

T. 12/8/67

Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation

John Doar
Assistant Attorney General
Civil Rights Division

JD:GMF:dsu
171-12-4
#17-073-13A

Richard B. Sobel, et al. v.
Leander M. Perez, Jr., et al.
Eastern District of Louisiana
Civil Action No. 67-243

The Department has filed a motion to intervene in the case of Richard B. Sobel, et al. v. Leander M. Perez, Jr., et al., Civil Action No. 67-243, Section E in the Eastern District of Louisiana, New Orleans Division, which motion was granted on November 1, 1967. The original complaint was based upon the arrest of Mr. Sobel by the Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana, authorities charging him with the unauthorized practice of law. This charge against Sobel was made in connection with his professional activities as an attorney representing Negroes and civil rights workers in the State and Federal Courts in Louisiana for the Lawyers Constitutional Defense Committee. Mr. Sobel is licensed to practice law in the District of Columbia and New York and was and is associated with attorneys licensed to practice law in Louisiana while practicing in Louisiana.

The Government's complaint in intervention alleges that Negroes in Plaquemines Parish are less able than white persons, because of their race, to secure in the local courts of Plaquemines Parish adequate legal representation by counsel licensed to practice law in the State of Louisiana in civil and constitutional rights cases. In support of their complaint, we will attempt to show, among other things, the difficulties Negroes licensed to practice in Louisiana have encountered because of their race, because of the race of their clients or because of the controversial nature of their cases.

cc: Records
Chrono
Doar
Fiss
Dunbaugh

Fleischer
Knight
Trial File, Southern Sec.
USA, New Orleans, La.

DOF

In connection with the preparation of the Government's case, a Departmental attorney interviewed A. A. Lenoir, the Dean of Southern University Law School in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, on November 21, 1967. In the course of the interview, Dean Lenoir stated that he knew of two graduates of the Law School, a Mr. P. Dushua and a Mr. Norbert Rayford, both Negro, who left Louisiana after practicing. Dean Lenoir also said that Mr. Rayford is now a State Labor Referee in Chicago and that Mr. Dushua is living in Illinois and running an investment business. Please locate Mr. Rayford and Mr. Dushua and, by interviewing them, obtain the following information for the purpose of determining whether they left the State due to difficulties they encountered in their practices because of their race, or the race of their clients, or because they were involved in controversial matters:

- (a) Age and address;
- (b) When they were admitted to the Louisiana bar;
- (c) Where they practiced in Louisiana and for how long;
- (d) The nature of their practice in Louisiana (i.e., the types of cases they handled);
- (e) When they left the State;
- (f) The specific reasons and circumstances for their decisions to leave the State;
- (g) Their present occupations, and whether they ever attempted to practice law in another state.

Dean Lenoir also stated in the course of the interview that the Ethics Committee of the State Bar Association was particularly harsh in disciplining Negro lawyers. He said that proceedings were commenced

against two Negro lawyers because the lawyers had commenced school desegregation suits. One lawyer, named by Dean Lott, was Mr. Alvin Fletcher, formerly of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and presently living in San Francisco, California. Dean Lott stated that Mr. Fletcher was charged with conspiracy on account of his school desegregation activities. With respect to that charge, the Louisiana Supreme Court did not disturb him, but instead censured him. However, subsequently he was disbarred, according to Dean Lott, because of some questionable dealings in a succession problem. Please locate Mr. Fletcher and, by interviewing him, ascertain all the details surrounding these disciplinary proceedings, including the following information:

- (a) Age and address;
- (b) Schools he graduated from, and when;
- (c) When was he admitted to the Louisiana bar and whether he encountered any difficulties in obtaining admission to the Louisiana bar;
- (d) Where he practiced in Louisiana and for how long;
- (e) The nature of his practice in Louisiana (i.e., the types of cases he handled);
- (f) The details of the law cases he was involved with that led to the disciplinary proceedings, including the name of the case, the court, the citation if any, how he became involved in the case, whether he was associated with any other counsel in the case, and the final disposition of the case;

- (g) The details of the disciplinary proceedings, including how the matter was initiated, whether he was afforded a hearing and by whom, and the final disposition of all such proceedings;
- (h) Whether he was subjected to any other disciplinary proceedings not mentioned by Dean Lenior;
- (i) Whether he encountered any other difficulties in his law practice that might be attributable to his race or the race of his clients or to the controversial nature of the case; and
- (j) When and why he left Louisiana.