

3-24

MURKIN
MEMO
FOLDER

Mr. DeLoach

March 24, 1969

A. Rosen

1 - Mr. DeLoach

1 - Mr. Rosen

1 - Mr. Malley

1 - Mr. McGowan

① - Mr. Long

MURKIN

This is the case involving the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Articles appearing in the news media state that James Earl Ray has written a letter to Judge W. Preston Battle, Criminal Court, Shelby County, Memphis, Tennessee, requesting a post-hearing concerning his recent conviction and sentence to the Tennessee State Prison for a term of 99 years. The newspaper media states that no petition or writ has been filed with the Clerk of the Court demanding any type of a hearing.

SAC Jensen of our Memphis Office has advised that Judge Battle received a letter from Ray requesting a post-hearing; however, no writ or motion has been filed with the Clerk of the Court. According to Jensen, the Judge stated that he fully expected some type of action such as this; however, no action has been taken by him at this time.

You will recall that SAC Jensen contacted Ray on 3/13 and 3/14/69, in an effort to interview Ray in connection with Ray's public statement in court that he did not agree that a conspiracy did not exist in connection with the assassination of King.

On those occasions Ray engaged in "small talk" but refused to discuss any aspects of an alleged conspiracy.

On 3/20/69, Jensen was contacted as to his views concerning the desirability of initiating further contacts with Ray. Jensen stated in view of Ray's current maneuverings to obtain a post-hearing, he felt no useful purpose would be served by attempting further contacts with Ray at this time. He will continue to follow the matter closely and at such time as it appears a further contact with Ray is feasible, he will so advise the Bureau. He will make no further contact with Ray without first clearing it with us.

Enclosure

JGK:eam

ACTION - PAGE TWO

Memorandum Rosen to DeLoach
RE: MURKIN

ACTION:

Attached for approval is a letter to the Department advising them of the results of interviews with Ray and also advising them that in view of recent developments no further attempts will be made to interview Ray at this time.

We will continue to follow the matter closely and you will be advised of pertinent developments.

Mr. Jerris Leonard
Assistant Attorney General

March 24, 1969

Director, FBI

① - Mr. Long

ASSASSINATION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

In accordance with your request, James Earl Ray was interviewed at the Tennessee State Prison, Nashville, Tennessee, on March 13, 1969, by an Agent of this Bureau and during the interview he would not at any time discuss a conspiracy or any aspects of it. The entire interview, which lasted approximately fifty minutes, was cordial; however, Ray did not commit himself on any specific points pertinent to issues of interest to the Government.

Ray was again interviewed on March 14, 1969, and he stated that he had nothing to say. He stated if he changed his mind he knew how he could get in touch with our Special Agent in Charge in Memphis, Tennessee.

Information has come to our attention that Judge W. Preston Battle, Criminal Court, Shelby County, Memphis, Tennessee, has received a letter from James Earl Ray requesting a hearing; however, no writ or motion has been filed with Clerk of the Court. In view of this recent development, no further attempt will be made to interview Ray at this time.

REL:erg
(4)

NOTE: See memorandum A. Rosen to Mr. DeLoach dated 3-21-69, captioned "Murkin," JGK:eam.

Mr. Jerris Leonard
Assistant Attorney General

March 24, 1969

Director, FBI

1 - Mr. Long

ASSASSINATION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

In accordance with your request, James Earl Ray was interviewed at the Tennessee State Prison, Nashville, Tennessee, on March 13, 1969, by the Special Agent in Charge of our Memphis Office and during the interview he would not at any time discuss a conspiracy or any aspects of it. The entire interview, which lasted approximately fifty minutes, was cordial; however, Ray did not commit himself on any specific points pertinent to issues of interest to the Government.

Ray was again interviewed on March 14, 1969, and he stated that he had nothing to say. He stated if he changed his mind he knew how he could get in touch with our Special Agent in Charge in Memphis, Tennessee.

Information has come to our attention that Judge W. Preston Battle, Criminal Court, Shelby County, Memphis, Tennessee, has received a letter from James Earl Ray requesting a hearing; however, no writ or motion has been filed with Clerk of the Court. In view of this recent development, no further attempt will be made to interview Ray at this time.

REL:sds
(4)

3-20

MURKIN
Memo Folder
March 20, 1969

Mr. Tolson	✓
Mr. DeLoach	✓
Mr. Mohr	
Mr. Bishop	
Mr. Casper	
Mr. Callahan	
Mr. Conrad	
Mr. Felt	
Mr. Gale	✓
Mr. Rosen	✓
Mr. Sullivan	
Mr. Tavel	
Mr. Trotter	
Tele. Room	
Miss Holmes	
Miss Gandy	

Mr. Bishop:

RE: JAMES EARL RAY
ASSASSINATION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING
BUREAU COOPERATION IN A BOOK

By informal memorandum dated March 11, 1969, Mr. DeLoach suggested that consideration be given to our cooperating with a friendly author, or with "The Reader's Digest," in the preparation of a book regarding the Martin Luther King murder case. With regard to this suggestion, the Director noted, "O.K."

With regard to this matter, "The Reader's Digest" has advised that it would greatly appreciate the opportunity to do a book on the Ray-King case with Bureau cooperation. If we approve, "The Reader's Digest" plans to contact Jim Bishop in an effort to place him under contract to write the book for them.

Jim Bishop is, of course, a very thorough and capable writer with whom we have had many contacts over the years. With the Director's approval, we worked with Bishop in connection with his latest published book, "The Day Kennedy Was Shot," which contains a number of favorable references to the FBI. The Director has written Bishop on several occasions concerning commendatory columns--including one in 1967 highly praising the Director as "the greatest law enforcement officer in all history."

Even though Bishop has been described in Bufiles as "somewhat pompous and a little overbearing at times," he nonetheless has both the name and ability to produce a book on the King case which would give proper credit to the outstanding work done by the FBI. Accordingly, it is recommended that approval be given to our cooperating with "The Reader's Digest" and Jim Bishop on this book.

