

A SPECIAL REPORT IN GQ THIS MONTH

WERE THE BLACK OFFICE-HOLDERS ROUTINELY INVESTIGATED DURING REAGAN-BUSH YEARS?

For more than 20 years, scores of black elected officials at all levels of U.S. government have been objects of systematic federal scrutiny—including surveillance, buggings, wiretaps, IRS audits, comprised informants, media leaks and grand-jury manipulations.

According to an article in the December issue of GQ, these federal probes — at times initiated without probable cause — accelerated and leaked during the Reagan and Bush admini-

strations.

The article, by investigative reporter Mary A Fischer, explores how political corruption during the 1980's — were targeted much more frequently against black office-holders.

Of the 4565 political corruption probes initiated between 1983 and 1988, 14 percent targeted black officials, even though blacks made up only 3 percent of all US officeholders. Roughly half of the then 26 members of the congressional Black Cau-

cus were the target of federal investigations and/or indictments between 1981 and 1993. Few resulted in actual convictions.

Fischer reports that rumors began surfacing about such a pattern in 1982, when an FBI operative in Atlanta testified in a federal trial about an unofficial FBI policy called "Fruhmen-schen"—a German word meaning "primitive man."

Hirsch Freidman (who now practices law in Atlanta) testified

in an affidavit for use in a bribery trial that the FBI routinely investigated prominent black elected and appointed officials in major metropolitan areas throughout the US. Friedman said his contacts at the FBI told him "the basis for the policy was the assumption... that black officials were intellectually and socially incapable of governing major governmental organizations and institutions."

Ambition and career ad-

vancement at the Justice Department also contributed to the growth in the number of federal probes of black office-holders, Fischer reports. She traces how successful prosecution of politicians leads to recognition in the media and the general public.

In the 1980's, federal prosecutors were given expanded powers by Attorney General Ed Meese and by his successor Richard Thornburgh. Fischer (See Victims, Page 26)



Is Commerce Secretary Ron Brown the latest victim?



Delores Sawyer of Las Vegas, Acting Executive Director of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee, attends her first advisory board meeting for the new \$3.3 million Addiction Training Center at the University of Nevada, Reno. Sawyer was one of 15 Nevada experts chosen to guide this crucial project. The multi-million dollar grant from the Department of Health and Human Services was the only one awarded in Nevada and one of only three west of Texas. Sawyer will help the university's new center in recruiting and training Nevadans from throughout the state as substance abuse counselors. Emphasis in the five-year project is on serving the state's minority and rural populations.



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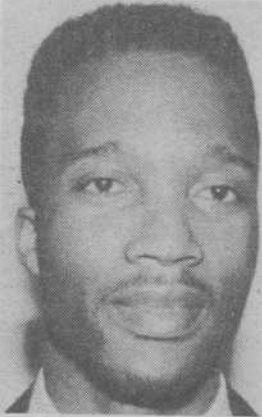
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