

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date of transcription 8/30/78

VERNON HOOTEN was interviewed at his residence, 3095 Ruskin Road, Bartlett, Tennessee. He furnished the following information:

BURGESS AUDIE WILSON, who is also known as BILL WILSON, is his former son-in-law. WILSON was formerly married to HOOTEN's daughter BETTY LOU, age 47, who now resides with her present husband KEITH WADE at 233 Smith Street, Burleson, Texas. Mr. HOOTEN has been suffering from heart problems for a number of years and has difficulty remembering names, dates, and places and referred the interviewing Agents to his wife OPAL HOOTEN for additional background information regarding BURGESS WILSON and his daughter BETTY LOU. Mr. HOOTEN furnished the following additional information:

On the night of August 17, 1978, VERNON HOOTEN received a telephone call from BURGESS AUDIE WILSON at approximately 8:00 P.M. WILSON asked general questions about the health and welfare of the HOOTENS and remarked he resided in New Orleans, Louisiana. WILSON furnished no other personal data regarding himself and the telephone call was terminated after the lapse of a few minutes.

On August 18, 1978, VERNON HOOTEN talked with his son JAMES HOOTEN, who resides at 2081 St. Elmo, Memphis, Tennessee. His son informed him BURGESS WILSON had called him on the evening of August 17, 1978. While WILSON was talking with either JAMES HOOTEN or his wife MARIE, he remarked that he had killed Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., in 1968. JAMES and MARIE HOOTEN informed him that they believed WILSON was exaggerating and that he did not, in fact, participate in the assassination of Dr. KING.

Mr. HOOTEN described WILSON as a very heavy drinker; however, he pointed out that when he drinks, he talks coherently and his movements do not give any indication that he is intoxicated. He has in the past made verbal threats to kill VERNON HOOTEN and his former wife BETTY LOU WILSON. Mr. HOOTEN was unable to give specific

Investigation on 8/18/78 at Bartlett, Tennessee File # Memphis 44-1987 Sub M
by SA THOMAS J. WINEBARGER and
SA BURL F. JOHNSON BfJ/mrp Date dictated 8/24/78

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dates or details regarding these threats. Mr. HOOTEN is of the opinion that WILSON is a compulsive liar and that he had nothing whatsoever to do with the assassination of Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING. He did not know whether WILSON ever owned or possessed a gun or other weapon but is of the opinion he did not.

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Date of transcription 8/30/78

OPAL HOOTEN was interviewed at her residence, 3095 Ruskin Road, Bartlett, Tennessee. She furnished the following information:

BURGESS AUDIE WILSON is her former son-in-law. WILSON and her daughter BETTY LOU, age 47, who now resides with her present husband KEITH WADE at 233 Smith Street, Burleson, Texas, were married in the 1940's and their marriage was terminated by divorce in about 1972 or 1973. The WILSONs had three children, DEBORAH ANN, age 28, who now resides with her husband CHARLIE JONES in Bellevue, Illinois, specific address not known; STEVEN, age 26, and MARK ANTHONY, age 21, both of whom reside in Burleson, Texas, specific addresses unknown. WILSON had one brother AL WILSON, who resides in Reform, Alabama, and two sisters LYDA MC GAHA, who resides in Reform, Alabama, and CHRISTINE WILSON, married name not known, who resides in Fulton, Mississippi. WILSON's parents are deceased.

BURGESS and BETTY LOU WILSON resided in Memphis, Tennessee, at various times, specific periods of time not recalled, at Kansas City, Missouri, and Canyon Lake, Texas. In about 1963, they moved from Memphis to Kansas City, Missouri, where they operated a jewelry store. BETTY LOU WILSON left BURGESS at Kansas City after they had resided three two or three years and returned to Memphis. After BETTY LOU and the children left Kansas City and returned to Memphis, BURGESS followed, and the family resided in Memphis as a family unit for a year or two before moving to Canyon Lake, Texas. The marriage between BURGESS and BETTY LOU WILSON, which was troubled during its entire existence, terminated in Canyon Lake, Texas, by divorce in about 1972 or 1973.

While BURGESS and BETTY LOU WILSON and their family resided in Kansas City, BURGESS purchased a white Mustang automobile for his daughter DEBORAH. Mrs. HOOTEN is of the opinion this white Mustang automobile was never transported to Memphis, Tennessee.

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According to Mrs. HOOTEN, BURGESS WILSON was seldom gainfully employed but did from time to time attempt to operate jewelry stores and watch repair shops.

Mrs. HOOTEN described WILSON as a very heavy drinker; however, she pointed out when drinking he talks coherently and his movements do not give any evidence that he is intoxicated. He is a boastful talker and often makes exaggerated statements in an effort to impress people who are listening to him. During the time he was married to BETTY LOU he physically abused not only his wife but his children and on one occasion held BETTY LOU's head under water in the bathtub for a considerable period of time. On one occasion he checked into the Veterans Administration Hospital at Memphis, date not recalled, complaining of a heart attack; however, medical examination revealed no such problem. On another occasion he checked in at the Veterans Administration Hospital and complained of a crippled leg, and again the medical examination revealed no problem with his leg. Mrs. HOOTEN is of the opinion WILSON is a compulsive liar and believes he had nothing whatsoever to do with the assassination of Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. She could not recall where he resided in 1968 but was of the opinion he was not residing in Memphis at the time. She does not know whether he ever owned or possessed a gun or other weapon but is of the opinion he did not.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date of transcription 8/30/78

GENE BARKSDALE, Sheriff, Shelby County, Tennessee, was interviewed at his office in Memphis, Tennessee. He furnished the following information:

At 3:15 P.M. on August 18, 1978, BURGESS AUDIE WILSON telephonically contacted Sheriff BARKSDALE at the Shelby County Sheriff's Office, Memphis, and informed BARKSDALE he would appear at the Holiday Inn dining room, Gulfport, Mississippi, at 6:30 P.M. on August 18, 1978. WILSON told BARKSDALE he would be accompanied by Reverend NOEL FANNON, Pastor, St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church, Ocean Springs, Mississippi.

Investigation on 8/18/78 at Memphis, Tennessee File # Memphis 44-1987 Sub M
by SA BURL F. JOHNSON:mrp Date dictated 8/24/78 - 1234

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date of transcription 8/30/78

GENE BARKSDALE, Sheriff, Shelby County, Tennessee, was interviewed at his office in Memphis, Tennessee, and he furnished the following information:

At approximately 9:15 P.M. on August 17, 1978, an individual who identified himself as BURGESS AUDIE WILSON telephonically contacted Sheriff BARKSDALE at the Shelby County Sheriff's Office Substation, Memphis, Tennessee. WILSON furnished Sheriff BARKSDALE background information regarding BARKSDALE and information regarding persons known to BARKSDALE as members or former members of the Tennessee Air National Guard unit at Memphis. BARKSDALE has been active in the Tennessee Air National Guard unit at Memphis for approximately 26 years. WILSON furnished information regarding places and trips he had made with BARKSDALE which indicated WILSON was also a member of the Tennessee Air National Guard unit at Memphis.

WILSON informed BARKSDALE he had committed a famous crime - that he was the man who killed Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. WILSON was the trigger man and was standing about 65 feet from Dr. KING in a position below the balcony where Dr. KING was standing. About three days prior to the death of Dr. KING, WILSON's daughter, whose identity he declined to furnish, drove a white Mustang from Kansas City, Missouri, to Memphis, Tennessee. He would furnish no information regarding the storage and use of this white Mustang after the Mustang reached Memphis. He declined to furnish information regarding the circumstances and events leading up to the killing of Dr. KING other than the information related above, but he stated the information that has been furnished by JAMES EARL RAY is accurate.

WILSON requested that Sheriff BARKSDALE meet him at the Holiday Inn, Gulfport, Mississippi, at 9:30 A.M., August 20, 1978. BARKSDALE was instructed to enter the dining room at the Holiday Inn without a coat on and that WILSON would surrender to him there. WILSON insisted that BARKSDALE be alone, that he not be mistreated after he surrendered, and that BARKSDALE not inform the Federal Bureau of Investigation. WILSON told BARKSDALE that if

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by SA BURL F. JOHNSON:mrp Date dictated 8/24/78 ^M₁₂₃₅

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he was betrayed, he would not surrender. WILSON declined to furnish BARKSDALE the place from which he was calling but BARKSDALE believed it was a long distance telephone call.