Sincerely,

M. A. Jones

- 1 - Mr. DeLoach
- 1 - Mr. Bishop
- 1 - Mr. Rosen
- 1 - C. L. McGowan

GWG:pls (7)

John Bauer - also approved - RB - 3/21/69 -

I think we should wait & see what move Ray makes to re-open his case. I am not keen about Bishop.

3/21/69

3/11/69

Mr. Tolson ✓
 Mr. DeLoach ✓
 Mr. Mohr ✓
 Mr. Bishop ✓
 Mr. Casper _____
 Mr. Callahan _____
 Mr. Conrad _____
 Mr. Felt _____
 Mr. Gale _____
 Mr. Rosen ✓
 Mr. Sullivan _____
 Mr. Tavel _____
 Mr. Trotter _____

MR. TOLSON:

RE: JAMES EARL RAY
ASSASSINATION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING

Now that Ray has been convicted and is serving a 99-year sentence, I would like to suggest that the Director allow us to choose a friendly, capable author, or the Reader's Digest, and proceed with a book based on this case.

A carefully written, factual book would do much to preserve the true history of this case. While it will not dispel or put down future rumors, it would certainly help to have a book of this nature on college and high school library shelves so that the future would be protected.

Who do you suggest?

I would also like to suggest that consideration be given to advising a friendly newspaper contact, on a strictly confidential basis, that Coretta King and Reverend Abernathy are deliberately plotting to keep King's assassination in the news by pulling the ruse of maintaining that King's murder was definitely a conspiracy and not committed by one man. This, of course, is obviously a rank trick in order to keep the money coming in to Mrs. King, Abernathy, and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. We can do this without any attribution to the FBI and without anyone knowing that the information came from a wire tap.

Respectfully,

C. D. DeLoach

See ADDENDUM...page 2

CDD:CSH (3)

cc Mr. DeLoach
Mr. Bishop

See informal memo Jones to Bishop 3/20/69 G.W.

If the Director approves, we have in mind considering cooperating in the preparation of a book with either the Reader's Digest or author Gerold Frank. The Reader's Digest would assign one of their staff writers or contract the preparation of a book out to an established author. Gerold Frank is a well-known author whose most recent book is "The Boston Strangler." Frank is already working on a book on the Ray case and has asked the Bureau's cooperation in the preparation of the book on a number of occasions. We have nothing derogatory on him in our files, and our relationship with him has been excellent. His publisher is Doubleday.

~~P~~

TBB

OK ✓
H

Several Books Planned on Ray Case, First

to Be Out Next Week

By MARTIN WALDRON

Special to The New York Times

MEMPHIS, March 12—“Next to cotton, James Earl Ray is Memphis’s biggest industry,” Percy Foreman said last fall after he succeeded Arthur J. Hanes as Ray’s lawyer.

Mr. Foreman, who said he was promised no fee for defending Ray on a murder charge in the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at the time also scorned what he referred to as the “pandering press” and its curiosity about Ray.

Books in Preparation

The chief target of the Houston lawyer’s scorn seemed to be William Bradford Huie, the Alabama author who had bought the rights to Ray’s life story and was getting handwritten memorandums from Ray in the Shelby County jail. Mr. Huie had written two articles about Ray for Look magazine.

This week, at least five books on James Earl Ray and the assassination of Dr. King were in preparation.

And Mr. Foreman had succeeded Mr. Hanes, of Birmingham, Ala., not only as Ray’s attorney but also as a business associate of Mr. Huie.

One of the books on Ray and the assassination is ready for printing and distribution. It was written by Clay Blair, a former editor of the Saturday Evening Post.

Other Authors

Bantam Books said that Mr. Blair’s book, “The Strange Case of James Earl Ray,” would be published next Monday or Tuesday. It will be a history of Ray and of the murder, with a chapter on the courtroom proceeding of last Monday when Ray pleaded guilty to murdering Dr. King and was sentenced to 99 years in prison.

Other authors preparing books include Gerold Frank, who has written six best-sellers, among them “The Boston Strangler”; George E. McMillan of Atlanta; James D. Squires, a Nashville newspaperman; and Mr. Huie.

Mr. Frank’s book may be the most comprehensive. With a reported advance of \$100,000, the New York writer plans to spend two years researching and writing his book for Doubleday & Co., Inc.

Where other authors have expressed opinions as to whether

Dr. King’s murder was the result of a conspiracy, Mr. Frank said that he was trying to get more evidence before making a decision.

‘History of Ineptitude’

“I hope my book will be a full history of the assassination of Martin Luther King and what happened on all levels. And if there was a conspiracy, I hope to know that. I will try to tell the entire unfolding story,” Mr. Frank said.

“From Ray’s history of ineptitude,” he said, “I would assume that he was helped in the assassination or preceding it, but that it was not necessarily a conspiracy.”

“If we knew the true motivation, it might well explode any idea of conspiracy,” he continued. “On the other hand, you cannot apply the normal measures of logic to a man who has spent most of his life behind bars. If he did this alone, he may have been turned on for reasons lost in the depth of his own personality.”

Doubts a Conspiracy

Mr. Frank, who began his research last July, said that he had not paid any money to any of the principals or to anyone else for information.

Mr. McMillan said that his book, “Portrait of an Assassin,” would be a psychological study of Ray. It will be published by Little Brown & Co. Mr. McMillan said that he had a “very happy contract” and that foreign reprint contracts had already been signed by publishers in eight countries.

“I have always believed that James Earl Ray did it alone,” he said. “This guy is a loner. And I have never investigated any aspect of a conspiracy, which has left me free to work on his biography.”

Mr. McMillan said that he had hired a psychiatrist to help him interpret the psychological effect on Ray of his many years in prison, his background of poverty and his family life. “Things like, what does it do

to argue to sleep in the same bed with his parents when he is growing up,” he said.

Mr. McMillan said his book was to have been published four months after the end of Ray’s trial. The date may be pushed forward, he said.

Mr. Squires’s book, to be published by New American Library, may be the second book out on Ray. Mr. Squires, who has covered the case for his newspaper, The Nashville Tennessean, said the writing should be completed in the next two weeks.

He said he hoped the book would be a “complete account of the murder of Dr. King, the arrest of Ray, the hiring and firing of Hanes and what went on in Memphis.”

The book has not yet been titled.

