

JAMES EARL RAY

HALL stated that he was later confined at Central Prison, Raleigh, North Carolina, awaiting trial at Wilmington, North Carolina. He stated that while at Central Prison, he was interviewed on several occasions by North Carolina Central Prison Superintendent of Transportation, STEPHEN ALBERT BERRY, and HALL alleged that BERRY apparently found out about the sketch which had been given to him by Special Agent BILL WALDEN of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Division, and that BERRY came to his cell at Central Prison and requested that HALL give him the sketch. HALL stated he told BERRY he did not have the sketch and then BERRY searched his cell and found it. According to HALL, BERRY then stated that JAMES EARL RAY had been gotten out of the country, and the same method could be used to get him (HALL) out of the country. From this statement, HALL alleged that he assumed BERRY had some knowledge of the KING murder, and believed that BERRY might be somehow involved in the murder.

HALL further stated that, during an interview on February 9, 1977, that North Carolina Central Prison Superintendent of Transportation, STEPHEN ALBERT BERRY, told him that he, BERRY, was a member of the Ku Klux Klan and they, BERRY and other prison officials, would help him the same way "they" helped JAMES EARL RAY when he killed MARTIN LUTHER KING.

STEPHEN ALBERT BERRY on interview on February 8, 1977, stated his job at Central Prison is to review all grievances filed by the inmates at Central Prison. BERRY stated that HALL's most recent incarceration at Central Prison was on December 7, 1976. BERRY stated that he estimates HALL has filed between ten and fifteen grievances since the above date which referred to alleged threats or mistreatment against him, and these grievances have been investigated and have failed to substantiate that HALL was ever threatened or mistreated. BERRY stated HALL has accused him of being a member of the Ku Klux Klan and also alleged that BERRY said that when Dr. KING was killed, they did not get the right man and that it would be the same way with him; they would have him killed and put the blame on a white inmate at Central Prison.

HALL's most recent allegation at North Central Prison is that attempts are being made on his life by putting razor blades in his prison food.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Mr. Moore

DATE: 3/18/77

FROM : J. S. Peelman

- 1 - Mr. Moore
- 1 - Mr. Ingram
- 1 - Mr. Peelman
- 1 - Mr. Lawn

SUBJECT: MURKIN

Assoc. Dir. _____
Dep. AD Adm. _____
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PURPOSE: To furnish for the file a transcript of the interview of James Earl Ray, conducted by CBS correspondent Dan Rather on the Who's Who program televised on March 15, 1977.

RECOMMENDATION: For information.

DETAILS: As previously set out in J. S. Peelman to Mr. Moore memorandum dated March 16, 1977, captioned as above, James Earl Ray was recently interviewed by CBS correspondent Dan Rather at the Brushy Mountain Prison, the results of which interview were televised on March 15, 1977.

During the course of this interview, Ray revealed no new information pertaining to the assassination of Martin Luther King.

Attached is a transcript of the Ray interview prepared by personnel of the Congressional Inquiry Unit, Civil Rights Section.

Enclosure

JCL:sas
(5)

ENCLOSURE

ST-126

REC-33

44-38861-6191

23
24 MAR 21 1977



84 MAR 29 1977

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U.S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE

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The subject heard about Ray was he was an escaped convict who had been on a strange year long odyssey landing up in Memphis. What we heard from Ray was that his travels had been directed and financed by an underworld character he knew only as Raoul. It seemed a simple case when James Earl Ray pleaded guilty but just three days later he recanted claiming that he had been railroaded into the plea by his own attorney Percy Foreman. For eight years courts have refused to grant him a new trial. For eight years the questions about a possible conspiracy have persisted and all this time Ray has declined to tell his side of the story on television until I went to interview Ray last week at Brushy Mountain Penitentiary in Tennessee where he is serving a 99-year sentence as the assassin of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Did you fire the shot that killed Dr. Martin Luther King?

Ray - No and I think now, sir. Based on investigations of those who have represented me if we could prove it through some type, judicial proceedings.

6:01 p.m. immediately after Dr. King was shot people with him pointed toward a rooming house across the street. Ray had rented a room there that day. The state claims he fired the fatal shot from there. Ray says he has an alibi. Now this of course is critical.

Ray - Yes

As your recollection as to where you were between let us say 5:50 p.m. and just after 6:00 April 4, 1968, you remember going to the service station; Ray - yes, having the tire fixed; Ray - I didn't have it fixed they said they suddenly was busy, the business didn't have time for it, and I never did get the tire fixed.

My point is that you were not in the rooming house or were you between let's say after 5:30 p.m.?

Ray - No I'm positive I wasn't in there after 5:30.

Let me take you back to that day in the court room when you had your day in court. Short day it was. Did the judge ask you whether you were doing it voluntarily, the guilty plea, and you said yes sir. I can't understand if you knew that you didn't pull the trigger on the gun that killed Dr. King, why you would go that far and say those things?

ENCLOSURE

44-38861-6177

Ray - Well this was all decided on March the 9th the day before the plea was entered. At that time I had determined it was no way I could force Percy Forman to going to trial with any prospects of success. I assumed if I did enter a plea of guilty and I could have had an investigation after the plea, with newly discovered evidence, it's a possibility the case could have been reversed and won the trial.

That same day when you entered your guilty plea there was a whole series of questions involving the voluntary nature of your plea, that you knew what you were doing, that you weren't being forced, that you knew you were giving up your right to appeal, all of those things were layed out to you. You answered to all of those yes you knew what you were doing.

Ray - If I had all to do over again I really don't see how I could have done anything different.

If somebody else did it, why sit here silent, why not tell everything you know and do everything you can to find the other people?

Ray - Well I don't I think a lot of people have a sort of a pollyanna view of the legal system, all you got to do is go to the prosecutor and say oh here's where it is, turn me loose, that's it. That's not the way it is. If you testify with the prosecutor he'll just use what you tell him to weave in his story. It doesn't necessarily mean he's going to turn you out or anything like that.

