

Jerry Ray Sounds Off

Statement from James Earl Ray's Brother Jerry Ray,
taken and edited by Mike Vinson

It didn't surprise me, the Justice Department's report on its recent, so-called investigation into the King assassination [which focused on the alleged involvement of Loyd Jowers and ex-FBI agent Donald Wilson]. Of course, they were going to say that James did it—alone—and nobody else was involved, especially our government. Hell, basically, you had the Justice Department investigating the Justice Department. That would be like me, Jerry Ray, investigating my brother James Earl Ray's alleged involvement in the assassination of Martin Luther King.

To make my point, I'd like to bring up something. I was reading the June 14, 2000 issue of *The Wall Street Journal*, and there was something in there about the FBI's investigation into the Clinton-Gore fund-raising practices. Now, this is a quote from Director Louis Freeh: 'Because this criminal investigation has taken our investigators into the highest reaches of the White House . . . we have had to assess the potential application of the Independent Counsel statute every step of the way.' That's my point. Why didn't Attorney General Reno appoint an independent counsel to investigate the King assassination, like she did Kenneth Starr in the Slick Willie-Monica deal? I'm not saying Barry Kowalski [who headed Reno's King probe] is a bad person or a bad investigator, but he works for the Justice Department. The U.S. Justice Department has said for more than 30 years that James killed King. How can you expect Kowalski to not be on their side?

On Friday, June 9, 2000, about 3 or 4 in the afternoon, I got a call from a woman named Allison Schwartz, of MS-NBC. She said she wanted to send up a limo, pick me up at 7:20 a.m., Saturday, 10 June 2000, and transport [Jerry Ray lives approximately 1 1/2 hours from Nashville.] me to WSMV in Nashville so I could be interviewed over satellite, respond to the Justice Department's report, and it go out over national television. She was all excited, and she even called again, a second time, just to make sure that it was still on, the limo coming and taking me to Nashville to do the interview and all. Then, around 6:30 or 7 p.m., I got a call from a man—he never identified himself—from MS-NBC who told me the interview with me had been cancelled, then,

CLICK, he hung up, like the receiver in his hand was a piece of hot lead, too hot to handle. I think I know why he hung up so fast. I was getting ready to ask him who'd called the show off.

Another thing: The media released the Justice Department's report on Friday, the weakest time, because over the weekend none of the prime time shows air, so you have a blackout, like the media did in the Jowers' trial, on a subject they want to die. Keep it away from the public's mind, and the public won't ask questions. That's what that's all about.

James Earl was given two trials, you could say, the 1993 HBO Mock Trial and the Loyd Jowers wrongful death civil trial, held in Memphis in late 1999. In the HBO Mock Trial, James Earl was acquitted, and the verdict in the Loyd Jowers civil trial was that Martin Luther King "was the victim of a vast murder conspiracy, not a lone assassin." In both trials you had mixed juries—in the Jowers' trial you had six blacks and six whites—and both times James was found not guilty of killing King. Just take a poll, and you'll be surprised at the people who do not believe James Earl killed King. And I'm talking about educated people, lawyers, almost anybody who doesn't have ties to the Memphis prosecutor's office or the U.S. Justice Department. Of course, anybody who does not agree with them doesn't ever get the opportunity to tell his side—no-no. Instead, they'll parade Posie-Wosie out there, and anybody with a lick of sense knows he's a government robot: Push this button, and he'll talk this way; push that button, and he'll talk that way. One guy told me that Posie's book on the Kennedy assassination, *Case Closed*, and his other book, *Killing the Dream*, about the King assassination, are almost identical—like two houses having been built from the same blueprint. If not Posie, then they'll have David Garrow or Robert Blakey, somebody like that. And before them, it was William Bradford Huie and George—I called him "Georgie Pie"—McMillan. In *The Tennessean*, the big newspaper in Nashville, they let their staff writer Dwight Lewis go on and on about James being a racist and the one who killed King. But when someone has an opposing view, *The Tennessean* won't print him, anymore.