Mr. Huie, who bought the publication rights to Ray’s life story last July, originally had signed a contract calling for proceeds from a book to be split between himself, Mr. Hanes and Ray.

Disbelieves Theory

He paid an advance of \$25,000 to Ray, who signed the money over to Mr. Hanes as part of his legal fee.

DcLoach _____
Mohr _____
Bishop _____
Casper _____
Callahan _____
Conrad _____
Felt _____
Gale _____
Rosen _____
Sullivan _____
Tavel _____
Trotter _____
Tele. Room _____
Holmes _____
Gandy _____

The Washington Post _____
Times Herald _____
The Washington Daily News _____
The Evening Star (Washington) _____
The Sunday Star (Washington) _____
Daily News (New York) _____
Sunday News (New York) _____
New York Post _____
The New York Times 20 _____
The Sun (Baltimore) _____
The Daily World _____
The New Leader _____
The Wall Street Journal _____
The National Observer _____
People’s World _____
Examiner (Washington) _____

Date MAR 13 1969

Mr. Huie, a resident of Hartselle, Ala., who is the author of a half-dozen best-sellers, wrote in the two articles for *Look* magazine last fall that

Ray said there had been a conspiracy to murder Dr. King.

However, Mr. Huie said in Memphis this week that he no longer believed in the conspiracy theory.

Mr. Huie said that Ray had told him that the assassin went into a rooming house and shot at Dr. King across the street while Ray was seated in front of the rooming house in the driver's seat of a white Mustang car.

The author quoted Ray as saying that the assassin rushed down the stairs of the rooming house and hid on the floor of the back seat of the car, covering himself with a sheet while Ray drove him out of town.

"When I could not find the man, I concluded that Ray himself made the decision to kill Dr. King," Mr. Huie said.

A third article for *Look* was prepared this week by Mr. Huie and Mr. Foreman. In addition, Mr. Huie is completing a book on Dr. King's assassination for the Dell Publishing Company. The book, which will concentrate on activities of Ray before and after the murder, has been tentatively titled, "He Slew the Dreamer."

Although Mr. Hanes still has a claim against a portion of the proceeds from the sale of Mr. Huie's book, the Alabama author told reporters in Memphis this week that he had a contract with Mr. Foreman.



*MURKIN
Memo
Folder*

March 20, 1969

Mr. Bishop:

RE: JAMES EARL RAY
ASSASSINATION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING;
BUREAU COOPERATION IN A BOOK

By informal memorandum dated March 11, 1969, Mr. DeLoach suggested that consideration be given to our cooperating with a friendly author, or with "The Reader's Digest," in the preparation of a book regarding the Martin Luther King murder case. With regard to this suggestion, the Director noted, "O. K."

With regard to this matter, "The Reader's Digest" has advised that it would greatly appreciate the opportunity to do a book on the Ray-King case with Bureau cooperation. If we approve, "The Reader's Digest" plans to contact Jim Bishop in an effort to place him under contract to write the book for them.

Jim Bishop is, of course, a very thorough and capable writer with whom we have had many contacts over the years. With the Director's approval, we worked with Bishop in connection with his latest published book, "The Day Kennedy Was Shot," which contains a number of favorable references to the FBI. The Director has written Bishop on several occasions concerning commendatory columns--including one in 1967 highly praising the Director as "the greatest law enforcement officer in all history."

Even though Bishop has been described in Bufiles as "somewhat pompous and a little overbearing at times," he nonetheless has both the name and ability to produce a book on the King case which would give proper credit to the outstanding work done by the FBI. Accordingly, it is recommended that approval be given to our cooperating with "The Reader's Digest" and Jim Bishop on this book.

Sincerely,

M. A. Jones

1 - Mr. DeLoach
1 - Mr. Bishop
1 - Mr. Rosen
① - C. L. McGowan
GWG:pls (7)



3-19

MURKIN
Memorandum
Folder

Mr. Bishop

3-19-69

M. A. Jones

**MURKIN:
FORTHCOMING BOOK BY
WILLIAM BRADFORD HUIE**

Long

BACKGROUND:

William Bradford Huie is the author of articles regarding James Earl Ray and the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr., which appeared in the November 12 and November 26, 1968, issues of "Look" magazine. He has also written a manuscript for a book--tentatively titled "They Slew the Dreamer"--dealing with the King murder.

Through Carroll B. Golby, a very reliable contact in the New York publishing industry, we determined last January that Huie's manuscript had been offered to several publishers and that one of these, the New American Library, Inc, was planning to publish it.

RECENT DEVELOPMENT:

The New York Office telephoned today to advise that one of its contacts ("Long John" Nebel, a television personality who continually receives advance copies of books from publishers who hope that he will plug their books on his TV show) has learned that Huie's manuscript is no longer in the hands of the New American Library. According to Nebel, an outfit named Bell has the manuscript and plans to put the book out in May. Nebel is attempting to obtain a copy of the manuscript or an advance copy of the book for us.

Source books in the Bureau Library do not list a Bell company as a publisher of books. However, the New York Telephone Directory lists a Bell Printing Company on West 25th Street.

RECOMMENDATION:

For information. We will continue to follow this matter.

- 1 - Mr. DeLoach
 - 1 - Mr. Bishop
 - 1 - Mr. Rosen
 - 1 - Mr. McGowan
- GWG:gms
(8)

MURKIN
Memo
Folder

William Bradford Huie, author, has written two articles for "Look" magazine. The articles appeared in the November 12, 1968, issue and the November 26, 1968, issue. These articles contain an account of an individual by the name of "Raoul." This individual and Ray, according to the articles, were endeavoring to make some type of deal concerning "joint activity" for which "Raoul" would pay Ray \$12,000. The specific nature of the "joint activity" was not fully described or identified, but Ray was to transport packages between the United States and Canada. The possibility exists that the package could contain contraband, such as narcotics.

According to the articles, an exchange of tires took place at the United States and Mexican borders, which again the possibility exists that the tires could contain contraband.

The only description available on Raoul, and this is according to Huie, Raoul is described as a blonde Latin seaman.

