

AT 44-2386

Mr. EAVES said undoubtedly I had already heard that the media had made some inquiry as to whether I had been transferred to Detroit over the MARTIN LUTHER KING matter, and he had told the media he did not know whether this was a demotion.

I informed EAVES in my judgment this was a promotion inasmuch as Detroit is a much larger office than Atlanta, and if posed this question, I would have to refer any such inquiry to the Director as he was the only person who would know the answer.

EAVES indicated again that he planned to make an interim report concerning his investigation of KING. I told him again I would not participate since the FBI was not involved. I did tell him, however, that if asked by the media whether he and I had had a conference on this date, that I would admit to this, however, would furnish no details since I considered the conversation confidential. He said that this is the same way he looked at it and he had no intention of referring to our conversation.

EAVES departed at 2:05 P.M. in a most cordial and amicable manner, and promised to visit the office again in the near future to meet members of the staff and personnel that might be available.

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# Eaves' Meeting On King Reset

By CLIFF GREEN

Public Safety Commissioner A. Reginald Eaves' on-again off-again news conference to release the results of the bureau's investigation into the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. has been reset for 10 a.m. Wednesday.

Eaves was given an "overview" paper outlining the bureau's progress in the five-week-old investigation Friday, and a news conference was scheduled for Monday.

A police spokesman postponed the release of the report until Tuesday. Then late Monday the conference was re-scheduled for Wednesday.

Eaves said five weeks ago he had new information on the King murder, indicating the killing was the result of a conspiracy hatched in Atlanta.

At the time, Eaves said the information was provided by "someone I respect a great deal," but declined to identify the person turning over the material.

A week later, The Atlanta Journal reported the information came from a twice-convicted drug dealer named Robert Byron Watson.

Watson, 21, has been convicted on two federal charges involving illegal drugs: the importation of heroin, and conspiracy to distribute six ounces of cocaine.

In addition, Watson pleaded no contest to a DeKalb County charge of possessing less than an ounce of marijuana last year. He has also been arrested in Atlanta and charged with creating a turmoil, and once got into trouble with his federal parole board for leaving the country without permission.

He is now in the Federal Youth Center at Ashland, Ky.

The bureau's intelligence division has had as many as four officers assigned to investigate Watson's statement that he overheard several Atlanta men discussing the King murder a week before it occurred. The final report has been boiled down to four pages, a police spokesman said.

After Eaves announced the investigation (he has never admitted it is based on the Watson material), the FBI said it had investigated identical information in 1971 and found it groundless.

Atlanta officers reportedly visited Washington, D. C., Memphis, Knoxville and Ashland during their investigation. The King murder has been investigated intensely by both public and private investigators since the Nobel laureate was killed in April 1968.

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

Page 3-A  
THE ATLANTA JOURNAL  
Atlanta, Georgia

Date: 7-29-75  
Edition: Evening  
Author: Cliff Green  
Editor: Jack Spalding  
Title: MURKIN

Character: CR  
or  
Classification: 44-  
Submitting Office: ATLANTA  
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44-2386-2319

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JUL 30 1975	
FBI - ATLANTA	
48	

Original sent to [unclear]

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

## Eaves to Release Results Of King Death Probe Today

Public Safety Commissioner A. Reginald Eaves will release the results of his investigation into the 1968 assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at a Wednesday press conference.

Eaves is expected to release a four-page statement on his department's probe, based on a statement from a federal inmate who claimed he overheard men planning King's death a week before the civil rights leader was slain in Memphis.

Intelligence officers pursued the tip for two weeks in Tennessee and elsewhere. An FBI spokesman said the bureau had received the same information in 1971 and discounted it. Eaves has maintained that the information is "new."

Much of the information contained in the inmate's 34-page typewritten statement deals with an alleged drug smuggling ring. Some of that information has been corroborated, lawmen said.

The 10 a.m. press conference will be held in the fourth-floor conference room at police headquarters, a spokesman said.

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Page 3-A  
THE  
ATLANTA CONSTITUTION  
Atlanta, Georgia

Date: 7-30-75  
Edition: Morning  
Author: CR  
Editor: Reg Murphy  
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or  
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Submitting Office: ATLANTA  
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#P [Signature]

1 Xerox copy made  
of original at Bureau.

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# 'King Going to Be Killed'

By CLIFF GREEN

Robert Byron Watson is an unlikely candidate for fame.

Other than the publicity generated by his statement that he overheard several white men discussing a plot to assassinate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the 21-year-old Atlantian has made few marks on the world.

And many of those appear

on metro police blotters and court documents outlining his involvement with illegal drugs, ranging from possession of small amounts of marijuana to the importation of heroin.

Nevertheless, Watson's claim that he overheard several men discussing the murder of the Nobel laureate has been kept alive for five years, mainly by his mother.

The pair tried to sell their story to President Nixon in 1970, according to a statement by Watson. The FBI said it investigated the story in 1971, and several private groups have studied the material off and on until today.

The latest official inquiry began several weeks ago when the allegations were brought to the attention of

Atlanta Public Safety Director A. Reginald Eaves.

The Atlanta Journal has since contacted those known to have studied the Watson claims. Not one will admit to finding any evidence linking the men named by Watson to the assassination.

Watson's assassination story is described as "bizarre" by

an Atlanta attorney familiar with the case. How the young man arrived at the story may deserve the same sort of description.

Watson's father was killed in an automobile accident in 1966. The death apparently had a traumatic effect on the youngster, says his mother, Mrs. R. W. Watson.

Her son is "a severe asthmpatic" who has "been a shut-in most of his life," she says.

He "devoted his time to the study of archeology and geology," which eventually led him to the alleged conspirators and into the world of illicit drugs, according to Mrs. Watson.

In 1967, Watson, then 13, was introduced to several men who operated a Buckhead firm dealing in artifacts, his mother recalls.

For the next few months, he went to the firm several times a week after school, she says. In the spring of 1968, he supposedly overheard the assassination plot.

"When mother picked me up," Watson says in a statement now on file with The Journal, "I told her King was going to be killed.

"She asked me how I knew, but I wouldn't tell her," Watson writes. "She said I didn't know that, but I told her that I did. I told her the place, day, time, etc., that it would take place."

The assassination occurred a week later, and the men left the country, according to Watson.

While they were gone, Watson said, he told his mother about the plot. The men didn't return until admitted King killer James Earl Ray was arrested in London the next winter, he says.

After the men returned and re-opened their business, Watson and his mother paid a visit.

"We believed that if they knew that I had overheard them, they would have us killed," Watson writes. "We believed that the best thing for us to do if they came back was to go back out there and act as if we knew nothing."

During the visit, one of the alleged conspirators pulled Watson aside and issued an oblique warning. "He said that bad things happen to people who overhear things and tell the authorities," Watson says.

More than a year passed before Watson and his mother decided to tell the authorities.

The pair flew to Washington in June 1970, where, they say, they talked with Nixon aides and the FBI. They talked with then-Rep. Charles Weltner, and through an attorney, contacted Sen. Herman Talmadge, then-Gov. Lester Maddox, and attempted to see the late Sen. Richard Russell. Finally, the attorney reached Washington lawyer Bernard Fensterwald, who privately investigates assassination conspiracies.

"After we turned the information in, it evidently got back to the wrong people," Watson said in the statement. "I was approached by the people and told that it had been voted on that we should die, but that if I worked with them, they knew we wouldn't be against them."

Watson said in his statement he was forced to go to the Far East with the men, where they forced him to write \$25,000 worth of bad checks and got him on drugs.

