

U. S. Department of Justice

(MATERIAL MUST NOT BE REMOVED FROM OR ADDED TO THIS FILE)

ATLANTA

FEDERAL BUREAU

of

INVESTIGATION

FOIPA REQUEST. DO NOT DESTROY PURSUANT
5 YEAR RULE. SERIAL SEE 190. 40

CLASSIFICATION NO.

44-2386

ENTIRE FILE REVIEWED
OR HISTORICAL
DECLASSIFICATION

Bureau File Number

44-38860

Serials

Volume Number 19
2186-2291

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 11/19/03 BY SP-10/K/SIU

See also Nos.

DO NOT DESTROY
PRESERVE FOR SELECT
COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS

NO. 8

Completed Section

H. M. Walker 8/18/74

SHAW-WALKER

DECODED COPY

☐ Radio☒ Teletype

451AM URGENT 1/21/69 BJP

TO DIRECTOR ATLANTA AND LOS ANGELES VIA WASHINGTON
FROM NEW YORK

MURKIN - CR (OO: MEMPHIS) COMINFIL SCLC - IS - C (OO: ATLANTA)

A CONFIDENTIAL SOURCE, WHO HAS FURNISHED RELIEABLE INFORMATION IN THE PAST, LEARNED ON JANUARY ONE NINE, SIX NINE, THAT A PERSON, WHOM THE SOURCE BELIEVES TO BE A SECRETARY TO CORETTA KING, TOLD STANLEY LEVISON, SCLC, ADVISED THAT SHE HAD RECEIVED A CALL FROM A MALCOLM DAVIS WHO CLAIMED TO BE A CORRESPONDENT OF RADIO JAMAICA AND THE BRITISH BROADCASTING COMPANY IN NEW YORK CITY. SHE SAID DAVIS ADVISED HER THAT HE IS GETTING A TAPE ALLEGEDLY OF A CONVERSATION BETWEEN JAMES EARL RAY AND AN UNKNOWN PERSON WHICH WAS MADE THREE MONTHS BEFORE MARTIN LUTHER KING'S ASSASSINATION AND WHICH CONTAINS DETAILS OF THE ASSASSINATION. SHE SAID THE PURPOSE OF DAVIS'S CALL WAS THAT HE DOES NOT WANT TO DISTURB CORETTA KING BECAUSE AS A JOURNALIST HE IS APPARENTLY GOING TO MAKE THIS TAPE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC AND DESIRED TO GIVE CORETTA

END PAGE ONE

LWG/LWG

44-2386-2186

SEARCHED.....	INDEXED.....
SERIALIZED.....	FILED.....
JAN 21 1969	
FBI-ATLANTA	

Hamilton

1 CC to 100-5718

If the intelligence contained in the above message is to be disseminated outside the Bureau, it is suggested that it be suitably paraphrased in order to protect the Bureau's cryptographic systems.

PAGE TWO

*Joel Levy 100-3527-79P56
100-4246*
KING A COPY FOR HER LAWYERS. SHE CONTINUED THAT DAVIS DISCLOSED THAT A JOEL LEVY IN LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, HAS THE TAPE AND WILL BE FORWARDING IT TO HIM. SHE SAID THE TAPE IS SUPPOSED TO DETAILS OF A PAYOFF PLAN.

LEVISON ADVISED CORETTA KING'S SECRETARY TO CONTACT DAVIS IN A FEW DAYS TO SEE IF HE HAS RECEIVED THE TAPE. HE SAID THEN SHE COULD JUDGE DAVIS'S REACTION AND PERHAPS HE, LEVISON, WOULD THEN GET INTO THE MATTER. HE SAID HE FELT HE SHOULD NOT INTERVENE AT THE PRESENT BECAUSE IT MIGHT UPSET RELATIONS BETWEEN CORETTA KING AND DAVIS IN THE EVENT DAVIS HAS SOMETHING OF VALUE.

*- Nathan refer 100-6825**
THE SOURCE ALSO LEARNED THAT LEVISON DISCUSSED THE OFFER OF THE TAPE WITH HARRY WACHTEL, NEW YORK CITY ATTORNEY AND ADVISOR TO SCLC. WACHTEL'S POSITION WAS THAT AS MEMBERS OF THE BAR THEY SHOULD NOT GET INVOLVED BECAUSE THEY DID NOT WANT TO BE PUT IN THE POSITION OF SUPPRESSING EVIDENCE. HE SAID THEY SHOULD NOT BE PLACED IN THE POSITION OF DIGNIFYING THE TAPE BY ENTERING NEGOTIATIONS FOR IT. THEY AGREED THAT CORETTA KING'S SECRETARY SHOULD HANDLE ANY NEGOTIATIONS AND THAT WHEN DAVIS SENDS THE TAPE TO CORETTA KING THEY WOULD LISTEN TO IT AND TAKE THE NECESSARY ACTION.

END PAGE TWO

PAGE THREE

A SECOND CONFIDENTIAL SOURCE, WHO HAS FURNISHED RELIABLE INFORMATION IN THE PAST, IN APRIL SIX FOUR DESCRIBED STANLEY LEVISON AS A SECRET MEMBER TO THE COMMUNIST PARTY AS OF JULY SIX THREE.

A THIRD CONFIDENTIAL SOURCE, WHO HAS FURNISHED RELIABLE INFORMATION IN THE PAST ON DECEMBER FOUR FOUR FURNISHED INFORMATION WHICH REVEALED THAT THE NAME HARRY WACHTEL WAS ON A LIST OF NAMES, SIGNIFICANCE UNKNOWN, MAINTAINED AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE KINGS ~~XXXXXX~~ COUNTY COMMUNIST PARTY, TWO SIX COURT STREET, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK.

ADMINISTRATIVE:

THE FIRST SOURCE IS NEW YORK THREE EIGHT ONE ZERO DASH S *.

THE SECOND SOURCE IS NEW YORK SIX NINE FOUR DASH S *, AND THE THIRD SOURCE IS FORMER NEW YORK ONE ONE NINE ZERO DASH S*.

THIS INFORMATION IS TO BE CLASSIFIED "SECRET" BECAUSE IT CONTAINS INFORMATION FROM NEW YORK THREE EIGHT ONE ZERO DASH S* AND BECAUSE OF THE INFORMATION FROM NEW YORK SIX NINE FOUR DASH S* USED IN THE CHARACTERIZATION OF LEVISON.

FOR THE INFORMATION OF ATLANTA THE PERSON WHO CONTACTED LEVISON WAS A FRAN LUCAS (PHONETIC).

FOR THE INFORMATION OF LOS ANGELES, FRAN LUCAS SAID THAT MALCOLM DAVIS FURNISHED THE TELEPHONE NUMBER OF JOEL LEVY (PHONETIC) IN CALIFORNIA AS TWO ONE THREE DASH SEVEN EIGHT ONE DASH EIGHT THREE THREE TWO. LOS ANGELES IS REQUESTED TO IDENTIFY JOEL LEVY.

END

1/21/69

PLAINTEXT

TELETYPE

URGENT

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (44-38861 AND 100-438794)

FROM: SAC, NEW YORK (44-493 AND 100-149194)

SECRET

MURKIN -CR (OO: MEMPHIS) COMINFIL SCLC IS-C

(OO:ATLANTA)

44-2386

RE NEW YORK TEL ONE TWENTY SIXTY NINE.

MALCOLM DAVIS, MENTIONED IN RE TEL, RESIDES ONE FORTY TWO EAST FORTY NINTH ST., NYC, AND IS SUBSCRIBER TO UNLISTED TELEPHONE NUMBER PL NINE - SEVEN FIVE FOUR SIX. NEW YORK INDICES REFLECT NO IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION. JAMES BUTLER, VICE COUNSEL, BIRTISH CONSULATE EIGHT FORTY FIVE THIRD AVE., NYC, ADVISED MALCOLM DAVIS IS KNOWN TO THEM AS FORMERLY WITH BBC BUT IS NOW A FREE - LANCE WRITER WHO MAKES OCCASIONAL TV APPEARANCES WHENEVER THERE IS NEED FOR PERSON WITH PRONOUNCED BRITISH ACCENT.

AIR MAIL COPIES SENT ATLANTA, MEMPHIS AND LOS ANGELES.

CLASSIFIED BY 6080, 6-19-77, X6 DS 2. INDEFINITE.

- 1- Atlanta (AM) (RM)
- 1- Memphis (AM) (RM)
- 1- Los Angeles (AM) (RM)
- 1- New York

JFOC:tf
(5)

- 1- Supv. #43

44-2386-2187

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
JAN 23 1969	
FBI - ATLANTA	

Hamilton

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

'Life' Called Key To Ray Informing

By PHILIP GAILEY

William Bradford Huie, the authorized biographer of James Earl Ray, said Sunday night the government's only chance of "turning Ray into an informer" is to promise him a life sentence instead of death if he is convicted of the murder of the late Martin Luther King Jr.



