

66-2189

CLASSIFICATION NO.

Review of FBI Investigation  
of Dr. Martin Luther King  
By Dept of Justice

nt of Justice

FROM OR ADDED TO THIS FILE

BUREAU

FBI - CENTRAL RECORDS CENTER

ME - MEMPHIS

ME-0066-0030B: ME

Class / Case #	Sub	Vol.	Serial #	
0066 2189		1	1	OPEN

11/10/1157908



RRP002MV6G

INVESTIGATION

Volume Number

Serials

Bureau File Number

Dead  
6-11-76

6-11-76

See also Nos.

NR028 WA CODE

1:41PM URGENT 06/11/76 GEG

TO MEMPHIS

MILWAUKEE

FROM DIRECTOR (100-106670)

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

FOR INFORMATION OF RECIPIENTS, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL HAS ORDERED A REVIEW OF THE FBI'S INVESTIGATION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING. ASSIGNED TO CONDUCT THIS REVIEW IS A TASK FORCE WORKING UNDER DIRECTION OF THE OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY (OPR) OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL HAS INDICATED THE REVIEW IS TO RESOLVE THE FOLLOWING FOUR QUESTIONS.

(1.) WAS THE FBI INVESTIGATION OF KING'S ASSASSINATION THOROUGH AND HONEST?

(2.) IS THERE ANY EVIDENCE THE FBI WAS INVOLVED IN THE ASSASSINATION?

(3.) IS THERE ANY NEW EVIDENCE WHICH HAS COME TO THE ATTENTION OF THE DEPARTMENT CONCERNING THE ASSASSINATION?

(4.) DOES THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BUREAU AND KING

*Walse 66-Dead - Jlt  
"Review of FBI investigation  
of Dr MLK -*

66-2189-1  
~~44-1987-1200~~

SEARCHED	INDEXED <i>my</i>
SERIALIZED <i>ncp</i>	FILED <i>9/10</i>
JUN 11 1976	
FBI - MEMPHIS	

*Hester Jlt*

PAGE TWO

CALL FOR CRIMINAL PROSECUTIONS, DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS OR OTHER APPROPRIATE ACTION?

THIS REVIEW IS A CONTINUATION OF A "PARTIAL REVIEW" RECENTLY CONDUCTED BY THE CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION OF THE DEPARTMENT UNDER DIRECTION OF ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL J. STANLEY POTTINGER. AFTER THE TASK FORCE COMPLETES STUDY OF ASSASSINATION FILES IN SELECTED FIELD OFFICES, IT WILL CONDUCT EXAMINATION OF OUR INTELLIGENCE INVESTIGATION OF KING AND ANY SECURITY FILES RELATING TO BASIS FOR THE INVESTIGATION. ALL PERSONNEL ON THE TASK FORCE ARE AUTHORIZED TOTAL ACCESS TO PERTINENT FILES AT FBIHQ AND IN THE FIELD. THIS WILL INCLUDE COVER PAGES OF COMMUNICATIONS CONTAINING IDENTITIES OF SOME FBI SOURCES, INFORMANTS WHO WERE NOT AFFORDED SYMBOL NUMBERS AT THAT TIME AND INDIVIDUALS WHO EXPRESSED OR IMPLIED CONFIDENTIALITY. INFORMANT FILES ARE NOT TO BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE TASK FORCE WITHOUT PRIOR FBIHQ AUTHORITY.

THE OPR REVIEW BEGAN AT FBIHQ ON MAY 10, 1976, WITH REVIEW OF ASSASSINATION FILES OF FBIHQ AND WASHINGTON FIELD OFFICE.

THE TASK FORCE NOW DESIRES TO REVIEW KING ASSASSINATION FILES IN THE MEMPHIS AND MILWAUKEE OFFICES BEGINNING JUNE 14, 1976. THE FOLLOWING TASK FORCE PERSONNEL ARE SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE IN MEMPHIS ON JUNE 14, 1976:

PAGE THREE

FRED G. FOLSOM, TASK FORCE LEADER; JAMES WALKER; WILLIAM WHITE; JOSEPH GROSS AND POSSIBLY MS. HOPE BYRNE. ESTIMATED TIME TO COMPLETE REVIEW IN MEMPHIS IS TWO WEEKS. FOLSOM HAS INDICATED THAT THE ONLY FILES HE ANTICIPATES REVIEWING IN MEMPHIS IS THE KING ASSASSINATION FILE (MEMPHIS 44-1987) AND POSSIBLY FILE CAPTIONED "SANITATION WORKERS STRIKE, MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE; RACIAL MATTER" (MEMPHIS FILE 157-1092).

THE SIXTH MEMBER OF THE TASK FORCE, JAMES KIECKHEFER, IS SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE IN MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN, JUNE 14, 1976, TO REVIEW ALL VOLUMES OF MILWAUKEE ASSASSINATION INVESTIGATION (44-388). SUBSEQUENTLY HE WILL JOIN THE REST OF HIS GROUP IN MEMPHIS. FOLSOM GAVE NO REASON FOR REVIEWING MILWAUKEE FILES OTHER THAN THE FACT KIECKHEFER IS TO BE IN MILWAUKEE ANYWAY AND WHILE THERE COULD CONDUCT REVIEW.

SAC, MEMPHIS AND MILWAUKEE ASSIGN COORDINATOR TO HANDLE LIAISON WITH TASK FORCE PERSONNEL AND PROVIDE OFFICE SPACE IN WHICH TO CONDUCT REVIEW. CONFIRM ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF TASK FORCE PERSONNEL AND KEEP FBIHQ ADVISED OF SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS.

END

ME FBI OK KJW

NR028 WA CODE

1:41PM URGENT 06/11/76 GEG

TO MEMPHIS

MILWAUKEE

FROM DIRECTOR (100-106670)

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. 44-1987\*

FOR INFORMATION OF RECIPIENTS, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL HAS ORDERED A REVIEW OF THE FBI'S INVESTIGATION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING. ASSIGNED TO CONDUCT THIS REVIEW IS A TASK FORCE WORKING UNDER DIRECTION OF THE OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY (OPR) OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL HAS INDICATED THE REVIEW IS TO RESOLVE THE FOLLOWING FOUR QUESTIONS.

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(4.) DOES THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BUREAU AND KING

SAC *[initials]*

66-2189-~~100~~

SEARCHED	INDEXED <i>mp</i>
SERIALIZED	FILED <i>mp</i>
JUN 11 1976	
FBI - MEMPHIS	

*J. Hester*  
*P. Shandall*  
*PHB*

PAGE TWO

CALL FOR CRIMINAL PROSECUTIONS, DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS OR OTHER APPROPRIATE ACTION?

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PAGE THREE

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SAC, MEMPHIS AND MILWAUKEE ASSIGN COORDINATOR TO HANDLE LIAISON WITH TASK FORCE PERSONNEL AND PROVIDE OFFICE SPACE IN WHICH TO CONDUCT REVIEW. CONFIRM ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF TASK FORCE PERSONNEL AND KEEP FBIHQ ADVISED OF SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS.

