

Martin Luther King's Son Says: James Earl Ray didn't kill MLK!

By Lisa Pease

On Thursday, March 27, nearly 29 years after his father's death, Dexter King met with James Earl Ray in a small room at the Lois DeBerry Special Needs Facility, Ray's current home. Dexter faced Ray, and after several awkward minutes of small talk came to the question to which so many want the answer: "I just want to ask you for the record, did you kill my father?"

"No I didn't," came Ray's reply. And in a display of the grace and compassion for which his family has long been known, Dexter King replied, "I just want you to know that I believe you, and my family believes you, and we are going to do everything in our power to try and make sure that justice will prevail."

True to his word, Dexter, recently supported by his older brother Martin Luther King III, has continued to talk to the media at every turn, calling for a trial to answer the questions long buried in this case.

The week after this historic meeting, Dexter King appeared opposite David Garrow on NBC's *Today* show. Garrow is the author of the book *The FBI and Martin Luther King*. He was also one of the ARRB's guests at the "Experts Conference" held in 1995. At that appearance, Garrow was pushing the ARRB to investigate the FBI's possible role in the assassination of President Kennedy.

On NBC, Garrow and King were clearly at cross purposes. King was calling for a new trial, and Garrow was there to convince all that Ray's guilt was beyond question. Garrow made an astonishing, insulting attack on the King family by saying:

I think it's very sad that the King family and the King children are so uninformed of the history that they could be open to believing that Mr. Ray was not involved in Dr. King's assassination...

Unfortunately, the King family has not looked at the

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record that the House Assassination committee [HSCA] compiled 19 years ago. There's really no dispute among people that know this history well about Mr. Ray's guilt."

King, besides wondering aloud how anyone could object to the family's wanting to know who killed their loved one, pointed out:

The House Committee did not have all the information. If it was such an open-and-shut case, why today are we asking this question?

Just a few days after this exchange, King and Garrow met again on CNN's *Crossfire*. On that show, King openly accused Garrow of being a spook:

Mr. Garrow, I've been told—and I am now more than ever convinced—is an agent for the national security and intelligence forces to distort the truth in this case.

Garrow responded by saying it was "very sad and very embarrassing for the King family to be in a position where it's saying things like that." But indeed, it is Garrow who should be embarrassed. Anyone who knows the history of the King assassination knows full well

that the evidence shows conspiracy, and that Ray was most likely *not* the assassin.

Likewise, this would not be the first time someone accused media people of covering up for the government in this case. During the HSCA, Walter Fauntroy, one of the members studying the King assassination, charged that reporters covering the HSCA were linked to the CIA and suggested the HSCA might investigate them. A few days later, for reasons about which we can readily speculate, Fauntroy backed down, saying the HSCA had "no plans now or in the future" to seek testimony of journalists regarding their possible ties to the intelligence community.¹

Fauntroy was most likely correct in his charge, if the history of this case means anything. One of

the earliest books written on the James Earl
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Ray case was one by Gerold Frank. William Pepper, Ray's current attorney, in his book *Orders to Kill*, quotes from an FBI memo from Assistant Director Cartha DeLoach to Hoover's close confidant, Clyde Tolson:

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

The next day, DeLoach followed up his own suggestion with this:

If the Director approves, we have in mind considering cooperating in the preparation of a book with either the *Reader's Digest* or author Gerold Frank... Frank is a well known author whose most recent book is *The Boston Strangler*. Frank is already working on a book on the Ray case and has asked the Bureau's cooperation in the preparation of the book on a number of occasions.

We have nothing derogatory on him in our files, and our relationship with him has been excellent.² [Emphasis added.]

Another author favored by the intelligence community was George McMillan, whose book

The Making of an Assassin was favorably reviewed by no less than Jeremiah O'Leary. Mark Lane tells us, "On November 30, 1973, it was revealed that the CIA had forty full-time news reporters on the CIA payroll as undercover informants, some of them as full-time agents." Lane adds, "It seems clear than an agent-journalist is really an agent, not a journalist." He then tells us:

In 1973, the American press was able to secure just two of the forty names in the CIA file of journalists. The *Washington Star* and the *Washington Post* reported that one of the two was Jeremiah O'Leary.³

On March 2 of this year, the *Washington Post* ran not one but two articles condemning Ray and the calls for a new trial, written by longtime CIA assets Richard Billings and Priscilla Johnson McMillan, wife of George McMillan. In another paper the same Sunday, G. Robert Blakey, the architect of the cover-up at the HSCA, also made his voice heard for the case against a new trial. And a week later, Ramsey Clark—the man who within days of the assassination was telling us there was no conspiracy in the King killing—has also recommended the formation of yet another government panel in lieu of a trial for Ray. The only voice missing was Gerald Posner. But his too will come. Posner's next book will be about the Martin Luther King assassination, according to *Time* magazine.

