FBI Tracks & Arrests ‘Black Identity Extremist’ and Hardly Anyone Is Talking About It

By **David Love** - February 5, 2018

Six months after the FBI issued a report inventing from whole cloth the term Black Identity Extremists — claiming this group poses a terrorist threat to police — the first apparent case of the prosecution of a BIE has emerged. The BIE designation has created concern in the Black community that the FBI is launching a new COINTELPRO program targeting Black activists who have committed no crimes, with more arrests and prosecutions of those involved in racial justice movements to follow.

This latest chapter represents the FBI that has been familiar to Black people for decades. While the bureau only recently created the term Black Identity Extremist, its methods, tactics and orientation remain the same with regard to Black activis[x Close] FBI has a long tradition of treating Black political

movements as terrorists and enemies of the state, and a threat to national security and public safety. A conservative, white-male-dominated organization, the FBI always has taken its cues from anti-Black, right-wing propagandists.

On December 12, 2017 in Dallas, Christopher Daniels, also known as Rakem Balogun, was arrested during a raid on his home and charged with the unlawful possession of a firearm, the result of more than two years of FBI surveillance, as Foreign Policy reported. Federal agents held Daniels outside in his underwear and seized two firearms the government claims he is barred from owning due to a 2007 misdemeanor domestic assault conviction in Tennessee. Among other items FBI agents took from Daniels' home was a copy of the book "Negroes With Guns" by civil rights activist Robert F. Williams.

Williams was the first Black leader of his era to support armed resistance to racial oppression. Following the Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, Williams had revived the Monroe, North Carolina, chapter of the NAACP amid Ku Klux Klan violence. In response to assaults on Black women that were ignored by police, he organized Black workers and veterans, filed for a charter from the NRA and formed the Black Armed Guard. The group repelled Klan violence against integration and protected the Freedom Riders. Williams also internationalized the Black struggle, as he and his family lived in Cuba — where he wrote his book and produced Radio Free Dixie — and China for a number of years. "I advocated violent self-defense because I don't really think you can have a defense against violent racists and against terrorists unless you are prepared to meet violence with violence, and my policy was to meet violence with violence," said Williams, a forefather of the Black Power movement and the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense.

The Huey P. Newton Gun Club, a pro-open-carry group of which Daniels is a founder, tweeted that Black political activists are being criminalized.



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According to Foreign Policy, the FBI became interested in Daniels in 2015 from a video of him participating in a police brutality protest, which was posted on the right-wing conspiracy theory website InfoWars. Alex Jones, the Austin, Texas-based radio and TV show host who runs InfoWars, is a "valuable asset" to the Trump administration. Trump uses the conspiracy theorist as a news source, reportedly called Jones three times in recent months, and has praised Jones and his "amazing" reputation. Jones has claimed the Sandy Hook elementary school mass shooting and the Boston Marathon bombing were inside jobs and hoaxes, that President Obama was not born in the United States, and the government is making people gay. Jones was the source of Trump's claim that millions of people voted illegally in the 2016 election. "I talk to the CIA, FBI connections, Army intelligence connections, former technical head of the NSA and a bunch of other people that talk to the president," said Jones on his TV program. "I'm gonna leave it at that."

FBI surveillance of Daniels and other activists extended to Detroit and South Carolina. The FBI claims Daniels "openly and publicly advocates violence toward law enforcement" on his Facebook profile, and posted words of admiration for Micah X. Johnson, who killed five Dallas police officers in 2016, and Tremaine Wilbourn, who is accused of killing a cop in Memphis, Tennessee.

That the FBI learned of Daniels through the right-wing propaganda outlet such as InfoWars is instructive, demonstrating that the bureau is politicized, but not in the manner in which Trump and his supporters believe it is. Trump loyalists such as Rep. Devin Nunes (R-Calif.) attack the FBI for its alleged surveillance abuses in the Russia investigation only because the agency poses a danger to an authoritarian president who disrespects the rule of law and the system of checks and balances, and is concerned with little more than his own power and ego. Rather, the FBI is responding to pressure from the right, monitoring for two years a Bl tivist with an 11-year-old misdemeanor conviction

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to prosecute him for a federal gun charge. This targeting of Daniels reflects the inherent racial biases of the FBI organizational culture — a culture that also finds virtually all shootings by federal agents justified and classifies all victims of justified homicide by police officers as felons. If convicted, Daniels could face up to 10 years in prison.