At approximately 11:45 P.M. on August 17, 1978, WILSON again telephonically contacted BARKSDALE and furnished the following information:

He had a clear conscience, had talked with his family, and was ready to confess to Sheriff BARKSDALE alone. He again requested Sheriff BARKSDALE meet him at the Holiday Inn in Gulfport, Mississippi, at 9:30 A.M., August 18, 1978, rather than August 20, 1978. He instructed BARKSDALE to meet him in the dining room at the Holiday Inn without his coat on and alone. Sheriff BARKSDALE pointed out to WILSON that he (BARKSDALE) would have difficulty meeting him at Gulfport at the appointed time and requested they arrange a meeting at Jackson, Mississippi. WILSON countered by informing BARKSDALE that BARKSDALE was a pilot and had access to aircraft and that he could obtain a plane and reach Gulfport, Mississippi, in a relatively short period of time. WILSON declined to meet with BARKSDALE in Jackson, Mississippi. During this conversation WILSON informed BARKSDALE that he was then in New Orleans, Louisiana, and that he could reach Gulfport, Mississippi, in about one and a half hours.

At approximately 9:45 A.M. on August 18, 1978, Reverend NOEL FANNON, Pastor, St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church, Ocean Springs, Mississippi, telephone number 875-0654, telephonically contacted Sheriff BARKSDALE and furnished him the following information:

Reverend FANNON was in a cafe in Ocean Springs, Mississippi, on the morning of August 18, 1978, having breakfast. BURGESS WILSON approached him and related information indicating WILSON had shot Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., in Memphis, Tennessee, in April, 1968. He

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informed Reverend FANNON he was to meet Sheriff BARKSDALE at the Holiday Inn, Gulfport, Mississippi, and requested Reverend FANNON to follow him to the Holiday Inn. Reverend FANNON did follow WILSON to the Holiday Inn at Gulfport, Mississippi, and after arriving there they determined that Sheriff BARKSDALE was not on the premises.

At this point BURGESS WILSON took over the telephone and questioned Sheriff BARKSDALE regarding the failure of BARKSDALE to meet with him at 9:30 A.M. on August 18, 1978, as he had previously requested. Sheriff BARKSDALE informed WILSON he had been on duty all night in connection with the strike involving the Memphis Police Department and had not been able to arrange matters so that he could meet with WILSON. BARKSDALE informed WILSON he would attempt to arrange a meeting with him later that day. WILSON told BARKSDALE he would stay in the vicinity of the Holiday Inn, Gulfport, and would contact the desk clerk at the Holiday Inn periodically in order for BARKSDALE to contact him regarding the meeting. WILSON furnished BARKSDALE telephone number 601-864-4310 as the telephone number of the Holiday Inn where he could periodically be contacted.

BARKSDALE reported that WILSON appeared to be coherent and Reverend FANNON had also reported to him that WILSON appeared to be coherent and acting normally.

Sheriff BARKSDALE also furnished information obtained from the Bureau of Identification, Shelby County Sheriff's Office, regarding BURGESS AUDIE WILSON. According to records of the Shelby County Sheriff's Office, WILSON, FBI No. 879 421 E, was arrested by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office on May 14, 1964, by the Memphis Police Department on May 26, 1964, and by the Shelby County Sheriff's Office on May 27, 1964, and March 24, 1965. WILSON was also arrested by the Bexar County, Texas, authorities on June 12, 1972, for contempt of court arising out of a child support matter in Bexar County. At the time of the arrest by the Shelby County Sheriff's Office,

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WILSON resided at 3612 Covington Pike, Memphis, Tennessee. At the time he was arrested by Bexar County, Texas, authorities, he resided at 1505 West Canyon Lake Drive, Canyon Lake, Texas. His employment was shown as a jeweler.

Records maintained by the Shelby County Sheriff's Office reveal that BURGESS AUDIE WILSON is a white male, born [REDACTED], at Fulton, Mississippi, 5'10" tall, 150 pounds, brown eyes, and brown hair.

During the conversation with Sheriff BARKSDALE, WILSON indicated he had a father-in-law VERNON HOOTEN, who resides at 3095 Ruskin, Memphis.

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FM KANSAS CITY (44-760) RUC

TO DIRECTOR, FBI (44-38861) (IMMEDIATE)

MEMPHIS (44-1987) (SUB M) (IMMEDIATE)

BT

UNCLAS E F T O

ATTENTION: CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRIES UNIT, MURKIN; OO MEMPHIS.

REFERENCE BUREAU TELEPHONE CALL TO KANSAS CITY,
AUGUST 29, 1978.

MITCHELL ZAMMAR DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: DOB NOVEMBER 3,
1915; POB KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI; WHITE MALE, 5'7",
150 POUNDS, BROWN EYES, DARK BROWN HAIR, FBI 759 112,
KCMOPD 22414.

ZAMMAR HAS BEEN ARRESTED AND INCARCERATED IN THE PAST
ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS. CHARGES RANGE FROM VIOLATION OF
DYER ACT, KIDNAPPING, THEFT FROM INTERSTATE SHIPMENT,
ASSAULT, BURGLARY, LARCENY, AND ASSAULT WITH INTENT TO KILL.

44-1987 Sub M-1237

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED <i>msc</i>	FILED <i>msc</i>
AUG 29 1978	
FBI - MEMPHIS	

B. Johnson

PAGE TWO KC 44-760 UNCLAS E F T O

A COMPUTERIZED CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECK INDICATED THERE ARE NO IDENTIFIABLE NCIC CRIMINAL RECORDS UNDER THE NAME OF MITCHELL ZAMMAR, FBI 759 112. THE LOCAL CRIMINAL CHECK PROVIDED THE SAME INFORMATION, NO IDENTIFIABLE NCIC CRIMINAL RECORD, FBI 759 112.

A COMPUTERIZED CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECK AND A LOCAL CRIMINAL CHECK ON LOU CREWS, DOB APRIL 17, 1926, 6', 200 POUNDS, BROWN EYES, SSAN [REDACTED], PROVED NEGATIVE.

ZAMMAR INDICATED THAT HE HAD A TOTAL OF FOUR BROTHERS WHO ARE ALL NOW DECEASED. ZAMMAR INDICATED THAT JOSEPH ZAMMAR DIED IN THE 1940'S. ZAMMAR CANNOT RECALL THE DATE OF BIRTHS OF HIS BROTHERS, HOWEVER, HE INDICATED THAT FERRIS ZAMMAR WOULD HAVE BEEN 68 YEARS OLD. ZAMMAR INDICATED THAT FRED ZAMMAR, FORMER PHYSICIAN, WOULD HAVE BEEN 64 YEARS OLD, AND THAT JAMES ZAMMAR WOULD HAVE BEEN 49 YEARS OLD. ZAMMAR INDICATED THAT HE DOES NOT THINK THAT ANY OF HIS BROTHERS KNEW BURGESS AUDIE WILSON.

PAGE THREE KC 44-760 E F T O

THE ADDRESS GIVEN OF FECHTER JEWELRY, SUITE 413,
25 EAST 12TH, KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI, IN TELETYPE FROM
KANSAS CITY TO BUREAU DATED AUGUST 28, 1978, IS LOCATED
ON THE CORNER OF 12TH AND WALNUT IN THE BUILDING KNOWN
AS THE 12TH AND WALNUT BUILDING.

BT

2412153Z ME 1

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : FILE (44-1987-SUB-M)

DATE: 8/18/78

FROM : SAC TRIMBACH

SUBJECT: SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE ASSASSINATION
OF MARTIN LUTHER KING
U. S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES (HSCA)
BUFILE 62-117290

At approximately 8:20 a.m. this date, ASAC PAT MURRAY called from Jackson, Miss. and advised, in substance, as follows:

Mr. WILLIAM D. GLADDEN, Rt. 1, Ocean Springs, Miss. telephonically informed at 1:15 a.m. this date as follows:

On 8/17/78, at 11:45 p.m., he was telephonically contacted by BILL WILSON, WM, 46 years of age, an employee of his who requested to meet with him and his wife. Mr. GLADDEN said they met WILSON at a card and gift shop GLADDEN owns, and WILSON told them about how he killed MARTIN LUTHER KING. He went into about one hour of details. Mr. GLADDEN said he rented part of his shop to WILSON in July, 1978, to operate a watch and repair service. WILSON said he was sorry for the expense caused in setting up the business, but that he had to get this off his chest. He said the Sheriff at Memphis is the only one he would surrender to. He said the Sheriff is to meet him at the Holiday Inn in Biloxi on the morning of 8/18/78.

Mr. GLADDEN said WILSON is a very intelligent man and although he was drinking at the time of this meeting he appeared to be serious about the killing of MARTIN LUTHER KING.

