



U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Birmingham, Alabama 35203  
July 23, 1982

JAMES EARL RAY;  
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING-VICTIM  
CIVIL RIGHTS-CONSPIRACY

Captain E. Robins, Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, Fairfield, Alabama, advised Paul Bernard Marler had telephonically contacted the Sheriff's Office in Bessemer, Alabama, and stated James Earl Ray did not kill Martin Luther King. Captain Robins advised this conversation was taped and he will make a copy of the tape available to the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

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157-2627-674

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
JUL 28 1982	
FBI-MOBILE	

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

Date of transcription July 23, 1982

CAPT. E. ROBINS, Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, made available a tape of a telephone conversation on July 11, 1982, by PAUL BERNARD MARLER, the transcripts of which is attached.

SEARCHED.....	INDEXED.....
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Investigation on 7/15/82 at Fairfield, Alabama File # BH 44-1740

by SA PETER JOHN BODKIN: mjl Date dictated 7/19/82

2

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FBI/DOJ

Testing 1, 2, 3. Testing 1, 2, 3.

Unknown Female Sheriff's Office  
(UF)

MARLER Sheriff's Office in Jefferson County?

UF Yes sir.

MARLER (unintelligible)

UF Okay.

MARLER My name is PAUL, P A U L BERNARD MARLER.

UF What is it? Is it PAUL or POL?

MARLER PAUL, P A U L.

UF Okay.

MARLER BERNARD MARLER, M A R L E R.

UF M A R L E R?

MARLER Yes ma'am.

UF Okay.

MARLER U'm up in Calhoun County.

UF Calhoun?

MARLER Calhoun County.

UF Okay.

MARLER I'm a white male. I's born  I'm sorry

I'm calling in reference to JAMES EARL  
RAY.

UF JAMES EARL RAY?

MARLER Right.

UF Okay. What, what about JAMES EARL RAY?

MARLER He didn't kill MARTIN LUTHER KING.

UF He didn't kill MARTIN LUTHER KING?

MARLER No ma'am we did it.

UF You did. Who, who was you besides....

MARLER LEO DENHAM.

UF LEO DUNHAM?

MARLER L E O...DNH...D E N H A M.

UF D U N H...

MARLER DN....DUN....

UF D U N...

MARLER ....H A M. D E N H A M

UF ...HAM. D E N H A M.

MARLER Right. LEO fired the shot. JAMES RAY was a punk.  
He never shot anybody. He ain't never been that brave.

UF Okay...have you, have you called the police department  
to investigate?

MARLER I've called the "Washington Post." I had called, I have  
talked with the warden in Tennessee...Warden DAVIS and  
you can call that okay and verify it.

UF Did they tell you to call us or....

MARLER No, no.  
I just don't think I'm gon be here that long. I just  
want, I just don't want JAMES RAY to die for something  
that he didn't do. Now he might be, they might lock  
him up forever I don't know. That's up to JAMES you  
know. JAMES was, he was, uh, he was, he was a nitty,  
he was a punk anyway. But JAMES didn't kill that  
nigger. I didn't mean to say that. JAMES RAY didn't  
kill MARTIN LUTHER KING. We did.

UF You, you and this LEO D E N H A M.

MARLER LEO killed him. I didn't kill him, but I was there;  
and that makes me a part of it. Right?

UF Yes sir. What, what, you live in Calhoun County?

MARLER I just gave you that.

UF What's your, uh, what's your address?

MARLER 716 East 10th Street and I'm at 238...seventeen, seventy-seven.

UF 238....seventeen, seventy-seven?

MARLER Yes ma'am.

UF And your address was seven sixteen?

MARLER I whatn't involved in it. I saw it.

UF Do you know where he is now?

MARLER Yes I do.

UF Where is he?

MARLER I'll talk to you about that later.

UF Okay.

MARLER I had nothing to do with it, uh, well maybe I did. Maybe I had something to do with it because I didn't come forth earlier you know....

UF Yeah.

MARLER ....to say what I had to say. But I saw the man, I wasn't involved in it. I didn't shoot at anybody, but I saw the man that shot MARTIN LUTHER KING.

UF And you've already....

MARLER Yes I did.

UF You've already called the police department and investigated him.

MARLER I've already called "Washington Post."

UF And what did they tell you?

MARLER I don't know what they told me.

MARLER I've called you. I've called Mobile. I've called Atlanta. I've called Memphis. I've called and talked to this judge, uh....I've talked to, uh, Warden DAVIS at the penitentiary in Tennessee. I've done already talked to him.

UF Well okay. Well I....