"When Byron returned from the trip," Mrs. Watson wrote in a letter to a Journal reporter, "I was shocked at his appearance.

"He was as white as death and a frame of bones," she wrote. "It was obvious that they had gotten him on drugs. His personality had completely changed, and his hair fell out by the handful."

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Shortly thereafter, Watson said, he moved to Chamblee, where he shared an apartment "with some Christian boys," in an attempt "to hide out from the gangsters."

"Not long after that, a magazine wrapped in brown paper from Bangkok, Thailand, came through the mail," Watson said in his statement. "My mother had told me over the phone that a magazine had arrived from the Orient and that she had put it in the shopping bag with the rest of my things in a hall closet."

Federal narcotics agents promptly raided the Watson home, where they confiscated the magazine containing heroin and arrested Mrs. Watson. The Chamblee apartment was also raided and Watson was arrested.

According to drug enforcement agents, three rolled magazines containing heroin were mailed from Thailand to

the Watson home. Two of them were confiscated but the third was allowed to go through.

In July 1972, Watson was sentenced to from four to six years in the Federal Youth Center at Ashland, Ky., and Mrs. Watson was placed on a year's federal probation.

Watson was paroled in March 1974, but in less than 10 months, he had been arrested in DeKalb County for possessing less than an ounce of marijuana. In addition, he was arrested in Atlanta and charged with creating a turmoil, then got in trouble with

the federal government for going to Chile with a girlfriend without permission from his probation officer.

In January, Watson was arrested by federal agents and charged with conspiracy to distribute six ounces of cocaine. He was convicted in May, and returned to the youth center in Kentucky.

Watson, who claims he can connect the murder of Dr. King to the killing of President Kennedy, blames his troubles on "the syndicate and people in high places in government" who do not want his story told.

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By JIM STEWART

Public Safety Commissioner Reginald Eaves' fruitless investigation into the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was "a waste of time, money and a source of embarrassment to me and my family," one of the targets of that investigation said Wednesday.

Bane Culley, a self-employed Atlanta businessman, said he had cooperated fully with investigators in the probe "at a great cost to me in terms of time and lawyer's fees."

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"Unless new information becomes available, I consider the subject closed," Eaves announced at a press conference.

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"I have no comment on what Watson has to say until I have a chance to read his entire statement," Culley said. "But I think the fact that both the FBI and the Atlanta police have looked into it and dismissed it speaks for itself."

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"I volunteered to take a polygraph examination," Culley said. "When it was completed I didn't even ask what the results were. I knew what they were."

Culley admitted that he knew his accuser when the young man worked at a Buckhead art gallery, the scene of the alleged plot to kill Dr. King. "If you know Watson or have ever talked with him, then you know what his charges are worth," Culley said.

Watson, 21, is currently serving a five-year sentence in Ashland, Ky., for conviction of narcotics trafficking. U.S. District Judge Newell Edenfield, who originally sentenced Watson, has since ordered that he undergo psychiatric examination.

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Eaves said that while the investigation of Watson's allegations proved fruitless, detectives did receive information "which indicates

possibility" that there may have been a conspiracy linked to King's death.

He added, however, "We are unable to attest to the reliability of persons who claim knowledge of a conspiracy."

Because of the "many questions" which remain in the case, Eaves said he would ask the Justice department, officials in Memphis and U.S. Rep. Andrew Young to initiate an investigation "to insure that an injustice has not been perpetrated."

Eaves declined to discuss what new information his investigators had received. He conceded that Watson's report was the same one received and dismissed as useless by the FBI in 1971.

In the course of the investigation Eaves had accused the FBI of being uncooperative and not allowing access to its records.

Eaves said his investigators talked with 11 law enforcement agencies and 35 "non-governmental persons" during the investigation.

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Page 1-A

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Atlanta, Georgia

Date: 7-31-75  
Edition: Morning  
Author: Jim Stewart  
Editor: Reg Murphy  
Title: MURKIN

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Atlanta, Georgia

August 1, 1975

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

MURKIN

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- 6 - Bureau (44-38861)
- 1 - Memphis (44-1987)(Info)
- 2 - Atlanta (44-2386) (C)

WDC:cw  
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44-2386-2323



## EAVES ADMITS

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Eaves then returned the ball to where it had been ever since the Nobel Prize winning civil rights leader was gunned down in 1968: The U.S. Department of Justice and local authorities in Memphis.

The commissioner ordered an investigation into the King murder a month ago after comedian Dick Gregory gave him a copy of a statement by a twice-convicted drug dealer, Robert Byron Watson, who claimed to have overheard several Atlanta men discussing King's murder a week before it occurred.

The Watson statement provided no accurate information on the assassination.

The Atlanta Constitution, Page 1-A, July 30, 1975

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In fact, he said two of the men named by Watson who are still living in Atlanta took polygraph examinations over the weekend, and the lie detector indicated the individuals

were not involved in the alleged conspiracy.

"Based on this evidence," Eaves said in a prepared statement, "our investigation, therefore, causes us to reject the probability of a conspiracy based upon the specific allegations made by Watson in the document he submitted relative to Dr. King's death."

Watson and his mother, Mrs. R. W. Watson, have been trying to convince officials of the truth of the 21-year-old's story since 1970, two years after Dr. King's death.

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Eaves said the Atlanta Bureau of Police Services investigation "found no evidence to support his claims."

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At one point during the bureau's probe, Eaves said it would have been impossible for the FBI to investigate the Watson statement four years ago, because some of the information was as new as 1974.

During the Wednesday press conference, however, Eaves admitted that the new information concerned drugs, not the assassination.

"Unless new information becomes available," Eaves said, "I consider the subject closed."





Staff Photo—George A. Clark  
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The Atlanta Constitution  
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WDC:cw  
(9)

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44-2386-2323



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July 31, 1975

F B I

Date: 8/1/75

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

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (44-38861)  
(ATTN: SUPV. JACK LAWN, ROOM 5078  
JEH, AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS)

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

MURKIN

Re Atlanta teletype to the Bureau, 7/18/75.

Enclosed herewith for the Bureau are the original and five copies of an LHM with attached newspaper clippings.

One copy of above LHM being furnished to Memphis Division for information.

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4-Bureau (Enc. 6)  
1-Memphis (44-1987) (Enc. 1) (Info)

② Atlanta

WDC:cw

(7) CW

*we Hamilton*  
44-2386-2324

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Special Agent in Charge

U.S. Government Printing Office: 1972 - 455-874

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Date: 8/1/75

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As pointed out in these clippings, the investigation produced no new evidence, however, EAVES stated that he would ask the U. S. Department of Justice, officials in Memphis, and U. S. Representative ANDREW YOUNG to initiate an investigation to insure that injustice has not been perpetrated.

4-Bureau (Enc. 6)  
1-Memphis (44-1987) (Enc. 1) (Info)  
①-Atlanta  
WDC:cw  
(7)

*W*

44-2386-2324

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Special Agent in Charge

Sent \_\_\_\_\_ M Per \_\_\_\_\_

U.S. Government Printing Office: 1972 - 455-874



# EAVES ADMITS King Theory Flops

By CLIFF GREEN  
Public Safety Commissioner  
A. Reginald Eaves conceded Wednesday that allegations the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was the result of an Atlanta-based conspiracy are "not substantiated."

Eaves then returned the ball to where it had been ever since the Nobel Prize winning civil rights leader was gunned down in 1968: The U.S. Department of Justice and local authorities in Memphis.