JHT:BN
(1)

Handwritten initials

44-1987 Sub M 1236

mcc msc

Handwritten signature



5010-108

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

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After talking to Mr. MURRAY, I telephoned Shelby County Sheriff GENE BARKSDALE. He was not in, but his Chief Deputy, A. C. GILLIS, told me the Sheriff wanted to talk to me this morning about the above matter. While Mr. GILLIS was on the line, Sheriff BARKSDALE called me and briefly mentioned he had received two telephone calls last night from WILSON, and that he was to meet WILSON at a Holiday Inn in Mississippi at 9:30 a.m. this Sunday, where he would turn himself in for the killing of JAMES EARL RAY. BARKSDALE said he wanted to furnish the full story of the conversations he had last night with WILSON and I told him I would have an Agent meet him at his office at 9:15 a.m. today for that purpose.

Immediately after talking to Mr. BARKSDALE, Bureau Supervisor DREW CLARK, FBIHQ, was telephonically advised of the above and of the fact that as soon as an Agent interviewed Sheriff BARKSDALE we would send an immediate teletype with the results of that interview, but would conduct no further inquiries unless instructed to do so by FBIHQ. Mr. CLARK requested that, in addition to the immediate teletype, we also include results of the interview of Sheriff BARKSDALE in an LHM with a cover Airtel.

At 9:50 a.m., DREW CLARK, FBIHQ, called to instruct that any inquiries received in this matter should be acknowledged by "no comment," and those inquiring should be referred to the Department of Justice. He requested I pass this information on to the Jackson, Mississippi, Office, which I did. He also said to tell Sheriff BARKSDALE that if he desires to consult the Department of Justice he should talk to AAC ROBERT L. KEUCH, Tel. 202-739-2333.

At 11:18 a.m., SAC TRUMBACH telephonically informed DREW CLARK, FBIHQ, that at 11:10 a.m., he got a call from ROBERT L. KEUCH, AAC, who said he has been pondering this matter and has also been in touch with a Deputy AAC of the Civil Rights Division named JIM TURNER. He said although he feels there is no valid basis for BARKSDALE to go to Mississippi to arrest this man he hopes BARKSDALE will go down and meet with him and tell WILSON, "Look, I can't arrest you, but if you have information about this matter we certainly would like to have it. This is a possible violation of the Civil Rights Statute, and what I would like for you to do is give the information to the FBI." Then, if the man WILSON says

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he will furnish the information to the FBI, then KEUCH wants him interviewed by the FBI. If WILSON says he will only give the information to BARKSDALE, then the Sheriff, of course, will take the information. KEUCH said if WILSON says this is not the agreement or understanding, that he does not want to be interviewed but just wants to be arrested, then BARKSDALE will not arrest him but will walk away. KEUCH asked that I give this information to Sheriff BARKSDALE and if the Sheriff still wants to talk to somebody or is not satisfied with it, then BARKSDALE can feel free to call KEUCH direct. KEUCH said he would encourage BARKSDALE to contact him direct, but since we are here in Memphis and the Sheriff is here we should pass this on ourselves.

KEUCH also requested that we make discreet inquiry to locate the daughter in Memphis, but not to interview her or to let her know we are conducting the inquiry, the reason being that if we do interview WILSON we will be that much farther ahead and can then take it one more step and interview the daughter.

I also told KEUCH that in the conversation between WILSON and the Sheriff the identity of the father-in-law, who lives in Memphis, came up.

KEUCH said it is their agreement with the HSCA that new information would be pursued by the Department rather than by the Committee. He said he has been in touch with the Committee and is agreeable to the FBI pursuing it.

SAC then informed DREW CLARK, FBIHQ, that unless he wanted this handled differently we would call Sheriff BARKSDALE and pass on the message from Mr. KEUCH, and if he says "I am not going, I don't think I should go," or whatever, we will get back to DREW CLARK to get back to KEUCH. I think what will happen is BARKSDALE will say he will be glad to go down. I told Mr. CLARK we would be glad to fly the Sheriff down to Jackson and could have a couple of Agents in the background in the event WILSON wanted to talk to the FBI. I informed Mr. CLARK that I did not want to call BARKSDALE to offer to fly him down unless I could be sure the FBIHQ would agree with this. It was my personal recommendation that even though this man may have a mental problem we cannot assume this, and since the Department has asked us to do this and we have no good reason not to, my recommendation is that we should fly him down.

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During this conversation with Mr. CLARK, ASAC BLAY mentioned the possibility that this could be a plot to get BARKSDALE, since WILSON wants to be assured BARKSDALE does not have a gun, yet WILSON wants BARKSDALE to arrest him.

I told Mr. CLARK of the close relationship this office enjoys with Sheriff BARKSDALE and that we would probably have Agents with him pursuing the possibility that this is a setup for BARKSDALE. Mr. CLARK said in view of this the Sheriff might want to consider other options.

SAC informed Mr. CLARK that the Sheriff told SA BURL F. JOHNSON of this office that WILSON had specifically asked that the FBI not be notified of the calls.

I also informed Mr. CLARK that we have a photograph of WILSON (BURGESS AUDIE WILSON), who has FBI #879421E. He was last arrested by the Memphis PD in May, 1964, on bad checks. We also have a 1964 photograph of him which was furnished by Sheriff BARKSDALE. I told Mr. CLARK that I think we should go ahead with the plan above. He said he would consult Bureau officials and get back to us.

At 11:55 a.m., DREW CLARK telephonically advised that we should handle this matter any way we deem appropriate.

It is noted that later in the day Sheriff BARKSDALE advised he would not be going to Mississippi to meet with WILSON but he would telephonically arrange a meeting with WILSON which would then give us an opportunity to confront WILSON about his contention that he murdered MARTIN LUTHER KING.

I instructed the ASAC to coordinate this with the Jackson Office so that Agents could intercept WILSON and attempt to clarify this matter.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

REPORTING OFFICE BIRMINGHAM	OFFICE OF ORIGIN MEMPHIS	DATE 8/29/78	INVESTIGATIVE PERIOD 8/19/78
TITLE OF CASE JAMES EARL RAY, aka Eric Starvo Galt; DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. - VICTIM (DECEASED)		REPORT MADE BY SA THOMAS MAC GIBBS	TYPED BY bkc
		CHARACTER OF CASE CR - CONSPIRACY	

REFERENCE: Memphis teletype, 8/19/78.

Bureau teletype, 8/22/78.

-RUC-

ACCOMPLISHMENTS CLAIMED						☐ NONE	ACQUIT- TALS	CASE HAS BEEN: PENDING OVER ONE YEAR ☐ YES ☐ NO PENDING PROSECUTION OVER SIX MONTHS ☐ YES ☐ NO
CONVIC.	PRETRIAL DIVERSION	FUG.	FINES	SAVINGS	RECOVERIES			

APPROVED	SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE	DO NOT WRITE IN SPACES BELOW
COPIES MADE:		
4 - Bureau (44-38861)		
3 - Memphis (1 - USA, Memphis)		
1 - Birmingham (44-1740)		

Dissemination Record of Attached Report					Notations	SEARCHED INDEXED SERIALIZED FILED SEP 11 1978 FBI - MEMPHIS <i>B. Johnson</i>
Agency	Request Recd.	Date Fwd.	How Fwd.	By		

A*

COVER PAGE

043-16-83480-1 GPO

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Copy to: 1 - U. S. Attorney, Memphis, Tennessee

Report of: SA THOMAS MAC GIBBS
Date: 8/29/78

Office: BIRMINGHAM

Field Office File #: 44-1740

Bureau File #: 44-38861

Title: JAMES EARL RAY;
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. -
VICTIM (DECEASED)

Character: CIVIL RIGHTS - CONSPIRACY

Synopsis: Mr. ALLISON T. WILSON, aka Al Wilson, P. O. Box 23, Reform, Ala., advised that BURGESS AUDIE WILSON is his brother and to his knowledge, his brother has been a confirmed liar and alcoholic for the past 20 years. Mr. WILSON stated that his brother on numerous occasions has admitted to crimes that he has not committed when he has been on an extended drunk. Mr. WILSON stated that his brother admits these crimes in order to get locked up so he will be able to sober up. Mr. WILSON stated his brother has told him several untruths knowing that he knew that he was lying at the time. Mr. WILSON stated that he and other members of his family have learned to "turn his brother off" when he starts telling known untruths.