END

ME FBI OK KJW

D- (2-14-74)

FBI

Date: 6/14/76

006

Transmit the following in CODED  
(Type in plaintext or code)

Via TELETYPE NITEL  
(Precedence)

TO DIRECTOR

FROM MEMPHIS (66-2189) <sup>c</sup>

ATTN: DEPUTY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR J. O. INGRAM

REVIEW OF FBI INVESTIGATION OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING MURDER.

RE BUREAU TELETYPE TO MEMPHIS AND MILWAUKEE JUNE 11,  
1976.

BUREAU NOTE MEMPHIS HAS OPENED SEPARATE FILE FOR  
ADMINISTRATIVE HANDLING OF THIS MATTER.

DJ TASK FORCE ARRIVED MEMPHIS EARLY AFTERNOON JUNE 14,  
1976. TASK FORCE CONSISTS OF MICHAEL SHAHEEN, FRED G. FOLSOM,  
JOSEPH F. GROSS, JR., WILLIAM D. WHITE, AND JAMES F. WALKER.  
SHAHEEN WILL RETURN WDC JUNE 15, 1976, AND JAMES KIECKHEFER WILL  
ARRIVE MEMPHIS FROM MILWAUKEE NIGHT OF JUNE 14, 1976.

SHAHEEN HAS SPOKEN WITH NEWSPAPER REPORTERS AT MEMPHIS AND  
HAS DISCLOSED HIS REASON FOR BEING HERE. HE INDICATED THEY WILL  
WORK SEVEN DAYS A WEEK FOR BETWEEN TWO AND THREE WEEKS. HE ALSO  
INDICATED THEY WILL WORK DURING PERIODS OTHER THAN NORMAL BUSINESS  
HOURS.

SEARCHED \_\_\_\_\_

SERIALIZED mpf

INDEXED \_\_\_\_\_

FILED mpf

JCH/mah  
(1) *hul*

Approved: *[Signature]*  
Special Agent in Charge

Sent 5:46 PM / WLC M Per *[Signature]*

GPO: 1975 O - 590-992

66-2189 *[initials]*



F B I

Date:

Transmit the following in \_\_\_\_\_  
(Type in plaintext or code)Via \_\_\_\_\_  
(Precedence)

PAGE TWO ME 66-2189

SHAHEEN INDICATED THAT ON THIS VISIT THEY WILL CONFINE THEMSELVES TO A REVIEW OF MURKIN FILE, BUT ON SUBSEQUENT VISITS MAY : INTERVIEW APPROPRIATE WITNESSES AS WELL AS CURRENT AND FORMER FBI EMPLOYEES. ON THE PREMISE THAT ALL FBI OFFICES HAVE SOME INFORMATION PERTAINING TO MURKIN, TASK FORCE MAY EVENTUALLY VISIT ALL FBI FIELD OFFICES TO REVIEW MURKIN FILES. END.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Sent \_\_\_\_\_ M Per \_\_\_\_\_  
Special Agent in Charge

GPO : 1975 O - 590-992

NR004 MI PLAIN

3:45PM URGENT JUNE 14, 1976 PMC

TO: DIRECTOR (100-106670)

MEMPHIS ~~(44-1987)~~ *admi. file.*

FROM: MILWAUKEE (44-388)

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

RE BUTEL JUNE 11, 1976.

JAMES KIECKHEFER, MEMBER OF DEPT. OF JUSTICE TASK FORCE, ARRIVED MILWAUKEE OFFICE FBI 8:15 AM, JUNE 14, 1976, AND INITIATED A REVIEW OF MILWAUKEE FILE 44-388. HE COMPLETED THE AUDIT AT 2:50 PM AND IS SCHEDULED TO DEPART FOR MEMPHIS 7 PM TODAY.

HE ADVISED THERE WERE NO SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS.

ADMINISTRATIVE

FOR INFO OF BUREAU, KIECKHEFER IS A FORMER RESIDENT OF MILWAUKEE AND HAS IMMEDIATE RELATIVES CURRENTLY RESIDING IN THE METROPOLITAN MILWAUKEE AREA.

END

FBI ME CLR BES

66-2189-~~1~~

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED <i>LM</i>	FILED <i>LM</i>
JUN 14 1976	
FBI - MEMPHIS	

*Hester* *gla*

*MB*

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

## Memphis Files On King Death Under Inquiry

Five Justice Department attorneys yesterday reopened the FBI's Martin Luther King Jr. files here, entering the Memphis phase of their renewed inquiry into King's 1968 murder.

Michael Shaheen, 35, a former Como, Miss., mayor now in the Justice Department's internal inspection division in Washington, said the inquiry will be "exhaustive," covering circumstances of the murder itself, various murder conspiracy theories and the FBI's harassment of King and later investigation of his death.

Shaheen said he and a team of 10 attorneys began the inquiry in Washington about seven weeks ago at the request of a Senate committee headed by Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho). "We plan to spend several months looking at the case from every angle and in light of what appears to be the bureau's (FBI's) 15- or 16-year harassment of King, as disclosed by the Church committee."

In charge of the Justice Department's Office of Professional Responsibility, Shaheen said he and his team, on an unlimited budget, will spend about 2½ to 3 weeks in Memphis and, eventually, peruse every King file in all 59 FBI field offices in the country.

"It's too early to have turned up anything yet . . . and we haven't noticed anything surprising so far." The bulk of the inquiry likely will be centered in Memphis, but "we're playing it by ear," he said.

"Anything anybody could possibly think of in connection with the Martin Luther King case or James Earl Ray will be done before we're finished."

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

— PAGE 1

— COMMERCIAL APPEAL

— MEMPHIS, TENN

Date: JUNE 15, 1976

Edition:

Author:

Editor: MICHAEL GREHL

Title: MURKIN

Character:

or ME44-1987SUB-c

Classification:

Submitting Office: MEMPHIS

☐ Being Investigated

SEARCHED INDEXED

SERIALIZED FILED

JUN 15 1976

FBI - MEMPHIS

Orig fwd to  
BUREAU 6/15/76 RM

F B I

Date: 6/18/76

Transmit the following in \_\_\_\_\_

~~PLAINTEXT~~ *code*

(Type in plaintext or code)

Via TELETYPENITEL

(Precedence)

TO: DIRECTOR

FROM: MEMPHIS (66-2189)(P)

ATTENTION: INTELLIGENCE DIVISION

REVIEW OF FBI INVESTIGATION OF DOCTOR MARTIN LUTHER KING.  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE TASK FORCE HAS REQUESTED TO INTERVIEW SA JOE C. HESTER OF THE MEMPHIS OFFICE REGARDING THE MURKIN INVESTIGATION. SA HESTER WAS THE CASE AGENT DURING THIS INVESTIGATION AND THIS INTERVIEW TO BE CONDUCTED AS PART OF THE TASK FORCE INQUIRY INTO MURKIN.