The Attorney General, if I read his language correctly, and perhaps I don't, at least in a between the lines fashion has held out the following prospect: That if you would reveal to him information that you've never revealed before, help solve the "conspiracy aspects" case, that perhaps some arrangement could be worked out for reduction of your sentence. Now what do you think about that?

Ray - Well I don't think much of anything about that. This thing of being state witness, even being perceived to be a state witness is a, there's a lot of pitfalls there, I mean you can look these people like Valachi and then winds up dying in solitary confinement. If I testified for anyone, it would be for myself. I'm not concerned with the States case, that's their problem. But I don't want to get involved in any type of situation whereby I would have to rely on the Justice Department because they have a, I think they have sort of an inherent hostility being aware of my background anyway so I'm going to keep them at arms length.

Would you be willing to talk here at present with the Attorney General?

Ray - No I can't see an advantage of having ex-parte meeting with the Attorney General. I have no objection if he wants to question me under oath on a witness stand.

Let me stop for a moment and ask you, are you willing to testify before a House Committee set up to look into the death of Dr. King as well as the John Kennedy assassination?

Ray - I think it would all depend. I think if they go on the premise that I'm guilty the only things they are interested in are finding out maybe who else is involved. I don't see much point in me testifying then. If I do testify I don't want to, I wouldn't want to testify in any type of Executive Session and the various members, leak various, not the members of Congress but members of staff leak information out like they did the Church Committee where they say that Ray said this and Ray said that. I'll be willing to testify in public, not necessarily on T.V. or anything, but have a public record where it would be available to anyone who is interested in it.

According to Ray he was in Memphis on the day of the assassination under instructions from a man he says he knows only as Raoul. A man whose instructions he claims he had been following for a year. He says he thought Raoul brought him to Memphis to take part in a gunrunning scheme. Could you describe Raoul for me?

Ray - Well I couldn't describe him except to say he appeared to be a Latin, average height 5'8" or 9", 150 pounds, and hair was only thing that stand out. Most of the Latin's have dark hair and he had kind of an auburn look, dark auburn. That's the only thing that really distinguished him from anyone else. Course I suppose you could dye your hair or something if you wanted to.

Did he at anytime give you any indication of his being in contact with or belonging to any group?

Ray - No, my impression was more or less a some type of thing for monetary gain with no mention of politics or anything like that.

Did he ever mention to you the possibility of assassination or hit man operation?

Ray - No I don't, that would have been, that would have been kind of out of my league, I don't really think I have the constitution for all that type of stuff. I don't say that as a virtue. Actually it might be a handicap in this type of society.

And in the bothersome question where the money came from.

Ray - Oh ya, I think it was the \$9,500 and \$10,000.

This is from the time you escaped from the Missouri Prison in April of 1967 from the time of your arrest in London after the King killing in 1968.

Ray - Yes

You estimate you spent between \$9,500 and \$10,000.

Ray - It would have to be somewhere in between there, yes.

Where did you get the money?

Ray - Well I suppose I got it, a certain amount, I never got a large sum of money at one time, think \$2000 is the most I ever came across at one time. And I got this off the individual I mentioned, this Raoul, alias, or whatever you want to call him.

You have to know, how many people who hear you tell the story will say to themselves that is a cock-in-bull story if ever I heard one.

Ray - Yes

That James Earl Ray has gotten himself in a world of trouble. He's trying to concoct some story that will help him out it, and this Raoul never existed and that thing is fantasy from beginning to end.

Ray - I think so, I think I have based on my background the, you know in jails and out, I think people would be skeptical of anything I testified to, to the media.

Let me see if I understand you here. You're saying, alright you understand that people are skeptical, perhaps even cynical about your story of Raoul and all this.

Ray - Yes

But that you are convinced that you could put yourself under oath and put other people under oath with wide ranging subpoena powers that it would be proven that Raoul did exist.

Ray - I don't know, this certain individual, I think it would be proven that someone did exist whether it is that particular name or not. I think I could have my previous testimony corroborated.

What about the charge that you're a racist, always have been?

Ray - If I went before a jury and tried to pretend like that I spent a life time as a humanitarian administering the poor or less they'd know I was either crazy or lying so there's a lot of self-segregation in the United States. I think a good example is probably in Federal prisons.

No, but there is something deeper than that. That you hated black people, always hated black people.

Ray - I usually get someone, yes, on the individual person, but I think there is an instinctive tendency to associate with people that you have something in common with and your background and things like that. I don't think that's a, means you plot to kill the other person or anything like that but just an inconsequential thing that I can see.

Want to run past you various theories that have been put to me as a reporter working on this assassination case over a good many years. And get your reaction to them as theories. First, unnamed money interests were somehow responsible for Dr. King's death. They wanted to prevent Dr. King from leading his peoples march on Washington for one thing.

Ray - Well that's the theory I've heard most the one the attorneys have discussed most. They say he was up beyond the integration state and interested in economics.

Well another of the theories is that white racists were responsible. Their motive for wanting to get rid of Dr. King is obvious.

Ray - No I think that would be totally false. I think it's their theory that Dr. King's activities was actually helping them, politically.

Three, the theory involving black militants being responsible, that Dr. King had become too non-violent for their plans and they wanted to take away leadership for their black movement.

Ray - No, that's one of the two theories that I think the attorneys that represented me wanted to put forward, but I just, I can't subscribe to that type of theory.

How about the communists who, so the theory goes, wanted to stir up black hatred and foment rebellion. Fidel Castro for example it is claimed had a special interest in this.

Ray - No I doubt it very much.

Have you ever thought about a possible connection between the Dr. King death, your situation and the assassination of President Kennedy?

Ray - My lawyers have discussed it with me, I don't think that's valid theory at all because

You don't

Ray - I don't think you could string a bunch of homicides together because there's different motives and different interests.

When I asked one of your former attorneys what your basic story was, this is what they said to me. "James Earl Ray would like to have the credit for killing Dr. Martin Luther King but does not want to have to pay the price.