MURKIN
Memo
Folder

HUGH STANTON
APPOINTED BY JUDGE W. PRESTON BATTLE
AS CO-COUNSEL FOR JAMES EARL RAY

Review of Bureau files concerning Hugh Stanton indicates the following information:

Bureau file 44-14617. Victim states he was arrested 1-31-58 and about 5-23-58 by Memphis PD, Memphis, Tenn., on charges of DWI. States was advised by Norman Moore, Investigator for Shelby County Public Defender, to plead guilty to both charges and he would receive two 60-day sentences to run concurrently. Was sentenced to two 60-day sentences to run consecutively, but asked Judge for jury trial. States was then kept in Shelby County Jail for about two months awaiting trial and during this time advised Hugh Stanton, Jr., Asst. Public Defender, that he wanted jury trial. After two months, he finally pleaded guilty and was sentenced to Shelby County Penal Farm. Says he believes he was deprived of his just right to jury trial by actions of Hugh Stanton, Jr.

Bureau file 44-15247. On 12-21-59, Mr. Clay Christy, brother of victim, appeared at Memphis Office and furnished signed statement alleging that civil rights of victim had been violated by captioned subjects. Clay Christy advised that in about March, 1959, victim was arrested by officers of Memphis, Tenn., PD, who told him he was being charged with driving while intoxicated, reckless driving, and leaving scene of an accident. A Memphis attorney advised Clay Christy that victim's arrest was illegal because victim was arrested without a warrant, because the police did not see the accident, nor did they see victim in or near a car, nor did they charge him with public drunkenness. Victim was arrested by James Elliston of the Memphis PD and three other officers. At City Court, the following day, Elliston told judge that he would have a witness the next day. On the next day, a witness did appear and judge found victim guilty and fined him \$126, plus costs. Victim was then held to State on same charges, and was placed in County Jail, Shelby County, Tenn., in lieu of bond. After approximately six or eight postponements requested by prosecution, which claimed witnesses not available, victim came to trial and pleaded guilty to charge of driving while intoxicated. Clay Christy stated he also felt that Public Defender Hugh Stanton violated his brother's civil rights because he failed to properly defend victim and failed to bring to attention of the Court the alleged illegality of arrest.

Bureau file 44-6353. John O'Neill Bomer, an informant in a civil rights case in early 1954, advised that Hugh Stanton, who is the Public Defender of Shelby County, owns a farm either at Lexington or Henderson, Tennessee, and he is constantly going to the Shelby County Penal Farm and obtaining a number of prisoners and transporting them to his farm where they are worked and held in jail on his farm by a Deputy Sheriff whose last name is Pitman. He said Stanton pays Pitman \$100 a month to feed and care for the prisoners who are used on his farm. He stated as many as twenty prisoners at one time would be taken to Stanton's farm and worked for several months before returning them to the Shelby County Penal Farm.

Mr. DeLoach

March 19, 1969

A. Rosen

1 - Mr. DeLoach
1 - Mr. Rosen
1 - Mr. Malley
1 - Mr. McGowan
1 - Mr. Long
1 - Mr. Bishop

MURKIN

This is the case involving the murder of
Martin Luther King, Jr.

Attorney Russell Thompson, Memphis, Tennessee, contacted our New York Office and expressed his desire to fully cooperate with the FBI concerning the information he possesses. Thompson advised that most of the information that he possesses has already been furnished to the FBI, however, he does have some information that he has not discussed with the FBI although this information may be already known to the FBI.

Thompson stated that he will probably return to Memphis on March 19, 1969, and upon his return he would contact our Memphis Office to arrange an appropriate time to furnish the information that he possesses. Thompson pointed out that he believed that it would be more practical to furnish the information to the FBI in Memphis since they are more familiar with streets, locations, and other pertinent details.

Thompson pointed out that he possesses no information that he classifies as great or spectacular, such as the news media was attempting to relate to the public.

In accordance with the Director's instructions, SAC, Jensen, in Memphis, was advised that he be most certain that we listen to Thompson and absolutely nothing be disclosed to him.

ACTION:

For information. You will be kept advised.

REL:jms
(7)

March 18, 1969

GENERAL INVESTIGATIVE DIVISION

This is the case involving the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr.

The attached advises that Russell Thompson, a Memphis Attorney, contacted our New York Office and advised that he will be in Memphis on 3/19/69, at which time he will contact our Memphis office to arrange an appropriate time to discuss all the information that he possesses.

Thompson pointed out that he possesses no information that he classified as great or spectacular such as the news media was attempting to relate to the public.

You will be kept advised.

REL:jms

VIA TELETYPE
MAR 18 1969
ENCIPHERED

1-9/16

Mr. Tolson	.....
Mr. DeLoach	.....
Mr. Mohr	.....
Mr. Bishop	.....
Mr. Casper	.....
Mr. Callahan	.....
Mr. Conrad	.....
Mr. Felt	.....
Mr. Gale	.....
Mr. Rosen	.....
Mr. Sullivan	.....
Mr. Tavel	.....
Mr. Trotter	.....
Tele. Room	.....
Miss Holmes	.....
Miss Gandy	.....

WA 05

1149AM URGENT 3-18-69 JAM
TO DIRECTOR AND MEMPHIS PLAINTEXT
FROM NEW YORK 44-1609 2P

MURKIN

RE NEW YORK TEL, MARCH SEVENTEEN, SIXTYNINE.

MR. RUSSELL THOMPSON, TELEPHONICALLY CONTACTED THE
NEW YORK OFFICE
NYO ON MARCH EIGHTEEN, SIXTYNINE, AT WHICH TIME HE EXPRESSED
HIS DESIRE TO FULLY COOPERATE WITH THE FBI CONCERNING THE
INFORMATION HE POSSESSES AND HAS HAD DISCUSSION WITH OFFICIALS
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE
OF THE NAACP IN NYC ON MARCH SEVENTEEN, SIXTYNINE.
New York City

MR. THOMPSON RELATED THAT MOST OF THE INFORMATION
THAT HE POSSESSES HAS ALREADY BEEN FURNISHED TO THE FBI
AND OTHER TENNESSEE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES. HE STATED
THAT HE DOES POSSESS SOME INFORMATION THAT HE HAS NOT
DISCUSSED WITH THE FBI OR OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES,
HOWEVER, THIS INFORMATION MAY ALREADY BE KNOWN TO
THESE AGENCIES.