The commissioner ordered an investigation into the King murder a month ago after comedian Dick Gregory gave him a copy of a statement by a twice-convicted drug dealer, Robert Byron Watson, who claimed to have overheard several Atlanta men discussing King's murder a week before it occurred.

The Watson statement provided no accurate information on the assassination.

Eaves said the statement did give Atlanta investigators unspecified "leads" in the case, but indicated the "leads" had nothing to do with the Atlanta men.

In fact, he said two of the men named by Watson who are still living in Atlanta took polygraph examinations over the weekend, and the lie detector indicated the individuals

were not involved in the alleged conspiracy.

"Based on this evidence," Eaves said in a prepared statement, "our investigation, therefore, causes us to reject the probability of a conspiracy based upon this specific allegations made by Watson in the document he submitted relative to Dr. King's death."

Watson and his mother, Mrs. R. W. Watson, have been trying to convince officials of the truth of the 21-year-old's story since 1970, two years after Dr. King's death.

The Atlanta office of the FBI said it obtained the same information in 1971 and found it groundless.

Watson claims to have been framed on charges of importing heroin in 1972 and charges of conspiring to distribute cocaine in January 1975 by "high government officials and the syndicate" because of his knowledge of the conspiracy.

Eaves said the Atlanta Bureau of Police Services investigation "found no evidence to support his claims."

A mental examination has been ordered for Watson, who is confined to the Federal Youth Center in Ashland, Ky.

At one point during the bureau's probe, Eaves said it would have been impossible for the FBI to investigate the Watson statement four years ago, because some of the information was as new as 1974.

During the Wednesday press conference, however, Eaves admitted that the new information concerned drugs, not the assassination.

"Unless new information becomes available," Eaves said, "I consider the subject closed."

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)  
Page 1-A  
THE ATLANTA JOURNAL  
Atlanta, Georgia

Xerox copies made  
Original sent Bureau

Date: 7-30-75  
Edition: Evening  
Author: Cliff Green  
Editor: Jack Spalding  
Title: MURKIN

Character:  
or  
Classification: 44-  
Submitting Office: ATLANTA

Being Investigated

44-2386  
SEARCHED INDEXED 2325  
SERIALIZED FILED

JUL 31 1975

FBI-ATLANTA  
*[Signature]*



**A. REGINALD EAVES DISCLOSES HE WAS UNABLE TO FIND NEW EVIDENCE IN KING MURDER CASE**  
Says Twice-Convicted Drug Dealer's Statement Named Two Men, But Lie Detector Apparently Cleared Them

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

# Memorandum

TO : File 44- 2386

DATE: 7/30/75

FROM : SAC WILBURN K. DeBRULER

SUBJECT: MURKIN

At 10:25 A.M., 7/30/75, a secretary of Commissioner A. REGINALD EAVES called and read a release she said was now being made by EAVES to the media concerning the assassination of MARTIN LUTHER KING. The purpose of her call was not to coordinate or receive the sanction of this office, but what she described as a courtesy from EAVES in making the release.

The release discussed the recent information received and stated that EAVES obtained the information furnished by WATSON from DICK GREGORY. The release stated that EAVES had great faith in GREGORY. In essence, it described the information furnished by WATSON and how the police department had traveled to various cities throughout the United States, including Washington, D. C., and Memphis and other places, attempting to check the story of WATSON. The statement indicated their investigation did not establish the veracity of WATSON's story, nor was their investigation successful in dispelling all the questions raised. The statement wound up by advising that the matter is considered closed in the Atlanta Police Department, with a plea for help to the United States Department of Justice and other agencies equipped to run out the story of WATSON, and solicited the aid of Congressman ANDREW YOUNG.

No reference was made to the FBI or any previous statements by EAVES concerning the lack of cooperation of this office.

*M. J. [unclear]*  
*Berry*  
*Hamilton*

44-2386-2326

① 44-2386  
1- 80-633  
WKD:rrl  
(2) *cal*

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
JUL 30 1975	
FBI - ATLANTA	
<i>ASAC</i>	

*Cookman*



5010-108

Buy U.S. Savings Bonds Regularly on the Payroll Savings Plan

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

# Memorandum

TO : SAC, ATLANTA (44-2386) (C)

DATE: 8/12/75

FROM : SUPV. BERNARD R. BERRY

SUBJECT: MURKIN

On 8/12/75, JACKIE MADDOX, Channel 5 TV news, telephonically contacted me and inquired as to whether or not this office had instituted investigation into information previously furnished by REGINALD EAVES. She was advised that information furnished by EAVES had been forwarded to the U. S. Department of Justice, CR Division, Washington, D.C., for their consideration and this office has not instituted investigation in this regard and does not intend to do so unless so advised by USDJ. Miss MADDOX indicated that her call was precipitated by Commissioner EAVES' recent statement to the effect that he had requested the USDJ to conduct investigation concerning the information that he had recently received regarding the assassination of Dr. KING. She was advised that this office was not aware whether or not EAVES had contacted the Department of Justice and this information could only be obtained through EAVES. I reiterated however that this office had received no request from the Department to institute investigation re the KING matter.

On the same date, I received a telephone call from Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Internal Security Agent LUKE BENSON who indicated that he was in Atlanta pursuing allegations recently made by ROBERT BRYON WATSON re specific DEA Agents and allegations of wrongdoing on their part. Specifically, Agent BENSON wanted to know whether or not WATSON was ever interviewed by the FBI regarding this matter and he was advised that I was not aware of any interview of WATSON by the FBI regarding any drug related matters, as set forth in the lengthy document prepared by WATSON in which he also included information re MURKIN; however, I did advise BENSON that WATKINS was interviewed by Agents of this office in 1971 which interview was related solely to MURKIN, and that the results of this information was furnished USDJ in 4/71.

① - Atlanta  
BRB:dhs  
(1)  
*d*

44-2386-2327

SEARCHED .....	INDEXED .....
SERIALIZED .....	FILED .....
AUG 13 1975	
FBI - ATLANTA	

SAC *MB*  
ASAC *[Signature]*  
*Coakley*



Buy U.S. Savings Bonds Regularly on the Payroll Savings Plan

AT 44-2386

BENSON indicated that he thought it was best that he communicate directly with the Department to obtain copies of our report in this matter. He stated that his reason in contacting the FBI in this matter was to determine whether or not the results of the FBI interview with WATSON would indicate in any way that he was mentally unstable and therefore unreliable.

The above is recorded for information of the file.

**AIRTEL**

**8/13/75**

**To: SAC, Atlanta (44-2386)**  
**From: Director, FBI (44-38861)**  
**MURKIN**

**ReATairtel 8/1/75.**

**On 8/13/75, the Civil Rights Division advised that by letter to the Attorney General, dated July 30, 1975, A. Reginald Eaves, Public Safety Commissioner, Atlanta, volunteered to furnish a copy of the recent investigation by the Atlanta Bureau of Public Services to the Department.**

**Accordingly, Atlanta should obtain a copy of this report which will be disseminated to the Civil Rights Division.**

44-2386-2328

SEARCHED .....	INDEXED .....
SERIALIZED .....	FILED .....
AUG 15 1975	
FBI — ATLANTA	

FBI

Transmit in \_\_\_\_\_ Via AIRTEL \_\_\_\_\_ (Precedence)

8/13/75  
(Date)

To: SAC, Atlanta (44-2386)  
From: Director, FBI (44-38861)  
**MURKIN**

ReATairtel 8/1/75.