Judge Joe Brown, a black man, was over

the King assassination from about 1994 until early 1998. Judge Joe knows his weapons pretty good, and with the ballistics on the rifle, they say shot King, Brown saw right off that something wasn't right. But, hell, neither of the ballistics tests—they conducted one right after King was shot and another one during the House Select Committee hearings—proved conclusive. That's the reason Brown ordered a third test, that was conducted sometime late in 1997. That one, too, was inconclusive. In fact, 12 of the 18 bullets fired on the third testing had markings that were "dissimilar" to the bullet they took out of King. And the other 6 bullets, they couldn't tell.

Now, Judge Brown was set to order still another round of testing on the rifle. He knew he was on to something. Hell yeah, he was—the truth, that James Earl didn't do it! Then John Campbell, the Assistant District General out of Memphis, the one who was over the case, and is big buddies with Posie, went running to the Tennessee Court of Appeals, there in Nashville, and claimed that Judge Brown was being out of line, and acting like an investigator instead of judge. Now, remember, on the Tennessee Court of Appeals, then, you had three former prosecutors. Right off, they agreed with Big John Campbell and took Brown off the case, said he was on James' side too much. That's more bullshit than a cow with diarrhea, and they know it.

What was happening, there, was this: Judge Brown, because of all the evidence, or lack of evidence, ballistics tests and all that, was about to grant James a trial, and they, the prosecution in Memphis, knew it. And they also knew that if James was given a trial, he would walk, just like he did in the mock trial and the Jowers' trial. Like it's been from day one, there was no evidence. Just the statement of ole wino Charlie Stephens—drunk on his ass, at the time of the killing—and the rifle, the one they never could match to the slug, and still can't. Like writer Mike Vinson has said, you have to wonder why the police, investigators, and prosecutors didn't want to hear what Earl Caldwell, the *New York Times* reporter, saw and had to say, but they grabbed ole Charlie's story right off, and never let go of it. Caldwell said, after he heard the shot,

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he saw a white man rise up from a crouched position in the bushes behind Bessie Brewer's rooming house and Jim's Grill. That's where Loyd Jowers says the real shooter was, too. After Charlie couldn't collect his reward, somewhere around a hundred thousand, he took back what he said about seeing James in the hallway after the shooting. I've got that testimony—Stephens taking back his statement—on tape.

And another thing I want to mention, even though it's been mentioned a bunch before. The Tennessee law [TCA 17-1-305] guaranteed James a trial. I'm talking about when James plead guilty on March 10, 1969, and filed a petition for a trial on March 13, 1969. Judge Preston Battle, who was over the case, then, had control of it for 30 days afterwards. On March 31, 1969, Battle was in his office looking at James' petition, and died right there in his office. That law says that if the reviewing judge dies within 30 days of the case, then the person who petitioned automatically is granted a new trial. Well, I don't have much education but if you minus 10 from 31 you get 21. So all that took place within that 30 day period, and they still wouldn't give James a trial. Lawyer Charles Galbreath, out of Nashville, who at one time was a Tennessee Appeals judge, researched it, and he says James is the only person in Tennessee not to be granted a trial under those conditions. I think Galbreath even sent a letter to the U.S. Justice Department about all that. I feel sorry for Galbreath because he just wasted 33 cents. James appealed for a trial something like six-seven-eight times. They wouldn't give him one because, like I got through saying, he would have walked. They had to keep him where he was. Too many questions if James Earl had been acquitted in a regular court of law. If that had happened, it would have got so bad, they'd been having strokes and jumping out of windows, like they did when the Stock Market fell back in the Depression.

To show how low down this can get, take what happened with Sammy the Bull. Here, you have a guy who turned informant—turned on Gotti for a reduced sentence—admitted to murdering 18 or 19 people, and Diane Sawyer had him as a guest on her show, everybody cutting up and having a good time, so it appeared. Tell me, what's up with a picture like that? The media might want to shake up its agenda and value system. One thing for sure, even though the American public used to be fooled, they're not so foolish, anymore. However, I'm glad that Loyd Jowers was able to get all that off his chest before he went to his grave, and I believe the King family got some relief with the verdict in the Jowers' trial. They didn't get any with the recent Justice

Department's report, but they [King family] already knew how that would come out.