END PAGE ONE

PAGE TWO

MR. THOMPSON ADVISED THAT HE WAS PROBABLY RETURNING TO MEMPHIS ON MARCH NINETEEN, SIXTYNINE, AND UPON HIS RETURN WOULD CONTACT THE MEMPHIS OFFICE TO ARRANGE WITH THEM AN APPROPRIATE TIME TO DISCUSS ALL THE INFORMATION THAT HE POSSESSES. MR. THOMPSON POINTED OUT THAT HE BELIEVED THAT IT WOULD BE MORE PRACTICAL TO DISCUSS THIS MATTER WITH FBI OFFICIALS IN MEMPHIS SINCE THEY ARE MORE FAMILIAR WITH STREETS, LOCATIONS AND OTHER PERTINENT DETAILS.

MR. THOMPSON POINTED OUT THAT HE POSSESSES NO INFORMATION THAT HE CLASSIFIED AS GREAT OR SPECTACULAR SUCH AS THE NEWS MEDIA WAS ATTEMPTING TO RELATE TO THE PUBLIC.

END

VXC FBI WASH DC

3-18

Mr. DeLoach

March 18, 1969

A. Rosen

1 - Mr. DeLoach
1 - Mr. Rosen
1 - Mr. Malley
1 - Mr. McGowan
① - Mr. Long
1 - Mr. Bishop

MURKIN

This is the case involving the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Director inquired as to the facts regarding a statement made by Mr. Baxton Bryant as reported in the "New York Times" on 3-16-69. Bryant is quoted as stating that he reported to the FBI information on an alleged telephone conversation related to the shooting of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the FBI later advised him the conversation had been found to be unrelated to the King murder. Bufiles indicate that Mr. Bryant is a member of the Tennessee Council on Human Relations who has been active in Civil Rights matters in Tennessee.

DETAILS: On April 8, 1968, Mr. Bryant accompanied John McFerren, who is a Negro Civil Rights activist from Somerville, Tennessee, to our Memphis Office and stated that McFerren had some information he wanted to provide us concerning a conversation he allegedly overheard while at a produce market in Memphis on April 4, 1968, (King was murdered on this date). McFerren was interviewed at length concerning this and he stated he heard a heavyset man talking on a telephone and heard him say, "Kill the SOB on the balcony and get the job done, you will get your \$5,000."

We completely investigated all facets of the information furnished us by McFerren and no substantiating information was developed indicating this alleged telephone conversation was pertinent to the King murder. We provided the results of our investigation to the Department in two separate memorandums (copies attached for ready reference).

Contrary to Mr. Bryant's statement in the "New York Times", we never advised him of the results of our investigation.

ACTION: For information.

Enclosures

REL:jms
(7)

The Attorney General

April 25, 1968

Director, FBI

ASSASSINATION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Reference is made to my memorandum dated April 20, 1968, setting forth pertinent details relative to information furnished by Mr. John McFerren regarding his suspicions that circumstances which occurred at the LL and L Produce Company in Memphis, Tennessee, on April 4, 1968, might be related to the killing of Martin Luther King, Jr.

As you were previously advised, the owners of the LL and L Produce Company denied having any connection with the killing and Mr. Frank Camillo Liberto, one of the owners, advised that he had relatives in New Orleans and discussed large sums of money when making produce purchases over the telephone.

Other members of the Liberto family in New Orleans have been interviewed and they have advised that they have no knowledge of the killing beyond accounts appearing in local news media.

On the basis of the information reported by Mr. McFerren and the information developed through our inquiries, it is not felt further inquiries along these lines are warranted.

Returned herewith is the copy of the "Time" report previously furnished.

Enclosure

1 - The Deputy Attorney General

1 - Mr. Stephen J. Follak
Assistant Attorney General

EJM:vea (9)

SEE NOTE PAGE TWO

NOTE:

The Attorney General's office furnished a copy of a "Time" report of information from John McFerren, Negro from Somerville, Tennessee. The Attorney General was previously furnished substantial information developed indicating there is no basis for McFerren's information. The "Time" report is being returned to the Attorney General with additional information developed in connection with McFerren's story.

4
The Attorney General

April 20, 1968

REC-27

Director, FBI

EX-105

MURDER OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Information was received that John McFerren, a Negro of Somerville, Tennessee, had reported to "Time" magazine information concerning an individual possibly involved in the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. Mr. McFerren allegedly overheard one end of a telephone conversation while at a produce market in Memphis on April 4, 1968. According to the report, Mr. McFerren overheard the individual state, "Shoot the S.O.B. on the balcony. Don't worry about the money. Your brother will get it in New Orleans." Mr. McFerren allegedly was contacted on April 13, 1968, by a white man formerly of Somerville who now resides in Louisiana. It was indicated that as a result of this visit Mr. McFerren feared for his own safety.

On April 8, 1968, Mr. McFerren advised Agents of this Bureau that he had picked up supplies for his grocery store at the LL and L Produce Company, Memphis, Tennessee, on April 4, 1968. At that time he overheard a heavysset white male talking on the telephone say, "Kill the S.O.B. on the balcony and get the job done. You will get your \$5,000." Mr. McFerren stated another white male with a scar on his right cheek came by at this time and told him to go on to the back of the produce company and help himself.

After completing his business Mr. McFerren heard the telephone ring again as he was passing the office and the man with the scar answered the telephone. He then handed the telephone to the heavysset man. Mr. McFerren heard this man say, "Don't come out here. Go to New Orleans and get your money. You know my brother."

Mr. McFerren attached no significance to these remarks at the time. When he arrived home at Somerville, Tennessee, at approximately 6:15 p.m., April 4, 1968, he Note: See memo Rosen to DeLoach captioned MURKIN, 4/20/68,

CLM:wjc EJM:vea.