SA HESTER IS AGREEABLE TO SUBMITTING TO SUCH AN INTERVIEW AND SUCH INTERVIEW WILL BE HAD ON JUNE 23, 1976, UACB.  
END.

JCH:mab

(1)

*mab*66-2189  
SEARCHED \_\_\_\_\_

SERIALIZED \_\_\_\_\_

INDEXED \_\_\_\_\_

FILED *tnb* \_\_\_\_\_

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

*[Signature]*  
Special Agent in Charge

Sent

*4:05 PM* (SLR)

M

Per

*Kgw*

F B I

Date: 6/22/76

010

Transmit the following in CODED  
(Type in plaintext or code)Via TELETYPE NITEL  
(Precedence)TO: DIRECTOR *6/22/MDP*

FROM: MEMPHIS (66-2189) (P)

ATTENTION: INTELLIGENCE DIVISION

REVIEW OF FBI INVESTIGATION OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE TASK FORCE HAS THIS DATE  
CONCLUDED ITS REVIEW OF MURKIN FILES (44-1987) AND HAS  
CONCLUDED A REVIEW OF MEMPHIS FILE 157-1092, PERTAINING  
TO THE SANITATION WORKERS STRIKE AT MEMPHIS, TENN.,  
WHICH OCCURRED JUST PRIOR TO KING'S MURDER.

TASK FORCE HAS NOW REQUESTED FILES ON THE INVADERS  
(157-1067) AND ON MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. (100-4105).  
UACB, THESE FILES ARE BEING TURNED OVER TO THE TASK  
FORCE FOR REVIEW.

MEMPHIS HAS ALSO MADE XEROX COPIES OF ALL PRESS  
CLIPPINGS MAINTAINED IN THE MURKIN CASE AND WILL TURN  
THESE OVER TO THE TASK FORCE WHO ARE EXPECTED TO DEPART  
MEMPHIS ON OR ABOUT THURSDAY NEXT.

END.

JCH:plc  
(1) *plc*

SEARCHED \_\_\_\_\_

SERIALIZED \_\_\_\_\_

INDEXED \_\_\_\_\_

FILED *one*

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Sent *6/22/76*

M

Per *184*

F B I

Date: 6/24/76

Transmit the following in PLAINTEXT  
(Type in plaintext or code)Via TELETYPE NITEL  
(Precedence)

TO DIRECTOR  
FROM MEMPHIS (66-2189)  
ATTENTION: INTELLIGENCE DIVISION  
REVIEW OF FBI INVESTIGATION OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE TASK FORCE DEPARTED MEMPHIS  
AFTERNOON OF JUNE 24, 1976, TO RETURN TO WASHINGTON. AN  
ATTEMPT WAS MADE BY THEM TO REVIEW THE EVIDENCE IN THE  
MURKIN CASE; HOWEVER, THE JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT WAS  
OUT OF TOWN AND UNAVAILABLE TO GIVE PERMISSION FOR SUCH A  
REVIEW.

TASK FORCE MEMBERS INDICATE THAT ONE OR MORE OF THEM  
WILL BE RETURNING TO MEMPHIS SHORTLY AFTER JULY 5, 1976, AND  
THEY HAVE INDICATED THEY WILL MAKE AN ATTEMPT TO INTERVIEW  
JAMES EARL RAY.  
END.

JCH/nkt

(1) nkt

66-2189  
SEARCHED \_\_\_\_\_  
SERIALIZED \_\_\_\_\_  
INDEXED \_\_\_\_\_

Approved: [Signature]  
Special Agent in ChargeSent 11:00 P M Per [Signature]

NR0077 WA CODE

9:04PM URGENT 6/30/76 SLR

TO KANSAS CITY

LOS ANGELES

MEMPHIS

SAN FRANCISCO

FROM DIRECTOR (100-106670)

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. *44-1987*

FOR INFORMATION OF KANSAS CITY, LOS ANGELES AND  
SAN FRANCISCO, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL HAS ORDERED A REVIEW OF  
THE FBI'S INVESTIGATION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING. ASSIGNED TO  
CONDUCT THIS REVIEW IS A TASK FORCE WORKING UNDER DIRECTION OF  
THE OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY (OPR) OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL HAS INDICATED THE  
REVIEW IS TO RESOLVE THE FOLLOWING FOUR QUESTIONS.

(1.) WAS THE FBI INVESTIGATION OF KING'S ASSASSINATION  
THOROUGH AND HONEST?

(2.) IS THERE ANY EVIDENCE THE FBI WAS INVOLVED IN THE  
ASSASSINATION?

(3.) IS THERE ANY NEW EVIDENCE WHICH HAS COME TO THE  
ATTENTION OF THE DEPARTMENT CONCERNING THE ASSASSINATION?

*66-2189-*

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED <i>mt</i>
JUN 30 1976	
FBI - MEMPHIS	

*SAC*  
*Hester*  
*See pg 4 + p. 10. Hude.*  
*14-3*

PAGE TWO

(4.) DOES THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BUREAU AND KING CALL FOR CRIMINAL PROSECUTIONS, DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS OR OTHER APPROPRIATE ACTION?

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THE OPR REVIEW BEGAN AT FBIHQ ON MAY 10, 1976, WITH REVIEW OF ASSASSINATION FILES OF FBIHQ AND WASHINGTON FIELD OFFICE.

DURING THE PERIOD JUNE 14-24, 1976, THE TASK FORCE REVIEWED KING ASSASSINATION AND SECURITY FILES IN THE MILWAUKEE AND MEMPHIS OFFICES.



PAGE THREE

TO CONTINUE ITS REVIEW MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE IDENTIFIED AS JAMES KIECKHEFER, WILLIAM WHITE AND JOSEPH GROSS TENTATIVELY PLAN THE FOLLOWING TRAVEL: DEPART WASHINGTON, D. C., JULY 6, 1976, FOR KANSAS CITY, REMAINING THERE JULY 7-8, 1976; DEPART KANSAS CITY JULY 8, 1976, TO ARRIVE AT SAN FRANCISCO OFFICE ON THE MORNING OF JULY 9, 1976; PROBABLY DEPART SAN FRANCISCO JULY 11, 1976, TO ARRIVE AT LOS ANGELES OFFICE ON THE MORNING OF JULY 12, 1976! FOR AN APPROXIMATE FIVE DAY PERIOD BEFORE RETURNING TO WASHINGTON, D. C.

TASK FORCE HAS INDICATED THAT TRAVEL TO KANSAS CITY IS BASED ON LOCATION OF PRISON FROM WHICH JAMES EARL RAY ESCAPED. IN ADDITION TO KING RELATED FILES TASK FORCE DESIRES TO REVIEW KANSAS CITY 157-472, WHICH INVOLVES AN ALLEGATION THAT A KLAN ORGANIZATION OFFERED TO KILL KING.