-RUC-

DETAILS:

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date of transcription 8/28/78

Mr. ALLISON T. WILSON, also known as Al Wilson, P. O. Box 23 (Highway 17 South), Reform, Alabama, after having been advised of the identity of the interviewing Agent and the nature of the inquiry, volunteered the following information:

Mr. WILSON stated that his only brother, BURGESS AUDIE WILSON, has, for the past 20 years, been a confirmed liar and alcoholic. Mr. WILSON stated his brother has been unable to adjust to normal society after his discharge from the U. S. Air Force, after spending 14 years therein. Mr. WILSON stated that his brother, for two years, upon being discharged from the Air Force, became an ordained minister. He practiced this profession for approximately two years and thereafter engaged in various occupations, including running a jewelry store in Grandview, Missouri and was so employed on April 4, 1968. Mr. WILSON stated his brother was married to BETTY WADE at this time. He stated Mrs. WADE lives with her husband, W. K. WADE, at 233 Smith Street, Burleson, Texas. Mr. WILSON stated his brother's son, STEVE WILSON, resides at 117 Livingston, Ft. Worth, Texas, and his daughter, Mrs. CHARLES (DEBBIE) JONES, resides at 2628 Newburg Road, Trailer 106, Belvidere, Illinois. Each of these three individuals would most likely have knowledge of BURGESS AUDIE WILSON's exact location on April 4, 1968.

Mr. WILSON stated that as an example of his brother's propensity to tell untruths, this past week, his brother called his sister, LYDIA McGAHA, in Columbus, Mississippi. He told her that he (ALLISON T. WILSON) had had a severe heart attack and was about to die. Mr. WILSON stated his sister called him and was very upset. He told

Interviewed on 8/19/78 at Reform, Alabama File # BH 44-1740
by SA THOMAS MAC GIBBS:bkc Date dictated 8/23/78

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BH 44-1740

her he had not had a heart attack, and she should have known better than to pay any attention to information furnished by BURGESS AUDIE WILSON. Mr. WILSON stated his brother had, on one occasion, confessed to a crime he did not commit in New Brownsville, Texas. Mr. WILSON stated he could not recall the date and crime charged against his brother; however, he knows he was in jail.

Mr. WILSON stated his brother tells everyone he is a retired colonel from the military and is a Vietnam veteran. Mr. WILSON further stated the family had recently sold their father's house and divided the proceeds. BURGESS AUDIE WILSON received a check for \$2,075 and ALLISON T. WILSON feels that his brother, at the present time, is on an extended "toot".

Mr. WILSON stated that his brother, until approximately one year ago, was operating a jewelry store in Mississippi. He closed this store, and no one heard from him for approximately three or four weeks. Mr. WILSON stated that this is the general pattern of his brother's actions over the past 20 years. When things are not going well, he just walks off, leaves them and goes on an extended drunk. He recalls that on one occasion, he received a telephone call from his brother who told him he had just been elected mayor of Grandview, Missouri. Mr. WILSON stated his brother is quite persuasive in these matters. He recalls on this occasion, he had his wife, BETTY, come on the telephone to confirm the fact that he had been elected mayor of Grandview. Mr. WILSON stated his brother, in his opinion, is not capable of committing a crime of violence. He recalled that when they were in school, his brother would get into an argument with one of their friends. His brother would then come to him and tell him that this individual had made uncomplimentary remarks concerning him in order for him, ALLISON T. WILSON, to engage in a fist fight. By doing this, his brother would accomplish his purpose without having to engage the individual in any physical contact.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

REPORTING OFFICE MEMPHIS	OFFICE OF ORIGIN MEMPHIS	DATE 8/30/78	INVESTIGATIVE PERIOD 8/17 - 28/78
TITLE OF CASE ASSASSINATION OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., 4/4/68, MEMPHIS, TENN.		REPORT MADE BY SA BURL F. JOHNSON	TYPED BY mrp
		CHARACTER OF CASE CR (A)	

REFERENCES:

Memphis teletype to the Bureau dated 8/18/78.
Bureau teletype to Memphis and other offices dated 8/23/78.

-P-

ADMINISTRATIVE:

No further investigation relative to information involving BURGESS AUDIE WILSON is contemplated by the Memphis Office, UACB.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS CLAIMED						☐ NONE	ACQUIT- TALS	CASE HAS BEEN: PENDING OVER ONE YEAR ☐ YES ☐ NO PENDING PROSECUTION OVER SIX MONTHS ☐ YES ☐ NO
CONVIC.	PRETRIAL DIVERSION	FUG.	FINES	SAVINGS	RECOVERIES			

APPROVED	SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE	DO NOT WRITE IN SPACES BELOW
COPIES MADE: 4 - Bureau (44-38861) 1 - USA, Memphis ② - Memphis (44-1987 Sub M) <i>mrp</i>		44-1987-Sub M-1239 <i>[Signature]</i>

Dissemination Record of Attached Report					Notations <i>[Signatures]</i>
Agency					
Request Recd.					
Date Fwd.					
How Fwd.					
By					

A*

COVER PAGE

e43-16-83480-1 GPO

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Copy to: 1 - U. S. ATTORNEY, MEMPHIS

Report of: SA BURL F. JOHNSON
Date: AUGUST 30, 1978

Office: MEMPHIS

Field Office File #: 44-1987 Sub M

Bureau File #: 44-38861

Title: ASSASSINATION OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.,
APRIL 4, 1978, MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

Character: CIVIL RIGHTS

Synopsis: On night of 8/17/78, BURGESS AUDIE WILSON telephonically contacted GENE BARKSDALE, Sheriff, Shelby County, Memphis, Tenn., on 2 occasions. He informed BARKSDALE his daughter drove a white Mustang from Kansas City, Mo., to Memphis, Tenn., 3 days before Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING was killed. WILSON killed Dr. KING by firing a shot at him from below where KING was standing and wanted BARKSDALE to meet him at the Holiday Inn, Gulfport, Miss., on 8/18/78 where WILSON would surrender to him. VERNON HOOTEN, Bartlett, Tenn., WILSON's former son-in-law, received a telephone call from WILSON on night of 8/17/78. WILSON inquired about the health and welfare of HOOTEN and his family and terminated the call. WILSON called JAMES HOOTEN, WILSON's former brother-in-law, on night of 8/17/78 and informed HOOTEN he was to meet Sheriff BARKSDALE on 8/18/78 and surrender to him for the killing of Dr. KING. WILSON called the residence of his former spouse, AVIS LEA HUNTER, Nashville, Tenn., on night of 8/17/78 and informed HUNTER's 14-year-old son LANCE that LANCE would be seeing him on TV soon as he had killed MARTIN LUTHER KING. VERNON HOOTEN and OPAL HOOTEN, former mother-in-law of WILSON, furnished background information regarding WILSON. They described him as a heavy drinker and compulsive liar. JAMES HOOTEN is of opinion excessive drinking has caused deterioration of his mental ability. AVIS LEA HUNTER reported WILSON drank alcoholic beverages frequently and after drinking would become "crazy," rambling, and silly.

-P-

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DETAILS:

This investigation was predicated upon information furnished by GENE BARKSDALE, Sheriff, Shelby County, Memphis, Tennessee, on August 18, 1978. Sheriff BARKSDALE advised on the night of August 17, 1978, BURGESS AUDIE WILSON telephonically contacted him and wanted BARKSDALE to meet him at the Holiday Inn, Gulfport, Mississippi, on August 18, 1978, where he would surrender for killing MARTIN LUTHER KING.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date of transcription 8/30/78

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GENE BARKSDALE, Sheriff, Shelby County, Tennessee, was interviewed at his office in Memphis, Tennessee, and he furnished the following information:

At approximately 9:15 P.M. on August 17, 1978, an individual who identified himself as BURGESS AUDIE WILSON telephonically contacted Sheriff BARKSDALE at the Shelby County Sheriff's Office Substation, Memphis, Tennessee. WILSON furnished Sheriff BARKSDALE background information regarding BARKSDALE and information regarding persons known to BARKSDALE as members or former members of the Tennessee Air National Guard unit at Memphis. BARKSDALE has been active in the Tennessee Air National Guard unit at Memphis for approximately 26 years. WILSON furnished information regarding places and trips he had made with BARKSDALE which indicated WILSON was also a member of the Tennessee Air National Guard unit at Memphis.

WILSON informed BARKSDALE he had committed a famous crime - that he was the man who killed Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. WILSON was the trigger man and was standing about 65 feet from Dr. KING in a position below the balcony where Dr. KING was standing. About three days prior to the death of Dr. KING, WILSON's daughter, whose identity he declined to furnish, drove a white Mustang from Kansas City, Missouri, to Memphis, Tennessee. He would furnish no information regarding the storage and use of this white Mustang after the Mustang reached Memphis. He declined to furnish information regarding the circumstances and events leading up to the killing of Dr. KING other than the information related above, but he stated the information that has been furnished by JAMES EARL RAY is accurate.