(10)

The Attorney General

was advised by a neighbor that Martin Luther King, Jr., had been shot. Mr. McFerren advised that the following day he observed a sketch of the assassin in a newspaper. The artist's conception together with a description as read to him by his wife immediately made him think of an individual who had been employed at the LL and L Produce Company some time in the late fall or early winter last year. He believed this man to be identical with the sketch of the unknown individual who shot Martin Luther King, Jr. He described this individual as five feet nine inches tall, weighing 140 pounds, white male, slender build and approximately twenty-five years of age.

Mr. McFerren was reinterviewed by Memphis Agents on April 18, 1968. Mr. McFerren stated he was suspicious because an individual he knows from Somerville, Tennessee, presently residing in Louisiana, visited his residence on the morning of April 18, 1968, and asked questions regarding his travel. Mr. McFerren identified this individual as Robert Powers who came to McFerren's residence with his wife driving a 1966-1967 late model beige Cadillac. Mr. McFerren advised he was not threatened by this individual and the only reason he suspects Powers of being strange is that McFerren states it is not common for a white man to shake a Negro's hand in that particular environment.

Mr. McFerren was shown six random photographs, one of which included the 1968 photograph of Eric Galt, and he definitely eliminated Galt as the individual he saw at the LL and L Produce Company and who he felt was identical with the sketch he saw in the newspaper. Mr. McFerren picked three photographs of individuals who are all under twenty-five years of age and do not resemble Galt at all. One individual in the photograph is known to be in prison at this time and the other two are not known to have been in the Memphis area at any time.

Investigation disclosed that individuals referred to by Mr. McFerren were Frank Canilla Liberto and James William Latch, President and Vice-President respectively of LL and L Produce Company. These individuals have been interviewed and emphatically deny ever discussing with

Memphis, Tenn.

The Attorney General

anyone the possibility of shooting Reverend Dr. King or having any knowledge of the subject responsible for his death. They stated that they may have made derogatory remarks about the actions of Martin Luther King, Jr., in Memphis and that the fact that he had been responsible for a loss of revenue by business establishments in the Memphis area. They advised that such disparaging statements had been part of general conversation among workers in and around the produce company and other individuals residing in the Memphis area.

Each of the individuals denied receiving any telephone call wherein mention was made of Martin Luther King or the shooting of Martin Luther King. They stated they did not have any knowledge concerning the shooting of Martin Luther King, Jr., while at work at the produce company on April 4, 1968. Mr. Liberto advised he frequently makes trips to New Orleans, Louisiana, for produce. He stated it is common knowledge among employees and customers of his produce company that members of his family reside in New Orleans and he frequently mentions trips to New Orleans. He stated that most of the produce is purchased through telephone conversations and this involves talking about large sums of money over the telephone. Mr. Liberto stated he always employs Negro males as helpers in the produce department and had not had in his employment at the produce company any individual fitting the description of the unknown individual previously described by Mr. McFerren. In this connection, Mr. McFerren was not identified at any time to Mr. Liberto as being the source of the information.

Mr. Liberto's brother in New Orleans is being interviewed for any information he may have concerning this matter.

1 - The Deputy Attorney General

1 - Mr. Stephen J. Pollak
Assistant Attorney General

The Attorney General

April 25, 1968

Director, FBI

ASSASSINATION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Reference is made to my memorandum dated April 20, 1968, setting forth pertinent details relative to information furnished by Mr. John McFerren regarding his suspicions that circumstances which occurred at the LL and L Produce Company in Memphis, Tennessee, on April 4, 1968, might be related to the killing of Martin Luther King, Jr.

As you were previously advised, the owners of the LL and L Produce Company denied having any connection with the killing and Mr. Frank Camillo Liberto, one of the owners, advised that he had relatives in New Orleans and discussed large sums of money when making produce purchases over the telephone.

Other members of the Liberto family in New Orleans have been interviewed and they have advised that they have no knowledge of the killing beyond accounts appearing in local news media.

On the basis of the information reported by Mr. McFerren and the information developed through our inquiries, it is not felt further inquiries along these lines are warranted.

Returned herewith is the copy of the "Time" report previously furnished.

Enclosure

1 - The Deputy Attorney General

1 - Mr. Stephen J. Pollak
Assistant Attorney General

EJM:vea (9)

SEE NOTE PAGE TWO

NOTE:

The Attorney General's office furnished a copy of a "Time" report of information from John McFerren, Negro from Somerville, Tennessee. The Attorney General was previously furnished substantial information developed indicating there is no basis for McFerren's information. The "Time" report is being returned to the Attorney General with additional information developed in connection with McFerren's story.

The Attorney General

April 20, 1968

REC 27

Director, FBI

EX-105

MURDER OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Information was received that John McFerren, a Negro of Somerville, Tennessee, had reported to "Time" magazine information concerning an individual possibly involved in the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. Mr. McFerren allegedly overheard one end of a telephone conversation while at a produce market in Memphis on April 4, 1968. According to the report, Mr. McFerren overheard the individual state, "Shoot the S.O.B. on the balcony. Don't worry about the money. Your brother will get it in New Orleans." Mr. McFerren allegedly was contacted on April 18, 1968, by a white man formerly of Somerville who now resides in Louisiana. It was indicated that as a result of this visit Mr. McFerren feared for his own safety.

On April 8, 1968, Mr. McFerren advised Agents of this Bureau that he had picked up supplies for his grocery store at the LL and L Produce Company, Memphis, Tennessee, on April 4, 1968. At that time he overheard a heavysset white male talking on the telephone say, "Kill the S.O.B. on the balcony and get the job done. You will get your \$5,000." Mr. McFerren stated another white male with a scar on his right cheek came by at this time and told him to go on to the back of the produce company and help himself.

After completing his business Mr. McFerren heard the telephone ring again as he was passing the office and the man with the scar answered the telephone. He then handed the telephone to the heavysset man. Mr. McFerren heard this man say, "Don't come out here. Go to New Orleans and get your money. You know my brother."

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(10)

The Attorney General

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Mr. McFerren was reinterviewed by Memphis Agents on April 18, 1968. Mr. McFerren stated he was suspicious because an individual he knows from Somerville, Tennessee, presently residing in Louisiana, visited his residence on the morning of April 18, 1968, and asked questions regarding his travel. Mr. McFerren identified this individual as Robert Powers who came to McFerren's residence with his wife driving a 1966-1967 late model beige Cadillac. Mr. McFerren advised he was not threatened by this individual and the only reason he suspects Powers of being strange is that McFerren states it is not common for a white man to shake a Negro's hand in that particular environment.