W. B. Huie

Huie, the noted Alabama author who purchased exclusive rights to Ray's story, said he believes King's assassination in Memphis, Tenn., last April 4 was a "conspiracy"

and that Ray's testimony is needed to solve the case.

"The only chance of turning Ray into an informer is to promise to commute his death sentence," Huie said. "Short of that, I don't think he'll ever become a government witness."

WANTED VIOLENCE?

Huie made his remarks in an address to the Abe Goldstein Human Relations Award Banquet of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith at the Progressive Club. Atlanta Rabbi Jacob M. Rothschild of The Temple was recipient of the award for his contribution to human relations.

The Alabama writer said there are reasons to believe King's murder may have been a conspiracy between white and Negro elements in this country who had hoped his assassination would trigger widespread racial violence.

"When King led the Selma March in 1965 he thought the only danger to his life came from the Klan elements," Huie said. "But in 1968, he realized that there were whites and blacks who wanted to use his death for further racial division."

PEAK IN 1965

He said the hate directed against King reached its peak in 1965—three years before his assassination.

"They killed him—not because they hated him—but to cause trouble," Huie said.

Huie said he believes the King murder was planned at least eight months in advance and that most of the money for financing the conspiracy came from the state of Louisiana.

Huie said he will establish these things in his account of the murder in a national magazine. His book on the King murder, "They Slew the Dreamer," is scheduled to be published next March, the month the Ray trial is slated to begin. The trial, originally set for last November, was postponed after Ray changed attorneys.

PUBLISH ALL

"I plan to publish before the trial everything publishable about the conspiracy to kill

Martin Luther King," the author said.

Huie predicted that there will be further postponements in the Ray trial.

Huie said he made a deal with Ray's first attorney, Arthur Haines, in London to pay for the cost of the trial in return for exclusive rights to Ray's story.

"Ray had accomplices and my only objective is to make a case against them," he said. "It has been very frustrating so far. We need Ray to sign statements on who his accomplices were."

Haines acted as a go-between for Huie and Ray, taking Huie's questions into Ray's cell and bringing out his answers.

FOUND MAP

Huie said the Federal Bureau of Investigation was able to identify Ray by a map he left in Atlanta. The map bore one of Ray's fingerprints, Huie said.

He said people who are known to have seen Ray in Atlanta and other parts of the country are refusing to talk because they fear getting involved.

"There is a deplorable but understandable reluctance in this country to get involved in this case," Huie declared.

He said the country has learned a "sad lesson" from the racial crimes committed in the South. "The only way to find out what happened in these planned racial crimes is to pay for the information," Huie said. "I have to and the federal government has, too."

PAY WITNESSES

He continued: "The only way we in a free society can deal with these conspiracies is to pay witnesses and buy evidence. The victims are dead and the only other persons knowing anything about it are the ones involved."

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

Pg. 2, ATLANTA
CONSTITUTION

Date: 12/2/68

Edition:

Author: Philip Gailey

Editor: Reg Murphy

Title:

Character: CR

or

Classification:

Submitting Office:

☐ Being Investigated

44-2386-2188

SEARCHED.....	INDEXED.....
SERIALIZED.....	FILED.....
DEC 3 1968	
FBI-ATLANTA	

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

RALPH MCGILL

Ray-King Case 'Rumors'

Percy Foreman, attorney for James Earl Ray, who is charged with the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, seemingly was in a somewhat petulant mood after a recent court argument in which he failed to obtain further postponement of the Ray case. The date set is

March 3.

The Texan also was quoted as saying he had requested—and failed to obtain—all the FBI files on the murdered civil rights leader. He understood, he said, that "it," the file, says that for two years before the April killing by rifle fire there was a "squad of FBI agents assigned to prevent the assassination of Dr. King."

One may be sure there was no such squad. The FBI investigates. It probably had agents at many of Dr. King's meetings, especially those where threats were involved, to check out characters known to be psychotic, "wanted" persons and those considered dangerous. But the FBI is not in the "guarding" business and no evidence exists that Dr. King was so watched over by a squad of agents assigned to him.

Unfounded Rumors

There was one flurry of such rumors some years ago when a group which had invited Dr. King to speak, in trying to raise money for the occasion, informed its members that expenses would be great because of the FBI men with Dr. King. I recall that this was checked out and Dr. King reportedly said there was nothing to the statement and that he was embarrassed by it. Some of his staff likely would recall the details. At any rate, it is out of such things that unfounded rumors flourish.

Mr. Foreman will certainly be entitled to any FBI files that relate to the investigation of the assassination of Dr. King. But to ask for the total file, with any details unrelated to the shooting and investigation of it, is unrealistic. This sort of thing was tried during the days of the late Joe McCarthy investigations. The FBI then and in other instances has withheld its "raw" files. Such files, of course, often contain crackpot letters, phony charges, malicious accusations, and many other items that are part of any investigation. It would be highly improper and without legal precedent to release any material that is not directly related to the killing.

F.B.I. Witness

The FBI can, of course, make reply to a query as to whether it did, indeed, as Mr. Foreman reportedly "heard," maintain a squad of agents with Dr. King to prevent his assassination. The answer, one may be sure, will be no. The FBI does not provide guards. Its agents who appear as witnesses will, of course, be subject to cross-examination, as are all witnesses. The state of Tennessee will conduct the trial—not the FBI or the federal government.

No one outside the FBI now has official or detailed knowledge of what evidence has been gathered. There is general belief among newsmen who have been assigned to the case that the FBI has done a superb job. Enough of the evidence was produced as a part of the legal procedures necessary to extradite Ray from London to give a hint of how much the FBI had learned.

It would seem, from that and other dribbles of news, that the FBI did a typically first rate job on the evidence left by Ray in an Atlanta rooming house. Also, well delineated are Ray's journeyings before and after Dr. King's death.

All agents who worked on the case and the total files relevant to it will be readily available to the defense.

Rumor mills will, of course, be busy during the case. There may be efforts to smear Dr. King with all the calumny and hatred flung at him in life, although it is difficult to see how these smears would be made admissible.

The trial judge may well be faced with rulings to prevent such tactics. The small courtroom more and more seems an asset.

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

"THE ATLANTA JOURNAL"

ATLANTA, GA.

Date: 1/2/69
Edition: REG MURPHY
Author: RALPH MCGILL
Editor:
Title: MURKIN

Character:
or
Classification:
Submitting Office: ATLANTA

☒ Being Investigated

44-23862185

7 2

11

FBI ATLANTA

FBI LOS ANG

905PM DEFERRED 1/21/69 BCD

TO DIRECTOR (44-32861), ATLANTA, AND NEW YORK
FROM LOS ANGELES (44-1574) 2P

MURKIN

RE NY TEL, JANUARY TWENTY LAST.

RECORDS PACIFIC TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY, LOS
ANGELES, REVEALED SUBSCRIBER TO PHONE NUMBER TWO ONE THREE
DASH SEVEN EIGHT ONE DASH EIGHT THREE THREE TWO IS MARJORIE
LARGENT, SIX NINE FIVE TWO VESPER AVENUE, VAN NUYS,
CALIFORNIA. LOS ANGELES INDICES, LAPD, LASO NEGATIVE
REGARDING LARGENT. RECORDS, LOS ANGELES RMCA, HAVE FILE
ON LARGENT WITH ABOVE ADDRESS, SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

[REDACTED], FILE
CONTAINS NO DEROGATORY INFORMATION.

BASED ON INFORMATION AVAILABLE IN REFERENCED TELETYPE,
REGARDING JOEL LEVY, LOS ANGELES INDICES, RECORDS LAPD,
LASO, LOS ANGELES RMCA NEGATIVE.

END PAGE ONE

44-2386-219

SEARCHED.....	INDEXED.....
SERIALIZED.....	FILED.....
JAN 21 1969	
FBI-ATLANTA	

Hamilton

PAGE TWO

LA MURKIN

UACB, NO FURTHER ACTION BEING TAKEN AT LOS ANGELES.
BUREAU REQUESTED TO ADVISE IF LARGENT TO BE INTERVIEWED
REGARDING KNOWLEDGE OF JOEL LEVY.

END

WEG

FBI ATLANTA

P

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Abernathy Backs Defender of Ray

By HARMON PERRY

The president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) said Thursday he has absolute confidence in the judgment and integrity of another SCLC official who has offered to defend the accused killer of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The Rev. Ralph Abernathy said what the Rev. James Bevel is trying to do is "move non-violence into a new dimension of American life."

The Rev. Mr. Bevel said early this week in Philadelphia that he would defend James Earl Ray, who goes on trial in March for the April 4 fatal shooting of Dr. King in Memphis.

