

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

10/17/73

[redacted] Missouri, advised that he is employed as a [redacted] at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC). BANKS stated he has worked at the records center for eight years and has been an associate of [redacted] who is also employed as a [redacted]

Several times during the past couple of months [redacted] has made statements to him and to other custodians, with whom [redacted] is acquainted, about being involved in the setting of the fire on the 6th floor at the records center on July 11, 1973.

About a month ago, [redacted] said to [redacted] for no apparent reason, and in the following exact words that, "I burned the sixth floor." [redacted] said that everyone knows [redacted] likes to get attention for himself, so he paid no attention to him when he heard the remark, but he noticed that [redacted] was looking at him and smiling when the remark was made. [redacted] continued to make these remarks, [redacted] said, and on one occasion, [redacted] told him that no one would ever believe that he, [redacted] was responsible for the fire. While [redacted] said he has no information which would eliminate [redacted] as a suspect in the fire, he personally has made up his mind that [redacted] should not be taken seriously in a general sense, and that he could see no reason to take him seriously in the matter of responsibility for the records center fire.

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[redacted] said that [redacted] has also claimed responsibility for the fire in the presence of other custodians as they have stood together in groups and talked. [redacted] said he could not remember who the people were, or when the discussions took place. He said he did recall telling these people that [redacted] was only bragging and that they shouldn't pay any attention to him. [redacted] said he could not recall the precise words used by [redacted] during these discussions due to passage of

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SA [redacted]

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time, but that they generally indicated that he, [redacted] was responsible for the records center fire.

[redacted] is described as follows:

Name:	[redacted]
Sex:	male
Race:	Negro
Date of birth:	[redacted]
Place of birth:	[redacted] Missouri
Height:	6'
Weight:	205 pounds
Hair:	Brown
Eyes:	Brown
Complexion:	Dark
Social Security Account Number:	[redacted]

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[redacted] St. Louis, [redacted] advised he has been employed as a [redacted] laborer at the National Personnel Records Center, Military Branch (NPRC-M) for a period of approximately 18 months. [redacted] said he did not work the second shift on the night of the fire, July 11, 1973. Since the fire, he has worked the 11:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. shift.

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[redacted] said that he has known [redacted] since he started at the records center and that [redacted] was his first on the job friend. [redacted] said he immediately recognized [redacted] as someone who needs attention and guidance, and that he endeavored to befriend [redacted] and to "bring him under his wing". [redacted] said repeatedly that he felt something like a big brother to [redacted]

[redacted] advised he had heard through the "grapevine" at the records center that [redacted] had started the fire. He said that [redacted] had also made statements to him to the effect that he had started the fire, but that because [redacted] needs attention and "just talks", he did not take him too serious when he first heard these statements.

[redacted] said he began to take [redacted] a little more seriously when on about October 11, 1973, he became involved in a discussion of the fire with [redacted] and [redacted] in the cafeteria of the records center. [redacted] volunteered the statement "I set the fire, but they don't have any proof." [redacted] said he looked at [redacted] realized he was serious and admonished him, "You'd better be cool man." [redacted] said [redacted] responded to the admonition by simply laughing.

[redacted] said he could not recall the exact nature of the conversation that followed but that [redacted] had claimed he started the fire by setting matches he brought from home to a box of records.

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SA [redacted] sfb

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[redacted] said that while he generally did not take [redacted] too seriously, he felt he may have been telling the truth about the fire. He said that while [redacted] he is plenty smart enough to not admit to something he had not actually done. [redacted] said he felt [redacted] believed he could admit involvement in the fire to his peers, primarily because considerable time had passed and he had not as yet been uncovered. [redacted] also seemed to feel secure in talking about his involvement with peers apparently based on the belief that he could not be reported by them. [redacted] said [redacted] may not have realized how angry many people were about the fire, including [redacted] himself.

