

# The FBI and Martin Luther King, Jr.: From "Solo" to Memphis

David J. Garrow

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The FBI and Martin Luther King, Jr.: From "Solo" to Memphis David J. Garrow The author of *Bearing the Cross*, the Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of Martin Luther King Jr., exposes the government's massive surveillance campaign against the civil rights leader

When US attorney general Robert F. Kennedy authorized a wiretap of Martin Luther King Jr.'s phones by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, he set in motion one of the most invasive surveillance operations in American history. Sparked by informant reports of King's alleged involvement with communists, the FBI amassed a trove of information on the civil rights leader. Their findings failed to turn up any evidence of communist influence, but they did expose sensitive aspects of King's personal life that the FBI went on to use in its attempts to mar his public image.

Based on meticulous research into the agency's surveillance records, historian David Garrow illustrates how the FBI followed King's movements throughout the country, bugging his hotel rooms and tapping his phones wherever he went, in an obsessive quest to destroy his growing influence. Garrow uncovers the voyeurism and racism within J. Edgar Hoover's FBI while unmasking Hoover's personal desire to destroy King. The spying only intensified once King publicly denounced the Vietnam War, and the FBI continued to surveil him until his death.

The FBI and Martin Luther King, Jr. clearly demonstrates an unprecedented abuse of power by the FBI and the government as a whole.



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