The Rev. Mr. Bevel said he did not believe Ray is guilty and would defend him free of charge.

"Rev. Bevel is speaking to the real issue," the Rev. Mr. Abernathy said Thursday in a statement issued in the Bahamas but released by SCLC headquarters in Atlanta. The Rev. Mr. Abernathy is in the Bahamas to recuperate from a recent bout with pneumonia.

THE REV. Mr. Abernathy said the issue is not who killed Dr. King but rather "what killed him."

"Rev. Bevel has offered to

defend a man accused of murder and wishes not to reveal details of that defense," the Rev. Mr. Abernathy went on.

"The American public must have all the information about the guilt for this murder," he said. "If a conspiracy exists—and I believe it does—it must be fully exposed."

"Going beyond a conspiracy, Americans must understand that broader guilt exists in a society which has been killing off its best young leaders, including President John F. Kennedy, Medgar Evers, Malcolm X, Robert F. Kennedy and Dr. King."

"IT WILL BE well for the American people to seek the justice which Dr. King worked for rather than killing Ray," the Rev. Mr. Abernathy said.

The SCLC president, who took over the reins of the organization after Dr. King was slain, said he has known the Rev. Mr. Bevel for eight years as an "outstanding strategist and organizer in the nonviolent movement."

"I have absolute confidence in his judgment and integrity," the Rev. Mr. Abernathy said.

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

PAGE 9A

THE ATLANTA JOURNAL

ATLANTA, GA.

Date: 1-23-69
Edition: Blue Streak
Author: HARMON PERRY
Editor: JACK SPALDING
Title: RM

Character: AT100-5718
or AT100-2386

Classification: 44-
Submitting Office: ATLANTA

☐ Being Investigated

44-2386-2191

SEARCHED.....	INDEXED.....
SERIALIZED.....	FILED.....
JAN 24 1969	
FBI - ATLANTA	



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

In Reply, Please Refer to
File No.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
January 21, 1969

JAMES EARL RAY;
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. - VICTIM

Philadelphia news media on January 19, 1969, carried information that the Reverend JAMES BEVEL, Southern Christian Leadership Council of Philadelphia, Pa., sent a telegram to JAMES EARL RAY stating RAY did not kill Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING and BEVEL, who was present at KING's death, offered to testify in RAY's behalf.

On January 19, 1969, BEVEL appeared on WCAU-TV, Philadelphia, special news program during the half-time of the National Football League All-Star Game, stating that he had evidence that JAMES EARL RAY did not kill MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BEVEL refused to divulge his evidentiary information but offered to defend RAY in court though he (BEVEL) was not a licensed attorney, but was learned in the law and had had much experience in defending cases in the courts. BEVEL said he analyzed all the facts and concluded RAY was not guilty.

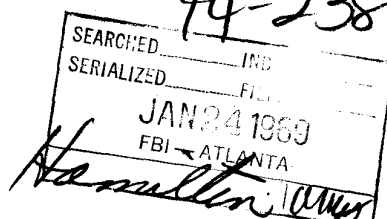
BEVEL said he was speaking for his friends in SCLC including the Reverend RALPH ABERNATHY.

The television interview said that an unnamed official of the SCLC in Atlanta, Ga., had told WCAU-TV that BEVEL has been under pressure and was speaking for himself, not SCLC.

The following is a verbatim tape transcription of the KYW Television news, 11 p.m., January 19, 1969:

Eleven o'clock report in color with BERT ROSELL and the eyewitness news team.

ROSELL: Good evening. There is a bizarre twist of events today in the case of JAMES EARL RAY. RAY is accused of killing Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., and goes on trial in Memphis, Tenn., March 3. The Reverend JAMES BEVEL is Director of Non-violent



JAMES EARL RAY;
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. - VICTIM

Education and Direction Action for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). He was with KING when the civil rights leader was gunned down. BEVEL says that RAY is innocent and has offered to serve as RAY's attorney, free of charge. I talked to BEVEL this afternoon at his Philadelphia headquarters.

ROSELL: Reverend, how do you know that he is not guilty?

BEVEL: Well, in terms of gathering evidence, being present, studying the whole problem of men being murdered, how it is done, from all the logical conclusion and evidence that I have gathered my conclusion, based on the knowledge, in terms we built it to experience, knowledge to the sense that the five senses and even the sixth sense, my conclusion is that JAMES EARL RAY did not kill Dr. KING.

ROSELL: What evidence do you have to support your conclusions that JAMES EARL RAY is innocent?

BEVEL: Well, I would not like to get into my evidence and my information in terms of that because if he asks me to take the case, and I don't know whether he will or not, for me to give that information now would not be to his advantage.

ROSELL: Why have you held back this long in offering your services and proclaiming the innocence of JAMES EARL RAY?

BEVEL: Well, I don't know, probably because I have never (pause) I was involved in developing as I am now, because I was in a movement here in Philadelphia and I just haven't thought in terms of offering this free kind of service to him. When I started thinking about this particular predicament, then I thought about.....

JAMES EARL RAY;
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. - VICTIM

The following is an interview of Reverend JAMES BEVEL by JAY SILVA, over television station WCAU, Philadelphia. This is the local CBS affiliate. The announcer was RON MILLER. The person interviewing BEVEL was JAY SILVA.

MILLER: Reverend JAMES BEVEL of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) says he will keep the evidence he has which he says would prove that JAMES EARL RAY did not assassinate Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING, if RAY does not accept BEVEL's offer of legal representation. Reverend BEVEL sent a telegram to RAY yesterday offering to represent him in court without a fee. The telegram added, "I was present on April 4th at the Lorraine Motel when Dr. KING died. You have been accused of murdering him; of course, I know you aren't guilty." Today, newsman JAY SILVA asked Reverend BEVEL about the proof he says he has concerning RAY's innocence.

BEVEL: Number one, based on the evidence that I have in terms of the incident that took place and based on the opinion of all of my friends, I don't have a friend that I know that thinks that he did it. I thought (inaudible) that the man is not guilty and have come to my conclusions, and based on my evidence.

SILVA: What specifically is the evidence that leads you to this conclusion?

BEVEL: At this time, I don't want to tell about that because if I was going to defend him, you see, then I would have to present that information to the jury. So, I would not go into the details of my evidence at this time because I would have to deal with that with the jury.

SILVA: You say that you have specific evidence that shows JAMES EARL RAY was not the man who murdered MARTIN LUTHER KING.

BEVEL: Mhm.

SILVA: Then, do you have any idea who did, that shows JAMES EARL RAY was not the man who murdered MARTIN LUTHER KING?

JAMES EARL RAY;
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. - VICTIM

BEVEL: Mhm.

SILVA: Well then, do you have any idea who did?

BEVEL: Now, I am not a district attorney. It is the responsibility of the district attorney to find out who killed people. And it is the responsibility of the defense attorney to prove that a particular person is not guilty. So that, in the way the courts work, it is never the responsibility of the defense attorney to prove who did kill someone. It is his job to defend the person who has been accused, that they are not guilty.

SILVA: You said you would defend JAMES EARL RAY without any fee. Are you a lawyer?

BEVEL: No, I am not a licensed lawyer. I have handled cases in court for the last few years. I have been in court quite a bit and I have handled most of my cases. The other thing is that I do know the law.

SILVA: The one thing that intrigues is, why have you held back this information for so long?

BEVEL: Well, number one, I hadn't thought about offering him my services. Now, the reason I, like I said, when you bind information together then you can come to conclusions. The first I said, he is not guilty. The next thing I said, he needs a good lawyer. He needs the best lawyer that the country can afford. And, of course, that means a lawyer who has knowledge enough in that situation and who knows the law. He needs a lawyer that can convince the jury that he is not guilty. And that's why I offered him my services, because I was interested in his having the best possible lawyer with the maximum amount of knowledge in law to defend him before the jury, because the jury and the country pretty much has resigned the motion that the man is guilty and they are just waiting to have a lynching party with him, you know. It is very difficult at this point considering the emotional attachment to Dr. KING that most people had, to have a fair trial.

SILVA: Do you speak for yourself on this issue?

JAMES EARL RAY;
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. - VICTIM

BEVEL: For my friends? Ah, yes, my friends, RUTH BASCOMBE, BEVERLY ERIC, REVEREND SHEPPARD, DU BRADY, REVEREND ABERNATHY, MRS. ABERNATHY, MRS. KING, ANDY YOUNG.

SILVA: Do you say Reverend ABERNATHY agrees with you? You said your friends come to the same conclusion as you have.

BEVEL: I don't have any friends who ever told me that EARL RAY was guilty.

SILVA: So, inasfar as you know, Reverend ABERNATHY agrees with you.

BEVEL: Certainly, in terms of his position on him and I just talked to BERNARD LOVIER who is our Program Director and I pointed out that if RAY would give me the case, he would help me to do a lot of the research and defend him.