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*Personally discussed  
8/12/75 with Mr  
Eaves and he indicated  
copy of investigation  
could be obtained  
through Capt. H. M. ...  
of A.P.D. J.M.*

*44-2386-2328*

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SERIALIZED .....	FILED .....
AUG 15 1975	
FBI - ATLANTA	
<i>Wilson</i>	<i>PSW</i>

(Do not type below this line.)

*SAC MM  
ASAC [Signature]*

SEARCHED .....	INDEXED .....
SERIALIZED .....	FILED .....
AUG 15 1975	
FBI - ATLANTA	

*CO: PDE  
8/22/75*

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

# Memorandum

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

DATE: 8/26/75

FROM : SUPV. BERNARD R. BERRY

SUBJECT: MURKIN

Re Bureau airtel to Atlanta, 8/13/75.

As noted on serial 2328 of this file, SAC DUNN contacted Mr. EAVES concerning the obtaining of a copy of Atlanta Police Department (APD) Investigative Report based on information furnished by ROBERT BYRON WATSON. As indicated by SAC DUNN, Mr. EAVES advised a copy of this report could be obtained through Cpt. BURNETTE, APD.

In this regard, on 8/26/75, I contacted Cpt. BURNETTE telephonically at 11:15 AM, and advised that a copy of their investigative report could be obtained through Det. JUDY WILLIAMSON at the convenience of the Agent who was to stop by and pick it up.

Pursuant to above, SA WILSON is requested to promptly obtain copy of APD report and submit same to Bureau via LHM.

For info of Case Agent, Cpt. BURNETTE is located in Beta Bldg., to Northside of 75, Room 520. SA ED SHEA, #3 Squad, is familiar with this information and should be of assistance in locating.

② Atlanta  
BRB:dhs  
(2)  
d

*TOP - pls copy*

44-2386-2329

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
AUG 26 1975	
FBI - ATLANTA	
<i>Wilson</i>	<i>JW</i>



5010-108

Buy U.S. Savings Bonds Regularly on the Payroll Savings Plan



SAC, ATLANTA (44-2386) (P)

8/26/75

SUPV. BERNARD R. BERRY

MURKIN

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② - Atlanta  
BRB:dhs  
(2)  
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44-2386-2329

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AUG 26 1975	
FBI - ATLANTA	

JS

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

BY 3 ATLANTANS

# Accuser Sued In King Probe

By JIM GRAY

Three Atlanta men accused by a convicted narcotics dealer of complicity in the 1968 slaying of Martin Luther King Jr. and exonerated this summer by Atlanta police have filed a \$3 million libel suit against their accuser and his mother.

Bayne S. Culley, Harold Eugene Purcell and Lawrence W. Meier claim in the Fulton County Superior Court action that 21-year-old Robert Byron Watson and his mother published "false, scandalous, malicious and defamatory" written statements they knew to be false.

Attached to the lawsuit are six pages allegedly written by young Watson. The narrative claims Watson overheard the men plotting the murder a week before it happened.

Watson's charges were turned over this summer to Atlanta Public Safety Commissioner Reginald Eaves by comedian Dick Gregory. Eaves announced "new evidence" and discounted FBI claims that it had already determined the allegations to be unfounded, but he conceded July 30 that Watson's claims "could not be substantiated."

The lawsuit claims Watson and his mother, Mrs. Robert Willard Watson, also falsely accused the three of international drug smuggling and

racketeering.

The plaintiffs' reputations have been irreparably injured, the suit says, and they have been "exposed to public hatred, contempt and ridicule with and amongst their neighbors and other good and worthy citizens."

Each plaintiff demands \$1 million in actual and punitive damages. Their lawyer swears in an affidavit that Watson is imprisoned at a federal prison in Kentucky after conviction for conspiracy to distribute cocaine.

The accusation by Watson claims he overheard the plot at Magellons artifact store in Buckhead. Watson claims he heard one man say he would shoot King in the head "and frame a jailbird just as they had Kennedy."

The Watson statement alleges that "assassins" and "syndicate" figures continually threatened him and his mother while they unsuccessfully tried to convince investigators of the truth of their charges.

"Ever since that time my mother and I have been threatened, victimized, and the objects of numerous dirty tricks by the federal government," the narrative claims.

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

Page 6-A  
THE ATLANTA JOURNAL  
& CONSTITUTION  
Atlanta, Georgia

Date: 9-1-75  
Edition: Combined  
Author: Jim Gray  
Editor: Spalding/Murphy  
Title: MURKIN

Character:  
or  
Classification: 144-  
Submitting Office: ATLANTA  
 Being Investigated

273 86-2330

*Call son  
pls read to B  
WALTON  
B*

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# What is FBI hiding? **Atlanta official charges King murder cover-up**

By Joel Aber

ATLANTA—New leads point to a conspiracy in the 1968 assassination of civil rights leader Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., but the FBI and Justice Department have refused to pursue the evidence. So admitted Atlanta's public safety commissioner, Reginald Eaves, at a July 30 news conference.

A twenty-one-year-old Black Atlantan, Robert Watson, says he overheard two white men in Atlanta plotting to murder the civil rights leader one week before his assassination.

In 1971, Watson informed federal authorities of the incident. They failed to do anything.

In 1972, Watson was convicted on a drug charge that he asserts was part of a government frame-up to silence him.

Since that time, James Earl Ray, who originally confessed to being the sole plotter, demanded a new trial based on his contention that he actually acted in conspiracy with white Southerners. He was denied a new trial by a federal judge last February.

Recently, Eaves initiated an investigation into the assassination plot,

after comedian Dick Gregory relayed Watson's story to him.

During the investigation, Eaves issued a statement complaining that the FBI was impeding the investigation. "Our intelligence detectives to date have been denied access to the information the FBI now has in their files," he said. He noted that "local FBI officials here in Atlanta who normally cooperate with us seemed unwilling to share information concerning the case."

Eaves said his detectives had been able to gather information that proved Watson's story "to be about 95 percent accurate."

At the news conference Eaves toned down his criticism of the FBI and said that his investigation had "not substantiated" Watson's contention that the plot was based in Atlanta. But he admitted that Atlanta detectives have turned up unspecified "leads," apparently in Memphis.

Eaves said he would call on the Justice Department, Memphis authorities, and Representative Andrew Young (D-Ga.) to continue the investigation.

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

"The Militant"

Page 29

9/5/75

Date:

Edition:

Author:

Editor:

Title:

Character:

or

Classification:

Submitting Office:

Being Investigated

*wilson 7/16*

48

44-2386-2361

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SEP 3 1975	
FBI - ATLANTA	

Meanwhile the FBI has been forced to admit, for the first time, that it had been told Watson's story in 1971. FBI director Clarence Kelley said the story was groundless, but offered no explanation as to how the agency arrived at that conclusion, or why it then decided to keep its conclusion secret.

Clearly the FBI and other government agencies have a stake in impeding further investigation into King's murder. It might lead to embarrassing questions.

According to information released last March by *New York Times* reporter Nicholas Horrock, King was under continual harassment and surveillance by the FBI until the moment of his death. Horrock quotes one agent as saying the surveillance was so tight that King "couldn't wiggle."

It is now known, through the court-ordered release of secret FBI memos, that the harassment of King was part of the FBI's Cointelpro plot to destroy the Black movement. The questions arise: What is the FBI trying to cover up? Was it behind the plot to kill King?



