights violations and election law violations.

Q. In regard to civil rights and election law matters, did you ever develop any information pertinent to the CP?

A. No.

Q. What Agents do you remember were assigned to that squad? Charles Harding, Arthur Murtagh?

A. Yes. Those two, Alden Miller, Richard Hamilton, Richard Davis, Donald Burgess, Randall McGough, Timothy Dorsch, Charles Haynes.

Q. Who monitored the King and SCLC surveillance?

A. A number of different gentlemen, some of whom were periodically transferred.

Q. Who were some of those?

A. Donald Burgess, Richard Davis, Brian O'Shea, now deceased.

Q. Who served in a supervisory capacity before Charles Harding?

A. Henry Rouse.

Q. Where is he now?

A. I understand he retired, I do not know where he is located.

Q. What was your involvement with the Bureau's program referred to as COINTELPRO?

A. Mr. Seidel, as I endeavored to explain on May 12, your use of that particular terminology did not register with me at all.

Q. Recently testimony was given by one or more Bureau officials indicating this program began during the late 1950s and continued to a fairly recent date. Did not your reports regarding King, SCLC, or Levison include in their caption COINTELPRO?

A. It is not my recollection that they did.

Q. What about a Klan organization?

A. I did at various times handle investigations concerning individual Klan members. I did not handle the Klan as an organizational matter. It is my recollection that in reporting on the activities of an individual Klan member the character of the case would have been indicated as Ku Klux Klan - Racial Matter.

I feel compelled to apologize if I appear particularly dense as to the utilization of this phrase COINTELPRO. If it was a program operating over a period of years the only explanation I can offer at this moment is that conceivably some field offices other than Atlanta were ^{initially} involved therein. If this was the case, Atlanta may well have been included therein subsequent to my departure.

Q. (John Bailey) When the telephone surveillance was discontinued on the King residence and on SCLC who took care of that.

A. I do not know.

It should be noted the Committee took a five minute break approximately 12:05 to 12:10 p.m. *after which questioning continued.*

Following a few very general concluding comments by Seidel, the writer was given the opportunity to make a statement. At this point Seidel was advised it was the writer's understanding that the procedures of this Committee provided for a witness to subsequently have opportunity to review the transcript thereof, and that the writer would like to avail himself of this opportunity. Inquiry was made as to whether this could be accomplished via registered or certified mail to preclude unnecessary expense to the Government.

Seidel responded at some length referring to (Section 6b?) of the Committee's rules and regulations which permitted

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19

such review in the Committee's office. Any expense thereof to be borne by the witness. He explained it was not his prerogative to amend the Committee's rules and regulations.

*assured
Mr. [unclear]
he was not
asking him
to make
any
changes.*

He submitted that had he been furnished a copy of the Committee's rules and regulations for a period of time ^{no} longer than 29 minutes before this Committee convened, it would not have been necessary to have asked the question.

The aforementioned session terminated shortly past 1 p.m.

→ From P 18

*Had such been
furnished at an
earlier date*

- 1 - Mr. J. B. Adams
 - 1 - Mr. J. A. Mintz
 - 1 - Mr. W. R. Wannall
- June 9, 1975

The Attorney General

Director, FBI

- 1 - Mr. J. G. Deegan
- 1 - Mr. R. L. Shackelford
- 1 - Mr. W. O. Cregar
- 1 - Mr. S. F. Phillips

Sensitivity - 45
 U.S. SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE TO
 RESPECT TO INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS WITH

Reference is made to my letter dated May 22, 1975, forwarding a memorandum concerning an interview by a Staff Member of captioned Committee of retired FBI Special Agent Alan G. Sentinella.

Enclosed is the original of a memorandum concerning testimony subsequently given by Mr. Sentinella before an Executive Session of the Committee. A copy of the memorandum is also enclosed for forwarding to Mr. James A. Wilderotter, Associate Counsel to the President.

Enclosures - 2 *for info. only; Per J. Albizer's instructions, 5 copies of this interview sent to OPR - Dept of Justice, 4/22/76 - JCB*

62-116395

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
 HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

1 - The Deputy Attorney General
 Attention: K. William O'Connell
 Special Counsel for
 Intelligence Coordination

DATE 10-31-80 BY SP1GSK/29

- 1 - 67-432832 (Personnel File Former SA Alan G. Sentinella)
- 1 - 100-106670 (Martin Luther King, Jr.)
- 1 - 100-392452 (Stanley David Levison)

SFP:ekw - RW
 (14)

UNRECORDED COPY FILED IN 100-106670-1000-312-102

*P.V. [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]
 Rus - 4509 - JCB
 JIB*

Jan 1/80

Hand carried to AG 6/10/75

REC-102

62-116395-265

TELETYPE UNIT

- 1 - Mr. J. B. Adams
- 1 - Mr. J. A. Mintz
- 1 - Mr. W. R. Wannall
- 1 - Mr. J. G. Deegan
- 1 - Mr. R. L. Shackelford

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OTHERWISE

June 9, 1975 1-Mr.W.O.Cregar

1-Mr.S.F.Phillips

62-116395

U. S. SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE TO
STUDY GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS WITH
RESPECT TO INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES (SSC)

RE: TESTIMONY OF RETIRED FBI
SPECIAL AGENT (SA) BEFORE
SSC EXECUTIVE SESSION

DECLASSIFIED BY SP4JMM/VA
ON 2-20-81
6076

Reference is made to the memorandum of this Bureau dated May 22, 1975, reporting a statement voluntarily furnished to the FBI by Mr. Alan G. Sentinella, a retired SA of the FBI. That statement concerned the interview of Sentinella by an SSC Staff Member on May 12, 1975.

Pursuant to a subpoena, Mr. Sentinella testified before an Executive Session of the SSC on May 21, 1975, after which he voluntarily furnished the FBI a statement concerning his testimony. Set out below is the verbatim text of that statement.

CLASS. & EXT. BY SP1GSK/jgc 10/31/80
REASON-FCIM II, 1-2.4.2 3
DATE OF REVIEW 6-9-95

"Alan G. Sentinella"

"May 21, 1975"

"The following represents the writer's recollection of testimony given this date before the Senate Select Committee (SSC) pursuant to subpoena. The session commenced at 10 a.m. 5/21/75 in Room 607, former Carroll Arms Hotel. Present was Senator Robert Morgan (North Carolina); Lester B. Seidel, Staff Member; Mr. Jack Smith, Staff Member; Mr. John Bailey, Assistant Minority Counsel, and a male reporter. Senator Morgan placed the writer under oath. Approximately four or five minutes later Senator Morgan excused himself with a general statement to the effect he had other pressing matters. The entire proceedings with only two exceptions were conducted by Lester B. Seidel.

- Assoc. Dir. _____
- Dep. AD Adm. _____
- Dep. AD Inv. _____
- Asst. Dir.:
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- Training _____
- Off. of Cong. & Public Affairs _____
- Telephone Rm. _____
- Director's Sec'y _____

- 1 - 67-432832 (Personnel File Former SA Alan G. Sentinella)
- 1 - 100-106670 (Martin Luther King, Jr.)
- 1 - 100-392452 (Stanley David Levison)

SFP:ekw
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