MILLER: In Atlanta, Georgia, a spokesman for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference said he, Reverend BEVEL, has been under a lot of pressure recently. Since Dr. KING's death he has gone into a deep depression and if he sent the telegram, he is speaking for himself.

This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

F B I

Date: **1/21/69**Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plaintext or code)Via AIRTEL REGISTERED MAIL
(Priority)

To: Director, FBI

ATTENTION:

From: SAC, PHILADELPHIA
(44-1368)☒ CIVIL RIGHTS SECTION
(C) GENERAL INVEST. DIV.
☐ DOMESTIC INTELLIGENCE DIV.Subject: **MURKIN**

☒ CR ☐ EL ☐ VRA-65 ☐ CRA-64
☐ PA ☐ PE ☐ PF
☐ BM ☐ BM-Threats ☐ Racial Matters
☐ Klan ☐ Organization

Summary of Complaint:

Remytels 1/19/69.

Enclosed for the Bureau are three copies of a self-explanatory LHM. Info copies furnished Memphis and Atlanta.

3 - Bureau (Enc. 3) (RM)
 2 - Memphis (Enc. 2) (RM)
 1 - Atlanta (Enc. 1) (RM)
 2 - Philadelphia
 1 - 44-1368
 1 - 100-47194 (SCLC)

JRW/JBK
 (8)

ACTION: UACB:

☒ No further action being taken and
☒ LHM enclosed ☒ Copy furnished to USA, EDPa.
☐ LHM being submitted
☐ Report being submitted
☐ Preliminary investigation instituted
☐ Limited investigation instituted

Approved: _____
 Special Agent in Charge

Sent _____

make sure of 157-656 n.Y. Paul

44-2386-2193

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
JAN 21 1969	
FBI - ATLANTA	

Hamilton

PH 44-1368

WF 1928-PRI advised 1/14/68 that Reverend JAMES BEVEL at an SCLC meeting recently held at Frogmore, S. C., wanted the Reverend RALPH ABERNATHY of SCLC to step down in favor of the Reverend JESSE JACKSON. WF 1928-PRI also said BEVEL was returning to Philadelphia to create a furor in the next four to six months.

3+4

E

FBI ATLANTA

FBI WASH DC

527PM URGENT 1-29-68 BGM

TO ATLANTA 44-2386

FROM DIRECTOR 44-38861 1P

MURKIN

ARTICLE IN "THE WASHINGTON POST" NEWSPAPER TODAY QUOTES
REVEREND RALPH DAVID ABERNATHY, HEAD OF SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN
LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE (SCLC) IN A NEWS CONFERENCE AS
INDICATING A CONSPIRACY EXISTS IN THE ASSASSINATION OF
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR (ASSASSINATION APRIL FOUR, NINETEEN
SIXTY-EIGHT).

YOU SHOULD IMMEDIATELY INTERVIEW REVEREND ABERNATHY
FOR DETAILS OF ANY INFORMATION HE POSSESSES, HIS SOURCE OF
INFORMATION, AND CONDUCT ALL NECESSARY INVESTIGATION TO
THOROUGHLY RESOLVE THIS MATTER AS WELL AS ANY INFORMATION
STEMMING FROM INTERVIEW OF REVEREND ABERNATHY. KEEP BUREAU
FULLY INFORMED OF ALL DEVELOPMENTS. AIRMAIL COPY SENT
MEMPHIS.

END

SAT

FBI ATLANTA

44-2386-2194

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
JAN 29 1969	
FBI ATLANTA	

Hamilton

1-24-69

PLAIN TEXT

TELETYPE

URGENT

TO DIRECTOR (44-38861)

FROM MEMPHIS (44-1987)

MURKIN. *44-2386*

ON JAN. TWENTYFOUR, SIXTYNINE, MR THREE THREE EIGHT R ADVISED THAT JAMES BEVEL OF SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE (SCLC), ACCOMPANIED BY YOUNG MALE NEGRO, CEDRIC MOORE, FORMERLY OF MEMPHIS, NOW OF PHILADELPHIA, PA., ONE (FNU) RUTHERFORD, SCLC GENERAL MANAGER, AND (FNU) NIXON (PHONETIC), FORMER CAMPAIGN MANAGER OF PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY OF COMEDIAN DICK GREGORY, WERE IN MEMPHIS, TENN. ON NIGHT JANUARY TWENTYTREE, SIXTYNINE. BEVEL CLAIMED TO HAVE CONFERRED FOR SEVERAL HOURS JANUARY TWENTYTREE, SIXTYNINE, ON EIGHTH FLOOR OF PEABODY HOTEL WITH JAMES EARL RAY'S ATTORNEY, PERCY FOREMAN, AND LATER FOREMAN AND BEVEL CONFERRED WITH RAY IN SHELBY COUNTY JAIL. AT ABOUT TEN P.M., BEVEL CALLED PRESS CONFERENCE AT CLAYBORN TEMPLE AME CHURCH, AT WHICH HE INVITED DELEGATES TO NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES MID-WINTER CONFERENCE, THEN MEETING IN MEMPHIS. BEVEL CLAIMED THAT HE WAS CONVINCED OF RAY'S INNOCENCE IN KILLING MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. CLAIMED AMERICA IS TRYING TO LYNCH RAY. CLAIMED SCLC

3

WHL:BN
CC (AM)

- 1 - PHILADELPHIA
- 1 - ATLANTA
- 1 - ME 170-70-Sub(ME 338-R)
- 1 - ME 157-166 (SCLC)

44-2386-2194

SEARCHED	INDEXED
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FBI - ATLANTA	

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1-24-69

PAGE TWO

PRESIDENT, REV. RALPH ABERNATHY, IS ALSO CONVINCED OF RAY'S INNOCENCE. HE REFUSED TO FURNISH THE BASIS FOR HIS STATEMENTS, OTHER THAN TO CLAIM HE HAD "PROPHETIC POWERS." BEVEL ADDED THAT HIS CONVICTIONS REGARDING RAY'S INNOCENCE HAD BEEN DISCUSSED BY HIM WITH ABERNATHY AND OTHER SCLC LEADERS AT A RECENT SCLC RETREAT IN SOUTH CAROLINA AND HE HAD CONVINCED THEM HE HAD PROOF OF RAY'S INNOCENCE, INDICATING THAT HE IS MAKING THESE CHARGES WITH ACQUIESCENCE OF SCLC LEADERS.

AIR MAIL COPIES TO ATLANTA AND PHILADELPHIA.

P.

END

FBI MEMPHIS

FBI ATLANTA

3:55 PM URGENT 1/30/69 SAT
TO DIRECTOR 44-38861 AND MEMPHIS
FROM ATLANTA 44-2386

MURKIN

RE BUREAU TEL TO ATLANTA JAN. TWENTYNINE, SIXTYNINE.
APPOINTMENT WAS MADE THIS DATE FOR INTERVIEW WITH REV. RALPH
ABERNATHY. WHEN SA'S O. RICHARD HAMILTON AND ARTHUR L. MURTAGH
ARRIVED AT SCLC HEADQUARTERS, ABERNATHY'S SECRETARY ADVISED HE
WAS NOT IN BUT SHE WOULD CONTACT HIM ON THE TELEPHONE. SA
HAMILTON TELEPHONICALLY TALKED WITH ABERNATHY WHO APOLOGIZED
FOR BEING UNABLE TO KEEP THE APPOINTMENT AND SAID HE WAS "VISITING
THE SICK".

ABERNATHY ADVISED CONCERNING HIS STATEMENT TO THE PRESS THAT A
CONSPIRACY EXISTS IN THE ASSASSINATION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.,
THAT WHAT HE ACTUALLY STATED WAS IN VIEW OF THE ASSASSINATIONS OF
PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, ROBERT F. KENNEDY, MEDGAR EVERS, AND
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., THERE WOULD BE AN INDICATION TO HIM
END PAGE ONE

Hamilton out

44-2386-255

PAGE TWO

AT 44-2386

THAT THERE MAY BE A CONSPIRACY AMONG THE "FORCES OF EVIL" TO DO AWAY WITH ANY YOUNG "MILITANT" WHO STANDS FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS. ABERNATHY STATED HE HAS NO EVIDENCE NOR HAS HE HEARD FROM ANY SOURCE ANY SPECIFIC INFORMATION THAT A CONSPIRACY EXISTS IN THIS MATTER. HE ADVISED THAT THE STATEMENT MADE TO THE PRESS CONCERNING A CONSPIRACY CONCERNED THE ASSASSINATIONS OF ALL THE ABOVE MEN.