Ray - That type of conversation there is, that is more suited for something, entertaining talk shows or something like that. There's no, someone would have to be insane to get involved wanting publicity in killing someone for publicity because, to me it is I can't perceive anyone, there is people like that but I can't perceive anyone wanting that type of publicity.

And you didn't do it?

Ray - No, I didn't do it.

James Earl Ray's story comes down to this, that he didn't do it and the State certainly has never proved it in court. To someone familiar with the case Ray's story seems to show, that for the time being at least, Ray is unwilling or perhaps unable to shed any really new light on the King assassination.

This document is a copy from the FOIA file. The original document was not in the file.

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3/17/77

"TREAT AS ORIGINAL"

84 MAR 25 1977

King Panel Might Call Miami Man

House Panel Contacts
Ex-Police Lieutenant

By JIM BUCHANAN
Miami Post Writer

A former Miami police lieutenant said Sunday that he may be called to testify before a congressional committee about receiving a pre-assassination tip in 1968 that Martin Luther King might be killed.

Charles Sapp, the former police man, said the information came in April 1968 from a Miami Police Department paid informant, Willie Somerset, who five years earlier had claimed advance notice of President John Kennedy's assassination.

"I've been contacted by a spokesman for the House Assassinations Committee," Sapp said Sunday, "and I've told them I'd be happy to testify as to what I know."

SAPP SAID he "can't recall the exact time element, but it was shortly before King was killed. King was killed on April 4, 1968."

Other sources told The Herald that the telephoned tip was received by the Neustepant April 3. Sapp, who retired in 1971, headed the department's intelligence-gathering unit.

Somerset, an admitted racist who then was trying to organize his own National Foundation for Labor, claimed to have overheard the death threat at a union affair in Washington, according to Sapp.

He said he overheard two men discussing King for meddling in union affairs. If you remember, King was helping the Memphis sanitation workers who were out on strike," Sapp said.

"Somerset told me the man said they were to take care of King or worry to that effect."

SOMERSET called me and he wanted me to know he was in Miami and shouldn't be suspected if something happened. Somerset was once a member of the National States Rights Party and claimed to have heard, during a conversation 11 days before the Kennedy killing, of plans to shoot King.

Sapp said Sunday, "I can't remember the exact day he called me, but I'm certain the FBI got an immediate report on the tip, because the agents were in our office every day, and they got the same information I went on to the chief."

Sapp's distant connection with the King case came to light last September as part of a Miami magazine article dealing with the assassinations of King and Kennedy.

Five weeks ago, Sapp said, he was contacted by an investigator for the House committee.

"WE TALKED for a while, but he said they'd be in touch with me. But I haven't heard anything from them yet," Sapp said.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

17-A

MIAMI HERALD

MIAMI, FLA.

Date: 3-14-77

Edition:

Author:

Editor:

Title: WILLIE SOMERSET

Character: 44-1854*

Classification:

Submitting Office: MIAMI, FLA.

☐ Being Investigated

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RE:

Date March 8, 1977

MURKIN

☐ For information ☐ Retention optional ☒ For appropriate action ☐ Surep, by _____

☐ The enclosed is for your information. If used in a future report, ☐ conceal all sources, ☐ paraphrase contents.

☐ Enclosed are corrected pages from report of SA _____ dated _____

Remarks:

Note enclosed indicating the exhibits should be retained by the RCMP. Also advise the appropriate Canadian authorities that FBIHQ would like to be advised prior to any actual RCMP disposition.

Enc. 3

Bufile **44-38861**

Urfile **44-4**

FILE COPY



UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Assistant Attorney General
Civil Rights Division

DATE: March 8, 1977

FROM : Director, FBI

SUBJECT: ASSASSINATION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Reference is made to _____ memorandum dated _____
(your file _____).

There is enclosed one copy of the report of Special Agent _____
dated _____ at _____.

A. ☐ This covers the preliminary investigation and no further action concerning
a full investigation will be taken by this Bureau unless the Department so directs.

B. ☐ The investigation is continuing and you will be furnished copies of
reports as they are received.

C. ☐ The investigation requested by you has now been completed. Unless
advised to the contrary no further inquiries will be made by this Bureau.

D. ☐ Pursuant to instructions issued by the Department, no investigation will
be conducted in this matter unless specifically directed by the Department.

E. ☐ Please advise whether you desire any further investigation.

F. ☐ This is submitted for your information and you will be advised of further
developments.

G. ☒ This is submitted for your information and no further investigation will
be conducted unless specifically requested by the Department.

H. ☐ This covers the receipt of a complaint and no further action will be
taken by this Bureau unless the Department so directs.

1 - Office of Legislative Affairs

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44-38861-
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4 MAR 16 1977

84 MAR 18 1977

FBI

Date: 1/28/77

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plaintext or code)Via AIRTEL _____
(Precedence)

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (44-38861)

FROM: SAC, NEW ORLEANS (157-10673) (RUC)

MURKIN

OO: MEMPHIS

Enclosed for the Bureau and Memphis, are one copy each of a letter to WILLIAM P. TYSON, from U. S. Attorney CHENEY C. JOSEPH, JR., dated 1/20/77, a copy of which was received by New Orleans FBI on 1/28/77.

Note that CHENEY's letter speaks of information from an informant of BEN D. GIBBENS regarding KING's assassination, and other matters, and also indicates that the informant would not be interviewed locally, desiring to speak to Department of Justice investigators from Washington in the presence of GIBBENS.

This is being furnished to FBI Headquarters for information. No further action being taken by New Orleans.

- 7A
- ENCLOSURE SI-126 REC-33 44-38861-6192
- ②-Bureau (Enc. 1)
1-Memphis (Enc. 1) (44-1987) (Info.)
1-New Orleans

CHA:prb
(4)

1 drop of enc. - CRD
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RE ALLEGATION INVOLVING KING.