TRAVEL TO SAN FRANCISCO AND LOS ANGELES IS BASED ON AMOUNT OF TIME KING IS KNOWN TO HAVE SPENT ON THE WEST COAST, ACCORDING TO TASK FORCE PERSONNEL. IN ADDITION TO KING RELATED FILES, TASK FORCE DESIRES TO REVIEW LOS ANGELES 157-869, REGARDING A PLOT TO ASSASSINATE KING AND LOS ANGELES 157-651, WHICH CONCERNS A KLAN THREAT ON THE LIFE OF KING. ALSO OF INTEREST IS LOS ANGELES FILE 100-24345, SECTION C, CAPTIONED "COMMUNIST PARTY, USA - NEGRO QUESTION," CONCERNING ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE

P  
A  
GE FOUR

OF KING. IN SAN FRANCISCO, OF PARTICULAR INTEREST IS 100-51914,  
CAPTIONED "COMMUNIST PARTY, USA - NEGRO QUESTION," WHICH PERTAINS  
TO THE ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE OF KING IN HAWAII AND SACRAMENTO.

SACS, KANSAS CITY, SAN FRANCISCO AND LOS ANGELES ASSIGN  
COORDINATOR TO HANDLE LIAISON WITH TASK FORCE PERSONNEL AND  
PROVIDE OFFICE SPACE IN WHICH TO CONDUCT REVIEW. CONFIRM  
ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF TASK FORCE PERSONNEL AND KEEP FBIHQ  
ADVISED OF SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS.

FOR INFORMATION OF MEMPHIS, TASK FORCE LEADER FRED G.  
FOLSOM AND JAMES WALKER PLAN TO RETURN TO MEMPHIS ON JULY 6, 1976.  
THEIR PLANS ARE TO REVIEW EVIDENCE IN THE ASSASSINATION CASE AND  
POSSIBLY CONDUCT INTERVIEWS WHICH MAY INCLUDE BOB JENSEN, FORMER  
SAC OF THE MEMPHIS OFFICE, TWO FORMER ASSISTANT UNITED STATES  
ATTORNEYS AND JAMES EARL RAY. THERE IS NO INDICATION AT THIS  
TIME FBI EMPLOYEES ARE TO BE INTERVIEWED. MEMPHIS CONFIRM  
ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF TASK FORCE PERSONNEL AND KEEP FBIHQ  
ADVISED OF ALL SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS.

END

FBI ME JSD CLR

NR003 KC CODE

6:53 PM NITEL 7-8-76 PPW

TO: DIRECTOR (100-106670)  
LOS ANGELES  
MEMPHIS  
SAN FRANCISCO

FROM: KANSAS CITY (100-12138) RUC

ATTN: INTD

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

*44-1987, num. refs.*

REBUIEL TO KANSAS CITY, ET AL, 6/30/76.

THREE MEMBERS OF DOJ TASK FORCE (OPR) REVIEWED KANSAS CITY FILES ON 7/7-8/76 CONCERNING INVESTIGATIONS OF MARTIN LUTHER KING.

THEY TOOK XEROX COPIES OF NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS FROM MURKIN FILE AND INFORMATION RE INTERVIEW DR. MARK D. FREEMAN, LOS ANGELES PSYCHOLOGIST, AS SET FORTH IN LOS ANGELES TELETYPE TO BUREAU, ET AL 4/20/68, BUFILE 44-38861.

MEMBERS DEPARTING KANSAS CITY TODAY BY AIR 4 P.M. FOR SAN FRANCISCO, WHERE THEY HAVE RESERVATIONS AT HOLIDAY INN CONVENTION CENTER. NO OTHER SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS CAME TO ATTENTION KANSAS CITY OFFICE.

END.

JSD FBI MEMPHIS CLR

*66-2189*

SEARCHED <i>52</i>	INDEXED <i>52</i>
SERIALIZED <i>52</i>	FILED <i>52</i>
JUL 8 1976	
FBI - MEMPHIS	

*Hester* *CH*

*AM*

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

**Assassination Probe**

Investigators for the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington, who have begun a nationwide probe of the FBI's files in connection with a new investigation into the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, will be in Memphis next week to conduct interviews with those involved in the case. Mike Shaheen of the Justice Department's division of professional responsibility, said two investigators will be in Memphis beginning Tuesday to begin the interview segment of the probe. Shaheen said arrangements have been made for the attorneys to examine all King case exhibits, now in the possession of the Shelby County Criminal Court Clerk's Office.

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

— PAGE 31

— MEMPHIS PRESS  
SCIMITAR

— MEMPHIS, TENN

Date: 6-30-76

Edition:

Author:

Editor: MILTON BRITTEN

Title:

Character: ME-66-2189

or

Classification:

Submitting Office: MEMPHIS

☐ Being Investigated

*orig fwd Bureau  
7-1-76  
L*

*[Handwritten signature]*

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# FBI Cleared in Dr. King's Death

*Orig fwd to  
Bureau 2/22/77  
som*

*SAC*

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

PAGE 1

MEMPHIS PRESS  
SCIMITAR

MEMPHIS, TENN

Date: FEB. 18, 1977

Edition:

Author:

Editor:

Title:

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

Character:

or

Classification: ME66-2189

Submitting Office: MEMPHIS

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
FEB 22 1977	
FBI - MEMPHIS	

WASHINGTON — (AP) — A Justice Department task force has found no evidence that the FBI was implicated in the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and has concluded that the FBI investigation of the assassination was thorough and honest.

The task force members also said they "found no evidence of any complicity" in the assassination by the FBI or the Memphis Police Department.

The task force today released a 149-page report of its findings after reviewing more than 200,000 FBI documents and interviewing about 40 witnesses.

Former Atty. Gen. Edward H. Levi had launched the probe to clear up questions about the FBI harassment of the civil rights leader and the investigation of his death.

The task force said the evidence virtually rules out the possibility of a conspiracy to kill King, who was shot on the Lorraine balcony in Memphis on April 4, 1968.

The evidence indicates that James Earl Ray, who was arrested and pleaded guilty to the crime, acted alone, the task force said.

"The sum of all of the evidence of Ray's

guilt points to him so exclusively that it most effectively makes the point that no one else was involved," the report said.

"Of course, someone could conceivably have provided him with logistics or even paid him to commit the crime. However, we have found no competent evidence upon which to base such a theory."

The task force said the FBI conscientiously checked out leads suggesting a conspiracy but "the results were negative."

The task force "has concluded that the investigation by the FBI to ascertain and capture the murderer of Dr. Martin Lu-

ther King Jr., was thoroughly, honestly and successfully conducted," the report said. "We found no new evidence which calls for action by state or federal authorities."

However, the FBI failed to check some leads which might have erased some still lingering mysteries about the case, the report said.

This included indications that one or both of Ray's brothers helped him escape in 1967 from the Missouri State Prison.