ABERNATHY ADVISED THAT SEVERAL MONTHS AGO, REV. JAMES LAWSON, MINISTER OF CENTENARY METHODIST CHURCH, MEMPHIS, TOLD HIM IT WAS HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT THE DAY PRIOR TO THE ASSASSINATION OF KING, TWO NEGRO FIREMEN WHO WORKED IN THE FIRE STATION ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE MOTEL WHERE KING WAS KILLED WERE MOVED, LEAVING SOME UNMANNED FIRE EQUIPMENT. ACCORDING TO LAWSON, THE TWO NEGRO FIREMEN WERE MOVED TO FIRE STATIONS WHICH WERE ALREADY FULLY MANNED AND EQUIPPED. ALSO ACCORDING TO LAWSON, A NEGRO POLICEMAN WHO WORKED THE BEAT WHICH INCLUDED THE MOTEL WHERE KING WAS KILLED WAS MOVED OFF OF THAT BEAT THE DAY KING WAS KILLED.

END PAGE TWO

PAGE THREE

01-44-2386

THAT INFORMATION ALONG WITH WHAT HE HAS HEARD AND READ CONCERNING UNIDENTIFIED RADIO CALLS WHICH DIVERTED A SEARCH FOR A WHITE MUSTANG LEADS HIM TO BELIEVE THAT THERE MAY BE A CONSPIRACY IN THIS MATTER.

MEMPHIS CONTACT REV. JAMES LAWSON CONCERNING THE ABOVE MATTER IF NOT ALREADY DONE AND CONDUCT ALL NECESSARY INVESTIGATION TO RESOLVE THE MATTER.

END

P

SDC

FBI MEMPHIS

TU

ERT FBI WASH DC



In Reply, Please Refer to
File No.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Atlanta, Georgia

January 31, 1969

**ASSASSINATION OF
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
AT MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE
APRIL 4, 1968**

The January 29, 1969, edition of "The Washington Post" newspaper contained an article which quoted Rev. Ralph David Abernathy, President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, as indicating in a news conference that a conspiracy exists with regard to the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

On January 30, 1969, Rev. Abernathy was interviewed by a Special Agent of the FBI at Atlanta, Georgia, and the results are set forth on the following page:

This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

5 - Bureau (RM) 2 - Memphis (RM)
1 - Atlanta (44-2386) (RM)
ORH:vsc
(8)

WJ

44-2386-2197

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1Date January 31, 1969

Rev. RALPH DAVID ABERNATHY, President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, 330 Auburn Avenue, N. E., Atlanta, Georgia, telephonically advised with regards to his statement to the press, which was quoted in "The Washington Post" newspaper, Washington, D. C., on January 29, 1969, that what he told the press was that he believed in view of the assassinations of President JOHN F. KENNEDY, ROBERT F. KENNEDY, MEDGAR EVERS and MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., there would be an indication to him that there may be a conspiracy among the forces of evil to do away with any young militant who stands for righteousness. Rev. ABERNATHY advised that he has no specific information or other evidence that a conspiracy exists with respect to the specific assassination of Dr. KING. He advised that the statement made to the press on January 29, 1969, in which he referred to a conspiracy concerned the assassination of all of the above-mentioned persons. In regard to those assassinations he made it clear he has no evidence indicating a conspiracy and it is only his belief or fear on his part that such a conspiracy does exist. He stated he has no idea what individuals or forces would be involved in such a conspiracy.

Rev. ABERNATHY advised that several months ago Rev. JAMES LAWSON, Minister of the Centenary Methodist Church at Memphis, Tennessee, told him, Rev. ABERNATHY, that it was Rev. LAWSON's understanding that the day before the assassination of Dr. KING, two Negro firemen, who had been assigned to the fire station across the street from the motel where Dr. KING was killed, were moved to another fire station. According to Rev. LAWSON that move left the fire station unmanned and they were moved to a station which was already fully manned and equipped. Also according to Rev. LAWSON, a Negro policeman, who worked the beat which included the motel where Dr. KING was killed, was moved off of that beat the day Dr. KING was killed, April 4, 1968, but prior to the killing.

2*

On 1/30/69 at Atlanta, Georgia File # Atlanta 44-2386by SA O. RICHARD HAMILTON :vsc Date dictated 1/31/69

This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

1/31/69

AIRTEL

AIRMAIL

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI

FROM: SAC, ATLANTA (44-2386) (P)

MURKIN

Re Atlanta teletype to Bureau and Memphis dated 1/30/69, and Bureau telephone call to Atlanta, 1/30/69.

Enclosed for the Bureau are five (5) copies of LHM and to Memphis are two (2) copies of LHM captioned "ASSASSINATION OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., AT MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE, APRIL 4, 1968".

3 - Bureau (Enc. 5) (RM)
2 - Memphis (Enc. 2) (RM)
2 - Atlanta
ORH:vsc
(7)

1/31/69
PLAINTEXT

AIRTEL

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (44-38861)

FROM: SAC, MEMPHIS (44-1987) (P)

SUBJECT: MURKIN

OO: ME

Re Atlanta teletype to Bureau, 1/30/69, concerning the interview of Reverend RALPH ABERNATHY, SCLC Headquarters, Atlanta, Georgia.

The results of the investigation conducted by the Memphis Division in regard to the reference of ABERNATHY re Citizens Band radio transmissions and the removal of Negro firemen and policemen from the immediate area of the Lorraine Motel shortly prior to the shooting of Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., were forwarded to the Bureau by Memphis airtels to the Bureau dated 7/29/68 and 11/21/68.

The only item mentioned by ABERNATHY that has not been fully explained to the Bureau is the fact that Reverend JAMES LAWSON, Memphis, advised ABERNATHY that a Negro policeman who worked the beat which included the motel where Dr. KING was killed was moved off that beat the day KING was killed.

Airtel _____ On 1/31/69, Lt. E. H. ARKIN, Intelligence
Unit, Memphis PD, advised that the Memphis PD
does not maintain any officers on a "walking beat" other

Teletype _____
3-Bureau
1-Atlanta (44-2386) INFO
2-Memphis

RFB:PEH
(6)

44-256-2199

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ME 44-1987

than on special occasions and that from a review of the Memphis PD records he ascertained that there were no Memphis police officers assigned to a "walking beat" in Memphis on the day Dr. KING was killed.

In this regard it is believed that Reverend LAWSON was referring to Detective E. E. REDDITT, Memphis PD, who was removed from a lookout position at engine house #2 of the Memphis Fire Department on 4/4/68 due to the fact a number of threats had been made on REDDITT's life as a result of REDDITT's activities in attending meetings of the striking sanitation workers in Memphis in February and March, 1968. REDDITT was removed from this fire house and two officers of the Memphis PD were assigned at that time to protect REDDITT and members of REDDITT's family.

In view of the above, the Memphis Division does not anticipate interviewing Reverend JAMES LAWSON concerning the information LAWSON furnished to ABERNATHY.

A copy of this airtel is being submitted for the information of the Atlanta Division as Atlanta obtained the information in question as a result of the interview of Reverend ABERNATHY at Atlanta.

F B I

Date: 2/18/69

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plain text or code)Via AIRTEL _____
(Priority or Method of Mailing)

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (44-38861)
 FROM: SAC, MEMPHIS (44-1987) (P)
 SUBJECT: MURKIN

All offices receiving copies of this airtel should note that the trial in instant case has been postponed from March 3, 1969, until April 7, 1969, in Division III of the Shelby County Criminal Court, Memphis, Tenn. In the event you receive inquiries from any witnesses who have been previously subpoenaed, you should advise them that their testimony will still be desired for the new trial on 4/7/69. If they have any need for further details, they should correspond directly with Attorney General PHIL A. CANALE, Shelby County Courthouse, Memphis, Tennessee.

The Bureau is requested to advise Legats London, Paris, and Ottawa of the postponement in order that they may be able to answer any inquiries from persons in their areas who may have been subpoenaed.

- 3 - Bureau
- ② - Atlanta
- 2 - Birmingham
- 2 - Chicago
- 2 - Kansas City
- 2 - Los Angeles
- 2 - Mobile
- 2 - New Orleans
- 2 - St. Louis
- 2 - Memphis

JCH:jap
 (21)

44-2386-2200

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Approved: _____

Special Agent in Charge

Sent _____

ME 44-1987

In view of plans being laid throughout the country for the observance of 4/4/69 as a memorial observance for MARTIN LUTHER KING, it is suggested that the Bureau consider requesting all offices to advise Memphis of any information they may receive which would indicate that militant groups or individuals plan to come to Memphis on 4/4/69 and who may remain to demonstrate or otherwise disrupt subject's trial on 4/7/69.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

In Reply, Please Refer to
File No.