WILSON requested that Sheriff BARKSDALE meet him at the Holiday Inn, Gulfport, Mississippi, at 9:30 A.M., August 20, 1978. BARKSDALE was instructed to enter the dining room at the Holiday Inn without a coat on and that WILSON would surrender to him there. WILSON insisted that BARKSDALE be alone, that he not be mistreated after he surrendered, and that BARKSDALE not inform the Federal Bureau of Investigation. WILSON told BARKSDALE that if

Investigation on 8/18/78 at Memphis, Tennessee File # Memphis 44-1987 Sub

by SA EUEL F. JOHNSON:mrp 3 Date dictated 8/24/78

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he was betrayed, he would not surrender. WILSON declined to furnish BARKSDALE the place from which he was calling but BARKSDALE believed it was a long distance telephone call.

At approximately 11:45 P.M. on August 17, 1978, WILSON again telephonically contacted BARKSDALE and furnished the following information:

He had a clear conscience, had talked with his family, and was ready to confess to Sheriff BARKSDALE alone. He again requested Sheriff BARKSDALE meet him at the Holiday Inn in Gulfport, Mississippi, at 9:30 A.M., August 18, 1978, rather than August 20, 1978. He instructed BARKSDALE to meet him in the dining room at the Holiday Inn without his coat on and alone. Sheriff BARKSDALE pointed out to WILSON that he (BARKSDALE) would have difficulty meeting him at Gulfport at the appointed time and requested they arrange a meeting at Jackson, Mississippi. WILSON countered by informing BARKSDALE that BARKSDALE was a pilot and had access to aircraft and that he could obtain a plane and reach Gulfport, Mississippi, in a relatively short period of time. WILSON declined to meet with BARKSDALE in Jackson, Mississippi. During this conversation WILSON informed BARKSDALE that he was then in New Orleans, Louisiana, and that he could reach Gulfport, Mississippi, in about one and a half hours.

At approximately 9:45 A.M. on August 18, 1978, Reverend NOEL FANNON, Pastor, St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church, Ocean Springs, Mississippi, telephone number 875-0654, telephonically contacted Sheriff BARKSDALE and furnished him the following information:

Reverend FANNON was in a cafe in Ocean Springs, Mississippi, on the morning of August 18, 1978, having breakfast. BURGESS WILSON approached him and related information indicating WILSON had shot Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., in Memphis, Tennessee, in April, 1968. He

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informed Reverend FANNON he was to meet Sheriff BARKSDALE at the Holiday Inn, Gulfport, Mississippi, and requested Reverend FANNON to follow him to the Holiday Inn. Reverend FANNON did follow WILSON to the Holiday Inn at Gulfport, Mississippi, and after arriving there they determined that Sheriff BARKSDALE was not on the premises.

At this point BURGESS WILSON took over the telephone and questioned Sheriff BARKSDALE regarding the failure of BARKSDALE to meet with him at 9:30 A.M. on August 18, 1978, as he had previously requested. Sheriff BARKSDALE informed WILSON he had been on duty all night in connection with the strike involving the Memphis Police Department and had not been able to arrange matters so that he could meet with WILSON. BARKSDALE informed WILSON he would attempt to arrange a meeting with him later that day. WILSON told BARKSDALE he would stay in the vicinity of the Holiday Inn, Gulfport, and would contact the desk clerk at the Holiday Inn periodically in order for BARKSDALE to contact him regarding the meeting. WILSON furnished BARKSDALE telephone number 601-864-4310 as the telephone number of the Holiday Inn where he could periodically be contacted.

BARKSDALE reported that WILSON appeared to be coherent and Reverend FANNON had also reported to him that WILSON appeared to be coherent and acting normally.

Sheriff BARKSDALE also furnished information obtained from the Bureau of Identification, Shelby County Sheriff's Office, regarding BURGESS AUDIE WILSON. According to records of the Shelby County Sheriff's Office, WILSON, FBI No. 879 421 E, was arrested by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office on May 14, 1964, by the Memphis Police Department on May 26, 1964, and by the Shelby County Sheriff's Office on May 27, 1964, and March 24, 1965. WILSON was also arrested by the Bexar County, Texas, authorities on June 12, 1972, for contempt of court arising out of a child support matter in Bexar County. At the time of the arrest by the Shelby County Sheriff's Office,

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WILSON resided at 3612 Covington Pike, Memphis, Tennessee. At the time he was arrested by Bexar County, Texas, authorities, he resided at 1505 West Canyon Lake Drive, Canyon Lake, Texas. His employment was shown as a jeweler.

Records maintained by the Shelby County Sheriff's Office reveal that BURGESS AUDIE WILSON is a white male, born [REDACTED], at Fulton, Mississippi, 5'10" tall, 150 pounds, brown eyes, and brown hair.

During the conversation with Sheriff BARKSDALE, WILSON indicated he had a father-in-law VERNON HOOTEN, who resides at 3095 Ruskin, Memphis.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date of transcription 8/30/781

GENE BARKSDALE, Sheriff, Shelby County, Tennessee, was interviewed at his office in Memphis, Tennessee. He furnished the following information:

At 3:15 P.M. on August 18, 1978, BURGESS AUDIE WILSON telephonically contacted Sheriff BARKSDALE at the Shelby County Sheriff's Office, Memphis, and informed BARKSDALE he would appear at the Holiday Inn dining room, Gulfport, Mississippi, at 6:30 P.M. on August 18, 1978. WILSON told BARKSDALE he would be accompanied by Reverend NOEL FANNON, Pastor, St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church, Ocean Springs, Mississippi.

Investigation on 8/18/78 at Memphis, Tennessee File # Memphis 44-1987 Sub
by SA DUEL E. JOHNSON:nep 7 Date dictated 8/24/78

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date of transcription 8/30/781

OPAL HOOTEN was interviewed at her residence, 3095 Ruskin Road, Bartlett, Tennessee. She furnished the following information:

BURGESS AUDIE WILSON is her former son-in-law. WILSON and her daughter BETTY LOU, age 47, who now resides with her present husband KEITH WADE at 233 Smith Street, Burleson, Texas, were married in the 1940's and their marriage was terminated by divorce in about 1972 or 1973. The WILSONs had three children, DEBORAH ANN, age 28, who now resides with her husband CHARLIE JONES in Bellevue, Illinois, specific address not known; STEVEN, age 26, and MARK ANTHONY, age 21, both of whom reside in Burleson, Texas, specific addresses unknown. WILSON had one brother AL WILSON, who resides in Reform, Alabama, and two sisters LYDA MC GAHA, who resides in Reform, Alabama, and CHRISTINE WILSON, married name not known, who resides in Fulton, Mississippi. WILSON's parents are deceased.

BURGESS and BETTY LOU WILSON resided in Memphis, Tennessee, at various times, specific periods of time not recalled, at Kansas City, Missouri, and Canyon Lake, Texas. In about 1963, they moved from Memphis to Kansas City, Missouri, where they operated a jewelry store. BETTY LOU WILSON left BURGESS at Kansas City after they had resided three two or three years and returned to Memphis. After BETTY LOU and the children left Kansas City and returned to Memphis, BURGESS followed, and the family resided in Memphis as a family unit for a year or two before moving to Canyon Lake, Texas. The marriage between BURGESS and BETTY LOU WILSON, which was troubled during its entire existence, terminated in Canyon Lake, Texas, by divorce in about 1972 or 1973.

While BURGESS and BETTY LOU WILSON and their family resided in Kansas City, BURGESS purchased a white Mustang automobile for his daughter DEBORAH. Mrs. HOOTEN is of the opinion this white Mustang automobile was never transported to Memphis, Tennessee.

Investigation on 8/18/78 at Bartlett, Tennessee File # Memphis 44-1987 Sub

by SA THOMAS J. WINEBARGER and
SA BURL F. JOHNSON BFF/arp 8 Date dictated 8/24/78

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According to Mrs. HOOTEN, BURGESS WILSON was seldom gainfully employed but did from time to time attempt to operate jewelry stores and watch repair shops.

