

## Fred Hampton Executed

Written by Robert ID125

Friday, 24 September 2004 11:45 -

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Fred Hampton was born in [Chicago](#) in 1948 and grew up in Maywood, a suburb of the city. A bright student, Hampton graduated from Proviso East High School in 1966 before enrolling at Triton Junior College where he studied law.

While a student Hampton became active in the civil rights movement. He joined the [National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People](#) (NAACP) and was appointed leader of the Youth Council of the organization's West Suburban branch.

In October 1966 [Bobby Seale](#) and [Huey Newton](#) formed the [Black Panther Party](#) in Oakland, California. Initially formed to protect local communities from police brutality and racism, the Black Panthers eventually developed into a

[Marxist](#)

revolutionary group. The group also ran medical clinics and provided free food to school children. Other important members included

[Stokely Carmichael](#)

,

[H. Rap Brown](#)

,

[Bobby Hutton](#)

and

[Eldridge Cleaver](#)

.

Hampton founded the Chicago chapter of the Black Panther Party in November 1968. He immediately established a community service program. This included the provision of free breakfasts for schoolchildren and a medical clinic that did not charge patients for treatment. Hampton also taught political education classes and instigated a community control of police project.

One of Hampton's greatest achievements was to persuade Chicago's most powerful street gangs to stop fighting against each other. In May 1969 Hampton held a press conference where

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he announced a nonaggression pact between the gangs and the formation of what he called a "rainbow coalition" (a multiracial alliance of black, Puerto Rican, and poor youths).

Later that year Hampton was arrested and charged with stealing \$71 worth of sweets, which he then allegedly gave away to local children. Hampton was initially convicted of the crime but the decision was eventually overturned.

The activities of the [Black Panthers](#) in [Chicago](#) came to the attention of [J. Edgar Hoover](#) and the [FBI](#)

. Hoover described the Panthers as "the greatest threat to the internal security of the country" and urged the Chicago police to launch an all-out assault on the organization. In 1969 the Panther party headquarters on West Monroe Street was raided three times and over 100 members were arrested.

In the early hours of the 4th December, 1969, the Panther headquarters was raided by the police for the fourth time. The police later claimed that the Panthers opened fire and a shoot-out took place. During the next ten minutes Fred Hampton and Mark Clark were killed. Witnesses claimed that Hampton was wounded in the shoulder and then executed by a shot to the head.

The panthers left alive, including Deborah Johnson, Hampton's girlfriend, who was eight months pregnant at the time, were arrested and charged with attempting to murder the police. Afterwards, ballistic evidence revealed that only one bullet had been fired by the Panthers whereas nearly a hundred came from police guns.

After the resignation of President [Richard Nixon](#) , the Senate Intelligence Committee conducted a wide-ranging investigation of America's intelligence services.

[Frank Church](#)

of Idaho, the chairman of the committee, revealed in April, 1976 that William O'Neal, Hampton's bodyguard, was a FBI agent-provocateur who, days before the raid, had delivered an apartment floor-plan to the Bureau with an "X" marking Hampton's bed. Ballistic evidence showed that most bullets during the raid were aimed at Hampton's bedroom.

### 1) Fred Hampton, speech (1968)

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A lot of people get the word revolution mixed up and they think revolutions a bad word. Revolution is nothing but like having a sore on your body and then you put something on that sore to cure that infection. I'm telling you that we're living in a sick society. We're involved in a society that produces criminals, thieves and robbers and rapers. Whenever you are in a society like that, that is a sick society.

We're gonna organize and dedicate ourselves to revolutionary political power and teach ourselves the specific needs of resisting the power structure, arm ourselves, and we're gonna fight reactionary pigs with international proletarian revolution. That's what it has to be.

We have to understand very clearly that there's a man in our community called a capitalist. Sometimes he's Black and sometimes he's white. But that man has to be driven out of our community because anybody who comes into the community to make profit off of people by exploiting them can be defined as a capitalist.

### **(2) Fred Hampton, speech (1968)**

Any program that's brought into our community should be analyzed by the people of that community. It should be analyzed to see that it meets the relevant needs of that community.

That's what the Breakfast for Children Program is. A lot of people think it's charity. But what does it do? It takes people from a stage to a stage to another stage. Any program that's revolutionary is an advancing program. Revolution is change.

We say that the Breakfast for Children Program is a socialistic program. It teaches the people basically that - by practice. We thought up and let them practice that theory and inspect that theory. What's more important?

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And a woman said, "I don't know if I like communism, and I don't know if I like socialism. But I know that the Breakfast for Children Program feeds my kids. And if you put your hands on that Breakfast for Children Program . . ."