Is the presence of such people commenting on the James Earl Ray case just coincidence? Or indicative of a continuing cover-up? Examine their backgrounds and decide for yourself.

Priscilla & George

It's predictable, really, that Priscilla would be writing in defense of the official myths relating to the MLK case. "Scilla", as her husband called her, has been doing the same in the John Kennedy assassination case for years. She just happened to be in the Soviet Union in time to snag an interview with the mysterious Lee Harvey Oswald. Later, she snuggled up to Marina long enough to write a book which Marina later said was full of lies, called *Marina and Lee*. Priscilla's parents once housed one of the most famous and high-profile defectors the CIA ever had—Svetlana Alliluyeva, daughter of Josef Stalin. Evan Thomas—father of the current *Newsweek* mogul of the same name and the man who edited William Manchester's defense of the *Warren Report*—

assigned Priscilla to write the defector's biography. Alliluyeva later returned to the Soviet Union in dismay, saying she was under the watch of the CIA at all times.

Is Priscilla CIA?

She applied for a job there in the fifties, and her 201 file lists her as a "witting collaborator," meaning, not only was she working with the agency, she *knew* she was working with the agency. And how independent was she? In a memo from Donald Jameson, who was an experienced Soviet Russia Branch Chief and who in the same year handled Angleton's prize (and the CIA's bane) Anatoliy Golitsyn, wrote of Priscilla:

Priscilla Johnson was selected as a likely candidate to write an article on Yevtushenko in a major U. S. magazine for our campaign... I think that Miss Johnson can be encouraged to write pretty much the articles we want.⁴ [Emphasis added.]

Priscilla's latest writing shows that either she never learned the truth about her husband's book, or she is unabashedly willing to support the lies therein. For example: George McMillan has long since been taken to task by researchers for writing that Ray's hatred of King came about as Ray watched King give speeches from Ray's prison cell. But that prison had no TVs available to inmates, either in cells or cell blocks, until 1970—two years after King had been killed! This has long since been exposed in print in numerous places. Yet Priscilla repeats this canard in the *Washington Post*, in 1997. Is this another assignment?

In addition, George McMillan relied heavily on James Earl Ray's brother Jerry as a source. Yet Jerry and George both admit that Jerry lied to George. Jerry also alleged, and George did not deny when given the chance, that George made up quotes and attributed them to Jerry. Now, Priscilla writes uncritically of George's version of events, without acknowledging to *Post* readers any of these serious challenges to the credibility of George's description of events.⁵

George McMillan himself is also a very interesting character, who shows up in both the King and Kennedy assassination investigations. What is not well known is that George McMillan was one of the earliest post assassination interviewers of George de Mohrenschildt. As reported by Mark Lane on Ted Gandolfo's *Assassinations USA* cable program, George McMillan had been in Dallas a few weeks after the assassination. He left his notebook in a hotel with Oswald's name in it. When the notebook was found, it was reported to the FBI. In it were notes McMillan had taken from de Mohrenschildt. Later, George tried to get in on the Garrison investigation, according to a memo from Garrison's files, but was rejected because he came on like "three bulls in a very small china shop." And after de Mohrenschildt's alleged suicide, McMillan wrote the following in the *Washington Post*:

I stayed with de Mohrenschildt and his wife in their lovely house which clutched the side of a steep hill overlooking Port-Au-Prince—and which was, not insignificantly, I suppose, within the compound where Papa Doc Duvalier then lived. We had to pass through heavily guarded gates as we came and went.

One can only imagine the kind of clearance needed to be able to live inside the dictator's compound, and to gain access to it as a journalist.

Et Tu, Billings?

Peter Dale Scott writes that Dick Billings is a relative-in-law of famous CIA propagandist C. D. Jackson. Billings has long been involved in the Kennedy assassination. G. Robert Blakey, the HSCA's Chief Counsel, and Billings both wrote the HSCA's final report. Billings did not, by the way, have to sign the nondisclosure agreement that other HSCA members had to sign. Evidently, Billings was trusted by those with the most to hide. Billings also co-wrote with Blakey their mob-did-it book called *The Plot to Kill the President*.