Mrs. HOOTEN described WILSON as a very heavy drinker; however, she pointed out when drinking he talks coherently and his movements do not give any evidence that he is intoxicated. He is a boastful talker and often makes exaggerated statements in an effort to impress people who are listening to him. During the time he was married to BETTY LOU he physically abused not only his wife but his children and on one occasion held BETTY LOU's head under water in the bathtub for a considerable period of time. On one occasion he checked into the Veterans Administration Hospital at Memphis, date not recalled, complaining of a heart attack; however, medical examination revealed no such problem. On another occasion he checked in at the Veterans Administration Hospital and complained of a crippled leg, and again the medical examination revealed no problem with his leg. Mrs. HOOTEN is of the opinion WILSON is a compulsive liar and believes he had nothing whatsoever to do with the assassination of Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. She could not recall where he resided in 1968 but was of the opinion he was not residing in Memphis at the time. She does not know whether he ever owned or possessed a gun or other weapon but is of the opinion he did not.

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Date of transcription 8/30/78

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VERNON HOOTEN was interviewed at his residence, 3095 Ruskin Road, Bartlett, Tennessee. He furnished the following information:

BURGESS AUDIE WILSON, who is also known as BILL WILSON, is his former son-in-law. WILSON was formerly married to HOOTEN's daughter BETTY LOU, age 47, who now resides with her present husband KEITH WADE at 233 Smith Street, Burleson, Texas. Mr. HOOTEN has been suffering from heart problems for a number of years and has difficulty remembering names, dates, and places and referred the interviewing Agents to his wife OPAL HOOTEN for additional background information regarding BURGESS WILSON and his daughter BETTY LOU. Mr. HOOTEN furnished the following additional information:

On the night of August 17, 1978, VERNON HOOTEN received a telephone call from BURGESS AUDIE WILSON at approximately 8:00 P.M. WILSON asked general questions about the health and welfare of the HOOTENS and remarked he resided in New Orleans, Louisiana. WILSON furnished no other personal data regarding himself and the telephone call was terminated after the lapse of a few minutes.

On August 18, 1978, VERNON HOOTEN talked with his son JAMES HOOTEN, who resides at 2031 St. Elmo, Memphis, Tennessee. His son informed him BURGESS WILSON had called him on the evening of August 17, 1978. While WILSON was talking with either JAMES HOOTEN or his wife MARIE, he remarked that he had killed Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., in 1968. JAMES and MARIE HOOTEN informed him that they believed WILSON was exaggerating and that he did not, in fact, participate in the assassination of Dr. KING.

Mr. HOOTEN described WILSON as a very heavy drinker; however, he pointed out that when he drinks, he talks coherently and his movements do not give any indication that he is intoxicated. He has in the past made verbal threats to kill VERNON HOOTEN and his former wife BETTY LOU WILSON. Mr. HOOTEN was unable to give specific

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by SA THOMAS J. WINEBARGER and
SA BURL F. JOHNSON DTJ/mrp 10 Date dictated 8/24/78

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dates or details regarding these threats. Mr. HOOTEN is of the opinion that WILSON is a compulsive liar and that he had nothing whatsoever to do with the assassination of Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING. He did not know whether WILSON ever owned or possessed a gun or other weapon but is of the opinion he did not.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date of transcription 8/30/78

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JAMES HOOTEN was interviewed at his residence, 2081 St. Elmo, Memphis, Tennessee. He furnished the following information:

BURGESS AUDIE WILSON, who is commonly known as BILL WILSON, is his former brother-in-law. About 9:30 P.M. on August 17, 1978, BURGESS WILSON telephonically contacted JAMES HOOTEN informing him he was calling from Canyon Lake, Texas. WILSON made general inquiries regarding the health and welfare of JAMES HOOTEN and his wife MARIE and then requested HOOTEN call the Shelby County, Tennessee, Sheriff GENE BARKSDALE for him. HOOTEN questioned WILSON regarding the nature of his request, and WILSON told him he had telephoned BARKSDALE on the evening of August 17, 1978, and had an appointment with him on August 20, 1978, place not stated. WILSON told HOOTEN he had called BARKSDALE and was meeting with him to surrender himself because he shot and killed Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING in 1968. He wanted HOOTEN to call Sheriff BARKSDALE for the purpose of confirming WILSON's identity and the appointment. HOOTEN refused to honor WILSON's request and questioned his sincerity regarding his claim for both the killing of Dr. KING and the appointment with Sheriff BARKSDALE. WILSON insisted he had killed Dr. KING and stated he had met with Sheriff BARKSDALE personally about two weeks previously. He terminated the call when he realized HOOTEN would not call the Sheriff as he requested.

HOOTEN reported that WILSON is an extremely heavy drinker. He believes that WILSON was under the influence of alcohol when he called and that his heavy consumption of alcohol over a long period of time has had an adverse effect on his mind. WILSON was at one time placed in an unknown hospital in Texas by his son STEVEN to be treated for alcoholism. HOOTEN is of the opinion that WILSON had nothing to do with the assassination of Dr. KING but due to the mental deterioration of his mind may believe he did. HOOTEN is not certain but believes WILSON was not in the Memphis area at the time Dr. KING was killed. HOOTEN did not know but believes WILSON never possessed a gun or other

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by SA BURL F. JOHNSON:mrp 12 Date dictated 8/24/78

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weapon. He stated that WILSON had never mentioned Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING to him prior to August 17, 1978.

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8/21/78

Date of transcription

Mrs. AVIS LEA HUNTER, nee PRUETT, Apartment C-103, Ravenwood Apartments, 1005 Hickory Hill Lane, Nashville, phone 889-4495 (unlisted), employed as a hairdresser at the Castner-Knott Department Store, Donelson Shopping Center, Nashville, advised as follows:

She married BURGESS AUDIE WILSON, also known as Bill, on December 31, 1974, at Mountain Home, Arkansas, and divorced him in June of 1975 at Huntsville, Alabama, after leaving him in May of 1975. At the time they were married, WILSON told her that he was 42 years of age, although she suspects he is older. She only knew him five weeks before they were married. WILSON worked as a jeweler and had jewelry stores at both Mountain Home, Arkansas, and Huntsville, Alabama.

During their marriage, WILSON would drink alcoholic beverages frequently and after drinking, would become "crazy", rambling, and silly. However, he never became violent nor vicious and never harmed her. During their marriage, he told her numerous wild and untrue stories about himself, including that he was mixed up in the Mafia. He told her these stories to gain attention and it was impossible for her to give him as much attention as he required. To her knowledge, he has never been institutionalized for any mental problems. WILSON frequently "rambled from drinking". She and WILSON moved from Mountain Home, Arkansas, to Huntsville, Alabama, on about April 1, 1975.

She left WILSON because of all of his crazy and wild stories and also because he was getting diamonds at his jewelry store that he did not appear to be paying for. These diamonds were brought there by SIMON CLINE of Cline Brothers Jewelers, Atlanta, Georgia, phone 404-521-1075. After she left WILSON he told her once that he had been jailed in New Brownsville, Texas, later in 1975 and this charge supposedly had something to do with diamonds. She does not know, however, whether or not WILSON was actually in jail there. She has had very little personal contact with WILSON since their divorce. She does not know if he has ever been actually in prison. She also left WILSON because he was always acting crazy and was not stable.

Investigation on 8/19/78 at Nashville, Tennessee File # Memphis 44-1987
by SA ALLEN H. QUIMBY:sle Date dictated 8/21/78

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Since their divorce, WILSON has called her frequently, approximately once a week. On this past Thursday night, August 17, 1978, WILSON phoned at about 10:00 to 10:30 pm Nashville time, and her fourteen year old son [REDACTED] answered the phone. She told [REDACTED] that if the caller was WILSON to tell WILSON that she was not there because she did not want to talk to him. However, she listened in on an extension as WILSON was talking to [REDACTED]. WILSON was very drunk and told [REDACTED] that [REDACTED] would soon see him on television as he had killed MARTIN LUTHER KING. WILSON referred to KING over the phone as a "black bastard". WILSON further told [REDACTED] that the FBI would be coming soon to pick him up and then he hung up. This was the first time that WILSON ever mentioned MARTIN LUTHER KING during the time she has known him. He also has never mentioned JAMES EARL RAY to her. She does not know any associate of WILSON's by the name of MITCH, and does not know any of his associates. She has no idea where WILSON was in April of 1968, as she did not know him until very late 1974. WILSON has a son named MARK, age about 20, who lives somewhere in Texas. In addition he has some member of his family, possibly a sister, who in the past has lived at Memphis, Tennessee.