SEE MEMORANDUM TO AAG, CRD, 2/11/77 CAPTIONED

ALLEGED INFORMATION REGARDING ASSASSINATION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.; THE MURDER OF SAM GIBBENS; THE MURDER OF A MAN NAMED MURPHY IN CHICAGO; AND THE THEFT OF PLUTONIUM AND Special Agent in Charge

44-38861-6183

Approved: _____ Sent _____ M Per _____

84 MAR 29 1977

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1/28/77

AIRTEL

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (44-38861)
FROM: SAC, NEW ORLEANS (157-10673) (RUC)

MURKIN

OO: MEMPHIS

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(2)-Bureau (Enc. 1)
1-Memphis (Enc. 1) (44-1987) (Info.)
1-New Orleans

CHA:prb
(4)

January 20, 1977

Mr. William P. Tyson
Deputy Director
Executive Office for
United States Attorneys
Department of Justice
Washington, D. C. 20530

Dear Bill:

As you recall, during a recent telephone conversation, you were advised that Ben D. Gibbens, Investigator, Criminal Division, Louisiana Department of Justice, informed the United States Attorney that a previously reliable informant of his claims to have been present during a meeting at which several men discussed the murder of Martin Luther King. The informant advised Gibbens that he can identify two of the men who were present at the meeting and that one of those "put up a considerable amount of money" to have King murdered. The informants said he saw the money change hands. He can identify the man who gave the money but not the man to whom the money was given. The meeting in question, according to the informant, occurred in Memphis, Tennessee, prior to King's death. The informant was himself in jail in Memphis, Tennessee, when King was murdered.

The informant also advised Gibbens that while in Chicago he worked for a "gangster" who offered him money to kill a Chicago man named "Giacanno". That individual was in fact later killed by persons unknown to the informant. The informant surmised that the "gangster" hired others to complete the assassination plot when the informant refused.

The informant also advised Gibbens that he knows who was responsible for the death of a man named "Murphy" whose body was found in the trunk of an automobile on Cicero Avenue in the Chicago area. The informant told Gibbens that Murphy's head looked like it had been mashed in a vise.

The informant also claims to have knowledge of those responsible for the theft of varying amounts of plutonium and mercury in the Oklahoma area.

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44-38861-6192

Mr. William P. Tyson
Page 2
January 20, 1977

Following the United States Attorney's telephone conversation with you, Gibbens met with the informant who advised that he would not be interviewed locally but would only discuss these matters with Justice Department investigators from Washington. Gibbens did not seek to obtain more detailed information from the informant, but advises that the informant asserts that he can supply more detailed information to Justice Department investigators.

The informant is an inmate in a Louisiana jail who is presently facing a sentence of life imprisonment. He claims to have been convicted at a trial where perjury was suborned by state law enforcement officials. Gibbens advises that the informant, in exchange for his cooperation, only requests that the matter be looked into by Justice officials. The informant specifically requests that two witnesses, whose testimony he claims was perjured, be interviewed.

Whether this information is valuable or accurate is something that neither Gibbens nor the United States Attorney can assess. Gibbens does not feel that he is in a position to evaluate the accuracy or reliability of the information. He simply requests that the United States Attorney relate these sketchy details to you in the event that someone in the Justice Department might be interested in interviewing his informant. Gibbens would be willing to be present during an interview between Justice investigators and his informant. The informant has indicated that he will discuss the matter with Justice investigators only in Gibbens' presence.

Should anyone decide to pursue this matter further, they can contact Gibbens or the United States Attorney. As indicated on the telephone, the United States Attorney has no idea who the informant is or where he is presently located. The United States Attorney's and Mr. Gibbens' interest in this matter is in seeing that this report is conveyed to the U. S. Department of Justice.

If we can provide further information, please advise.

Very truly yours,

CHENEY C. JOSEPH, JR.
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

BEN D. GIBBENS, Investigator
Criminal Division
Louisiana Department of Justice

Copy to: Elmer Litchfield
Resident Agent in Charge
Federal Bureau of Investigation

44-38861-6193

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62-117290-197X

JUL 20 1978

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2025 RELEASE UNDER E.O. 14176

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FBI

Date: 3/16/77

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Via AIRTEL _____
(Precedence)

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (44-38861)
FROM: LEGAT, OTTAWA (44-4) (RUC)

MURKIN
CR

Re ME airtel and LHM, 3/2/77.

Info referenced LHM furnished RCMP.

For info HQ and Memphis, RCMP, Ottawa, advise that a request has been received from the House Select Committee on Assassinations for production of all pertinent RCMP records.

On 3/15/77, Legat, Ottawa, was advised that due to existing Canadian Government policy, the RCMP was unable to comply with the request of the Committee.

RCMP have been requested to be advised when the House Select Committee terminates, as a decision to dispose of evidence will be made at that time.

Ottawa setting an administrative tickler for a six-month period.

- (4) - Bureau
 (1 - Foreign Liaison-Direct)
 (1 - Memphis (44-1987-Sub M))
1 - Ottawa

JAM/bad 1- CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRY UNIT
(5) 1- SAC, MEMPHIS
6-7; 3/23/77
HNH/dhy

REC-59

44-38861-6193

MAR 22 1977

McDONOUGH

Approved: _____

Special Agent in Charge

Sent _____

M Per _____

57 MAR 30 1977

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RR HQ

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FM PHOENIX (44 371) (P)

TO DIRECTOR (44 38861) ROUTINE

BT

EFTO

MAR 23 4 28 PM '77

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ATTENTION CIVIL RIGHTS SECTION, GENERAL INVESTIGATIVE DIVISION.

MURKIN.

RE PHOENIX TELCAL TO FBIHQ, MARCH 23, 1977.

FOR INFORMATION BUREAU, ON MARCH 22, 1977, FORMER
SAC PALMER M. BAKEN, CURRENTLY RESIDING IN PHOENIX, ADVISED
THAT HE HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH CARL WEST, A NEWSPAPERMAN
REPRESENTING THE SCRIPP HOWARD NATIONAL DESK IN WASHINGTON, D.C.
MR. WEST WAS PERSONALLY ACQUAINTED WITH FORMER SAC BAKEN WHEN
HE, WEST, HAD BEEN ASSIGNED AS A REPORTER IN COVINGTON,
KENTUCKY, DURING THE PERIOD OF TIME THAT MR. BAKEN HAD BEEN
SAC OF THE FBI OFFICE IN LOUISVILLE (1965-1970).

