

Case Number:

282- DL - 82396

Serial(s):

23

(01/26/1998)

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Precedence: ROUTINE

Date: 12/15/1999

To: All Field Offices

Attn: SAC
Civil Rights Program Coordinator

From: Criminal Investigative
C/CRS/Hate Crimes Unit/Room 3117
Contact: SSA [REDACTED] (202) 324-5390

Approved By: [REDACTED]

Drafted By: [REDACTED]

Case ID #: 66F-HQ-A1147653 / (Pending) -1327

Title: DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Synopsis: To advise all Field Offices on proper handling of information and inquiries received concerning the recent civil suit filed by the family of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Details: On 08/26/1998, after a personal plea by Coretta Scott King, Dr. King's widow, to President Clinton, Attorney General Janet Reno announced the authorization of an inquiry into conspiracy claims regarding the 04/04/1968 assassination of Dr. King, based on the allegations of a retired FBI agent and Lloyd Jowers, who at the time of King's death, owned Jim's Grill, which was co-located in the rooming house from which the shot that killed Dr. King, was fired.

In 1998, the Shelby County Prosecutor's Office conducted a seven-month investigation into the allegations and found no credible evidence to support claims of a conspiracy. In October 1998, as a result of the conspiracy allegations, the King family filed a wrongful death suit against Jowers in Shelby County, Tennessee. Subsequently, on 12/08/1999, a jury found that Jowers and "unknown conspirators" within the government were liable for Dr. King's death, although no branch of the government was specifically held liable in the claim. This inquiry by the Department of Justice is ongoing and continues to receive extensive national media coverage, however, the FBI was recused from participation.

Based on the jury's finding, the Department of Justice (DOJ) requested that the FBI not follow-up on any investigative leads or initiate any new investigations concerning this matter. Instead, any information or inquiries received regarding Dr. King's assassination should be forwarded to DOJ Attorney Barry Kowalski, who is directing the inquiry, with an information copy to FBIHQ, C/CRS, Hate Crimes Unit. Attorney Kowalski can be contacted at the DOJ, Civil Rights Division, Criminal Section, Room 5142, 601 D. Street NW, Washington, D.C., (202) 514-4067.

282A-DL-C82396-23 RSP/lex

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66F-HQ-A1147653-1327

To: All Field Offices From: Criminal Investigative
Re: 66F-HQ-A1147653, 12/15/1999

LEAD(s):

Set Lead 1:

ALL RECEIVING OFFICES

Read and clear.

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