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Memphis, Tenn.

The Attorney General

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Mr. Liberto's brother in New Orleans is being interviewed for any information he may have concerning this matter.

- 1 - The Deputy Attorney General
- 1 - Mr. Stephen J. Pollak
Assistant Attorney General

3-17

Murkin
Memo Folder Rosen
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Mr. Bishop

March 17, 1969

M. A. Jones

JAMES EARL RAY

Senator James O. Eastland (D - Miss.) last week indicated the Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security which he chairs was going to look into the Ray case, in an effort to develop information concerning a possible conspiracy in the slaying of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

On 3/17/69, Senator Eastland telephonically advised Special Agent Bowers he had that date received a letter from Ray in which Ray says he did not kill King and offers to cooperate with the Senate Subcommittee. The Senator made available the enclosed copy of the letter which is dated 3/14/69, and the envelope in which it was mailed.

RECOMMENDATION:

That this be referred to the General Investigative Division.

Enclosures

- 1 - Mr. DeLoach
- 1 - Mr. Bishop
- ① - Mr. Rosen

CWB:job

APR 13 10 31 AM '69

APR 13 10 31 AM '69

3-14-69

Dear Senator Eastland;

I read in the local newspaper where your committee is considering investigating the Dr. King case. I would like to inform you and the committee that I would cooperate in any such hearing. However, at the time I am going to attempt to get the guilty plea set aside, I know that the odds against having this done are greatly against me. But I think due to the unusual circumstances in the guilty plea it mite be possible. I personally did not shoot Dr. King but I believe I am partly responsible for his death. I will briefly attempt to explain why I entered the guilty plea. At the time Mr. Pery Foreman agreed to take over the defense from Mr. Arthur Hanes we had a verbal agreement that there would be no guilty plea, as I wanted to try the case in court, I had every reason to believe during the first two months Mr. Foreman was on the case there would be a trial, during that period Mr. Foreman had me sign a new contract with him and Mr. Huie giving Mr. Foreman all the money from any of Mr. Huie's money making ventures. (I had sign another contract with Mr. Huie and Mr. Hanes) Shortly after this Mr. Foreman came to visit me and he had a picture for me to look at. This picture was about 8 x 10 in. Mr. Foreman said Mr. Huie had given him the picture and that Mr. Huie had got the picture from someone in the federal government. The picture contain 2 or 3 men followed by two or 3 policemen. Mr. Foreman described one of the men in the picture as an 'anti communist' cuban refugee who was arrested at the time president Kennedy was shot. "The arrest took place in Dallas I was told" I was asked if I would identify the man if he was brought to Memphis. I said no, althoe he did look similar to the person I was involved with. After I wouldn't identify this man, about all I was told was that I would go to the electric chair if I went to trial. I was even told my family wanted me to plead guilty, but I found out this was not so. But I did not plead guilty for the above reasons. I did so because I did not want to go to trial with a lawyer who thought he was going to lose. I believe if you think you will lose you probably will. On the day before I plead guilty I signed another contract with Mr. Foreman. In this one I agreed to give him \$165,000, he agreed to give my brother \$500.00 in the event I wanted to hire another lawyer to reopen the case. Mr. Foreman wrote into the contract that if I embarres him (disagreed) in the court room he could withdraw, the old contract would go into effect and I would be without funds to hire another

attorney. Getting back to Mr. Hule for a minute, while Mr. Hanes was my attorney Mr. Hule asked me through him about public figures and various organizations. I got the impression that he thought their was a conspiracy but he wanted to name the conspirators. And I sometime felt that my attorneys were working for him instead of for me. In closing I would like to say if I can't get the case reopened, their should be an invegestion, as I have signed over \$200,000 to attorneys and not 1/20 of the witnesses have been interview. No one went to Los Angeles or New Orleans where I think much of the evidence lies. Mr. Foreman said in open court that he didn't trust investigators, and the one Mr. Hanes hired never left Memphis. I would also like to say that despite what the papers and book writer's quote me as saying, I have no intention of discussing this case with anyone 'verbaly' until it is closed. If I have anything to say I will say it in court or to lawyers, or in letter form like this letter.

Sincerely, James E. Ray.

COPY:mls

Rosen
f

Mr. Bishop

March 17, 1968

M. A. Jones

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RECOMMENDATION:

That this be referred to the General Investigative Division.

Enclosures

1 - Mr. DeLoach

1 - Mr. Bishop

① - Mr. Rosen

DWB:job

MAR 18 10 30 AM '68

REC-111

3-14-69

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Sincerely, James E. Ray.

COPY:mls

MURKIN
Memo Folder

Mr. DeLoach

A. Rosen

MURKIN

March 17, 1969

1 - Mr. DeLoach
1 - Mr. Rosen
1 - Mr. Malley
1 - Mr. McGowan
① - Mr. Long

This is the case involving the murder of Martin Luther King.

Reference is made to the teletype from the New York Office concerning Attorney Jack Greenberg, Director of the Legal Defense Fund, NAACP, New York, who advised that Attorney Russell Thompson, Memphis, Tennessee, was to meet with Greenberg on 3/17/69 to furnish names of other people involved with Ray in the Martin Luther King killing. Thompson professed to have once represented James Earl Ray.

Greenberg suggested an FBI Agent be present at the meeting as he had no way to evaluate the information to be furnished by Thompson.

ACTION TAKEN:

In accordance with the Director's instructions, we told the New York Office that Thompson has not been forthright and if Thompson wants to furnish any information he and Greenberg can come to our New York Office and give it.

The New York Office attempted to reach Greenberg in the morning but was advised he was at a meeting and would not be available until later. At 3:00 p.m. the afternoon of 3/17/69 Greenberg advised Agent Young of the New York Office that he had met with Thompson and he had reams of material the nature of which he could not understand. Greenberg was advised that if he or Thompson wanted to furnish any information we would be glad to receive it. So far, no information has been furnished as of this writing.