MR. BAKEN WAS CONTACTED BY MR. WEST RELATIVE TO ANY
COMMENT HE MIGHT HAVE CONCERNING THE ALLEGATION BY A LOUISVILLE

REC 32

44-38861-6144

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J. ED. ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
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PAGE TWO PX 44 371 EFTO

POLICE OFFICER THAT A GROUP INCLUDING SEVERAL FBI AGENTS HAD OFFERED THE POLICEMAN, IDENTIFIED AS CLIFTON E. BAIRD, \$500,000 TO KILL MARTIN LUTHER KING. MR. WEST STATED THAT HE PERSONALLY HAD ATTEMPTED TO CONTACT OFFICER BAIRD ON THIS MATTER BUT HAD ONLY BEEN ABLE TO REACH BAIRD'S WIFE, WHO ACKNOWLEDGED THAT OFFICER BAIRD HAD, IN FACT, MADE THE ALLEGATIONS.

FORMER SAC BAKEN TOLD MR. WEST THAT HE HAD NO KNOWLEDGE WHATSOEVER OF ANY SUCH INCIDENT AND HE WAS CERTAIN THAT HE WOULD HAVE REMEMBERED SUCH AN OCCURENCE HAD IT BEEN BROUGHT TO HIS ATTENTION. FORMER SAC BAKEN FURTHER ADVISED THE PHOENIX FBI OFFICE THAT HE HAS NO PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF CLIFTON E. BAIRD OR THE ACTIVITIES OF ANY SPECIAL AGENTS OF THE FBI WHO MIGHT HAVE CONVERSED WITH BAIRD CONCERNING KING OR ANY OTHER MATTER. FORMER SAC BAKEN STATED THAT HE WOULD BE HAPPY TO ANSWER ANY INQUIRIES THE BUREAU MAY WISH TO PROPOSE RELATIVE TO BAIRD'S ACCUSATIONS.

BT

#

44-38861-6195

CHANGED TO

62-117290-209X1

JUL 20 1978

CMK/NK

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Director's Sec'y	

FM LOUISVILLE (44-947)(P)

TO DIRECTOR, FBI (44-38861) PRIORITY

BT

E F T O

MURKIN

RE BUREAU TELETYPE TO LOUISVILLE, MARCH 25, 1977.

ON MARCH 26, 1977, ATTEMPT WAS MADE TO INTERVIEW CLIFTON E. BAIRD, 7813 EOSEL LANE, LOUISVILLE, KY., CONCERNING ALL DETAILS OF RECENT REPORTED ALLEGATION THAT BAIRD HAD RECEIVED OFFER FROM FBI AGENTS AND POLICE OFFICERS TO KILL MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

INQUIRY AT BAIRD RESIDENCE BY BUAGENTS, ACCOMPANIED BY AUSA ALEXANDER T. TAFT, JR., ON MARCH 26, 1977, REVEALED CLIFTON E. BAIRD CURRENTLY OUT OF TOWN AT UNDISCLOSED LOCATION IN KENTUCKY, WHERE BAIRD IS ON SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT IN CONNECTION WITH EMPLOYMENT PINKERTON, INC. DETECTIVE AGENCY, 510 WEST BROADWAY, LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY.

MAR 31 1977

MARY BAIRD, WIFE OF CLIFTON E. BAIRD, DECLINED TO FURNISH

P. D. [unclear] 3/28/77.
8 APR 5 1977

6195

PAGE TWO LS 44-947

INFORMATION CONCERNING BAIRD'S SPECIFIC LOCATION SINCE BAIRD IS WORKING SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT INVOLVING TWELVE HOUR SHIFT AND INTERVIEW OF BAIRD WHILE SO EMPLOYED COULD JEOPARDIZE JOB AND CAUSE EMBARRASSMENT INASMUCH AS CO-WORKER ON CURRENT ASSIGNMENT HAS NO KNOWLEDGE OF BAIRD'S RECENT ALLEGATION.

MARY BAIRD, WHO APPEARED COOPERATIVE AND TRUSTWORTHY, INDICATED HUSBAND WOULD NOT RETURN TO LOUISVILLE, KY., UNTIL MORNING OF MARCH 29, 1977, AT WHICH TIME BAIRD WILL CONTACT FBI, LOUISVILLE OFFICE OR USA'S OFFICE, LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY.

MARY BAIRD ADVISED SHE HAS NO PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF REPORTED OFFER, WHICH APPARENTLY OCCURRED SOMETIME DURING 1966, AND HUSBAND HAS NOT REVEALED PERTINENT FACTS OF ALLEGATION TO HER. IDENTITIES OF FBI AGENTS AND LOUISVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT OFFICERS REPORTEDLY NAMED IN HUSBAND'S LETTER TO REPRESENTATIVE M. G. "GENE" SNYDER, UNKNOWN TO MARY BAIRD.

ACCORDING TO MARY BAIRD, HUSBAND WAS INTERVIEWED BY HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS (HSCA) IN WASHINGTON, D.C., SEVERAL WEEKS AGO AT WHICH TIME TAPE RECORDING OF ALLEGED OFFER TO KILL MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. AND ALL PERTINENT DATA PROVIDED COMMITTEE MEMBERS. MARY BAIRD DID NOT BELIEVE COPY

PAGE THREE LS 44-947

OF TAPE RECORDING EXISTED AND HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF ANY COPY OF LETTER TO SNYDER WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN RETAINED BY BAIRD.