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BUCHANAN is described as follows:

Name:	[redacted]
Residence:	[redacted] Missouri
Race:	Negro
Sex:	Male
Date of birth:	[redacted]
Place of birth:	[redacted] Mississippi
Height:	5'11"
Weight:	180 pounds
Hair:	Black
Eyes:	Brown
Complexion:	Dark

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[redacted]
Missouri, advised he is presently employed as a [redacted]
[redacted] at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC-M),
St. Louis, Missouri. [redacted] said he has held this
position for approximately 16 months, as a [redacted]
He said he is associated on the job with [redacted]

[redacted] said he is not close to [redacted] as
[redacted] has not got anything to say that [redacted] wants to
listen to. [redacted] stated he feels this way because
[redacted] is uneducated, and of limited general knowledge.

[redacted] said he was aware, however, that [redacted]
[redacted] during a conversation involving some of the above
named persons, exact ones unrecalled, had inquired in a
"snickering way" what the penalty would be for a person
convicted of the fire at the records center on July 11,
1973. Everyone in the group laughed, but everyone got the
impression from the remark that [redacted] may have been
referring to himself. No one took him too seriously,
however, as [redacted] is always looking for attention. This
incident occurred about two months ago.

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[redacted] said he never thought much more about
the above situation until the week of October 8, 1973.
Sometime during that week, [redacted] said [redacted] came
to him in private and earnestly made inquiry as to what
[redacted] though "they" could do to [redacted] what punishment could
be given him if [redacted] set the fire. [redacted] said that in
view of [redacted] danger, he began to seriously consider the
possibility that [redacted] had set the fire. He reasoned
that if [redacted] talked to anyone, he would have
talked to [redacted] said, was the kind
of person who would take a minute to listen to someone
like [redacted] He always treated [redacted] with a lot of kind-
ness and felt some compassion for him. [redacted] said he

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SA [redacted]

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never heard [redacted] make any statements to [redacted] about lighting a box of files with matches. About a month and one-half ago [redacted] did ask [redacted] what he thought would happen to someone who set the fire at the records center. [redacted] said he definitely felt [redacted] was trying to search him out. The impression [redacted] left was clearly that he was the one responsible for the fire.

[redacted] said that while it was often difficult to take [redacted] seriously because he tried to get a lot of attention, it was obvious that he felt things more deeply than he let on. For example, [redacted] would laugh off a scolding from a supervisor and make very "light" of it, when actually he was deeply troubled by such occurrences and took them more seriously than he wanted it to appear.

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[redacted] is described as follows:

Name:	[redacted]
Residence:	[redacted] Missouri
Race:	White
Sex:	Male
Date of birth:	[redacted]
Place of birth:	[redacted] Missouri
Height:	6'0"
Weight:	160 pounds
Hair:	Blonde
Eyes:	Blue
Social Security Account Number:	[redacted]
Education:	High school; 2 semesters college
Marital Status:	Married

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[redacted]
 [redacted] Missouri, advised that he is employed as a [redacted] at the National Personnel Records Center - Military Branch, 9700 Page, St. Louis, Missouri. [redacted] said he has been employed in this position since June of 1972 and has been a working colleague of [redacted] since that time.

[redacted] said that about a month ago, [redacted] told him that he had started the fire at the records center. [redacted] said he did not take [redacted] seriously [redacted] but that he was somewhat troubled by his statement as [redacted] tends to look up to [redacted] and will tell him things he will not tell anyone else. [redacted] said he feels he developed this relationship with [redacted] as he is careful to treat [redacted] kindly and tends to listen to him when no one else will. To the best of [redacted] collection, however, [redacted] said that he had "found" some matches on the first floor at NPRC and then went to the sixth floor to start the fire, simply "for something to do".

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On October 11, 1973, [redacted] said he again discussed the fire with [redacted] and [redacted] repeated that he had started the fire. On this occasion [redacted] advised that he had brought matches from home. [redacted] said he pointed out to [redacted] that he had previously stated the matches were found on the first floor. [redacted] merely responded with a "Yeah". During this conversation [redacted] said he started the fire near the west end of the 6th floor. [redacted] said he at first tended to disbelieve what [redacted] was saying because on the night of the fire [redacted] was on the sixth floor after the fire started and he noticed no flames toward the west end.