### (3) Fred Hampton, speech (1968)

You know, a lot of people have hang-ups with the Party because the Party talks about a class struggle. We say primarily that the priority of this struggle is class. That Marx and Lenin and Che Guevara and Mao Tse-tung and anybody else that has ever said or knew or practiced anything about revolution always said that a revolution is a class struggle. It was one class - the oppressed, and that other class - the oppressor. And it's got to be a universal fact. Those that don't admit to that are those that don't want to get involved in a revolution, because they know as long as they're dealing with a race thing, they'll never be involved in a revolution.

We never negated the fact that there was racism in America, but we said that the by-product, what comes off of capitalism, that happens to be racism. That capitalism comes first and next is racism. That when they brought slaves over here, it was to make money. So first the idea came that we want to make money, then the slaves came in order to make that money. That means, through historical fact, that racism had to come from capitalism. It had to be capitalism first and racism was a byproduct of that.

**(4) Akua Njere (Deborah Johnson) was carrying Fred Hampton's child when he was killed on 4th December, 1969. She was interviewed about her involvement with the [Black Panthers](#) by the *Burning Spear* magazine in June, 1990.**

I saw Fred Hampton on TV. It was a Ronnie Barrett talk show. Fred Hampton and some other

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Panthers were on the television show and Fred Hampton had taken it over. He decided what questions he would answer, how the interview would go, everything.

I sat there watching this brother. I sat on the edge of my seat because he went straight through the Party's 10 point program and platform, saying what our needs are and what our demands were. The thing that really impressed me about him was his sincerity, his dedication to his beliefs. In that interview I believed what the brother was saying, his honesty.

I knew that this was not a person who had read a lot of books, who had been involved in just developing a lot of theory. He was a brother who was involved in social practice. He stood on what his beliefs were and he would live, fight and die for those beliefs.

It was like Fred Hampton was sitting in my living room talking to me. I talked to some other people and they got the same feeling. It was that kind of charisma that came across. You didn't have to be face to face.

Fred Hampton and a number of Panthers came over to speak at the college that I was attending. I tried to get some people to go with me, but they wouldn't. I was late getting there and the room was packed. So I got up to the front, right in Fred's face and he was talking. I was sitting there on the edge of my seat.

He did a long discussion about how people are being brutalized in the community, how African people are starving, our children are going to school hungry and are expected to learn, and we needed medical attention, and the government was murdering us at every turn.

Everything he said was true and he wasn't just talking, he was documenting, he was bringing us to the realization that everything he said was true.

Fred Hampton knew that he could organize anybody. He talked to the brothers and sisters on the street. He talked to those in the classroom. He talked to those in the factories. He talked to those who were in business. He went to the churches. He organized and attempted to work with every element of our communities.

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**(5) After Fred Hampton and Mark Clark were killed a Commission of Inquiry into the [Black Panthers](#) and the Police was co-chaired by [Roy Wilkins](#) and Ramsey Clark. Its report, *Search and Destroy*, was published in 1973.**

This report pursues the truth of an episode that occurred early on December 4, 1969, at 2337 West Monroe Street in Chicago, Illinois. It was a time of darkness, cold, rage, fear, and violence. Facts are not easily found in such company.

The early dawn stillness had been broken at about 4:45 a.m. by heavy gunfire, eighty rounds or more, which lasted over a period of ten minutes. When it stopped, two young men, Fred Hampton and Mark Clark, were dead. Four other occupants of the premises, the Illinois Black Panther Party headquarters, were seriously wounded. Two police officers were injured, one by glass, the other by a bullet in the leg.

Approximately six shots were apparently fired as the police entered the living room through the front door - two by Sergeant Groth, three by Officer Davis, and one by Mark Clark. The FBI's ballistics analysis shows that during the remainder of the raid between seventy-seven and ninety-four shots were fired by the police - and none by the apartment's occupants. Accordingly, with the exception of one shot, the police testimony of gunfire directed at them from the occupants must be rejected.

The death of Fred Hampton appears to the Commission to have been isolated from the killing of Mark Clark and the wounding of Brenda Harris on the one hand, and from the wounding of Ronald Satchel, Verlina Brewer, and Blair Anderson on the other. The Commission has concluded that there is probable cause to believe that Fred Hampton was murdered - that he was shot by an officer or officers who could see his prostrate body lying on the bed. Unfortunately, the inadequate investigation by the police and the other officials and their inadequate examination of the available evidence make it impossible to know which officer or officers actually fired the fatal bullets.

The Commission has been unable to determine whether the purpose, or a purpose, of the raid was specifically to kill Hampton. There is some evidence that Hampton was shot after the other

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occupants of the rear bedroom were removed. If that was not the sequence of events, it seems likely that he was the sole target of the police shooting from the doorway of the bedroom. Neither of those consequences, however, would establish that Hampton's death was an object of the raid.

