

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

FBI bid to hurt Dr. King told

By WALLACE TURNER
New York Times Service

A former FBI agent says that in the 1960s the bureau used material gained in an electronic surveillance of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in an apparent effort to undermine the late civil rights leader's support among his white backers.

The former agent also said that many newspapermen were urged to write articles disclosing intimate details of Dr. King's personal life — details to be supplied by the bureau after they were picked up in telephone taps. These taps on Dr. King were said to have been much more widespread than had previously been reported.

THE former agent, Arthur Murtagh, a 51-year-old lawyer now practicing in Constable, N.Y., told the New York Times in an interview that important figures in the FBI even tried to persuade community leaders in Atlanta that they should not attend a banquet that was held to honor Dr. King after he won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964.

The persuasion was said to have included a warning that the bureau had derogatory information about Dr. King that might eventually embarrass those who attended the banquet.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

A-4 Independent
Long Beach, Calif.

Date: 5/21/73
Edition: Monday Morning
Author: Wallace Turner
Editor: Daniel H. Ridder
Title:

Character:

or

Classification:

Submitting Office Los Angeles

☐ Being Investigated

44-1574B-245

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
1 MAY 23 1973	
FBI — LOS ANGELES	

[Signature]

Murtagh retired from
the bureau in September
1971 after 21 years, includ-
ing 11 years in the Atlanta
office. His account to The
Times has been confirmed
in interviews with various
independent sources.

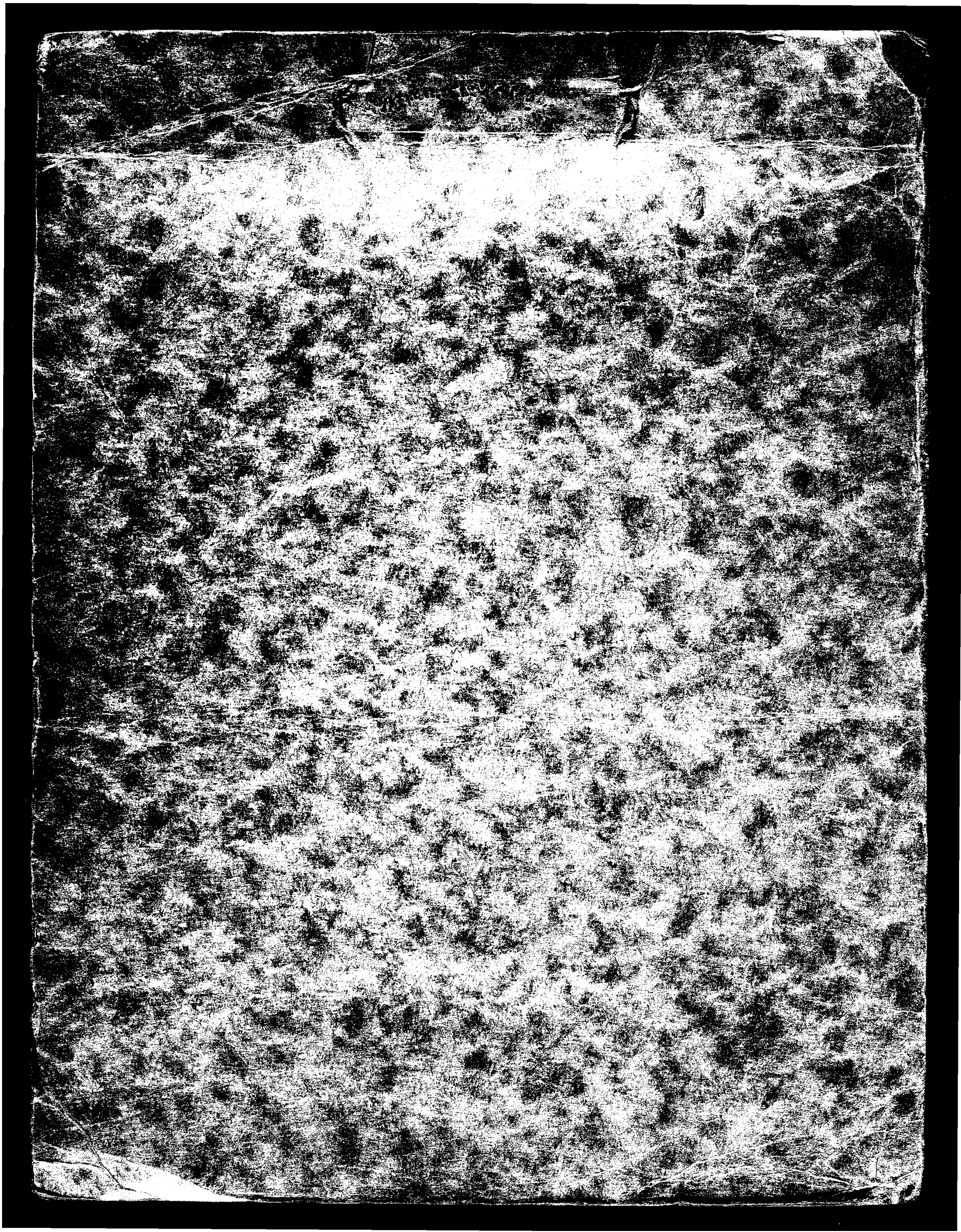
The fact that Dr. King's
telephone was tapped has
been well-established. It
was disclosed in 1968
while Sen. Robert F.
Kennedy campaigned for
the Democratic presiden-
tial nomination.

After Kennedy's murder
in June 1968 his former
associates said that the
tap was installed when
Kennedy, as attorney
general, acquiesced in
1963 to J. Edgar Hoover's
repeated demands for au-
thority to tap. Hoover had
argued that Dr. King had
associations with subver-
sive groups who sought to
use the civil rights move-
ment against the best
interests of the United
States.

IN 1969, the tap on Dr.
King was further de-
scribed briefly in court
hearings involving the
draft violation conviction
of Muhammad Ali, then
the world heavyweight
boxing champion.

These brief glimpses
made it clear that the tap
was instituted in October
1963, and was continued at
least into 1965. There
were suggestions that it
lasted until 1968, when Dr.
King was assassinated.
The bureau has never
given any information
about the tap.

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