Atlanta, Georgia

March 11, 1969

ANONYMOUS ACCUSATION ALLEGING
PARTICIPATION OF RAYMOND POLACCO
IN ASSASSINATION OF
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

On March 7, 1969, Mr. Jim Rankin, City Desk, "The Atlanta Constitution" newspaper, Atlanta, Georgia, furnished a letter, contained in an envelope, postmarked Amarillo, Texas, March 2, 1969. The letter, which was typewritten and unsigned, states as follows:

"March 1, 1969

"The Constitution
Atlanta Newspapers, Inc.
10 Forsythe St., N.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30030

"To Whom it may concern:

"I am sure this is some information that you would appreciate. I have been keeping up with what you publish about the Martin Luther King Jr. case. That whole thing was plotted in Atlanta, Ga. One of the key pay-off men is a Cuban, 27 years of age, his name is Raymond Polacco and uses telephones, concerning his pay-off at 4550 Ridgecrest and 834 C Confederate Courts S. E. He is also shacking with a little red headed girl at the Confederate Courts address. This little red-headed girl is Debbie Blackman. They make a lot of trips together to New Orleans, La.

SEARCHED

SERIALIZED

INDEXED

5 - Bureau This document contains neither recommendations nor con-
2 - Memphis sions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is
1 - Dallas loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be dis-
2 - AT tributed outside your agency.

ONE:vcc
(10)

ANONYMOUS ACCUSATION

"I live in New Orleans and know this girl real well. She does not know that this Cuban is the pay-off man. She is a teen-ager and should not be involved in this crime."

The current Atlanta City Directory reflects there is no address such as 4550 Ridgecrest Drive in Atlanta. The current suburban directory for the Atlanta, Georgia, area reflects 4550 Ridgecrest Drive, Forest Park, is occupied by Mr. Alf Calalay.

On March 10, 1969, Miss Deborah Diane Blackman, 834 Confederate Court, Apartment C, age 19, advised she met Raymond or Raymon Polacco about four months ago at The Scene, a nightclub in Atlanta, Georgia. She advised she dated Polacco several times after that and he came to her apartment on numerous occasions where she lives with her sister, Judy Griffin. She advised she has not seen Polacco for about one month, although she dated him quite steadily during the period that she knew him. Miss Blackman advised that according to Polacco he was married and separated from his wife and he worked at the First National Bank in Atlanta, Georgia, and attends Georgia State College in Atlanta. She said that according to Polacco he is half Italian and half Spanish. Miss Blackman advised that Polacco is from California. She believes he is from the Los Angeles area but is not sure. She advised he called his home in California on two or three occasions during the period of time she knew him from her and her sister's apartment. She advised she heard that Polacco has been reconciled with his wife and is living with her again.

Miss Blackman advised that she and a girl friend have made two trips to New Orleans, Louisiana, the first one being made in December, 1968, and the second in February, 1969. The girl who accompanied her was Charlotte Majure. She stated these

ANONYMOUS ACCUSATION

were short weekend trips, the latter being to attend the Mardi Gras. She denied that Polacco ever went with her to New Orleans or to any place outside of Atlanta. Miss Blackman advised during the time she knew Polacco, he never mentioned James Earl Ray nor does she recall that he ever mentioned the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Miss Blackman advised that Polacco is a white male, about 25 years old, about 5' 9" tall, medium build, black hair, black eyes, olive complexion, and wears expensive clothing.

Miss Blackman advised that her sister, Judy, is married to, separated from, and in the process of getting a divorce from Joe Griffin, who resides at 1918 North Manhattan Street, Amarillo, Texas. She advised he is a house painter by trade and is about 50 years old. Miss Blackman stated that Judy and Joe Griffin have three children, who are living with Judy, and that Joe Griffin is attempting to obtain custody of the children. During his attempts to obtain custody of the children, he has attempted to prove that Judy is an unfit mother. In making these allegations, he has accused Judy of having illicit affairs with Raymond Polacco. She advised that on at least one occasion, Joe Griffin called a neighbor of Polacco's and told the neighbor that Polacco was running around with Judy and told Judy that from that conversation with the neighbor, he determined that Polacco is actually a Cuban. She advised that Joe Griffin and Raymond Polacco have never actually met to her knowledge but that Griffin seems intent upon proving an illicit relationship between Polacco and Judy Griffin.

On March 10, 1969, Mrs. Judy Griffin, 834 Confederate Court, Apartment C, S. E., Atlanta, Georgia, confirmed the above information furnished by Deborah Blackman, her sister, and stated that Joe Griffin, her husband, appears to be attempting through

ANONYMOUS ACCUSATION

telephone calls, to prove that she and Raymond Polacco have been too intimate. She advised that Polacco has been to her and her sister's apartment on numerous occasions but that actually her sister, Deborah Blackman, has been dating Polacco.

Judy Griffin advised that the telephone call allegedly made by Griffin to a neighbor of Polacco's was made to a family by the name of Calalay. She does not know where the Calalay family lives and neither Judy Griffin nor Deborah Blackman admitted knowing the residence of Raymond Polacco.

Deborah Blackman advised that during the time Polacco was allegedly separated from his wife he claimed to have an apartment in Atlanta, but she does not know where it was located.

3/11/68

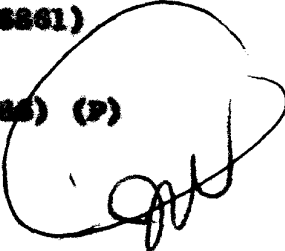
AIRTEL

AIRMAIL

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (44-38861)

FROM: SAC, ATLANTA (44-2386) (P)

MURKIN



Enclosed herewith for the Bureau are five (5) copies of LHM, captioned "ANONYMOUS ACCUSATION ALLEGING PARTICIPATION OF RAYMOND POLACCO IN ASSASSINATION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR."

Two copies of the LHM are being enclosed for Memphis and one copy for Dallas.


Atlanta indices negative concerning RAYMOND POLACCO and Debbie or Deborah Blackman.

Records of the Atlanta Police Department contain no record of RAYMOND POLACCO.

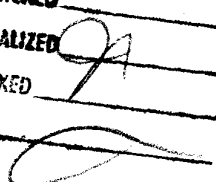
The enclosed LHM is self-explanatory.

The anonymous letter, which was apparently written by JOE GRIFFIN, 1918 N. Manhattan St., Amarillo, Tex., would appear to be a violation of blackmail statutes within the investigative jurisdiction of the Post Office Department. In view of the subject matter, however, the letter is not being furnished to the local Postal Inspector without specific instruction to do so by the Bureau.

3 - Bureau (Enc. 5)
2 - Memphis (44-1987) (Enc. 2)
1 - Dallas (Enc. 1) (Info)
2 - Atlanta
GMM:vsc
(8)



OUT-GOING
SEARCHED
SERIALIZED
INDEXED
FILED



44-2386-2012

AT 44-2386

**Dallas Office is being furnished one copy since
the writer of the letter apparently lives within that division.**

2*

3-12-69

AIRTEL

To: SAC, Memphis (44-1987)

From: Director, FBI (44-38861)

MURKIN

44-2386-2203

For information of Offices receiving this communication, James Earl Ray on March 10, 1969, in Shelby County Criminal Court, Memphis, Tennessee, entered a plea of guilty to the state charge of murder in connection with the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., and was sentenced to a term of imprisonment for 99 years.

In the event you receive inquiries from any witnesses who have been previously subpoenaed in the state case, you should advise them of the above court proceedings. If any individuals who contact you desire any further details, they should be advised to correspond directly with Mr. Phil M. Canale, Jr., State Attorney General, Shelby County Courthouse, Memphis, Tennessee.

- 2 - Atlanta
- 2 - Birmingham
- 2 - Chicago
- 2 - Kansas City
- 2 - Los Angeles
- 2 - Mobile
- 2 - New Orleans
- 2 - St. Louis

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MAR 13 1969	
FBI - ATLANTA	

Samuel O. Smith

44-2386-2203

3-14-69

AIRTEL

To: SAC, Dallas (44-2649)
From: Director, FBI (44-38861)
MURKIN

ReATairtel to the Bureau dated 3-11-69.

Dallas should immediately locate and interview Joe Griffin, 1918 N. Manhattan St., Amarillo, Texas, concerning any information he may have in his possession regarding the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. You should also determine location of Raymond Polacco through interview of Griffin and set forth leads to have him interviewed.

Atlanta should continue efforts to locate Raymond Polacco in an effort to interview him and completely resolve this allegation. It is noted that Polacco was allegedly employed at the First National Bank in Atlanta, Georgia, and allegedly attends Georgia State College in Atlanta. Your efforts to locate Polacco should not be limited to his alleged place of employment and school as all avenues must be exhausted to locate and interview him.

Based upon available information, Bureau indices contain no information identifiable with Raymond Polacco or Joe Griffin.

Keep the Bureau advised of pertinent developments.

- 1 - Memphis (44-1987) (for info)
- ① - Atlanta (44-2386) (for info)

44-2386-2204

SEARCHED	INDEXED
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MAR 15 1969	
FBI - ATLANTA	

Hamilton



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

In Reply, Please Refer to
File No.