Eli Finer

FBI says they heard story of plot to murder Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1971 but dismissed it as groundless.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Atlanta, Georgia

September 8, 1975

MURKIN

On August 22, 1975, Special Agent in Charge, James J. Dunn, Jr., of the Atlanta Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), contacted A. Reginald Eaves, Public Safety Director, Atlanta, Georgia Police Department, and referred Mr. Eaves to his letter to the Attorney General, dated July 30, 1975, in which Mr. Eaves volunteered to furnish a copy of recent investigation conducted by the Atlanta Police Department, regarding data furnished to the Police Department by Robert Byron Watson, pertaining to the murder of Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr.

Mr. Dunn requested that the FBI in Atlanta be furnished a copy of the Atlanta Police Department Report. This report will be forwarded through FBI Headquarters to the Civil Rights Division of the U. S. Department of Justice, Washington, D. C.

Mr. Eaves advised a copy of the investigation would be made available through Captain K. E. Burnette, Intelligence Section, Bureau of Police Services, Atlanta, Georgia.

On August 29, 1975, Captain K. E. Burnette, Intelligence Section, Bureau of Police Services, furnished a copy of the Atlanta Police Department Investigation, which is attached.

-----  
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.

4- BUREAU (44-38861)  
1- MEMPHIS (44-1987)  
① ATLANTA (44-2386) (C)



TJW:ew  
(7) CW

B  
44-2386-2332

MURKIN

At the time of contact with Mr. Eaves on August 22, 1975, by Special Agent in Charge Dunn, Mr. Eaves advised he had directed a letter to the U. S. Department of Justice, Washington, D. C., requesting information pertaining to the murder of Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr. Mr. Eaves advised that as of that time, a reply had not been received by him from the U. S. Department of Justice, Washington, D. C. He was advised that this would be brought to the attention of the U. S. Department of Justice at the time when the results of the investigation conducted by the Atlanta Police Department, were furnished to the U. S. Department of Justice.

Also attached is a newspaper clipping from the Atlanta Journal and Constitution, Page 6, Section A, dated September 1, 1975, and a clipping from "The Militant" Newspaper, Page 29, dated September 5, 1975.

INVESTIGATION INTO ALLEGED CONSPIRACY  
TO ASSASSINATE DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Submitted by: Captain K. E. Burnette  
Intelligence Section  
Bureau of Police Services  
Atlanta, Georgia

Investigative Contacts:

Detectives P. E. Sullivan, I. Mapp, and J. A. Williamson

### INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

On June 20, 1975, Detectives Sullivan, Mapp, and Williamson of the Intelligence Section were assigned by Section Commander Captain K. E. Burnette to investigate information recently received by Commissioner A. Reginald Eaves, which related to the 1968 assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This information, which specifically alleged the existence of an Atlanta-based conspiracy in the death of Dr. King, was incorporated into a forty-two (42) page document, the bulk of which consisted of drug-related data.

The author of the entire document was self-identified as Robert Byron Watson, a twenty-one year old white male and a native of the Atlanta area. Preliminary inquiries established that Watson had an arrest record which included a 1972 arrest and conviction for importation of heroin, a subsequent arrest for Possession of Marijuana and a January 1975 arrest and subsequent conviction for Distribution of Cocaine. Watson is presently incarcerated in the Federal Youth Center in Ashland, Kentucky, and is now serving a five-year sentence on the latter charge.

As the conspiracy allegations comprised only a minor portion of the originator's lengthy statement, immediate investigative emphasis was placed upon determining the reliability of the drug-related information as an elementary factor in evaluating the source's total credibility. Towards this end, two investigators were assigned to this aspect of the investigation. A comprehensive report of their findings is attached as an appendage to this investigative summary; however, for purposes of clarity, certain pertinent facts obtained through their efforts require elaboration in the body of this report. In general, Watson's involvement in the narcotics traffic and his



familiarity with many of the illegal drug traffickers referenced in his statement can be documented through information on file with various local and federal narcotics enforcement agencies. Law enforcement records verify the subject's initial narcotics involvement as dating from July 26, 1972, when Watson and his mother were arrested for Importation of Heroin after quantities of that substance were discovered by federal agents in a magazine mailed to Watson at his mother's address from sources in the far east. However, while the subject's activities as a narcotics trafficker can be documented from the above date until his most recent arrest in January of 1975, investigation failed to substantiate Watson's claims, emphasized repeatedly throughout his statement, that he was an innocent victim of corrupt law enforcement officials who framed him because of his knowledge of their illegal activities. More specifically, Watson's charges that "federal gangsters" conspired to frame him in 1972 to silence him about the King and Kennedy conspiracies and again in January of 1975 to discredit his information regarding an international narcotics smuggling operation perpetrated by DEA agents were found to be totally erroneous. Investigation did establish that Watson, after his release from the Federal Youth Center in Ashland, Kentucky, in March of 1974, did approach the local office of the Drug Enforcement Administration about a position as a special employee working undercover to set up drug deals. DEA authorities relate that, while they were prohibited from utilizing Watson as an undercover operative by the conditions of his parole, he did, on that occasion, furnish the agency with cursory data relating to the local narcotics traffic. From this point, Watson's contact with the DEA was restricted to his narcotics transactions with several undercover DEA operatives whom, until his January 1975 arrest, he did not know were employees of that agency. While information obtained indicates that the

above referenced individuals did utilize Watson for his narcotics contacts, there is no evidence to support Watson's allegations that these same authorities framed him in his last arrest to conceal their own involvement in an international smuggling ring.

However, exclusive of Watson's claims that he had been the victim of a drug-related conspiracy, the general reliability of the narcotics information submitted was deemed sufficient to merit a comprehensive investigation into his allegations of an Atlanta-based conspiracy to assassinate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Investigators then began to conduct a series of interviews with individuals whose familiarity with Watson and/or the subjects whom he specifically named as conspiring to kill Dr. King could assist us in determining the credibility of the conspiracy-related information. For the purpose of this section of the summary, all of these interviews will be reported in a chronological format, and the collective results will then be analyzed in the general conclusions following the investigative summary.

#### PRELIMINARY ATLANTA INTERVIEWS

As a preparatory step in this facet of the investigation, Intelligence detectives, on June 24, 1975, visited the Atlanta office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, where we requested agents to check the names of Robert Byron Watson and also of Jerry Adams, Larry Meier, Eugene Purcell, and Bayne Culley (the four alleged conspirators) through the FBI indices. The Bureau reported that it had no record of any of the above individuals in the regular filing system. However, subsequent conversations with Bureau personnel revealed that the local FBI office had received information in 1971 from Robert Byron Watson which, in all details relating to the King conspiracy, was essentially a

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duplicate of that received by the Atlanta Bureau of Police Services. Agent Dick Berry, who was assigned the case, stated that the information was handled as a civil rights investigation and was, therefore, forwarded to the U. S. Department of Justice for further action. An official request from Commissioner Eaves to view the results of the federal government's investigation has now been filed with Attorney General Levi, and we await a decision in the matter. However, investigators were given to understand from Bureau sources that the Department of Justice found no substance to the conspiracy allegations.

A record check was also instituted through the Identification Section of the Bureau of Police Services, and Robert Byron Watson's arrest record was obtained. Of the four principals alleged in the conspiracy, Atlanta police files reflect only Bayne Stacy Culley, Jr. arrested on April 9, 1946 for Carrying a Pistol Without a License and on December 18, 1950 for a traffic violation. Since Watson's statements indicated a radical right affiliation on the part of the four named subjects, Atlanta Intelligence files and those of other local agencies were queried to determine involvement in right wing extremist activities. No record of this type of affiliation could be located in regards to any of the principals, although Jerry Adams was identified as an active member of The John Birch Society, an ultra-conservative organization which cannot objectively be categorized as right wing extremist in nature.