[redacted] said he became increasingly troubled over [redacted] repeated statements that he set the fire and gradually began to believe that he might be telling the truth. On one occasion when he talked to [redacted]

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told him to "shut up" because what he was saying would get him in trouble. Later [redacted] said he began to "kid" [redacted] that he would turn him in for all the work he had caused by starting the fire, but [redacted] kept on talking. [redacted] said he believed it was during the conversation in the cafeteria on October 11, 1973, that [redacted] had said that he had actually pulled out a box of files on the sixth floor and set fire to the box with the matches he had in his possession. [redacted] said he believed [redacted] said this to him because, as previously stated, [redacted] looked up to him and seemed to want to discuss the matter.

[redacted] said that as he has thought about [redacted] statements about the fire, he has gradually come to realize that [redacted] may have been telling the truth. [redacted] said he bases this belief on the recollection that when [redacted] first discussed the matter with him, he was extremely secretive. As time passed, however, and [redacted] apparently began to feel more secure that he would not be identified, he became more open in his statements about the fire. Later, when he would state he had set the fire, fellow workers would say "They're going to lock you up," to which [redacted] would respond boastfully "How, they can't prove it." Recently, and particularly since [redacted] statement on October 11, 1973, [redacted] said that [redacted] had said he was responsible for the fire frequently enough and earnestly enough that he began to "seriously wonder if [redacted] may have actually been responsible for the fire." He said he was thrown off, however, by [redacted] discrepancy as to where he had gotten the matches. [redacted] said that on the other hand, [redacted] had recently become very interested in what the penalty would be for the person responsible for the fire and that this lent substance to his belief that [redacted] may have, in fact, set the fire at the records center.

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[redacted] described as follows:

Name: [redacted]
Residence: [redacted] Missouri

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Race: White
Sex: Male
Date of birth: [redacted]
Place of birth: [redacted] Missouri
Height: 6'1"
Weight: 175 pounds
Hair: Blonde
Eyes: Brown
Social Security
Account Number: [redacted]
Serial Number: [redacted]

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date of transcription 10/17/73

[redacted]
 [redacted] Missouri, advised he is an employee of the National Personnel Records Center - Military Branch as a [redacted]. He said he has been employed in this position for about 17 months.

[redacted] said that in this position he has been a working colleague of [redacted] said that about one week or a week and one-half ago, he was involved in a conversation with [redacted]

[redacted] The conversation turned to the fire at the records center, and [redacted] during the course of the conversation volunteered that he had started the fire. [redacted] said he looked at [redacted] who grinned and started to laugh. [redacted] did not take [redacted] too serious because he felt he was just attempting to get attention. During the course of this conversation either [redacted] asked [redacted] how he started the fire. [redacted] could not recall the exact conversation, but [redacted] said that he started the fire with matches, or something to that effect.

The only other recollection [redacted] had of [redacted] claiming he started the fire occurred about two months prior to the above occasion. Someone had made a comment about the fire and [redacted] simply blurted out "I started the fire." [redacted] said he told [redacted] to not even tell him about it, that he did not want to hear about it.

[redacted] said he could furnish no other information regarding this incident. He said that while he tended to not take [redacted] too seriously, it occurred to him that [redacted] may have been very serious about having set the fire.

[redacted] is described as follows:

Interviewed on 10/15/73 at Overland, Missouri File # SL 52-4856

by SA [redacted] /ls Date dictated 10/17/73

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Name: [REDACTED]
Residence: [REDACTED] Missouri
Telephone number: [REDACTED]
Race: White
Sex: Male
Date of birth: [REDACTED]
Place of birth: [REDACTED] MISSOURI
Height: 5'8"
Weight: 130 pounds
Hair: Brown
Eyes: Hazel
Social Security Account Number: [REDACTED]

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