In August 2017, the FBI published an intelligence report called "Black Identity Extremists Likely Motivated To Target Law Enforcement Officers." In the report, the FBI said "it is very likely Black Identity Extremist (BIE) perceptions of police brutality against African Americans spurred an increase in premeditated, retaliatory lethal violence against law enforcement and will very likely serve as justification for such violence." The report claims this increase in "ideologically motivated" incidents began with the 2014 shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and the subsequent failure of a grand jury to indict the police officers responsible for his death. "The FBI assesses it is very likely incidents of alleged police abuse against African Americans since then have continued to feed the resurgence in ideologically motivated, violent criminal activity within the BIE movement. The FBI assesses it is very likely some BIEs are influenced by a mix of anti-authoritarian, Moorish sovereign citizen ideology, and BIE ideology."

Black leaders, lawmakers and activists have expressed concern over the new BIE designation, and according to the Center for Democracy and Technology, civil rights and civil liberties advocates have accused the FBI of taking several distinct incidents and poorly manufacturing a movement from them. In November, the Congressional Black Caucus met with FBI Director Christopher Wray, concerned about the bureau's "troubling history" of targeting Black organizations, and that Black

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activists such as Black Lives Matter will only be criminalized and branded as terrorists and extremists for protesting against police brutality.

Rep. Cedric L. Richmond (D-La.), the Congressional Black Caucus chairman, fears BIE is the new FBI version of COINTELPRO, referring to the program under J. Edgar Hoover designed to "prevent the rise of a messiah who could unify, and electrify, the militant black nationalist movement" and monitor, infiltrate and destroy civil rights organizations. The history of the federal government coming down on Black justice movements as a threat to national security and conflating Black activists with domestic terrorists is a long one. Hoover, who targeted Black leadership since Marcus Garvey, had his agency send a letter to Martin Luther King urging him to commit suicide, and called the Black Panther Party "the most dangerous threat to the internal security of the country."



Melina Abdullah
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Don't be fooled by Trump v. FBI beef...Remember who wrote the #BlackIdentityExtremist report, who framed & assassinated our most visible leaders, who infiltrated & destroyed our organizations and who is engaged in all-out war against Black freedom. The FBI. #MoreThanOneEnemy

11:58 AM - Feb 3, 2018

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Michael McBride
@pastormykmac

Two things are true according to the experience of Black America: Trump is a threat to Black Americans...AND...so is the FBI...have we forgotten #BlackIdentityExtremist just months ago? Or better yet MLK/Malcolm/BlackPantherParty...etc

6:45 PM - Feb 3, 2018

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The "terrorist" designation serves to undermine Black activism and anti-racism movements. As Patrisse Khan-Cullors and asha bandele, authors of "When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir," note, young Black activists are called terrorists and receive death threats. "I think what we've seen over the last four-and-a-half years, as this movement has grown, is a continued, you know, backlash from the right and 'alt-right.' And the first time, you know, we were called terrorists, I remember seeing our names on Bill O'Reilly's show, and our faces. And I thought that that was frightening because I know who watches Bill O'Reilly," Khan-Cullors recently said on "Democracy Now!"

"The truth is that the threat to police does not come from the black community. The threat from police — it certainly doesn't come from black activists. It certainly doesn't come from us. It comes from, typically, aggrieved, angry, crazy — whatever we want to call it — white men," bandele added,

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highlighting the need for Black people to tell their stories to avoid the rewriting of history "by those who are lying."

The FBI focus on Black Identity Extremists comes as white men emerge as America's preeminent domestic terror threat, killing more Americans than are Islamic terrorists. According to a report from the Anti-Defamation League, white supremacists have killed 51 police officers since 1990, as opposed to 11 officers killed by left-wing groups. White supremacists are infiltrating law enforcement across the country, a situation of which the FBI is aware and investigating. Yet, while the FBI has designated Black Identity Extremists as a terror threat, it has not similarly identified white extremist groups who are killing the vast majority of police, suggesting politics rather than data are at play. At a November 2017 oversight hearing before the House Judiciary Committee Rep. Karen Bass (D-Calif.) pressed Attorney General Jeff Sessions on this racial discrepancy.

Underscoring a troubling history on race, strained relations between police and communities of color and a legacy of implicit bias in law enforcement, the FBI has a Black people problem. The agency is less diverse than it was two decades ago, and the percentage of Black and Latino agents in this white law enforcement agency has decreased over the years, with a dominance of white men at the top perpetuating a cycle, and making the agency a target of discrimination lawsuits from African-Americans, Latinos and women over the years. The bureau is 83.4 percent white, 6.5 percent Latino, 4.5 percent Asian and 4.4 percent Black, according to the FBI website.

Meanwhile, the FBI is also setting up a task force to monitor social media, which, given the agency's history of singling out Black movements, poses dangers for Black activists who exercise their First Amendment rights on Facebook, Twitter and other platforms. Given the FBI report and the first apparent BIE prosecution in Dallas, Black activists may have reason for concern they will be next. Anyone who posts his or her thoughts on police violence on social media — particularly someone with a high profile and influence — is susceptible to FBI surveillance.

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