Also on June 24, 1975, at approximately 1:30 p.m., an interview was held with Mr. Steve Mullis and Mr. Bob Hall, federal probation officers assigned to Robert Byron Watson from the date of his parole in March of 1974 until his most recent arrest and conviction in 1975. While these officers were somewhat restricted in what they could divulge by the nature of their responsibilities, both gentlemen were extremely cooperative. Both Mr. Mullis and Mr. Hall

confirmed the source's conscious participation in narcotics activities and described Watson as an overly protected, emotionally unstable individual whose actions they believed to be primarily motivated by an obsession to be important and to be accepted by some element of society. In their professional opinion, Watson's overwhelming desire for acceptance was equally reflected through his attachment to the criminal community on the one hand and through his attempted identification with law enforcement sources (the DEA) on the other. Information which these sources were able to provide into Watson's background indicated that the subject had a history of severe asthma which, during his childhood, resulted in isolation from his peer group and in an overly protective attitude on the part of his parents. Since the death of his father in 1966, Watson, an only child, has been obsessively protected by his mother and maternal grandmother, with his only apparent outlet his passion for archeology and ancient artifacts.

During the course of the interview, investigators were permitted to view a psychological analysis of Robert Byron Watson performed in 1973 during the subject's incarceration at the Federal Youth Center in Ashland, Kentucky. This psychological evaluation, which provided professional documentation to the probation official's assessment of Watson's emotional instability, cited the subject in question as having an early history of mental disorder and classified him in the following psychological terms: "a schizophrenic, chronic undifferentiated type; is considered psychotic and dangerous to the community; has no real judgement; is extremely grandiose; has a great deal of looseness of association in thought with direction of thought and conversation constantly changing."

After obtaining a professional evaluation of the source's character and background, investigators interviewed Mr. William Arnette, identified by Watson as a close personal friend and the individual who introduced Watson to Magellan,

Inc., the art gallery where the alleged conversation about the conspiracy reportedly took place. By way of background, William S. Arnette (AKA Arenowitch,) now residing in Atlanta, is a white male, approximately thirty-six (36) years of age, born Columbus, Georgia, B.A. degree from University of Georgia. Arnette a reported expert in ancient art with an impressive private collection, operated "The West Eleven, Inc." art and antique shop on West Eleventh Street, Atlanta, before being retained by Magellan, Inc. as chief buyer of the art and antiques sold at the gallery. When contacted at his home on Knollwood Drive, Atlanta, at approximately 3:00 p.m., June 24, 1975, Arnette stated that he had initially met Watson through the latter's interest in ancient art and that he had attempted to assist Byron with his hobby. He also stated that Byron consistently frequented Magellan and both Byron and his mother had made a number of art purchases, both from Magellans and from Arnette personally, purchases financed by a large insurance settlement accrued by Mrs. Watson upon the death of her husband. Arnette advised that his personal relationship with both Watsons was interrupted in 1970 when the Watsons, who had purchased a quantity of art items totaling some \$46,500 from Arnette and had then attempted to sue him for defrauding them with worthless material. Arnette, who by this time had moved his collection to Columbus, Georgia, stated that the situation became extremely complex when Mrs. Watson, convinced by Byron that Gene Purcell planned to marry her, was told by her son that half of Arnette's collection belonged to Purcell, and, therefore, confronted Arnette demanding what belonged to "Gene and her." According to Arnette, this period became difficult with Byron threatening him personally and accusing him of defrauding him and his mother until in December of 1970, Watson was arrested while attempting to burglarize Arnette's warehouse in Columbus. This incident is documented in Watson's arrest record which also

reflects that the charges were subsequently dropped. In Arnette's statement, he dropped contact with Watson until 1972/1973 when the subject was incarcerated in Ashland, Kentucky. During that period, Arnette stated that he corresponded with Byron and even offered to help him upon his release. However, he stated that Byron was extremely erratic, given to grandiose visions and violent outbursts, and that Mrs. Watson's stability was also highly questionable.

When questioned specifically regarding his involvement with Magellans, Arnette relayed the following information: Magellans was incorporated under the title of Blockade Runners, Inc., in November of 1966. Incorporators of the venture were Jerry Adams, Benjamin L. Sutherland, and John Nelson, all previously associated in Adams Associates, a private detective agency, credit bureau, and bill collection agency, and The Atlantic Clearing Exchange, 3177 Peachtree Road, Atlanta. The idea for the corporation, and obviously its title, stemmed from an attempt by Adams, in 1966, to raise a civil war blockade runner off the North Carolina coast, an enterprise in which Eugene Purcell was to be employed as a diver. When the entire venture was aborted through a legal tangle with the state of North Carolina, Adams, Southerland, and Nelson formed Blockade Runners, Inc., d.b.a. Magellans, to serve as a clearing house for ancient eastern and pre-Columbian artifacts and also for civil war relics. The business, established initially at 3177 Peachtree Road, was moved shortly thereafter to its primary location at 3340 Peachtree Road. Bayne Culley and Gene Purcell were brought in as stockholders to handle the civil war materials while Arnette was introduced as a buyer for pre-Columbian and far-eastern art objects.

Arnette stated that he only performed one buying trip for Magellans in the summer of 1967 when he visited a number of far-eastern countries to procure various art pieces for the gallery. When he returned from this trip, he stated

that problems, both personal and financial, had arisen at Magellans, and in December of 1967, Arnette left the company. He further advised that he had not renewed contact with any of the Magellan principals since that date and described them as all belonging to the political right. Of particular interest to detectives was Arnette's reference to Bayne Culley and Gene Purcell as very physical and bigoted individuals. As a result of the interview with Mr. Arnette, investigators were primarily interested in determining the reliability of his statement that Gene Purcell had, in 1956, been involved in a racial incident in Clinton, Tennessee, during which a black school was dynamited and damage to other property incurred.

While in the process of gathering all available background information regarding Magellans and its principals, investigators also systematically traced the evolution of the conspiracy allegations from March 28, 1968, the date identified in the source's statement as the occasion when the alleged conversation took place, until the entire document was brought to the attention of the Bureau of Police Services. Watson stated that he told no one but his mother about the conversation until 1970 when the Watsons traveled to Washington, D. C. to present their evidence to President Nixon. After experiencing disinterest on the part of Secret Service agents with whom they came in contact, the Watsons returned to Atlanta where they contacted local attorney Lynnwood Maddox. On June 25, 1975, an interview was conducted with Mr. Maddox.

Mr. Maddox stated that, sometime in 1970, Mrs. Edwards, Byron's grandmother and an acquaintance of Maddox through mutual church activities, brought Byron to his office, upon which time the conspiracy allegations were related to him. Mr. Maddox advised that, although his memory of the incident had grown rather vague with time, he did recall that Byron appeared frightened and that his story had



a ring of consistency. He further stated that Byron had referred to the alleged conspirators as "businessmen" and also as "the Southern Maffia," and that he had also referred to the Kennedy assassination as related to the same group as well as to several other assassinations now being plotted. Mr. Maddox also recalled that Byron had mentioned receiving a reward for the information which he hoped to collect from "someone like Mrs. Kennedy." At this point in the interview, Mr. Maddox could not recall exactly whom he had advised Byron to contact, but was reasonably certain that he had set up interviews for Watson with the FBI and with Governor Lester Maddox. In regards to the latter, Mrs. Watson and Byron did apparently gain an interview with the Governor, during the course of which a reward was again mentioned, much to Governor Maddox's displeasure. The Watsons were then referred to Mr. Bernard Fensterwald and the Committee to Investigate Assassinations in Washington, D. C. At the conclusion of the interview, Mr. Maddox advised that, while he greatly admired his grandmother, on the basis of his brief acquaintance with Byron, he judged him to be a rather strange individual.