MARLER Lady, I'm blind and I don't know how long I'm gon live. But I'm gon tell you...that man did not kill MARTIN LUTHER KING. They've got the wrong man. Well okay. I got the situation and I'll, (unintelligible). I'll pass it on.

MARLER I appreciate it.

UF Okay.

MARLER Wait...are you in Bessemer?

UF Yes sir.

MARLER Well that's where it came from. Now let me tell you something else.

UF Where what came from?

MARLER Where information came from.

UF Are you in Bessemer?

MARLER That's where it all came from in Bessemer, Homewood right? Now and do you know the man...are you still on?

UF Yes I'm (unintelligible)

MARLER Okay you know they said the man, the gun that killed KING came from Homewood whatever right. That Woods boy. I hope you're getting all this down. There was WOODS boy that sold him my gun. You see lady....

UF Uh huh.

MARLER I'm the man that brought the gun.

UF                    You bought the gun?

MARLER             Now then...

UF                    What kind of gun was it?

MARLER             That wasn't the only...now wait a minute. That's,  
that's where everybody got screwed up. How many guns  
were there was bought? You don't know that do you?

UF                    No sir, (unintelligible)

MARLER             The law don't even know it.

UF                    I'm not up on, on, uh, the killing.

MARLER             Okay, yeah...well but it was, uh, it was, uh, it was  
a tragic thing right. But you got the wrong man.  
There was more guns bought that day than what the law  
knows about. Okay.... Will you have him to  
call me if you don't mind.

UF                    Who do you want to call you?

MARLER             The police.

UF                    You want a sergeant to talk to you?

MARLER             Yeah.

UF                    Okay. Hold on just a second.

MARLER             Now wait....

?                    Hello.

UF                    Sir....

?                    Hello.

UF                    Sir didn't you want to talk to a sergeant?  
Sir...Mr. MARLER....Hello....I guess he's hung up.

Birmingham, Alabama  
December 5, 1979

Re: RICK TOWNSLEY;  
TERRY WALTERS;  
RALPH TURNER;  
JERRY CARROLL  
OFFICERS, ANNISTON POLICE DEPARTMENT;  
CECIL BLOSTER, FIREMAN,  
ANNISTON FIRE DEPARTMENT,  
ANNISTON, ALABAMA;  
PAUL BERNARD MARLER - VICTIM  
"DUKE" MARLER - VICTIM  
CIVIL RIGHTS

On November 19, 1979, Paul Bernard Marler, 716 East 10th Street, Anniston, Alabama, telephonically contacted the Washington, D.C. office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation at which time he related the following:

In September or October 1970, he and his brother were arrested at the VFW Hall in Anniston, Alabama, following a fight resulting from drinks. His brother, when put in jail, was beaten by the officers. This is not a racial matter as the police officers and his brother were white.

On June 15, 1979, Paul Bernard Marler appeared at the Anniston, Alabama, Resident Agency, obviously under the influence of either alcohol or narcotics. Throughout the interview, Marler would doze off or begin crying unexplainably. Marler complained that in 1970 he and his brother, "Duke", had gone to the VFW Club in Anniston to pay their dues. While there, they began to drink and trouble broke out between them and some of the patrons or bartenders at the club. Marler stated that seeing his brother in a fight with several other individuals, he then broke a bottle and came to his brother's assistance. Marler stated

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RICK TOWNSLEY,  
ET AL

that unquestionably, he had "assaulted them", but stated that he felt this was the only reasonable action to protect his brother. Following the fight, Marler and his brother went to the parking lot of the VFW where they encountered Anniston Police Officers Rick Townsley, Terry Walters, Ralph Turner and Jerry Carroll. Marler stated that he was then handcuffed without cause and taken to the Anniston Police Department. During the drive to the Police Department, Marler stated that he had addressed Officer Carroll as "son" and Carroll had advised him that he was not his son and did not appreciate being called son by Marler. Marler further advised he then told Carroll that his family would not forget Carroll's family and that also, he, Marler, would not forget Carroll's family. Throughout the interview, Marler rambled incoherently, stating that he had spent \$37,000 to find out what he is now telling the FBI and that he wanted a warrant sworn out for the officers immediately and that he was also suing the Police Department for one million dollars. It was pointed out to Marler that this would be impossible, but if he had a complaint, it could be brought to the attention of the FBI.

After a great deal of difficulty keeping Marler on matters relevant to his complaint, Marler continued that he was then put in a cell and after being locked up in a "drunk tank" he was then visited by unknown officers who kicked him, splitting his forehead open and then "hammered" his teeth out.