The FBI learned about that possibility after Ray was captured in England on June 8, 1968, but failed to check it out

because it was apparently considered unimportant then, the task force said.

The report said it was understandable that the FBI concentrated on learning the killer's identity and catching him and bypassed some leads about his activities prior to the assassination.

As for the FBI's efforts to harass King and discredit him as a civil rights leader, the task force called the campaign clearly improper but recommended against prosecution of anyone involved.

The late FBI director J. Edgar Hoover instigated the harassment of King and he and some of his top lieutenants are dead

and other top aides involved are retired from the bureau, the report noted.

Ray's former attorney today called an FBI investigation indicating James Earl Ray acted alone in assassinating Martin Luther King Jr., "a whitewash" and "a cover-up."

"From the moment the shot was fired there's been a cover-up," said Robert Livingston, Ray's former attorney. "It's a whitewash. I don't really feel the truth is ever going to be known if we depend upon the FBI or the Department of Justice to bring us the truth."

Turn to Page 11 — FBI

## FBI Cleared in King's Death

**Front Page 1**

A spokeswoman for the Tennessee Corrections Department said Ray, now serving a 99-year prison sentence, had no immediate comment on the report and would not talk with reporters.

Rebecca Cottrill said Ray's written permission was required before anyone could speak with the prisoner, whom she visited at Brushy Mountain State Prison near Petros Thursday.

"He is extremely uncommunicative," Mrs. Cottrill said. "When I saw him, he was pressing shirts in the prison laundry. I stood right beside him and he didn't speak."

The report developed by the Justice Department's "Martin Luther King Task Force" found that during Ray's imprisonment at the Missouri prison he told inmates he "hated Negroes." It said he vowed on several occasions to kill King "if the price was right."

Livingston said he never has placed any faith in the FBI investigation.

"Since that investigation started, I felt they would approve everything the FBI has said and done in connection with the Dr. King murder. I knew they would find no fault; whatever with the Dr. King murder. I knew they would find no fault whatever with (late FBI director) Mr. John Edgar Hoover. I knew they would find no fault with anyone remotely connected to it."

"The only thing I'm surprised at is that they haven't recommended Hoover for sainthood."

The Memphis attorney claimed there has been an effort to scuttle the FBI investigation since it started.

"The forces behind the assassinations are working full time to see that nobody anywhere investigates these assassinations," he said. "There are forces at work trying to destroy the select committee of Congress to investigate the assassinations."

"There are people in this world who don't want any of these investigations continued."

# Inquiry Finds No Conspiracy In King Death

By MORRIS CUNNINGHAM

From The Commercial Appeal  
Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — James Earl Ray killed Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the evidence indicates he acted alone, a Justice Department task force concluded Friday after an exhaustive, eight-month inquiry.

A 201-page report found the Federal Bureau of Investigation "thoroughly" and "honestly" investigated King's April 4, 1968, murder in Memphis, and was not itself implicated in the crime.

"We found no evidence of any complicity on the part of the Memphis Police Department or of the FBI," the report said.

Rolling out a conspiracy, the report said "the sum of all of the evidence of Ray's guilt points to him so exclusively that it most effectively makes the point that no one else was involved.

"Of course," the report added, "someone could conceivably have provided him (Ray) with logistics, or even paid him to commit the crime. However, we have found no competent evidence upon which to base such a theory.

"... we found that conspiracy leads ... had been conscientiously run down by the FBI even though they had no possible relation to Ray's stories or to the known facts," the report asserted. "The results were negative."

The study was ordered last year by then Atty. Gen. Edward H. Levi after reports surfaced of the FBI's persistent surveillance and harassment of King in the years preceding his murder.

It was directed by Michael E. Shaheen Jr., 35, who grew up in Como, Miss., and once was a law clerk for U.S. Dist. Judge Robert M. McRae Jr. in Memphis.

The task force's report which came after checks into 200,000 documents and interviews of 40 witnesses, was so sweeping that it further undermined a faltering House attempt to investigate King's death along with the assassination of President Kennedy. Shaheen, reached by The Commercial Appeal, declined to comment on

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

PAGE 1

COMMERCIAL APPEAL

MEMPHIS, TENN

Date: FEB. 19, 1977

Edition:

Author:

Editor:

Title:

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

Character:

or ME 66-2189

Classification:

Submitting Office: MEMPHIS

Searched		Indexed	
Serialized		Filed	
FEB 24 1977			
FBI - MEMPHIS			

Orig. fwd to  
Bureau 2/24/77  
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The report named the late FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover as the force behind the FBI's years-long "illicit surveillance" of King that it said included "a series of illegal surreptitious entries."

In several instances the report omitted names and other details, such as when it referred to "advisers" to King with Communist connections and FBI bugging King's hotel rooms.

Asked about these instances, Shaheen said the reason was to "protect the rights of privacy."

"The flames of Director Hoover's antipathy for Dr. King were fanned into open hostility in late 1962 when Dr. King criticized the bureau's performance during an investigation of a racial disturbance in Albany, Ga." the report said.

"The controversy was publicly rekindled in early 1964 when the director testified before a House appropriations subcommittee that he believed Communist influence existed in the Negro movement. King countered by accusing the director of abetting racist right-wingers."

The report said that in October, 1963, Hoover received from then Atty. Gen. Robert F. Kennedy authority "for technical surveillance of Dr. King's residence and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference office in New York City . . . and it was instituted almost immediately." Other surveillance followed.

However, despite past differences, the FBI pitched in and carried out an honest and thorough investigation of King's murder. It led to Ray's apprehension, guilty plea, and the 99-year-sentence he now is serving in Tennessee's Brushy Mountain Prison.

The report traced in detail the murder in Memphis and the course of the investigation that followed and culminated in the arrest and trial.

While in general commending the FBI's work in the case, the report at the same

(Continued on Page 7)



Michael E. Shaheen Jr.

# Racism Is Cited As Ray's Motive In Assassination

(Continued From Page 1)

time was critical on some specific points. One was the failure to learn more about Ray; his previous life-style and source of funds.

"In light of the fact that a good deal of mystery still surrounds James Ray and the assassination, particularly the means by which he financed his life-style and travels, we concluded that on the basis of the information which was uncovered, the bureau should have pursued this line of the investigation more thoroughly," the report said.

It said the FBI learned that Ray was aided by a family member during the manhunt, and also had had contacts with two brothers and a sister while in Missouri State Penitentiary prior to King's murder.

The report said it is possible that Ray received funds from family members. However, it noted the FBI's opinion that Ray financed himself with proceeds from a series of robberies.

As to Ray's motive in shooting King, the report found justification for a belief that Ray hated blacks.

The report dealt in detail with the recall, shortly before King was killed, of Memphis police Det. Edward E. Redditt from a two-man police detail that had King under surveillance at the Lorraine Motel on April 4, 1968. Redditt was recalled from the assignment, and placed under guard himself, after police reported receiving a threat against his life. Patrolman Willie B. Richmond remained on guard near the motel, heard the shot that killed King, and sounded an alarm.