MARY BAIRD WAS OF OPINION THAT SNYDER PUBLICIZED RECEIPT OF ALLEGATION IN ORDER TO ENSURE CONTINUED FUNDING OF HSCA SCHEDULED TO EXPIRE MARCH 31, 1977. MARY BAIRD HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF HOW HER HUSBAND'S IDENTITY WAS "LEAKED" TO NEWS MEDIA. MARY BAIRD NOTED THAT SHE HAS BEEN HARASSED BY NEWS MEDIA, BOTH AT HOME AND AT HER EMPLOYMENT, STOCKYARDS BANK, LOUISVILLE, KY., IN APPARENT EFFORTS TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL DATA REGARDING ALLEGATION AND INTERVIEW HUSBAND. TO DATE, NO KNOWN INTERVIEW OF BAIRD HAS BEEN CONDUCTED BY NEWS MEDIA.

MARY BAIRD ASSURED BUAGENTS AND AUSA THAT SHE WOULD HAVE HUSBAND, CLIFTON E. BAIRD, CONTACT FBI OR USA IMMEDIATELY UPON HIS RETURN TO LOUISVILLE, KY. NECESSITY FOR IMMEDIATE INTERVIEW REITERATED TO MARY BAIRD AND SUITABLE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SAME ON OR ABOUT MARCH 29, 1977 MADE.

ABOVE INFORMATION PERSONALLY FURNISHED BY BUAGENTS TO USA GEORGE J. LONG, JR., WESTERN DISTRICT OF KENTUCKY, LOUISVILLE, ON MARCH 26, 1977.

PAGE FOUR LS 44-947

ADMINISTRATIVE:

LOUISVILLE WILL FOLLOW MATTER CLOSELY AND SUBMIT SUMMARY
TELETYPE SUBSEQUENT TO INTERVIEW, FOLLOWED BY LHM.

BT

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This document is a copy from the FOIA file. The original document was not in the file.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Assistant Attorney General
Civil Rights Division

DATE: March 21, 1977

FROM : Director, FBI

SUBJECT: HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS
(MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.)

Reference is made to _____ memorandum dated _____
(your file _____).

There is enclosed one copy of the report of Special Agent _____
dated _____ at _____.

A. ☐ This covers the preliminary investigation and no further action concerning
a full investigation will be taken by this Bureau unless the Department so directs.

B. ☐ The investigation is continuing and you will be furnished copies of
reports as they are received.

C. ☐ The investigation requested by you has now been completed. Unless
advised to the contrary no further inquiries will be made by this Bureau.

D. ☐ Pursuant to instructions issued by the Department, no investigation will
be conducted in this matter unless specifically directed by the Department.

E. ☐ Please advise whether you desire any further investigation.

F. ☒ This is submitted for your information and you will be advised of further
developments.

G. ☐ This is submitted for your information and no further investigation will
be conducted unless specifically requested by the Department.

H. ☐ This covers the receipt of a complaint and no further action will be
taken by this Bureau unless the Department so directs.

NOT RECORDED

167 MAR 30 1977

Enc. (1)

1 - Assistant Attorney General
Criminal Division

84 MAR 31 1977

FBI/DOJ

March 21, 1977

.. CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIVE DIVISION

This refers to the assassination of Martin Luther King in Memphis in April, 1968.

Attached Louisville teletype indicates that Congressman M. G. Snyder, Kentucky, revealed on a recently taped TV news conference that he had received letter from an unnamed, retired police officer who alleged that he, former police officer, had been approached by three FBI Officers and three or four prominent citizens with a \$500,000 offer to kill Martin Luther King on two occasions. Unnamed police officer made tapes of these two meetings, one of which was stolen, the other, unnamed officer turned over to the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA).

Congressman Snyder said he has heard the tape recording but could not attest to its authenticity but indicated that Congressman Samuel L. Devine, Ohio, had checked background of former police officer and found him to be "solid citizen."

Snyder stated that the HSCA has this matter currently under investigation.

A review of FBIHQ files pertaining to the assassination of Martin Luther King has failed to reveal any prior allegations of an alleged conspiracy involving FBI personnel in a plot to kill Martin Luther King.

Civil Rights Division and Criminal Division being advised.

- 1 - Mr. Held
- 1 - Mr. Adams
- 1 - External Affairs Division

JCL:caw

APPROVED:

Director _____
Assoc. Dir. _____
Dep. AD Adm. _____
Dep. AD Inv. _____

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*Director advised
3/21/77
JCL*

84 MAR 30 1977

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FM LOUISVILLE (100-4583) (P)

TO DIRECTOR IMMEDIATE

BT

E F T O

HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS (MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.)

ON MARCH 20, 1977, M. G. (GENE) SNYDER, UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE, FOURTH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, KENTUCKY, APPEARING ON WHAS - TV "NEWS CONFERENCE" TAPED MARCH 18, 1977, AT LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY, REVEALED THAT HE BELIEVED INVESTIGATION BY HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS (HSCA) WOULD BE PRODUCTIVE, EVEN THOUGH HE DID NOT INITIALLY VOTE JNWR FUNDING OF SAME. SNYDER INDICATED THAT HE HAD CHANGED HIS MIND IN LIGHT OF SOME RECENT INFORMATION WHICH HE WOULD CAREFULLY EXPLAIN SO AS TO NOT "DROP SOMEBODY IN" OR "SAY ANYTHING WRONG ABOUT SOMEBODY, THAT SHOULDN'T BE SAID".

ORIGINAL FILED IN

24 MAR 23 1977

44-38861-
NOT RECORDED
167 MAR 23 1977

Shown to OAC Attorney
Michael Shabazz, Jane Kinsley,
J. G. & Roy Humberman 3/22/77. WFF

SNYDER INDICATED THAT HE HAD RECEIVED LETTER A FEW WEEKS AGO FROM "CITIZEN" WHO IS RETIRED AFTER MANY YEARS. FROM RESPONSIBLE POLICE DEPARTMENT AND THAT THIS "CITIZEN", NOT FURTHER DESCRIBED, HAD BEEN APPROACHED BY THREE (3) "FBI OFFICERS" AND THREE (3) OR FOUR (4) "PROMINENT PEOPLE AT THAT TIME IN THAT POLICE DEPARTMENT". SNYDER NOTED THAT THIS UNNAMED "CITIZEN" RECEIVED THIS "OFFER" ON TWO (2) SEPARATE OCCASIONS IN HIS AUTOMOBILE WHERE HE HAD TAPE RECORDER SECRETED. TAPES WERE MADE OF THE "OFFER" ON BOTH OCCASIONS, HOWEVER, ONE TAPE WAS SUBSEQUENTLY STOLEN. OTHER TAPE "CITIZEN" RETAINED AND FURNISHED SAME TO HSCA AFTER REPORTEDLY TRAVELING TO WASHINGTON, D.C., AT HIS OWN EXPENSE.