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3-14

MURKIN
Memo Folder

Mr. Rosen

March 14, 1969

C. L. McGowan

- 1 - Mr. Rosen
- 1 - Mr. Malley
- ① - Mr. McGowan
- 1 - Mr. Long

MURKIN

On 3/14/69, Attorney Jack Greenberg, Counsel for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, New York City, contacted the New York Office and advised that he plans to meet with Attorney Russell Thompson, Memphis, Tennessee, at New York City, on Monday, 3/17/69, at 9:00 A.M. Greenberg related that Thompson reportedly has some information concerning a conspiracy in connection with the slaying of Martin Luther King, Jr. which he wished to furnish to Greenberg. Mr. Greenberg requested that the New York Office have an Agent present at his meeting with Mr. Thompson.

SAC Robert G. Jensen, Memphis, was contacted on 3/14/69 to determine what information he might possess concerning Thompson.

SAC Jensen advised that Thompson's full name is Russell X. Thompson and that he is of the white race and was or still is an attorney in an integrated law firm.

SAC Jensen stated that based on his independent recollection, Thompson on either April 10 or 11, 1968, but before James Earl Ray was identified by fingerprints on April 19, 1968, as the assassin, advised the Memphis Office that he was visited by a man who gave the impression that he might want some legal advice in the future. Because of a possible client-attorney relationship, Thompson did not furnish this man's name. Thompson related that the man stated that material found at the scene of the King slaying was false and that the real murder weapon was a Savage rifle which had already melted down. This man also reportedly told Thompson the authorities' interest in a white mustang was wrong because the assassin got away on a motorcycle. The man also told Thompson that a Cadillac was of interest in this case.

Thompson described this man as a blond Latin who had a Denver, Colorado, address.

Jensen further advised that after Ray had been publicly identified, Thompson was again in contact with the Memphis Office probably

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CONTINUED - OVER

McGowan to Rosen Memo
Re: MURKIN

early in May of 1968 at which time Thompson advised that the man who had contacted him in early April, 1968, was probably a mental case. On this second contact with the Memphis Office, Thompson still did not reveal the man's name.

SAC Jensen advised that to the best of his knowledge the above two contacts with Thompson are the only contacts the Memphis Office has had with Thompson. Jensen stated he was not aware of any derogatory information concerning Thompson.

ACTION:

For information.

*MURKIN
Memo
Folder*

Mr. Rosen

March 14, 1969

C. L. McGowan

- 1 - Mr. Rosen
- 1 - Mr. Malley
- 1 - Mr. McGowan
- 1 - Mr. Long

MURKIN

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CONTINUED - OVER

McGowan to Rosen Memo
Re: MURKIN

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ACTION:

For information.

Mr. DeLoach

A. Rosen

MURKIN

March 14, 1969

1-Mr. DeLoach
1-Mr. Rosen
1-Mr. Malley
1-Mr. McGowan
①-Mr. Long

This is the case involving the murder of Martin Luther King.

In accordance with approval, I called Jerris Leonard, Assistant Attorney General, Civil Rights Division, and gave him a brief run down of the interview which SAC Jensen had with subject James Earl Ray at the Tennessee State Penitentiary, Nashville, Tennessee, yesterday (3/13/69).

After giving him a run down, he said he was most appreciative and wanted to know if we were going to talk with Ray again. I told him we had planned to do that perhaps sometime today. He asked to be advised along the same lines as above.

It is recalled he had called the first thing this morning asking that he be advised of the results of the interview because he was to meet the Attorney General with Will Wilson of the Criminal Division concerning the possibility of any future action against Ray. In this connection, it was mentioned by Leonard they might consider calling him before a grand jury in order to question him under oath.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN:

As previously indicated, Jensen plans to try to talk with Ray today. He was instructed to advise me definitely concerning this and also to advise the Bureau of the results of such an interview.

In talking with Leonard, I again stressed the Director's views that it is most important that our visits with Ray not be publicized as the press and TV would descend upon the penitentiary and cut off any possibility of getting Ray to cooperate to any degree.

You will be advised of further developments.

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ADDENDUM: Subsequent to the above, I was advised by the Nashville Resident Agency that Jensen is meeting with Ray at the state penitentiary. We will get the results of such interview later today and you will be advised. Shortly after this call,

CONTINUED - OVER

Memorandum to Mr. DeLoach
Re: MURKIN

I received a personal call from Jensen, who said he had been in to see Ray and that Ray said he was not talking, he had thought the matter over during the night and he was not going to talk. He indicated on the way up from Memphis, Tennessee, to Nashville when he was transported by state officials he had said about three words and the newspapers had made a story out of that. He said he was not going to talk any more. Jensen indicated he then left and before doing so said if Ray changed his mind he could write him a letter.

If approved by the Director, Leonard will be advised that Ray refused to do any talking today.

9-13

1 - Mr. DeLoach
1 - Mr. Rosen
1 - Mr. Malley

Mr. DeLoach

3/13/69

A. Rosen

1 - Mr. McGowan
① - Mr. Long
1 - Mr. Bishop

MURKIN

With reference to the above matter SAC Jensen, Memphis, has made arrangements to get into the prison at Nashville, Tennessee, at 1:30 p.m., Nashville time today, which is 2:30 p.m., Washington, D.C. time. He is to call the Bureau and advise us at such time as the interview is underway. It is not known whether Ray will be communicative. Jensen states he plans to approach Ray along rather than take another Agent with him inasmuch as Ray may feel he is being outnumbered. He feels this is desirable on the first approach in order to determine Ray's attitude. Jensen is fully familiar with the facts of this case.

Jensen was advised it was hoped that arrangements were made so no press or TV would descend on the penitentiary en masse. Jensen stated insofar as he knew there was no indication of this. Jensen states he is taking the position that he was on a routine visit to Nashville at which time he is making the usual checks of the Resident Agency, etc. I advised him that Deputy Assistant Attorney General Owen of the Civil Rights Division asked to be advised when we plan to interview Ray. It was indicated that Owen had no objection to such an interview but wanted to be advised.

In this connection in accordance with the Director's approval we will let Owen know at such time as the interview is underway. Owen will be advised that no public statement should be made as the press and TV would descend on the penitentiary en masse.

AR:WW
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