Now, it's down to me trying to get back the rifle, the one they say James killed King with. Sometime after James Earl died from cirrhosis, I filed a complaint in Davidson County [Nashville] Probate Court to take possession of property that belonged to James. Of course, the rifle, the one they say James killed King with was—is—part of that property. You have to remember that James named me as executor of his will. As expected, the court ruled against me, and said I didn't have any rights to James' property. We appealed that, and the Appeals Court pretty much said the same thing—the same Tennessee Appeals Court that threw Judge Joe Brown off the case. They try to hide the truth behind a big horseshit word like "sovereign immunity." Basically, all Sovereign Immunity says is that the State of Tennessee can mess over you any which way they like, and you can't do jack about it.

Then, the Court of Appeals sent the case back down to Probate Court, there in Nashville, and Probate Judge Frank Clement, back around April-March of this year, ruled that the state still had possession of the rifle, but they could "lend" it to the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, who's been wanting it for a long time. When Judge Clement made that ruling, the Justice Department hadn't yet come out with its report. Now, they're trying to say the case with me trying to take possession of the rifle has to be heard in Memphis, since that's where the crime took place. All that is is a maneuver to try and put some much distance between me and the case [Jerry Ray is approximately 1 1/2 hours from Nashville, and approximately 5 hours from Memphis.] so that I can't accommodate it. I got news for 'em, though.

Right now, I'm fixing to get started on a book that will tell my side of the story. I'm working with Mike Vinson, who is a well-known writer in Tennessee. He's had a whole buncha stuff published on the case. The reason I've got Mike, now, is I like his style, and he's objective and weighs the facts for what they are. We're scouting around for a publisher. I can promise you this book will tell some stuff that hasn't been told before, robberies, attempted murder, escape attempts and prison escapes, secret messages, plans that never went into effect, and a lot more. And I'll be able to back it all up with documents. I'm 65, and the time has come for me to tell my side. I imagine my side is gonna be like a blender—shake 'em up good [laughs]!

Like I've been saying, they don't want me to have that rifle, because they know it wasn't the one that killed King, and they also know

I'll have it re-tested until a conclusion is reached. And if it's proven that rifle didn't kill King, then we got a new chapter in history. You would think it was enough for 'em to let James die in prison, you know, with em not letting him have a liver transplant, and letting that hernia go until it looked like something on one of those freak show. No, letting him die like a dog wasn't enough. With 'em not allowing me to have the rifle, they're still robbing James in his grave. Robbing history, too. ♣

Downing

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then things started getting really bad. Now, I—it was about the time that...

WILLIAMS: Let me clarify something about the two-year life of the committee. Could that be renewed if...

DOWNING: Yes, it could.

WILLIAMS: It could be renewed. OK.

DOWNING: For one year, I think. About that time, I think I drew up a final report myself. I couldn't get anybody around early on, vacations and things like that. Basically, it was just turning over to the new committee when it was formed to the next Congress.

Basically, what we had done, from an organizational standpoint, we had done practically no substantive work, no investigations. We've sent nobody out in the field. And that wasn't my job. My job, as I understood it, was to get organized, get it financed, get it set up into committees, get it a director, a chairman, new chairman—I didn't know who that was going to be.

But I thought it was going to be Henry Gonzales, which it was. And all hell broke loose then. But I thought—that's all my job was. I really—I would liked to have gone into the substantive stuff, of course, for the excitement of it. But I knew that my job ended when I had the committee going, and that somebody else would chair it during its substantive investigations.

Which they did. Henry took over as chairman. And then he and Sprague got in some of the biggest dogfights I have ever heard. They say that Congressman Gonzales sent his office staff to spy on the meetings of Sprague's committee. And indeed, I think that was probably true. And I think Gonzales admits that.

And apparently, Sprague was critical of Gonzales, and was planning to do things. And then Gonzales found out that I had three or four people from my staff over there on the committee's staff. And that was true. I did not push anybody or ask anybody—I didn't ask

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