SNYDER HAS SPOKEN WITH "CITIZEN" PERSONALLY AND IN SNYDER'S OPINION, "CITIZEN" APPEARS TO BE RESPONSIBLE. SNYDER BELIEVES INSTANT "LEAD" AND OTHER LEADS SHOULD BE "CHECKED OUT". BECAUSE OF INSTANT "LEAD", UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE SAMUEL L. DEVINE (OHIO), RANKING MINORITY MEMBER OF HSCA, NOW INTENDS TO VOTE FOR CONTINUATION OF HSCA FUNDING.

SNYDER REVEALS THAT LETTER WAS RECEIVED IN "REGULAR UNITED STATES MAIL" AND THAT BASIC ALLEGATION IS THAT UNNAMED "CITIZEN", WHO IS RETIRED POLICEMAN, WAS APPROACHED BY "MEMBERS OF FBI AND UNNAMED POLICE DEPARTMENT" AND ENCOURAGED TO ASSASSINATE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. WHEN ASKED WHY SNYDER RECEIVED LETTER, SNYDER REPLIED "TIME WILL HAVE TO TELL" AND THAT HE "DIDN'T WANT TO GO INTO THAT".

SNYDER FURTHER REVEALED THAT UNNAMED "CITIZEN" HAS BEEN TO WASHINGTON AND THAT HSCA NOW HAS POSSESSION OF TAPE RECORDING WHICH IS BEING "WASHED DOWN" TO ELIMINATE BACKGROUND NOISES SUCH AS RUNNING AUTOMOBILE ENGINE. SNYDER HAS HEARD TAPE HIMSELF AND DESCRIBED SAME AS HAVING "SOME PRETTY INAUDIBLE SECTIONS" WHICH ARE BEING WORKED ON AT PRESENT. SNYDER NOTED THAT TAPE PURPORTS TO DEAL WITH INSTANT SUBJECT MATTER. SNYDER INDICATED THAT HE COULD NOT ATTEST TO AUTHENTICITY OF TAPE RECORDING SINCE HE WAS NOT ELECTRONICS EXPERT, BUT NOTED SAME MUST BE DETERMINED.

SNYDER DECLINED TO ANSWER INTERROGATORIES AS TO WHETHER LETTER CAME FROM HIS CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OR LOUISVILLE,

KENTUCKY, NOTING HE DID NOT THINK HE OUGHT TO PLACE UNNAMED "CITIZEN" IN JEOPARDY IF ALLEGATION IS TRUE, OR PEOPLE MENTIONED THEREIN IN JEOPARDY IF ALLEGATION FALSE. SNYDER BELIEVES HSCA WILL HAVE TO DECIDE WHEN NAMES OF INDIVIDUALS ALLEGEDLY INVOLVED ARE TO BE RELEASED AND MADE PUBLIC.

SNYDER DECLINED ANY FURTHER COMMENT ON MATTER, NOTING THAT IF ALLEGATIONS WERE TRUE, UNNAMED "CITIZEN" FURNISHING BASIS FOR SAME WOULD BE IN JEOPARDY FROM "FBI AND OTHERS NAMED" IN LETTER, AND IF ALLEGATION NOT TRUE, "RESPONSIBLE PERSONS" WOULD LIKEWISE BE IN JEOPARDY. SNYDER ASSUMED THAT HSCA WOULD GIVE INDIVIDUALS NAMED IN LETTER, OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES AT APPROPRIATE TIME.

ON MARCH 19, 1977, "COURIER-JOURNAL", DAILY NEWSPAPER OF GENERAL CIRCULATION, LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY, CARRIED ARTICLE CAPTIONED "SNYDER GIVES PANEL ALLEGATION OF PLOT TO ASSASSINATE KING", WHEREIN SNYDER IS REPORTED TO HAVE REVEALED, DURING TAPING OF ABOVE TELEVISION NEWS CONFERENCE, THAT HE HAD TURNED OVER TO HSCA AN ALLEGATION THAT FBI AGENTS AND POLICE PLOTTED TO KILL MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

LS 100-4583

PAGE FIVE

SNYDER IS REPORTED TO HAVE RECEIVED THE ABOVE-MENTIONED LETTER IN "LATE FEBRUARY" FROM FORMER POLICEMAN WHO CLAIMS HE WAS TWICE OFFERED \$500,000 TO KILL KING. SNYDER REPORTEDLY WOULD NOT REVEAL NAME OF FORMER POLICEMAN OR NAMES OF THREE (3) FBI AGENTND POLICEMEN ALLEGEDLY INVOLVED IN PLOT.

SNYDER MADE NO CONNECTION BETWEEN ALLEGED OFFER MADE TO UNNAMED RETIRED POLICEMAN WITH MORE THAN TWENTY (20) YEARS SERVICE, AND ACTUAL KILLING OF KING.

RICHARD A. SPRAGUE, CHIEF COUNSEL FOR HSCA, IS QUOTED AS HAVING SAID MARCH 18, 1977, THAT SNYDER HAD TURNED OVER MATERIAL CONTAINING THE ALLEGATION TO HSCA AND THAT MATTER IS CURRENTLY "UNDER INVESTIGATION".

SNYDER REPORTEDLY INDICATED THAT FORMER POLICEMAN HAD ATTEMPTED TO TURN TAPE REVEALING \$500,000 OFFER, OVER TO ATTORNEYS FOR JAMES EARL RAY, CONVICTED KILLER OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., BUT WAS FINALLY ASKED BY INVESTIGATOR FOR ATTORNEYS, "WHERE HE PLANNED TO HIDE IF HE TRIED TO DO ANYTHING WITH TAPE".