Marler continued to cry and doze off as he related the above facts and when asked why he had not come to the FBI earlier, he explained that he did not wish to make a complaint at that time because it would disgrace his family.

Marler, in conversation, admitted being an alcoholic and under the influence of drugs for which he has a doctor's prescription. In addition, he currently is an outpatient in the Veteran's Administration Hospital for mental incompetency.

RICK TOWNSLEY;  
ET AL.

It was pointed out to Marler that because of his condition, at this time, it would be impossible for any statement to be taken by the FBI, but if he desired, he could return when he was obviously not under the influence of alcohol and narcotics and a statement would be taken. Marler gave no indication as to whether he planned to return.

No investigative action is being taken by the FBI.



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Unknown Female Sheriff's Office  
(UF)

MARLER Sheriff's Office in Jefferson County?

UF Yes sir.

MARLER (unintelligible)

UF Okay.

MARLER My name is PAUL, P A U L BERNARD MARLER.

UF What is it? Is it PAUL or POL?

MARLER PAUL, P A U L.

UF Okay.

MARLER BERNARD MARLER, M A R L E R.

UF M A R L E R?

MARLER Yes ma'am.

UF Okay.

MARLER U'm up in Calhoun County.

UF Calhoun?

MARLER Calhoun County.

UF Okay.

MARLER I'm a white male. I's born  I'm sorry

I'm calling in reference to JAMES EARL  
RAY.

UF JAMES EARL RAY?

MARLER Right.

UF Okay. What, what about JAMES EARL RAY?

MARLER He didn't kill MARTIN LUTHER KING.

UF He didn't kill MARTIN LUTHER KING?

MARLER No ma'am we did it.

UF You did. Who, who was you besides....

MARLER LEO DENHAM.

UF LEO DUNHAM?

MARLER L E O...DNH...D E N H A M.

UF D U N H...

MARLER DN....DUN....

UF D U N...

MARLER ....H A M. D E N H A M

UF ...HAM. D E N H A M.

MARLER Right. LEO fired the shot. JAMES RAY was a punk.  
He never shot anybody. He ain't never been that brave.

UF Okay...have you, have you called the police department  
to investigate?

MARLER I've called the "Washington Post." I had called, I have  
talked with the warden in Tennessee...Warden DAVIS and  
you can call that okay and verify it.

UF Did they tell you to call us or....

MARLER No, no.  
I just don't think I'm gon be here that long. I just  
want, I just don't want JAMES RAY to die for something  
that he didn't do. Now he might be, they might lock  
him up forever I don't know. That's up to JAMES you  
know. JAMES was, he was, uh, he was, he was a nitty,  
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kill MARTIN LUTHER KING. We did.

UF You, you and this LEO D E N H A M.

MARLER LEO killed him. I didn't kill him, but I was there;  
and that makes me a part of it. Right?

UF Yes sir. What, what, you live in Calhoun County?

MARLER I just gave you that.

UF What's your, uh, what's your address?

MARLER 716 East 10th Street and I'm at 238...seventeen, seventy-seven.

UF 238....seventeen, seventy-seven?

MARLER Yes ma'am.

UF And your address was seven sixteen?

MARLER I whatn't involved in it. I saw it.

UF Do you know where he is now?

MARLER Yes I do.

UF Where is he?

MARLER I'll talk to you about that later.

UF Okay.

MARLER I had nothing to do with it, uh, well maybe I did. Maybe I had something to do with it because I didn't come forth earlier you know....

UF Yeah.

MARLER ....to say what I had to say. But I saw the man, I wasn't involved in it. I didn't shoot at anybody, but I saw the man that shot MARTIN LUTHER KING.

UF And you've already....

MARLER Yes I did.

UF You've already called the police department and investigated him.

MARLER I've already called "Washington Post."

UF And what did they tell you?

MARLER I don't know what they told me.

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UF Well okay. Well I....

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MARLER I appreciate it.

UF Okay.

MARLER Wait...are you in Bessemer?

UF Yes sir.

MARLER Well that's where it came from. Now let me tell you something else.

UF Where what came from?

MARLER Where information came from.

UF Are you in Bessemer?

MARLER That's where it all came from in Bessemer, Homewood right? Now and do you know the man...are you still on?

UF Yes I'm (unintelligible)

MARLER Okay you know they said the man, the gun that killed KING came from Homewood whatever right. That Woods boy. I hope you're getting all this down. There was WOODS boy that sold him my gun. You see lady....

UF Uh huh.

MARLER I'm the man that brought the gun.



UF You bought the gun?

MARLER Now then...

UF What kind of gun was it?

MARLER That wasn't the only...now wait a minute. That's, that's where everybody got screwed up. How many guns were there was bought? You don't know that do you?