Mrs. HUNTER advised that WILSON's stories about killing MARTIN LUTHER KING is not true and is just another one of his wild stories that he is telling to get attention.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date of transcription 8/30/781

Mrs. OPAL HOOTEN was interviewed at her residence, 3095 Ruskin Road, Bartlett, Tennessee. She furnished the following information:

She could not recall a visit of her daughter, BETTY LOU WADE, and granddaughter, DEBRA WILSON JONES, on occasions following heart attacks suffered by her husband, VERNON HOOTEN. BETTY LOU WADE has in the past visited both Mrs. HOOTEN and her husband when they were ill, but she could not recall the specific dates. She planned to check family medical records and attempt to establish specific dates when Mr. HOOTEN was ill.

Investigation on 8/26/78 at Bartlett, Tennessee File # Memphis 44-1987 Sub

by SA BURL F. JOHNSON:mrp 16 Date dictated 8/25/78

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Date of transcription 8/30/781

Mrs. OPAL HOOTEN, 3095 Ruskin Road, Bartlett, Tennessee, furnished the following information:

She conducted an extensive search of family papers and effects and was unable to locate family medical records, check stubs, canceled checks, insurance records, or telephone bills for periods prior to 1975 which record periods of illness of her husband or visits of their daughter, BETTY LOU WADE, and granddaughter, DEBRA WILSON JONES. Mrs. HOOTEN and her husband, VERNON HOOTEN, are unable to recall specific dates of their illnesses during the period prior to 1975 or the visits of their relatives on occasions when they were ill.

Investigation on 8/20/78 at Bartlett, Tennessee File # Memphis 44-1987 Sub L
by SA BURL F. JOHNSON:mrp 17 Date dictated 8/25/78

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Date of transcription 8/30/781

SANDRA HAYNES, Secretary to Security Director,
South Central Bell Telephone Company, Memphis, Tennessee,
furnished the following information:

Toll records are maintained by the South Central
Bell Telephone Company for approximately six months following
dates the calls were made.

Investigation on 8/25/78 at Memphis, Tennessee File # Memphis 44-1987-Sub

by SA BURL F. JOHNSON:JRP 15 Date dictated 8/25/78

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On August 19, 1978, BURGESS AUDIE WILSON was interviewed by SA's K. P. WHITE-SPUNNER, JR., and ROYCE DAVID HIGNIGHT at Ocean Springs, Mississippi. The following is a portion of the information furnished by WILSON:

WILSON flew to Memphis, Tennessee, in a Bonanza airplane and landed at an airport north of Raleigh, Tennessee. His daughter, DEBRA, picked him up at the airport in her 1965 Mustang which WILSON previously purchased for her. DEBRA WILSON and her mother, BETTY LOU, were at the residence of WILSON's father-in-law at 3095 Ruskin Road, Memphis, due to a heart attack suffered by WILSON's father-in-law.

WILSON went to the Wonder Bar, Summer and White Station Streets, where he was approached by two white men, one having an accent similar to a Puerto Rican. The two men furnished him with FBI credentials which had a black and white photograph of WILSON on it, showed him where KING was to hold a rally, and then took him to a third floor room in a hotel on South Main Street near Beale Street, Memphis. He was instructed to be in the crowd at the rally, that a decoy shot was to be fired, and then he was to shoot. WILSON was informed that KING had the habit of raising his arms over his head when making a speech and the second time he did so, the shots were to be fired.

On the day Dr. KING was killed WILSON was in the crowd standing near a wooden fence about 60 feet from Dr. KING. When Dr. KING raised his arms the second time, WILSON shot him. WILSON had the rifle attached to his belt on a swivel under a suit coat. The barrel protruded below his coat but no one questioned him concerning it. After the shooting he was stopped by the Memphis police but upon showing the credentials they let him go.

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Date of transcription 8/30/781

GLENN MITCHELL, Maintenance Supervisor, Hagler Aero Service, C. W. Baker Airport, Millington, Tennessee, made available fuel receipts maintained by the Hagler Aero Service for the period January through April, 1968. A review of these receipts revealed no information regarding BURGESS AUDIE WILSON or an aircraft bearing number N34L or number 4434L. According to Mr. MITCHELL, receipts are not maintained for credit and cash purchases of fuel, supplies, and equipment. Mr. MITCHELL does not know BURGESS WILSON personally and could furnish no information concerning him.

Investigation on 8/25/78 at Memphis, Tennessee File # Memphis 44-1987 Sub

by SA JAMES A. DAVIS and
SA EURL F. JOHNSON:arp/DEI 20 Date dictated 8/29/78

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date of transcription 8/30/781

By physical observation it was determined the Chisca Plaza Hotel, 262 South Main Street, Memphis, Tennessee, now utilized as an office building, and the Annex Hotel, 267 South Main Street, Memphis, currently a vacant building, are the closest buildings on Main Street formerly used as hotels in the vicinity of South Main and Beale Streets, Memphis. In recent years portions of Main Street just south of Beale Street have been razed and are either vacant or new buildings were constructed there. The intersection of Main and Beale Streets is approximately half a mile north of the Lorraine Motel, 406 Mulberry Street, Memphis. The Chisca Plaza Hotel and the Annex Hotel buildings are approximately three tenths of a mile north of the Lorraine Motel.

It appears the Lorraine Motel cannot be observed from the Annex Hotel and probably cannot be seen from the third floor of the Chisca Plaza Hotel.

Investigation on 8/23/78 at Memphis, Tennessee File # Memphis 44-1987 Sub 1

by SA BURL F. JOHNSON:arp 21* Date dictated 8/23/78

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DE OC

R 010332Z SEP 78

FM OKLAHOMA CITY (44-686) (P)
TO DIRECTOR, FBI (44-38861) ROUTINE
PITTSBURGH ROUTINE
MEMPHIS (44-1987 SUB M) ROUTINE
BT

UNCLAS

ATTENTION: CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRY UNIT.

MURKIN. OO - MEMPHIS

RE KANSAS CITY TEL TO BUREAU, ETAL, SEPT. 1, 1978.

FOR THE INFORMATION OF PITTSBURGH, REFERENCED COMMUNICATION REQUESTED RECORD REVIEW AT THE FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION, (FAA) RECORDS CENTER, OKLA. CITY, OKLA, WITH REFERENCE TO AIRCRAFT REGISTRY NUMBER N4434L. THE PURPOSE OF RECORD CHECK WAS TO DETERMINE CURRENT OWNER SO THAT LEADS COULD BE SET OUT TO HAVE THAT OWNER INTERVIEWED FOR REVIEW OF PLANE LAW BOOK TO DETERMINE LOCATION OF PLANE ON APRIL 4, 1968.

ON AUG. 19, 1978, BURGESS AUDIE WILSON WAS INTERVIEWED BY AGENTS OF THE JACKSON OFFICE AT GULFPORT, MISS. WILSON TOLD

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B. Johnson

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INTERVIEWING AGENTS HE HAD SHOT AND KILLED MARTIN LUTHER KING IN MEMPHIS, TENN. AMONG INFORMATION FURNISHED, WILSON ADVISED THAT DURING THE PERIOD IN WHICH HE SHOT AND KILLED KING, HE RESIDED AT 13125 HERRICK AVE., GRANDVIEW, MO., AND THAT HE WAS AT THAT TIME IN THE AIR FORCE RESERVE EMPLOYED AS A CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYEE. HE STATED THAT AT THE TIME OF KING'S DEATH, HE OWNED A RED AND WHITE BONANZA AIRPLANE. REGISTRATION NUMBER PROVIDED AS 34 L, BUT LATER IDENTIFIED AS N4434L. RECORDS OF THE FAA ON SEPT. 1, 1978, IDENTIFIES REGISTRATION NUMBER N4434L AS BEING ASSIGNED TO A 1956 MODEL G-35 BEECHCRAFT AIRCRAFT, SN D-4600.

THAT AIRCRAFT WAS INITIALLY SOLD BY BEECHCRAFT APRIL 20, 1956 TO GOPHER AVIATION, INC., ROCHESTER, MINN. GOPHER AVIATION INC., SOLD THE AIRCRAFT MAY 3, 1956, TO FRANKLIN MANUFACTURING CO., 65 TWENTY-SECOND AVE., NORTHEAST, MINNEAPOLIS, MINN. AIRCRAFT SOLD BY THAT MANUFACTURING COMPANY MARCH 17, 1960, TO MIDSTATE AVIATION CORP., SKY HARBOR AIRPORT, NORTHBROOK, ILL. AIRCRAFT SOLD APRIL 18, 1960, BY MIDSTATE TO CONNIE C. MILLER, 9618 SAGAMORE, KANSAS CITY, MO. AIRCRAFT SOLD BY MILLER

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MAY 27, 1968, TO FISHER SALES AND SERVICE, INC., BOX 6516
LEEWOOD, KANS.