Dallas, Texas
March 19, 1969

**ANONYMOUS ACCUSATION ALLEGING
PARTICIPATION OF RAYMOND POLACCO
IN ASSASSINATION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.**

Reference is made to the memorandum, entitled as above, submitted by the Atlanta Office on March 11, 1969.

A check of the City Directory of Amarillo, Texas, failed to reveal an address of 1918 North Manhattan Street or the name of JOE GRIFFIN. The City Directory did reveal a J. E. Griffin, Painter, residing at 1913 North Manhattan Street.

Operator No. 20, Amarillo Credit Association, 912 Taylor Street, on March 17, 1969, advised that Johnnie E. Griffin, 1913 North Manhattan Street, had been known to their files since July of 1966, and was reportedly employed as a house painter. The name of his wife was shown as Judy but file also contained information that Griffin had filed for divorce from Judy on January 9, 1969.

On March 17, 1969, Mr. Johnnie Ernest Griffin, 1913 North Manhattan Street, Amarillo, Texas, was interviewed at his place of employment, the Astoria Park Apartments, Amarillo, Texas. Griffin advised that on

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Hamilton
44-2386-2905

**ANONYMOUS ACCUSATION ALLEGING
PARTICIPATION OF RAYMOND
POLACCO IN ASSASSINATION OF
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.**

January 6, 1968, his wife's sister, Mrs. Charlie (Wanda) Johnston, came to Amarillo, and lived with them until May of 1968. He advised that she has now returned to her husband and that they reside at 812 - Apartment B, Eloise Courts, Atlanta, Georgia, and that the husband, Charlie Johnston, is employed as a fireman for the City of Atlanta, Georgia.

He advised that the mother of Charlie Johnston is Mrs. R. H. Johnston, 594 Hill Street, Atlanta, Georgia. He stated that one time at Amarillo while Wanda Johnston was drunk, she stated that her husband, Charlie Johnston, had run over a Negro boy and killed him. She stated that her husband had killed a Negro for free but that her mother in law got \$10,000.00 for shooting Martin Luther King. He stated that he did not know whether this was true or not, but that Mrs. Johnston did about that time send Wanda Johnston about \$2,000.00 to pay for a car.

Griffin advised that all of his wife's family call him Joe Griffin. He stated that his wife, Judy Griffin, left him about October, 1968, and returned to Atlanta, Georgia, where she resides with a sister, Deborah Blackman, at 834-C Confederate Courts, Atlanta, Georgia. He advised that there is presently a court fight going on for the custody of their three children.

Griffin advised that he was in Atlanta just before Christmas of 1968, and that Deborah Blackman told him that Mrs. Johnston had received another "big pay off" in the Martin Luther King case, and that this "pay off" had been made by Raymond Polacco. He advised that he had never met this Raymond Polacco but that he was going with Deborah Blackman at the time that he was in Atlanta.

**ANNOHYMOUS ACCUSATION ALLEGING
PARTICIPATION OF RAYMOND
POLACCO IN ASSASINATION OF
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.**

Griffin advised that he returned to Amarillo, Texas, and that on January 28, 1969, he received a telegram which read as follows:

"Dear Sir: I would like to get in touch with you concerning your family. It is important. I would like for you to reply back to the Atlanta Main Office, sending your telephone number. Please answer one way or the other. BRUCE MARKS."

Griffin advised that he sent a telegram back furnishing his phone number and the next day received a telephone call from Raymond Polacco from Atlanta, Georgia. Polacco advised that he understood that Griffin was looking for evidence to indicate that his wife was morally unfit to have the children and stated that he would secure pictures of his wife in the nude or in bed with some man if Griffin would pay him \$500.00. He indicated to Griffin that he was an investigator and told Griffin that he could be reached at Atlanta telephone number 404-361-7297.

Griffin advised that he called Polacco back at this number and talked with a woman whose name he understood to be "Calloway". She advised that Polacco did not live at that address but that she babysat for the four year old daughter of Polacco. She said that Polacco lived "down the street" and advised that she lived at 4550 Ridgecrest Drive. She stated that Polacco was a Cuban, 27 years of age, was not employed, but had a wife who worked in a drug store. She said that Polacco was attending school somewhere in Atlanta.

Griffin was then asked if he wrote a letter to the Atlanta Constitution, Atlanta, Georgia, about this matter and emphatically denied writing such a

**ANONYMOUS ACCUSATION ALLEGING
PARTICIPATION OF RAYMOND
POLACCO IN ASSASSINATION OF
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.**

letter. He stated that all that he knew about the Martin Luther King assassination had come from members of his wife's family and that he knew nothing of his own knowledge about the matter.

On March 17, 1969, Mr. Dee Miller, Attorney at Law, Fisk Building, Eighth and Polk Streets, Amarillo, Texas, advised that he represented Johnnie E. Griffin in a divorce and child custody suit against his former wife, Judy Griffin, of Atlanta, Georgia. He advised that he did receive a call from a man named Raymond, last name not given, from Atlanta, Georgia, advising that he would secure compromising photographs of Judy Griffin for use in the child custody matter for \$500.00. Miller advised that this caller claimed to be an investigator but stated that it was immediately apparent to him that the caller was not an investigator since he did not even have a camera and wanted an advance so that he could buy a camera. Miller told this caller that they were not interested in such a proposition.

Mr. Miller advised that there was a hearing at Amarillo, Texas, on January 24, 1969, in the child custody matter and that Griffin had furnished him some letters from an "Aunt Ella" from Decatur, Georgia, which letters described the immoral behaviour of Judy Griffin while in Atlanta. He advised that he subpoenaed this person to the hearing and attempted to introduce the letters but "Aunt Ella" denied writing such letters and stated she convinced him that she did not write the letters. He stated that he accused Griffin of preparing the letters from "Aunt Ella" but he denied it. Mr. Miller advised that in view of this, he was seriously considering asking permission of the court to withdraw from the case.

3/19/69

AIRTEL

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (44-38861)
FROM: SAC, DALLAS (44-2649) (RUC)
SUBJECT: MURKIN

Re Bureau airtel to Dallas dated 3/14/69.

Enclosed herewith for the Bureau are five copies of LHM captioned "ANONYMOUS ACCUSATION ALLEGING PARTICIPATION OF RAYMOND POLACCO IN ASSASSINATION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.", dated 3/19/69, at Dallas, Texas.

Two copies each are also enclosed for the Atlanta and Memphis offices.

The interview of JOHNNIE ERNEST GRIFFIN also known as Joe Griffin, was conducted by SAs WILLIAM R. JENKINS and LARRY J. STEGING. The interview of Attorney DEE MILLER was by SA WILLIAM R. JENKINS.

LEADS

ATLANTA

AT FOREST PARK, GEORGIA. 1. Will interview Mrs. ALF CALALAY, 4550 Ridgecrest Street, since this is apparently the person that GRIFFIN talked with by phone and who said that she was a babysitter for RAYMOND POLACCO and kept his four year old daughter.

2. Will determine holder of Atlanta phone number 404-361-7297, and if not listed to ALF CALALAY will interview them for information concerning POLACCO.

3 - Bureau (Enc. 5)
2 - Memphis (44-1987) (Enc. 2)
2 - Atlanta (44-2386) (Enc. 2)
1 - Dallas
WRJ:mar
(8)

SEARCHED.....	INDEXED.....
SERIALIZED.....	FILED.....
MAR 21 1969	
FBI - ATLANTA	

[Handwritten signature]

44-2386-2206

OXFBI ATLANTA

FBI WASH DC

827PM URGENT 3/28/69 CAB

TO DIRECTOR ATALNTA MEMPHIS PHILADELPHIA
FROM WASHINGTON FIELD 44-703 1P

MURKIN

RE PHILADELPHIA TEL MARCH TWENTY-SEVEN, LAST.

LEONARD E. DOYLE, R (PROB), (PROTECT) ADVISED MARCH
TWENTY-EIGHT INSTANT THAT BEVEL NOT IN WDC. ACCORDING TO
SOURCE BEVEL BELIEVED TO BE IN ATLANTA ATTENDING AN SCLC
STAFF MEETING.

END

LWG

FBI ATLANTA

*Hamilton advised
3/28/69 (12)*

3

44-2386-2207

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
MAR 28 1969	
FBI - ATLANTA	

Hamilton

FBI PHILA

FBI ATLANTA

1122PM URGENT 3/28/69 LWG

TO DIRECTOR, WASHINGTON FIELD, PHILADELPHIA
FROM ATLANTA (44-2386)

MURKIN

RE PHILADELPHIA TEL MARCH TWENTYSEVEN LAST.

ATLANTA SOURCES CONTACTED THIS DATE AND ADVISED REVEL
IS NOT IN ATLANTA AND WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN TO THEM, ALTHOUGH
SUPPOSED TO BE IN PHILADELPHIA WHERE HE RESIDES.