UF No sir, (unintelligible)

MARLER The law don't even know it.

UF I'm not up on, on, uh, the killing.

MARLER Okay, yeah...well but it was, uh, it was, uh, it was a tragic thing right. But you got the wrong man. There was more guns bought that day than what the law knows about. Okay.... Will you have him to call me if you don't mind.

UF Who do you want to call you?

MARLER The police.

UF You want a sergeant to talk to you?

MARLER Yeah.

UF Okay. Hold on just a second.

MARLER Now wait....

? Hello.

UF Sir....

? Hello.

UF Sir didn't you want to talk to a sergeant?

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Birmingham, Alabama  
December 5, 1979

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RICK TOWNSLEY;  
ET AL

that unquestionably, he had "assaulted them", but stated that he felt this was the only reasonable action to protect his brother. Following the fight, Marler and his brother went to the parking lot of the VFW where they encountered Anniston Police Officers Rick Townsley, Terry Walters, Ralph Turner and Jerry Carroll. Marler stated that he was then handcuffed without cause and taken to the Anniston Police Department. During the drive to the Police Department, Marler stated that he had addressed Officer Carroll as "son" and Carroll had advised him that he was not his son and did not appreciate being called son by Marler. Marler further advised he then told Carroll that his family would not forget Carroll's family and that also, he, Marler, would not forget Carroll's family. Throughout the interview, Marler rambled incoherently, stating that he had spent \$37,000 to find out what he is now telling the FBI and that he wanted a warrant sworn out for the officers immediately and that he was also suing the Police Department for one million dollars. It was pointed out to Marler that this would be impossible, but if he had a complaint, it could be brought to the attention of the FBI.

After a great deal of difficulty keeping Marler on matters relevant to his complaint, Marler continued that he was then put in a cell and after being locked up in a "drunk tank" he was then visited by unknown officers who kicked him, splitting his forehead open and then "hammered" his teeth out.

Marler continued to cry and doze off as he related the above facts and when asked why he had not come to the FBI earlier, he explained that he did not wish to make a complaint at that time because it would disgrace his family.

Marler, in conversation, admitted being an alcoholic and under the influence of drugs for which he has a doctor's prescription. In addition, he currently is an outpatient in the Veteran's Administration Hospital for mental incompetency.

RICK TOWNSLEY;  
ET AL.

It was pointed out to Harler that because of his condition, at this time, it would be impossible for any statement to be taken by the FBI, but if he desired, he could return when he was obviously not under the influence of alcohol and narcotics and a statement would be taken. Harler gave no indication as to whether he planned to return.

No investigative action is being taken by the FBI.

# Memorandum



To : DIRECTOR, FBI

Date July 23, 1982

From : SAC, BIRMINGHAM (44-1740)

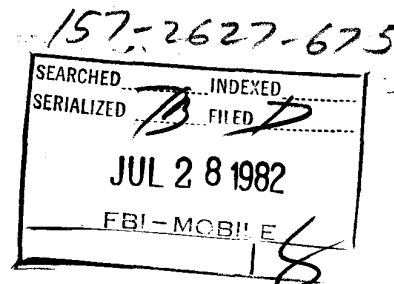
Subject : JAMES EARL RAY;  
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CIVIL RIGHTS-CONSPIRACY  
OO: MEMPHIS

Enclosed for the Bureau are the original and three copies of a letterhead memorandum containing investigation by the Birmingham Office. Enclosed for the information of the Atlanta, Memphis, Mobile and WFO Offices are two copies of an LHM containing results of investigation by the Birmingham Office.

## ADMINISTRATIVE:

The Birmingham Office is not interviewing PAUL BERNARD MARLER in connection with this matter due to his mental incompetency and he is an alcoholic.

2-Bureau (44-38861) (Enc. 4)  
2-Atlanta (44-2386) (Enc. 2)  
2-Memphis (44-1987) (Enc. 2)  
②-Mobile (157-2627) (Enc. 2)  
2-WFO (Enc. 2)  
1-Birmingham  
PJB/acm  
(11)



# Memorandum



To : DIRECTOR, FBI

Date July 23, 1982

From : SAC, BIRMINGHAM (44-1740)

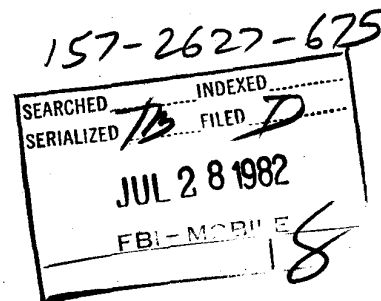
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