AIRCRAFT SOLD JUNE 6, 1968, BY FISHER SALES TO BURGESS
WILSON AND LOU CREWS, 553 NORTH SCOTT, BELTON, MO. ON JUNE 12,
1969, AIRCRAFT SOLD BY WILSON AND CREWS TO GARY W. WILSON,
1302 N. HOCKER, INDEPENDENCE, MO.

AIRCRAFT WAS SOLD BY WILSON, DATE NOT KNOWN, BUT DOCUMENT
RECEIVED AT FAA, FEB. 16, 1970, TO GEORGE T. WARD BUILDERS,
INC., 1401 PLAZA CENTER, BLUE SPRINGS, MO. AIRCRAFT SOLD
SEPT. 27, 1973, BY BUILDERS INC. TO GERALD L. FISHER, 1204 S.
19TH ST., BLUE SPRINGS, MO. AIRCRAFT SOLD BY FISHER TO GEORGE
R. KEELING, PRAIRIE VILLAGE, KANSAS (DATE UNKNOWN), WHO SOLD
AIRCRAFT TO RONALD J. MAGGARD, 2218 E. 110TH ST., KANSAS CITY,
MO. THE DATE OF THAT SALE IS UNKNOWN, BUT BILL OF SALE
RECEIVED AT FAA AUG. 16, 1974.

MAGGARD SOLD AIRCRAFT OCT. 15, 1974, TO CHARLES W.
VAN HOFWEGEN, HIGHWAY 10, ORANGE CITY, IOWA. VAN HOFWEGEN
SOLD AIRCRAFT DEC. 10, 1975, TO MICHAEL NEFF, 525 HICKORY,
NEVADA, IOWA. NEFF SOLD AIRCRAFT OCT. 19, 1977, TO GENE

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SIMPSON AIRCRAFT SALES, INC, ONAWA, IOWA. THAT SALES COMPANY SOLD THE AIRCRAFT OCT. 24, 1977, TO RONALD K. KARAS, 120 PAIGE COURT, WEINTON, WEST VA. AIRCRAFT CURRENTLY OWNED BY KARAS AND POSSIBLY REGISTERED WITH FAA AS OF OCT. 28, 1978.

PITTSBURGH AT WEINTON, WEST VA. WILL REVIEW LOG BOOK OF AIRCRAFT BEARING REGISTRATION NUMBER N4434L, CURRENT OWNER RONALD N. KARAS, 120 PAIGE COURT, AND DETERMINE LOCATION OF PLANE APRIL 4, 1978, AND IF RECORDS REFLECT ANYTHING TO DO WITH BURGESS AUDIE WILSON.

BT

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FM KANSAS CITY (44-760) P

TO DIRECTOR (44-38861) ROUTINE

MEMPHIS (44-1987) (SUB M) ROUTINE

OKLAHOMA CITY IMMEDIATE

BT

UNCLAS EFTO

ATTENTION: CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRIES UNIT

MURKIN, OO MEMPHIS.

RE KANSAS CITY TELETYPE TO DIRECTOR, MEMPHIS, OKLAHOMA CITY AND ST. LOUIS, AUGUST 21, 1978; KANSAS CITY TELEPHONE CALL TO OKLAHOMA CITY, AUGUST 31, 1978.

IN ABOVE REFERENCED TELETYPE, IT WAS STATED THAT BURGESS AUDIE WILSON OWNED A RED AND WHITE BONANZA AIRPLANE, REGISTRY NO. 34L. OKLAHOMA CITY WAS REQUESTED TO CONTACT FAA RECORDS CENTER AND PERFORM A COMPLETE TITLE SEARCH FOR REGISTRY NO. 34L. IN ADDITION, OKLAHOMA CITY WAS ASKED TO DETERMINE CURRENT OWNER AND SET OUT LEADS TO APPROPRIATE FIELD OFFICES TO

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B. Johnson

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CONTACT OWNER FOR REVIEW OF PLANE LOG BOOK WHICH SHOULD REVEAL DISPOSITION OF PLANE DURING APRIL 4, 1968.

KANSAS CITY INVESTIGATION REGARDING BONANZA AIRPLANE REVEALED THAT REGISTRY NUMBER IS N4434L AND NOT NO. 34L AS MENTIONED PREVIOUSLY.

OKLAHOMA CITY AT OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA WILL CONTACT FAA RECORDS CENTER AND PERFORM A COMPLETE TITLE SEARCH FOR BONANZA PLANE, REGISTRY NO. N4434L. ADDITIONALLY, WILL DETERMINE CURRENT OWNER AND SET OUT LEADS TO APPROPRIATE FIELD OFFICE TO CONTACT OWNER FOR REVIEW OF PLANE LOG BOOK WHICH SHOULD REVEAL DISPOSITION OF PLANE DURING PERIOD IN QUESTION, APRIL 4, 1968.

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(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Jackson Appeals For Funding For Probe Of Assassinations

By JEROME WRIGHT

Rev. Jesse Jackson said yesterday whites should be just as concerned as blacks that all facts concerning the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. be brought forth, and called on citizens to urge Congress to continue funding for a select committee probing King's death and that of

former President John F. Kennedy.

In a live radio broadcast yesterday morning, carried in Memphis and Chicago, Jackson urged persons across the country to send telegrams to House Speaker Thomas "Tip" O'Neill asking him to use his influence with representatives so that the House Select Committee on Assassinations will receive additional funding of \$790,000 to complete its investigation. The Congress is scheduled to consider the additional funding Thursday.

Officials said the committee, which has already spent more than \$5 million since it was born in 1976, will run out of funds Sept. 15.

Rep. Harold Ford of Memphis, a member of the committee, was scheduled to attend the press conference but did not appear.

Meanwhile, Jackson did not preclude the possibility of some type of FBI involvement in King's slaying.

"We know the FBI engaged in character assassination (against King). It remains to be seen if they engaged in physical assassination.

"Let us make it clear that the FBI spent more money and more manpower violating the constitutional rights of Dr. King than it did anybody or any group in the history of America.

"Hoover said the FBI's role was to view him (King) as if he was an espionage agent from another country. They had surveillance on him 24 hours day, always electronically tapped his phone, bugged his hotel rooms . . . that's very strong circumstantial evidence and so far the highest motive for the assassination."

During the broadcast at Olivet Baptist Church at 3984 Southern, police said a church member received a telephoned bomb threat. Doris Bolden told officers a caller said "There's a bomb in your church." She said the caller repeated the sentence and hung up. Police searched the building but found nothing. The broadcast was not interrupted, officials said.

At a press conference later Jackson said, "Unless this committee is refunded the public will never know the full story. We

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

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Section B

COMMERCIAL

APPEAL

MEMPHIS, TENN

Date: Sept. 3, 1978

Edition: Sunday
morning

Title: MURKIN

Character: CR

or

Classification:

Submitting Office: MEMPHIS

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Bureau
Aug 9-5-78
B. J. [signature]

FBI/DOJ

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

will be left with James Earl Ray and Lee Harvey Oswald as lone assassins. If this committee is denied refunding we will never be able to convince 82 per cent of the American people, who refuse to believe the official version, that this is anything but a continuation of the coverup."

About a week before the hearings, Jackson interviewed Ray at Brushy Mountain State Prison in Petros, Tenn., where Ray is serving a 99-year sentence for King's death. Afterward he said he had "profound doubt" that Ray killed King.

However, the minister said that after Ray's testimony before the committee questions still remain but, "I have less doubt now that Ray pulled the trigger." Still, he said he believes King's death was part of a conspiracy.

The Chicago minister and head of Operation PUSH (People United to Serve and Save Humanity), however, left little doubt that he was especially interested in facts surrounding King's death in Memphis on April 4, 1968.

"The long list of unanswered questions surrounding the King assassination and the tremendous suspicion that others, even the government itself, were involved continues to eat away at the moral fabric of our nation.

"It is in the national interest that these unanswered questions and suspicions be openly and totally dealt with to the satisfaction of reasonable and fair-minded people."

He also said all Memphians should be especially interested in the truth being revealed. "The people of Memphis should want to know if the Memphis Police Department was involved; if the (former Mayor Henry) Loeb administration was involved; if Dr. King's murder in Memphis was coincidental or planned to happen here."

Jackson said he was very impressed with the hearings and had special praise for several committee members, including Ford and Rep. Louis Stokes (D-Ohio) chairman of the committee.

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APPEAL

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