The task force found some instances where the FBI failed to cooperate fully with the Justice Department and U.S. Atty. Gen. Ramsey Clark during the course of the manhunt and apprehension of Ray, but attached no significance to it.

It said the FBI prepared and filed the criminal complaint rather than leaving it to the Justice Department to do.

"The bureau selected Birmingham as the venue in which to file the complaint in preference to Memphis because the bureau could not rely on the U.S. attorney at Memphis (the late Thomas L. Robinson), and 'would lose control of the situation,'" the report said.

At one point Clark complained to the FBI of being "kept in the dark," whereupon the assistant to Hoover to whom he was talking "accused the attorney general of falsifications" and hung up, the report recounted.

The report's major criticism of the FBI, however, was restricted to the renewed electronic surveillance, including illegal break-ins, of King in the years preceding his murder.

"We believe the persistent controversy between Dr. King and Director Hoover was a major factor in the bureau's determination to discredit Dr. King and ultimately destroy his leadership role in the civil rights movement," the report said.

However, the report said that in the light of presidential directives and Hoover's views, "it was understandable that a security investigation should be initiated into the possible influence of the Communist Party, U.S.A., on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Two of King's close advisers, at the outset of the security matter, were reported to be Communist Party members by sources relied upon by the bureau.

"The security investigation continued for almost six years until Dr. King's death. It verified, in our view, that one alleged Communist was a very influential adviser to Dr. King (and hence the SCLC) on the strategy and tactics of King's leadership of the black civil rights movement of the early and mid-sixties. Another had no such weight although he seemed to be of use to King."

"King himself never varied publicly or privately from his commitment to nonviolence and did not advocate the overthrow of the government of the United States by violence or subversion," the report said. "To the contrary, he advocated an end to the discrimination and disenfranchisement of minority groups which the constitution and the courts denounced in terms as strong as his. We concluded that Dr. King was no threat to domestic security."

The task force recommended corrective measures to prevent a repetition of the harassment of King but said "because the five-year statute of limitations has long since run, we cannot recommend criminal prosecution of any bureau personnel, past or present, responsible for the possible criminal harassment of Dr. King."

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3-1-77

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

To: SAC, Albany

From: ~~Director~~ Director, FBI

BUREAUWIDE INFORMATION PROGRAM, 77-5

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE TASK FORCE REPORT  
ON FBI INVESTIGATIONS INVOLVING  
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Attached is a copy of a three-page news release which was made by Attorney General Griffin B. Bell on 2/18/77 pertaining to the report prepared by the Department of Justice Task Force which conducted a review of our security investigation, as well as our investigation regarding the assassination, of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

There also is attached a copy of the Task Force's report, together with its exhibits. Copies of this report, including its exhibits, have been made available to news media by the Department of Justice.

I have made the following statement in response to inquiries regarding the Task Force's report which have been received at FBIHQ:

"I noted with great satisfaction the conclusions of the task force that the FBI's assassination probe of the Martin Luther King slaying was 'credible and thorough'; that there was no evidence of a conspiracy; and that the report clearly indicates no complicity on the part of the FBI in this assassination.

Enclosures (2)

- 1 - All Field Offices - Enclosures (2)  
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Airtel to SAC, Albany

RE: DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE TASK FORCE REPORT  
ON FBI INVESTIGATIONS INVOLVING  
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

"There are portions of the report which describe objectionable actions on the part of the FBI.

"Guidelines, procedures and our determination to be completely observant of civil rights and the dignity of man will prevent a recurrence of these activities."

If requested to comment regarding any of the conclusions of the Task Force or concerning the contents of its report, you should feel free to quote my above-cited statement. However, you should not expand on my statement or volunteer observations of your own.

In addition, you should not hesitate to refer news media representatives who make inquiries about matters covered in the Task Force report to the Press Services Unit (Ext. 3691) of the External Affairs Division.

Should you receive inquiries regarding the availability of copies of the Task Force report, you should state that the report was released by the Department of Justice and that the FBI has been advised that copies of the report are being printed and will be available for purchase through the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402.



REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

TASK FORCE TO REVIEW THE FBI MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.,

SECURITY AND ASSASSINATION INVESTIGATIONS

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. The Mission Of The Task Force

#### 1. The Problem

On November 1, 1975, William C. Sullivan, former Assistant Director, Domestic Intelligence Division, Federal Bureau of Investigation, testified before the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities. He related that from late 1963 and continuing until the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., King was the target of an intensive campaign by the F.B.I. to neutralize him as an effective civil rights leader. Sullivan stated that in the war against King "No holds were barred." (Senate Report No. 94-755, Final Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, Book II, p. 11). This and other testimony describing this F.B.I. counterintelligence campaign against King reached the public through the news media. As a consequence there was a regeneration of the widespread speculation on the possibility that the Bureau may have had some responsibility in Dr. King's death and may not have done an impartial and thorough investigation of the assassination.

## 2. The Attorney General's Directive

On November 24, 1975, the Attorney General of the United States directed the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice to undertake a review of the files of the Department and its Federal Bureau of Investigation to determine whether the investigation of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. should be reopened. More particularly it was sought to be determined: (1) whether any action taken in relation to Dr. King by the FBI before the assassination had, or may have had, an effect, direct or indirect, on that event, and (2) whether any action was taken by the FBI which had, or may have had, any other adverse effect on Dr. King. Recommendations for criminal, disciplinary or other appropriate action were requested.

## 3. The Review up to April 26, 1976

In the next four months, the Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Civil Rights Division, his principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General and the Chief of the Criminal Section of the Civil Rights Division, acting as a review staff, variously read portions of the FBI headquarters file on a person

who served as an adviser to Dr. King, portions of the FBI headquarters security file on Dr. King himself, portions of the FBI headquarters file on the assassination investigation, some Department (as opposed to FBI) files relating to Dr. King, and other Bureau documents including everything on Martin Luther King, Jr., held in the late J. Edgar Hoover's official, confidential and personal files.

By a memorandum to the Attorney General dated April 9, 1976, the Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Civil Rights Division submitted a 51 page report of the Chief of the Civil Rights Division's Criminal Section dated March 31, 1976, embodying the results of the three-man study, limited to the above listed files, and concentrating almost exclusively on the pre-assassination surveillance of, and counterintelligence activities against, Dr. King.

The Assistant Attorney General recommended the creation of a Departmental Task Force to complete the review he and his team had begun. He also recommended an Advisory Committee of distinguished citizens to advise with the task force. The further review proposed included interrogation of material witnesses, reading all the pertinent field office files and reviewing all of the headquarters files relating to Dr. King and possibly to other civil rights activists. A recommendation was made to review tapes secured

by electronic surveillance with a view to determining which of such materials should be and could be legally destroyed. The Assistant Attorney General felt that the FBI should assess the culpability of its agents involved in the wrongdoing by the principals named in the report. His memorandum to the Attorney General concluded that probably criminal redress was time-barred, that civil remedies might be available to the King family but might also be more embarrassing than helpful, and hence that consideration be given to a direct payment by the settlement process or by a private bill to compensate the King survivors, or with the survivors' concurrence, the King Foundation; if this last issue were left to the task force or an Advisory Commission, it should consider the pros and cons and recommend as it sees fit.