On June 25, 1975, Mr. Bernard Fensterwald, current chief counsel for James Earl Ray, was contacted by phone at his law firm in Washington, D. C. After conversing with Mr. Fensterwald and his investigator Mr. Ken Smith, it was determined that these gentlemen had been contacted by Watson in 1970 and that Mr. Smith had visited Atlanta on various occasions to investigate various aspects of Watson's conspiracy allegations. As both gentlemen seemed to place credence in the document in question, it was agreed that investigators would meet with them in Washington to obtain whatever additional facts and documentation were available. During the conversation with Mr. Smith, it was revealed that he had personally talked with a subject in Atlanta, claiming to be the

former girl friend of James Earl Ray, who stated that she had visited the Magellan location with Ray.

With the assistance of several law enforcement contacts, background information was compiled on both Mr. Fensterwald and Mr. Smith to determine the reliability of their information. Information received through this inquiry reflected Mr. Fensterwald to be a well-established attorney whose career includes a six-year stint as a legal advisor to the State Department (1950-1956); chief counsel on the Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments (1959-1960); staff director of the Senate Anti-Trust and Monopoly Subcommittee (1961-1964); and counsel to the Senate Subcommittee on Administrative Practices and Procedures where he became involved in investigating illegal wiretapping operations (1967-1968.) In 1968, Fensterwald left senate service and in 1969 founded the privately sponsored Committee to Investigate Assassinations. In this capacity, he has published a series of articles on the Kennedy assassination, and in 1970 became the chief counsel for James Earl Ray. In addition, Mr. Fensterwald represented convicted Watergate conspirator James W. McCord. Mr. Ken Smith is a retired agent of the U. S. Treasury Department and presently Fensterwald's chief investigator. Sources contacted considered both men to be reputable.

At approximately 5:00 p.m. on June 25, 1975, investigators interviewed Mrs. Edna Mathews at her place of employment, the Orange Julius Stand in the Lakewood Shopping Center. Mrs. Mathews, a white female approximately 45-50 years of age, did not appear surprised when we identified ourselves; however, she stated that she was afraid to talk to us in the restaurant, therefore the interview was conducted in the detective car parked in the shopping center. Mrs. Mathews stated that she had met James Earl Ray through her husband, a

service friend of Ray's, and that she had spent considerable time with Ray, both in Atlanta and in California and had borne his son. Beyond this point, Mrs. Mathews' statements were totally incoherent as she described an "American Revolutionary Army" headed by Sam Giancana and a CIA agent, which was responsible for political assassinations, kidnappings, illegal drug trafficking, etc. When asked specifically about Magellans and its principals, Mrs. Mathews showed no recognition, even when the former location of the gallery was described. Mrs. Mathews' credibility was negated by investigators; although it was subsequently learned that this subject has attended the majority of court proceedings involving James Earl Ray and has taken trips to several distant locations including Costa Rica. However, Mrs. Mathews failed to provide any evidence of a link between Ray and an Atlanta-based conspiracy centered at Magellans.

On June 27, 1975, interviews were scheduled respectively with Mrs. Edwards, Byron's grandmother, and Mrs. Lillian Watson, the source's mother. Mrs. Edwards, an elderly lady recovering from an illness, stated that she had no direct knowledge of the conspiracy allegations, and was most immediately concerned with obtaining Byron's release from prison. However, she was able to verify that, in the fall of 1974, Byron Watson had left the country, without the permission of his probation office, for Santiago, Chile. Mrs. Edwards was not aware of his activities while in Chile, but stated that he had called her from Santiago requesting money to come home. Mrs. Edwards stated that she acquiesced to this request and showed us a payment book for a bank loan which she took out to finance Byron's return trip to Atlanta. Mrs. Edwards appeared thoroughly convinced of her grandson's innocence in his most recent arrest and conviction.

On the same date, Mrs. Lillian Watson was interviewed at her home at 764 Wildwood Road, N. E. Mrs. Watson stated that, on March 28, 1968, she had driven to Magellans to pick up Byron. During the ride home, she stated that Byron had

told her that Dr. King was to be killed, and had given her the time, date, and manner. She said that she had not really placed much credence in the information until after Dr. King was assassinated. Mrs. Watson, who typed all of Byron's statements, repeated his conspiracy allegations verbatim as they had appeared in the document. She advised us that, after he overheard the conversation, Byron had been threatened by Gene Purcell and that, out of fear, both Watsons had kept silent about their knowledge of the conspiracy until June 11, 1970 when they traveled to Washington to see President Nixon. Mrs. Watson stated that the Secret Service was "very rude" to them and showed no interest in their story. Upon returning to Atlanta they contacted Mr. Lynnwood Maddox who eventually placed them in contact with Mr. Fensterwald.

When questioned about Gene Purcell, Mrs. Watson admitted that "he had been interested in her" and that, just prior to the King assassination, she had observed Purcell to be extremely agitated and usually intoxicated. She also stated that, the weekend after the assassination, Purcell left Byron a note at Magellans advising him that he had left the country and might never come back. Mrs. Watson alleged that Purcell, Culley, and Meier left the country right after the assassination; and stated that Jean Sayre, who ran Magellans during this period, could corroborate this fact.

Mrs. Watson appeared most anxious that the investigation into the alleged conspiracy would, in some manner, occasion her son's release from prison. While she could offer no new information to support those charges contained in Watson's statement, she showed investigators letters received from Senators McKinney, Nunn, Church, and Jackson, all of which were dated in June of 1975 and which acknowledged receipt of Byron's statement which she had forwarded to them. Mrs. Watson also stated that Lamar Singleton, an aide to Representative Hosea Williams,

and Attorney John Hudson Miers were interested in the case.

Investigators then talked with Attorney Ernest Brookins, Byron's legal counsel in his last arrest and trial. Mr. Brookins was extremely cooperative and was willing to discuss his client at length.

Mr. Brookins stated that his first professional contact with the Watsons had been in 1970 when Mrs. Watson engaged him to file a suit against William Arnette. He stated that, in April of 1970, Mrs. Watson had written him a letter in which she stated that she had a problem but could not confide it "if I value my life and that of my son." Mrs. Watson did write, in the same letter, that, if Mr. Brookins aided her, there would be a lot of money for both him and her son.

Mr. Brookins, according to his statement, has maintained a professional relationship as Byron's attorney during his two major narcotics convictions, a relationship which degenerated into hostility on the part of the Watsons when Brookins advised Byron to plead guilty in his last hearing. During the course of this relationship, Mr. Brookins stated that he had been fully briefed by the Watsons regarding the conspiracy allegations, was aware of Fensterwald's interest in the matter, but, in his own words, seriously doubted Byron's credibility in that regard.

To support this opinion, Mr. Brookins showed detectives a series of letters from various educational authorities documenting Byron's emotional instability while enrolled in the Atlanta Public School System. He also advised investigators of Byron's erratic behavior during his latest trial when, at one point, the subject placed a call to an undercover DEA agent in Denver and told him to find the DEA agent who had "set him up and take care of him." In another conversation with an undercover federal agent, Byron is reported as stating that he was going to kill his mother and grandmother to get the inheritance money.

In addition, Watson, according to Brookins, used offensive and profane language in court and seemed bent on further incriminating himself.

