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J. Edgar Hoover personally ordered FBI to initiate COINTELPRO dirty tricks against Black Panthers in 'Omaha Two' case

By [Michael Richardson](#) [Email](#) [Permalink](#)

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Confidential memorandums from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's secret and illegal Operation COINTELPRO against domestic political organizations and activists in the 60's and 70's reveal dirty deeds by FBI director J. Edgar Hoover.

The archives of Political Research Associates offer up long-held secrets of FBI misdeeds from one of the nation's largest collections of COINTELPRO documents. Hoover had targeted the Black Panthers for the full fury of his clandestine war on political activists he disliked. Directives were sent out nationwide with orders to "disrupt" the group and each field FBI office was to develop proposals targeting local Panther chapters and leaders.

In Omaha, Nebraska, the chief FBI targets were Edward Poindexter and Mondo we Langa (formerly David Rice) who were leaders of the National Committee to Combat Fascism, also known as the Nebraska Committee to Combat Fascism.

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Omaha was not on the initial list of 23 FBI field offices ordered to "expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit or otherwise neutralize" the Black Panthers in a COINTELPRO directive of August 25, 1967. Marching orders for Omaha FBI agents came on March 4, 1968 in the form of a memo from George C. Moore, head of the Racial Intelligence Division, to William Cornelius Sullivan, head of the Domestic Intelligence Division.

"In view of the tremendous increase in black nationalist activity, and the approach of summer, this program [COINTELPRO] should be expanded."

The Omaha SAC (Special-Agent-in-Charge) responded to Hoover in a confidential memo dated April 3, 1968. The heavily redacted document discusses one "militant Black Nationalist" but concludes there is no organized activity in Omaha. "There are no organizations or individuals in the Omaha Division presently considered of potential danger as to be considered for Counterintelligence action."

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"Omaha has no suggestions to offer at the present time regarding the over all Counterintelligence Program or administration of this program. It is felt, however, that this program can be very beneficial to the Bureau in helping to prevent the coalition of militant Black Nationalist Groups and violence on their part."

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On May 31, 1968 the Omaha SAC reaffirmed, "There continue to be no organizations or individuals in the division currently considered of potential danger as to be considered for counterintelligence actions." Making quarterly reports, the message was again repeated to Hoover by the Omaha SAC that there was no activity to disrupt.

On September 6, 1968, the Omaha office finally had something to tell Hoover. "It is anticipated that in the near future [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] might be targets of counter intelligence action as well as the organizations of which they are leaders. The Black Panther group in Omaha has vaguely discussed in general terms creating violence, however, it has taken no positive action in this regard to date."

An October 6, 1968 COINTELPRO memo from the Omaha SAC to Hoover expressed concern about the "revolutionary and criminal nature" of the Black Panthers and proposed a plan to contact "Leaders of the Negro community". The memo went on to describe actions of the local police.

"It should be noted that the Omaha Police department has instigated an harassment campaign against the BPP [Black Panther Party] members by stopping vehicles registered to these individuals at every opportunity. This activity has become of great concern to those members involved. In addition, this campaign has resulted in identification of additional persons associated with the BPP movement and its leadership."

Hoover replied on October 23, 1968. "Proposals for counterintelligence measures against the Black Panther Party...have merit and are worthy of more detailed consideration."

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"The utilization of your sources and informants to spread gossip in the ghetto area concerning BPP leaders and members must be done on a selective basis so as to preclude tracing the origin of the gossip to the FBI. This is an effective but risky maneuver and you must insure that your informants are not compromised. Prior to undertaking such maneuvers, you must identify your informants you intend to use in this program and the rumors they will spread."

"Although these recommendations have merit, they are so broad and nonspecific that authority is not being granted at this time to implement them. Omaha is being instructed to submit specific recommendations after which an independent decision can be made at the Bureau as to whether or not they should be authorized."

By December 2, 1968 there were developments Omaha could share with Hoover. "[REDACTED] of the Black Panther Party in Omaha, was interviewed on 11/27/68 by Special Agents of the Omaha Office in connection with an Antiriot Laws matter."

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