The Attorney General forwarded the Civil Rights Division memoranda (and comments thereon from the Deputy Attorney General, the Solicitor General, and from staff members and the Assistant Attorney General of the Criminal Division) to the Counsel, Office of Professional Responsibility. The Attorney General charged the Office of Professional Responsibility with the work of completing the review begun by the Civil Rights Division. His memorandum states:

'My request for the review involved four matters. First, whether the FBI investigation of the Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination was thorough and honest; second, whether there was any evidence that the FBI was involved in the assassination of Dr. King; third, in light of the first two questions, whether there is any new evidence which has come to the attention of the Department concerning the assassination of Dr. King which should be dealt with by the appropriate authorities; fourth, whether the nature of the relationship between the Bureau and Dr. King calls for criminal prosecution, disciplinary proceedings, or other appropriate action.

As the fourth point, I again note that from the partial review which has been made, Mr. Pottinger concludes 'we have found that the FBI undertook a systematic program of harassment of Martin Luther King, by means both legal and illegal, in order to discredit him and harm both him and the movement he led.' Assuming that the major statutory violations relevant to this conduct would be 18 U.S.C. Section 241 and Section 242, Mr. Pottinger's memorandum concludes that any prosecution contemplated under those acts would now be barred by the five-year statute of limitations with the possible exception which would exist if there were proof of a continuing conspiracy.

As to the matter of new evidence with respect to the assassination my understanding is that the Department has never closed the Martin Luther King file and that numerous allegations of the possible involvement of co-conspirators are promptly investigated. The thrust of the review which I requested, however, was to determine whether a new look at what was done by the Bureau in investigating the assassination or in the relationship between the Bureau

and Dr. King might give a different emphasis or new clues in any way to the question of involvement in that crime. At this point in the review, as I read the memoranda, nothing has turned up relevant on this latter point.

The review is not complete. Mr. Pottinger and all those who have commented upon his memorandum recommend that the review be completed. Mr. Pottinger also has made other recommendations upon which there is some difference of opinion. In my view, it is essential that the review be completed as soon as possible and in as thorough a manner as is required to answer the basic questions. In view of what has already been done, and the tentative conclusions reached, special emphasis should be given to the fourth question. In conducting this review you should call upon the Department to furnish to you the staff you need.

My conclusion as to the review conducted by the Civil Rights Division is that it has now shown that this complete review is necessary, particularly in view of the conclusion as to the systematic program of harassment. If your review turns up matters for specific action, we should discuss the best way to proceed on each such case."

B. The Task Force And The Method Of Review

The Counsel of the Office of Professional Responsibility selected three attorneys from the Civil Rights Division, Joseph F. Gross, Jr., James R. Kieckhefer and William D. White, one attorney from the Criminal Section of the Tax Division,

James F. Walker, and a retired attorney Fred G. Folsom, who is currently a consultant to the Tax Division with 37 years of experience in Civil Rights Division (which included homicide cases), Criminal Division and Tax Division prosecutions. As the senior man the latter was designated to head the task force. This committee or task force began its work on May 4, 1976. The committee was further staffed by the addition of two research analysts, Ms. Hope Byrne and Mr. Geoffrey Covert, two secretaries, Ms. Veronica Keith and Mrs. Renee Holmes, and two clerk-typists, Mrs. Leroylyne Murray and Ms. Dana Boyd.

Consideration of a tentative outline for an eventual report based on the chronology of events in the relationship between Dr. Martin Luther King and the Federal Bureau of Investigation brought the task force up against the fact that the field of the history before the assassination had just been plowed twice: once by the Civil Rights Division memoranda of March 31, 1976, and April 9, 1976 and once (among other kindred subjects) by the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities (Senate Report, No. 94-155 94th Congress, 2d Session, Books II and III).

By way of contrast, however, the matter of the assassination of Dr. King and the ensuing investigation had been

judged by the Civil Rights Division's Assistant Attorney General and his two assistants primarily on their familiarity with the Department file on the investigation as it had progressed since 1968. The Civil Rights Division's Martin Luther King, Jr., review memoranda reflected that a study had been made of only the first 10 sections of the FBI headquarters file on the assassination investigation and only a random inspection was done of some of the remaining 74 sections. There was no factual discussion or analysis. The conclusion was reached by the Civil Rights Division staff that "the Bureau's investigation was comprehensive, thorough and professional" (Murphy memorandum of March 31, 1976, p. 6). It was determined therefore to begin the task force's study with a complete review of the files on the FBI's investigation of the assassination. It was the consensus of the review team that by approaching the whole task by first examining the character and completeness of the murder investigation an answer could be made to the Attorney General's question as to the Bureau's performance in that regard and also an answer could be indicated to his question going to the Bureau's possible responsibility, if any, direct or indirect, for Dr. King's death.

After the examination of the FBI's investigation of the murder of Dr. King, the review team proceeded to go



back and complete the inquiry into the Bureau's pre-assassination relationship with Dr. King. Necessarily included again in this second stage of our review was the consideration of whether the FBI was in any way implicated in the murder directly or indirectly.

The task force made a particular point of looking at all the material in the FBI headquarters and field office files on the Assassination Investigation, the so-called "Murkin File" (Murkin being an acronym for Murder of King) 1/; the Martin Luther King Security File 2/; the Cominfil-SCLC File (Cominfil being an acronym for Communist infiltration; S.C.L.C., the initials for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference) 3/; the file on Communist Influence in Racial Matters 4/ and the advisor to King File 5/. The "Murkin" file was solely concerned with the murder investigation. The other four files provided a multi-focal view

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1/ FBI HQ. 44-38861

2/ FBI HQ. 100-106670

3/ FBI HQ. 100-438794

4/ FBI HQ. 100-442529 and the predecessor file entitled Communist Party, U.S.A. Negro Question; FBI HQ. 100-3-116

5/ FBI HQ. 100-392452

of the Bureau's intelligence and counterintelligence activities with respect to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The scheme of citation hereinafter used will be to minimize footnotes, place the source citation in the body of the writing, and designate headquarters files by "HQ" and number and serial and Field Office files by city and number and serial, e.g.: (Memphis 44-1987-153). Exceptions to this scheme will be explained when made.

The more voluminous of the pertinent files in addition to the FBI headquarters files and the Washington Field Office files were located in Memphis, Atlanta, Baltimore, Charlotte, Birmingham, New Orleans, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Kansas City, St. Louis, Omaha, Chicago, Springfield (Ill.), Milwaukee and New York. These were examined in place by visits by task force personnel. The remaining files were xeroxed and forwarded for review in Washington. Pertinent newspaper clipping files maintained by the Department and by the Bureau and its field offices were scanned.