Mr. Brookins was, however, able to verify certain aspects of Byron's statement not related to the King conspiracy. For example, he confirmed that Byron had made a trip to Thailand in 1972 and to Chile in 1974. Regarding the latter, Mr. Brookins produced a letter, dated October 6, 1974, written by Byron from Chile, in which Watson mentions that he is extremely close to several high government officials including Don Carlos Morales and "can make a fortune" from these sources. Byron also writes that he may come back to the U. S. "if Fensterwald gets his act together." It is believed, but not totally substantiated, that the Chile trip, like the one to Thailand, may have been closely connected with Watson's narcotics activity.

At this point in the investigation, priorities were directed towards compiling additional background information regarding the alleged conspirators, with special attention given to proving or disproving Watson's claims that the four individuals left the country directly following the assassination. On July 2, 1975, Mrs. Jean Sayre was contacted at her present residence in Ashville, North Carolina. Mrs. Sayre reportedly managed Magellans for a period in the late spring/early summer of 1968 after the Blockade Runners, Inc. interests had collapsed.

Mrs. Sayre stated that she and her partner, Mary Singleton, had been persuaded by Mr. William Arnette to move their stock of European antiques from a small shop on Peachtree Street to Magellans in the summer of 1967. The negotiated arrangement provided that the ladies could house their collection for exhibition and retail purposes at 3340 Peachtree Road, rent free, in return for which they would act as salespersons for the artifacts displayed by Blockade Runners, Inc. Mrs. Sayre stated that the operation had never been profitable for herself and her partner, that their personal inventory was badly depleted by thefts. She stated

that she personally lost \$750.00 which she had invested in Blockade Runners stocks. She further stated that she had only a working relationship with the other principals and had no basis for speculating as to their personalities or political views. However, she described both Jerry Adams and William Arnette as "con men" and expressed active dislike for Larry Meier due to his "sexual habits."

Mrs. Sayre could not specifically recall the date that she took over the operation of Magellans, but she believed that by late March/early April of 1968 Blockade Runners had removed all of their stock from 3340 Peachtree Road to the building housing Jerry Adams' collection agency (3177 Peachtree Road), leaving her to operate her antique business, under the Magellan trade name, until approximately July of 1968. When asked specifically if any of the principals had left the country during that time period (April-July, 1968,) Mrs. Sayre stated that, to her knowledge, Arnette was the only associate of Magellans who had travelled abroad, and that she had no information that Adams, Meier, Culley, or Purcell had gone outside of the United States during her association with them.

Additional inquiries through the U. S. Customs and Passport Authorities failed to substantiate that any of the principals had left the United States in the spring or summer of 1968.

All available records for Blockade Runners, Inc. were obtained and reflected the following general information:

Stockholders

J. R. Adams	360 Shares
B. L. Sutherland	360 Shares
J. W. Nelson	360 Shares
J. G. Grizzard	166 Shares
H. E. Purcell	116 Shares
J. G. Adams	46 Shares
F. M. Clamon, Jr.	10 Shares

Board of Directors

J. R. Adams . . . . . Chairman  
B. L. Sutherland . . . . . Director  
J. W. Nelson . . . . . Director  
H. E. Purcell . . . . . Director

Officers

J. R. Adams . . . . . President  
J. W. Nelson . . . . . Executive Vice President  
H. E. Purcell . . . . . Vice President  
B. L. Sutherland . . . . . Secretary/Treasurer

Associates

James Kemp . . . . . Owner of Buckhead Radio Shop.  
Raymond Anderson . . . . . Restorer and Framer.  
Larry Meier . . . . . Antique and Art Restoration.  
William Arnette . . . . . Buyer.  
Paul Clifford . . . . . Authority on pre-Columbian Art.  
Bayne S. Culley, Jr. . . . . Authority on Civil War Relics.  
William Thibideau . . . . . Banker and Real Estate Entrepreneur.  
John Seymour . . . . . Lockheed Executive.

Information collected revealed that of all associated principals, only Jerry Adams, Ben Sutherland, John Nelson, Larry Meier, Bayne Culley and Howard Eugene Purcell were active in the day-to-day operation of the business. The management operations were handled by Adams, Sutherland, and Nelson, while Purcell, general manager after Arnette withdrew, and Culley maintained the restoration aspects of the business through his own firm, Southeast Restoration Laboratories.

Since the dissolution of Magellans in 1968, principals in the company are now employed as follows:

Jerry Adams, Ben Sutherland, and John Nelson are principal officers in the Great American Silver Company, 3862 Stewart Road, Doraville, Georgia. This company is now under indictment by The Securities and Exchange Commission.



Bayne Culley, Jr. now resides at 1929 McJenkins Drive, Atlanta.  
Salesman, civil war relic collector, and race car driver.

Harold Eugene Purcell now resides in Clinton, Tennessee; employed  
by The Atomic Energy Commission in Oakridge, Tennessee.

Larry Meier - Archeological consultant for five-county area in Georgia.

On June 27, 1975, investigators interviewed Mr. Ben Southerland, a fellow associate in the Great American Silver Company, at his Doraville office. Mr. Southerland related the following information:

Mr. Southerland confirmed that Magellan Galleries operated as a result of a corporation called Blockade Runners being formed some time in 1966 by himself, Mr. Bill Arnette, Jerry Adams, Larry Meier, Gene Purcell, Bayne Culley, Paul Clifford, Wayne Pharr, Bill Thibideau and a number of other persons. Mr. Southerland recalled that the company operated from approximately September, 1966, until January, 1968. However, he believes he may be able to locate some of the old company records which would pin down more accurately the time period in which Magellan Galleries operated. Mr. Southerland remembered that Robert Byron Watson, who was a teenager at the time, worked in the gallery and there may have been some special relationship between Watson and Larry Meier who lived on the premises at the gallery. The company experienced a great deal of theft during the time it operated and was never financially successful. Mr. Southerland recalled that approximately a total of \$30,000 was invested in the company by about 20 to 24 people.

In questioning Mr. Southerland regarding his personal opinion of the political views of those persons involved in the operation of Magellan Galleries,

he said that all would probably be considered "conservative" with the exception of Bill Arnette. He remembered one individual by the name of Jimmy Kemp, who was an investor in the company, as being ultra-conservative and very racially prejudiced against blacks. Mr. Southerland states that Jimmy Kemp died several years ago. We also asked Mr. Southerland if he was acquainted with Congressman Larry McDonald, and he stated that he was and that to his knowledge the only other person involved in the Magellan Galleries who was acquainted with the Congressman would be Jerry Adams. He could not personally recall if Mr. McDonald had ever visited the gallery but, of course, he was not there in the day-to-day operation of the gallery.

Mr. Southerland stated that Gene Purcell (a friend of his) had been involved in some type of racial incident (probably the burning of a school bus) back in Tennessee when he was a young man, and that Purcell used to talk about the incident from time to time. According to Mr. Southerland, Purcell was living in Clinton, Tennessee, the last time he had contact with him (about five years ago,) and that Purcell's ex-wife, Patsy Purcell, as well as his brother named John Purcell, still lived in the metropolitan Atlanta area.

Mr. Southerland believed that Larry Meier is now employed by the state of Georgia in some capacity to do with his knowledge of archaeology. He suspected that Mr. Meier may have been a homosexual at the time he was associated with Magellan Galleries.

During the investigation, we had occasion to observe several books in bookcases adjacent to Mr. Southerland's desk. Two volumes of these books were titled "A Biographical Dictionary on the Left." Also, had occasion to observe what appeared to be a 12-gauge automatic-pump shotgun leaning in the corner wall near the door to Mr. Southerland's office.