SAMUEL L. DEVINE, UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE (OHIO),

LS 100-4583

PAGE SIX

HERETOFORE MENTIONED, WHO IS FORMER FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (FBI) AGENT, REPORTEDLY HAS CHECKED INTO BACKGROUND OF RETIRED POLICEMAN AND FOUND HIM TO BE "SOLID CITIZEN".

ACCOUNT APPEARING IN "COURIER-JOURNAL" AS HIGHLIGHTED ABOVE IS REPORTEDLY BASED ON COMMENTS MADE BY SNYDER DURING TAPING OF WHAS-TV "NEWS CONFERENCE" PROGRAM BROADCAST MARCH 20, 1977. HOWEVER, NO MENTION WAS MADE BY SNYDER OF \$500,000 AMOUNT ALLEGEDLY OFFERED RETIRED POLICEMAN, DURING WHAS-TV "NEWS CONFERENCE" AS BROADCAST ON MARCH 20, 1977.

ADMINISTRATIVE:

RE LOUISVILLE TELCALLS TO BUREAU, MARCH 19, 1977, AND MARCH 20, 1977.

PURSUANT TO BUREAU INSTRUCTIONS, LOUISVILLE TRANSMITTING COPY OF MARCH 19, 1977, "COURIER-JOURNAL" ARTICLE TO FBIHQ VIA TELECOPIER FASCIMILE. TAPE RECORDING OF WHAS-TV "NEWS CONFERENCE" AND NEWSPAPER ARTICLE COPIES BEING FORWARDED FBIHQ BY AIRTEL MARCH 21, 1977. LOUISVILLE WILL FOLLOW AND REPORT

LS 100-4583

PAGE SEVEN

ALL PERTINENT ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING

INSTANT MATTER WHICH MIGHT BE REVEALED LOCALLY AT LOUISVILLE,
KENTUCKY.

BT

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7

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Mr. Moore *mpf*

DATE: 3/16/77

FROM : J. S. Peelman *js*

SUBJECT: MURKIN

- 1 - Mr. Held
- 1 - Mr. Adams
- 1 - Mr. Moore
- 1 - Mr. Ingram
- 1 - Mr. Peelman
- 1 - Mr. Lawn
- 1 - Mr. Mintz
- 1 - External Affairs Division

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Dep. AD Inv. _____
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Director Sec'y _____

PURPOSE: To advise the results of an interview of James Earl Ray by CBS correspondent Dan Rather which appeared on national television on the night of 3/15/77. Ray is the convicted assassin of Martin Luther King, Jr.

RECOMMENDATION: For information.

APPROVED:

Director _____
Assoc. Dir. _____
Dep. AD Adm. _____
Dep. AD Inv. _____

Adm. Serv. _____
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Fin. & Pers. _____
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DETAILS: This is the case concerning the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., in Memphis, Tennessee, on 4/4/68. James Earl Ray pled guilty to this murder in State Court in Tennessee and presently is serving a 99-year sentence. *7A*

On the night of 3/15/77, a videotaped interview of James Earl Ray appeared on national television on Columbia Broadcasting System's (CBS) "Who's Who." The original interview of Ray by CBS correspondent Dan Rather had taken place a week earlier at the Bushy Mountain Prison in Tennessee where Ray is presently incarcerated.

Ray has never consented to an interview by the FBI and recently declined to be interviewed by the Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR), USDJ, which conducted an inquiry into the FBI's investigation of King. *44-38861-6186*

HNH:sas
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23 MAR 22 1977



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EXT. AFFAIRS

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U.S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE

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FBI

Memorandum to Mr. Moore
Re: MURKIN

In this interview with Dan Rather, Ray stated he had not fired the shot which killed King and stated he was not in the rooming house (from where the fatal shot was fired) at the time of the shooting. Ray stated he was in Memphis, however, had gone to a service station to attempt to get a tire fixed at the time of the shooting. Ray also stated he was in Memphis at the instructions of "Raoul" who he stated was a gunrunner. Ray stated he utilized between \$9,500 and \$10,000 between the time he escaped from a penitentiary in Missouri in April of 1967 until his apprehension in London in June of 1968. He advised the largest sum of money he received at one time was \$2000 which he received from "Raoul." It is noted that previous investigation by the FBI never identified "Raoul," and the recent report by OPR of the King investigation stated, in part, in reference to Ray's claim about getting air in a tire, and the existence of "Raoul," that it "... views the exculpatory content of these varying and patently self-serving tales to be unbelievable." The OPR report also stated "we concluded Ray was lying about the existence of a 'Raoul.'"

During this interview with Dan Rather, Ray also stated he pled guilty since he felt there was no way he could force his attorney to go to trial. Ray felt that after his guilty plea, investigation could be conducted to obtain new evidence to reverse the guilty plea. Dan Rather pointed out to Ray that by so pleading he gave up his right to appeal. It is noted the recent OPR report examined Ray's guilty plea and stated "Thus, Ray has judicially confessed that he intended to and did kill Dr. King."

In response to a question by Dan Rather as to whether he would cooperate with the U. S. Justice Department in return for a possible reduction in sentence, Ray stated he did not rely on the Justice Department. He also stated he would not talk to the Attorney General at prison, however, would have no objection to talking under oath on a witness stand.

In response to a question by Dan Rather regarding whether he would testify before the House Select Committee on Assassinations, Ray stated that if he did testify he would not testify in Executive Session but rather in public. ✓

In conclusion Dan Rather stated that James Earl Ray's story comes down to this: That he did not do it and the state has never proved it in court. Dan Rather concluded by saying of Ray's interview, "... for the time being at least Ray is unwilling or perhaps unable to shed any really new light on the King assassination."

44-38861-6197
CHANGED TO
62-117296-454X6

JUL 13 1978

cmk / JMS

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