In terms of papers examined, more than 200,000 entries, many with numerous pages concerning both the murder investigation and the security investigation were covered. The five attorneys sitting together originally

and later, as the work progressed, splitting up to work singly or in teams together with the research personnel, considered separate sections of each file compiling notes, commenting on, or reading aloud, or noting for reading by all of the committee, items of significance. Notes were taken, when pertinent items were encountered, on a serial-by-serial basis ("serials" being each separate document entry of one or more pages in the file). The resulting books of notes were then reviewed and used in conjunction with the original-source serials for the development of the statements of fact herein. In addition witness interviews were reflected in contemporaneous memoranda which aided in the development of the facts recited.

Selected portions of the so-called Official and Confidential files which had been kept in the office of the late J. Edgar Hoover, some sensitive files in the office of a Section Chief in the FBI Security Division, and the files of former Assistant Director William Sullivan were reviewed. So also were the pertinent files of the Attorneys General. The task force attorneys reviewed the transcripts of key intercepted telephone and microphone overheard conversations of Dr. King and his associates. These were spot checked

for accuracy against the tapes of those surveillances. A canvass of other investigative agencies was made to determine whether their files reflected that intelligence or counterintelligence requests had been made upon them by the FBI in relation to Dr. King. This included the Defense Department, the State Department, the U.S. Information Agency, the C.I.A., the Secret Service, the Postal Inspection Service, the Internal Revenue Service's Intelligence Division and the Treasury Department's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. The material turned up by these agencies was examined, albeit little of consequence was discovered. Relevant portions of the investigation reports of the Memphis Police Department on the King murder were xeroxed and studied.

In addition to official files, the task force personnel considered published material from the public sector dealing with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and his assassination. Included in this category were a viewing of the Columbia Broadcasting System's program on the death of King in its series "The Assassins," a National Broadcasting Company "Tomorrow" program of April 4, 1974, and perusal of books and articles on the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the role of the FBI in relation to the murder of Dr. King (see Bibliography, App. A, Ex. 6). This lead to some valuable

evidentiary material - principally the oral and written statements of James Earl Ray - which was used to buttress the reconstruction of the facts of the murder and of the FBI investigation.

Some 30 interviews were conducted, principally in the assassination phase of the task force study. They were helpful in supplementing the results of interviews done during the murder investigation.

During the review of the Memphis Field Office files, an on-site inspection of the crime scene was conducted and the exhibits in the office of the Clerk of the County Court for Shelby County, Tennessee, were examined.

## II. THE ASSASSINATION INVESTIGATION

### A. Events Surrounding April 4, 1968

#### 1. The Poor People's Campaign

To understand the movements of Dr. King during this critical period, it is necessary to briefly discuss the Poor People's Campaign (POCAM), originally called the Washington Spring Project in which he and the SCLC were involved. POCAM was scheduled to begin the first week of April 1968, and involved recruiting some 3,000 poor unemployed blacks from 16 localities in the United States for the purpose of going to Washington, D.C., and petitioning the government to improve their economic status (HQ 157-8428-51).

The plan was to camp on the Washington Monument or Lincoln Memorial grounds (HQ 157-8428-132). During the first and second weeks, demands would be made of congressmen and heads of departments, such as the Secretary of Labor. If the demands were not met, nonviolent demonstrations were to be conducted (HQ 157-8428-109).

Dr. King's planned travel schedule for February and March included trips to 9 major cities and visits to various points in Mississippi, Alabama, South Carolina, North Carolina and Virginia (HQ 157 8428-75). By mid February Dr. King had become discouraged with the lack of progress in recruiting and

training demonstrators (HQ 157-8428-206). During this low point in the POCAM Dr. King was persuaded to alter his plans and to go to Memphis, Tennessee, in support of a strike involving the city's sanitation workers.

## 2. Memphis Sanitation Worker's Strike

On February 12, 1968, approximately 1,000 sanitation workers employed by the city of Memphis called a wildcat strike. The strikers were represented by Local 1733 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees who demanded exclusive recognition of the union as bargaining agent, setting up grievance procedures, wage improvements, payroll deduction of union dues, and a promotion system as well as a pension, hospitalization and life insurance program. (HQ 157-9146-X1).

The NAACP intervened in the strike because all of the sanitation workers, excluding drivers, were black. A militant young black power group known as the Invaders was similarly interested in the strike. The group consisted of about 15 members, mostly high school dropouts, and was a cell of a larger group known as Black Organizing Power (BOP) headed by Charles L. Cabbage and John B. Smith. The alleged purpose of BOP was to stimulate a sense of black identity, black pride and black consciousness in young blacks.

The strikers were also supported by a group of black ministers, connected with the Memphis Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, who adopted the name COME (Community on the Move for Equality). It was members of this group that were instrumental in bringing Dr. King to Memphis. On March 3, 1968, the Reverend James M. Lawson, Jr., pastor of the Centenary Methodist Church, Memphis, and member of COME, stated on a television program (WHBQ-TV) that he wanted to bring Dr. King (and other heads of civil rights organizations) to Memphis in an effort to unify the entire black community behind the demands of the strikers (HQ 157-9146-X23). The intervention of these various black community organizations caused the city of Memphis to be concerned about the racial overtones of the strike and the possibility of violence (HQ 157-9146-X1).

Dr. King made his first visit to Memphis in support of the strike on the night of March 18, 1968. On that occasion, in addressing an estimated crowd of 9,000 to 12,000 people at a rally sponsored by COME at the Mason Temple, he called for a general protest day on March 22, 1968. All blacks were asked not to go to work or school on that day and were urged to participate in a massive downtown march. Dr. King and his party stayed at the Lorraine Motel, 406 Mulberry Street, on



the night of March 18, 1968 and left Memphis shortly before noon on March 19, 1968, ostensibly to go to the State of Mississippi in connection with the POCAM (HQ 157-9146-X39).

The City of Memphis was virtually paralyzed by a 16-inch snowfall on March 22, 1968, resulting in the postponement of the planned mass march to March 28, 1968. Dr. King returned to Memphis on the 28th, arriving at the airport at approximately 10:22a.m. By that time approximately 5,000 to 6,000 people, about half of whom were of school age, had congregated at the Clayborn Temple (located at 280 Hernando St.) for the start of the march. According to the plan of the march, the sanitation workers were in front with the remainder of the people following behind. The march was to proceed north on Hernando to Beale Street, thence west on Beale Street to Main Street and north on Main Street to City Hall.

The march got underway at approximately 11:00a.m. and had proceeded to Hernando and Beale before it was joined by Dr. King. When the front of the march (led by Dr. King) reached Main Street, teenagers and young adults at the rear of the march near Third and Beale (two blocks from the front of the march) ripped the signs off their poles and began breaking store windows and looting. Mass confusion developed and the police moved in to quell the disturbance. The