### **(6) Noam Chomsky, *COINTELPRO: The FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom* (1975)**

Perhaps the most shocking story concerns the assassination of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark by Chicago police directed by the state's attorney's office in December 1969, in a pre-dawn raid on a Chicago apartment. Hampton, one of the most promising leaders of the Black Panther Party - particularly dangerous because of his opposition to violent acts or rhetoric and his success in community organizing - was killed in bed, perhaps drugged. Depositions in a civil suit in Chicago reveal that the chief of Panther security and Hampton's personal bodyguard, William O'Neal, was an FBI infiltrator. O'Neal gave his FBI "contracting agent," Roy Mitchell, a detailed floorplan of the apartment, which Mitchell turned over to the state's attorney's office shortly before the attack, along with "information" - of dubious veracity - that there were two illegal shotguns in the apartment. The availability of the floorplan presumably explains why "all the police gunfire went to the inside corners of the apartment, rather than toward the entrances. Agent Mitchell was named by the *Chicago Tribune* as head of the Chicago's COINTELPRO directed against the Black Panthers and other Black groups. For his services, O'Neal was paid over \$10,000.

### **(7) *Final Report of the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities* (1976)**

According to an FBI memorandum, this sharing of informant information was crucial to police during their raid on the apartment occupied by several Black Panther members which resulted in the death of the local Chairman, Fred Hampton, and another Panther: " (Prior to the raid), a detailed inventory of the weapons and also a detailed floor plan of the apartment were furnished to local authorities. In addition, the identities of BPP members utilizing the apartment at the above address were furnished. This information was not available from any other source and subsequently proved to be of tremendous value in that it subsequently saved injury and

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possible death to police officers participating in a raid on the morning of 12/4/69. The raid was based on the information furnished by the informant."

### **(8) Anthony Summers, *The Secret Life of J. Edgar Hoover* (1993)**

FBI dirty tricks, the Senate Intelligence Committee later discovered, provoked "shootings, beatings and a high degree of unrest" in the Black Panther movement. For two Panthers in Chicago, the FBI tactics brought sudden death. Fred Hampton and Mark dark died in a hail of gunfire, and three others were wounded, when police burst into their apartment at 4:00 a.m. on December 3, 1969. It later emerged that the police had fired ninety-eight rounds, the Panthers - maybe - one.

In 1982, after persistent litigation, the survivors were awarded \$1.85 million in damages against the police, in a case that revealed the killings had been the direct result of action by the FBI. The Bureau had provided the police with detailed information on Hampton's movements, along with a floor plan of the apartment. Veteran agent Wesley Swearingen quoted a Chicago colleague as telling him: "We told the cops how bad these guys were, that the cops had better look out or their wives were going to be widows. . . . We set up the police to go in there and kill the whole lot."

### **(9) [Cynthia McKinney](#) , speech in the Senate (25th July, 2002)**

In the 1960s, the lines between illegal intelligence, law enforcement and military practices became blurred as Americans wanting to make America a better place for all were targeted and attacked for political beliefs and political behavior. Under the cloak of the Cold War, military intelligence was used for domestic purposes to conduct surveillance on civil rights, social equity, antiwar, and other activists.

In the case of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Operation Lantern Spike involved military intelligence covertly operating a surveillance operation of the civil rights leader up to the time of his



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assassination. In a period of two months, recently declassified documents on Operation Lantern Spike indicate that 240 military personnel were assigned in the two months of March and April to conduct surveillance on Dr. King. The documents further reveal that 16,900 man-hours were spent on this assignment.

Dr. King had done nothing more than call for black suffrage, an end to black poverty, and an end to the Vietnam War. Dr. King was the lantern of justice for America: spreading light on issues the Administration should have been addressing. On April 4, 1968, Dr. King's valuable point of light was snuffed out.

The documents I have submitted for the record outline the illegal activities of the FBI and its COINTELPRO program. A 1967 memo from J. Edgar Hoover to 22 FBI field offices outlined the COINTELPRO program well: "The purpose of this new counterintelligence endeavor is to expose, disrupt, misdirect, or otherwise neutralize" black activist leaders and organizations.

As a result of the Church Committee hearings, we later learned that the FBI and other government authorities were conducting black bag operations that included illegally breaking and entering private homes to collect information on individuals. FBI activities included "bad jacketing," or falsely accusing individuals of collaboration with the authorities. It included the use of paid informants to set up on false charges targeted individuals. And it resulted in the murder of some individuals. Geronimo Pratt Ji Jaga spent 27 years in prison for a crime he did not commit. And in COINTELPRO documents subsequently released, we learn that Fred Hampton was murdered in his bed while his pregnant wife slept next to him after a paid informant slipped drugs in his drink.

Needless to say, such operations were well outside the bounds of what normal citizens would believe to be the role of the military, and the Senate investigations conducted by Senator Frank Church found that to be true. Though the United States was fighting the spread of communism in the face of the Cold War, the domestic use of intelligence and military assets against its own civilians was unfortunately reminiscent of the police state built up by the Communists we were fighting.

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