CONTACT BEING MAINTAINED WITH SOURCES AND IF LOCATED IN ATLANTA,
WILL BE INTERVIEWED.
AM COPY TO MEMPHIS.

END

CRR

FBI PHILA

P

MXS

FBI WASH DC*

4

44-2386-2208

BI ATLANTA

FBI MEMPHIS

545 PM URGENT 3-28-69 DND

TO DIRECTOR (44-38861), WFO, ATLANTA, AND MOBILE
FROM MEMPHIS (44-1987)

7530-285-
8-1/2 IN.
WHITE, CANAL

MURKIN.

RE PHILADELPHIA TEL TO BUREAU MARCH TWENTYSEVEN LAST.

FOR MOBILE'S INFORMATION, BUREAU HAS INSTRUCTED THAT REV. JAMES BEVEL, SCLC OFFICIAL, BE LOCATED AND INTERVIEWED CONCERNING HIS STATEMENT IN NEW YORK TIMES THAT LETTER WAS TURNED OVER TO MEMPHIS PD APPROXIMATELY APRIL THREE, SIXTYEIGHT, CONTAINING INFORMATION THAT MARTIN LUTHER KING WAS TO BE KILLED WHILE IN MEMPHIS. MEMPHIS PD HAS NO KNOWLEDGE THIS LETTER.

BEVEL IS NOT NOW IN MEMPHIS BUT INFO AVAILABLE TO MEMPHIS INDICATED ABERNATHY OF SCLC IS TO BE IN ATLANTA MARCH TWENTYNINE NEXT AND ALSO THAT NUMEROUS SCLC OFFICIALS ARE TO MEET AT MONTGOMERY, ALA. ON APRIL FOUR NEXT.

ATLANTA AND MOBILE ATTEMPT TO LOCATE AND INTERVIEW BEVEL. P.

END

LWG

FBI ATLANTA

3

44-2386-2001

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SERIALIZED	FILED
MAR 28 1969	
FBI - ATLANTA	

[Handwritten signature]

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Ray's Innocence Can Be Proved by SCLC's Rev. Bevel, Abernathy Believes

By HENRY P. LEIFERMANN
By United Press International

The Rev. Ralph D. Abernathy said Thursday he believes one of his aides, the Rev. James Bevel, can prove James Earl Ray is innocent in the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

"I have absolute confidence in his judgment and integrity," Abernathy said of Bevel, the

Ray's attorney, Percy Foreman of Houston, has not commented on Bevel's offer of help. Neither Foreman, who is

in Memphis, Tenn., nor Bevel, was available for comment Thursday.

Bevel has refused to elaborate

on whatever information he has. Abernathy's telegram statement was issued after he, Bevel and other SCLC officials discussed

the situation by telephone on Wednesday.

Bevel had been subpoenaed as a defense witness in the Ray

trial by Ray's former attorney, Arthur J. Hanes Sr., the ex-mayor of Birmingham, Ala. Hanes, in an interview after

Ray fired him and hired Foreman last November, said he had planned to prove that a black power group with Com-

munist ties killed King, with a goal of creating civil disturbance in the wake of the assassination.



James Earl Ray Percy Foreman

Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) leader who offered to defend Ray last Saturday.

"If a conspiracy exists, and I believe it does, it must be fully exposed," Abernathy said. "I call upon America's oppressed and victimized to come to the aid and defense of the accused man."

Abernathy made the statement in a telegram released by the SCLC offices here.

Bevel, longtime staffer under King and Abernathy, is director of nonviolent education and direct action for SCLC, and presently works in the SCLC's Philadelphia office. In a telegram to Ray last Saturday, Bevel offered to defend him and said, "I know you are not guilty."

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

Page 56

THE ATLANTA
CONSTITUTION
ATLANTA, GA.

Date: 1-24-69

Edition:

Author: HENRY LIEFFERMAN

Editor: REG MURPHY

Title:

RM

Character: AT100-5718

or AT100-2386-22N

Classification: 44

Submitting Office: ATLANTA

☐ Being Investigated

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SERIALIZED.....	FILED.....
JAN 24 1969	
FBI - ATLANTA	

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Abernathy Backs Defender of Ray

By HARMON PERRY

The president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) said Thursday he has absolute confidence in the judgment and integrity of another SCLC official who has offered to defend the accused killer of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The Rev. Ralph Abernathy said what the Rev. James Bevel is trying to do is "move non-violence into a new dimension of American life."

The Rev. Mr. Bevel said early this week in Philadelphia that he would defend James Earl Ray, who goes on trial in March for the April 4 fatal shooting of Dr. King in Memphis.

The Rev. Mr. Bevel said he did not believe Ray is guilty and would defend him free of charge.

"Rev. Bevel is speaking to the real issue," the Rev. Mr. Abernathy said Thursday in a statement issued in the Bahamas but released by SCLC headquarters in Atlanta. The Rev. Mr. Abernathy is in the Bahamas to recuperate from a recent bout with pneumonia.

THE REV. Mr. Abernathy said the issue is not who killed Dr. King but rather "what killed him."

"Rev. Bevel has offered to

defend a man accused of murder and wishes not to reveal details of that defense," the Rev. Mr. Abernathy went on.

"The American public must have all the information about the guilt for this murder," he said. "If a conspiracy exists—and I believe it does—it must be fully exposed."

"Going beyond a conspiracy, Americans must understand that broader guilt exists in a society which has been killing off its best young leaders, including President John F. Kennedy, Medgar Evers, Malcolm X, Robert F. Kennedy and Dr. King."

"IT WILL BE well for the American people to seek the justice which Dr. King worked for rather than killing Ray," the Rev. Mr. Abernathy said.

The SCLC president, who took over the reins of the organization after Dr. King was slain, said he has known the Rev. Mr. Bevel for eight years as an "outstanding strategist and organizer in the nonviolent movement."

"I have absolute confidence in his judgment and integrity," the Rev. Mr. Abernathy said.

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

PAGE 9A

THE ATLANTA JOURNAL

ATLANTA, GA.

Date: 1-23-69
Edition: Blue Streak
Author: HARMON PERRY
Editor: JACK SPALDING
Title: RM

Character: AT100-5718

or AT 100-2386

Classification: 44-

Submitting Office: ATLANTA

☐ Being Investigated

SEARCHED.....INDEXED.....
SERIALIZED.....FILED.....
JAN 24 1969
FBI - ATLANTA

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date January 31, 1969

Rev. RALPH DAVID ABERNATHY, President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, 330 Auburn Avenue, N. E., Atlanta, Georgia, telephonically advised with regards to his statement to the press, which was quoted in "The Washington Post" newspaper, Washington, D. C., on January 29, 1969, that what he told the press was that he believed in view of the assassinations of President JOHN F. KENNEDY, ROBERT F. KENNEDY, MEDGAR EVERS and MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., there would be an indication to him that there may be a conspiracy among the forces of evil to do away with any young militant who stands for righteousness. Rev. ABERNATHY advised that he has no specific information or other evidence that a conspiracy exists with respect to the specific assassination of Dr. KING. He advised that the statement made to the press on January 29, 1969, in which he referred to a conspiracy concerned the assassination of all of the above-mentioned persons. In regard to those assassinations he made it clear he has no evidence indicating a conspiracy and it is only his belief or fear on his part that such a conspiracy does exist. He stated he has no idea what individuals or forces would be involved in such a conspiracy.

Rev. ABERNATHY advised that several months ago Rev. JAMES LAWSON, Minister of the Centenary Methodist Church at Memphis, Tennessee, told him, Rev. ABERNATHY, that it was Rev. LAWSON's understanding that the day before the assassination of Dr. KING, two Negro firemen, who had been assigned to the fire station across the street from the motel where Dr. KING was killed, were moved to another fire station. According to Rev. LAWSON that move left the fire station unmanned and they were moved to a station which was already fully manned and equipped. Also according to Rev. LAWSON, a Negro policeman, who worked the beat which included the motel where Dr. KING was killed, was moved off of that beat ~~the day~~ Dr. KING was killed, April 4, 1968, but prior to the killing.

On 1/30/69 at Atlanta, Georgia File # Atlanta 44-2386-2212
 by SA O. RICHARD HAMILTON :vsc Date dictated 1/31/69

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In Reply, Please Refer to
File No.

CONFIDENTIAL

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

January 23, 1969

JAMES EARL RAY;
MARTIN LUTHER KING - VICTIM

Reverend James Bevel was interviewed at his residence, 919 North 18th Street, Philadelphia, Pa., on January 21, 1969. The following are the results of this interview:

GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

CONFIDENTIAL

44-2386-2213

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SERIALIZED _____	FILED _____
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FBI - ATLANTA	

Hamilton