Billings was for years involved in Allen Dulles' friend Henry Luce's publishing empire, as a writer and editor at *Life* magazine. One of his most intriguing assignments was to accompany several CIA and ex-CIA commandos on a mission code-named Operation Red Cross. This operation's goal was to kid-

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nap two Russian military officers from a Cuban missile site and bring them back to the United States for an interview. The point was to discredit President Kennedy with new evidence—post-October Missile Crisis—that the Soviets still harbored missiles in Cuba. Along with Billings on this mission were John Martino, Rip Robertson, and the owner of the private yacht upon which they sailed, former U.S. Ambassador William Pawley. Others involved in the planning and/or execution of this operation were Howard Davis, Gerry Patrick Hemming, Frank Sturgis, Eddie Bayo (born Eduardo Pérez)—an anti-Castro guerrilla, and Senator James O. Eastland. All of these people had worked with the CIA at some point. At the CIA's request, Pawley had gone to Batista to attempt to persuade him to step down. The CIA also sent Pawley to make the same request of Trujillo, shortly before he was assassinated in a CIA-backed coup.

At this time, President Kennedy had issued (and the FBI was enforcing) a ban on such excursions to Cuba. But Billings evidently had no compunction about participating in this illegal, and, as it turned out, ill-fated raid. *Life* magazine had footed the bill for \$15,000 in military equipment needed for the voyage, and Billings' participation was part of the deal. Everyone in the project had been sworn to secrecy. As a typical off-the-books operation, then CIA director John McCone didn't even find out about this attempted raid until a year later, when the families of several of the men who disappeared forever that night started pushing for answers.⁶

Billings later injected himself into Garrison's investigation, at first siding with Garrison, and later writing articles saying Garrison's investigation was designed to protect the mob in New Orleans, a charge which falls apart rapidly upon investigation. But even more significantly, Billings was evidently in touch with George de Mohrenschildt during Garrison's investigation as well (see the letter pictured at center). In a letter dated August 29, 1967, de Mohrenschildt attempts to confirm that some people asking questions about HLO (Harvey Lee Oswald?) and Haiti

were really from *Life*. He ends the letter by saying that "Both my wife and I are anxious to see you again in Dallas." [Emphasis added.] *Just how well did these two know each other?*

Also suggestive that Billings may have known far more than he lets on about the Kennedy assassination is a provocative transcript of Loran Hall's account of a meeting with Billings in Garrison's files. Dated May 7, 1968, Hall makes some statements best left in Hall's own words:

August 29, 1967

Dear Dick:

Two days ago a reporter and a photographer from your magazine called me up, referred to you, and came to my house. Their names escape me; one had a Spanish name, another Arthur something. They constantly referred to my conversations with you and then showed me the pictures of some Cubans involved in the unsuccessful invasion of Haiti. They asked us some questions about HLO but mostly about the situation in Haiti.

Naturally I did not say much, because I have a pending suit against Haiti, nor was I familiar with any of the characters they had mentioned.

Now I am wondering if they were actually people from your magazine; they took some pictures of us and of our dogs.

Anyway, I did not say anything of importance and I did insist that nothing should be printed about us.

However, they both did know of our conversations, so I presume that they actually were from *Life* and that my doubts have no foundation.

Please let me know. In the future I shall ask anyone who will come over for their credentials.

Both my wife and I are anxious to see you again in Dallas.

Sincerely yours,

/s/

George de Mohrenschildt

...He [Billings] wanted to know why JERRY COHEN had taken such a complete turn now, like being pro-Garrison and pro plot on the assassination and that why is JERRY COHEN now thinking that BRADLEY is involved, and I said because he's probably opened up his god damn ears and he said well he's sure switched in the last week. I talked to him last Friday and he's convinced now that BRADLEY is involved some way or somehow and this kind of shook BILLINGS. He also started asking me questions like uh like uh, was there any did he show you any movie films and I said what kind of film are you talking about. And he uh he kind of hem-hawed around he said well you know what I'm talking about and I said no, what are you talking about. He said did you see the killing of Kennedy on movie and I says no and uh then he

also told me that in November or December that he went to Dallas, Texas, with \$20,000 from *Life* and *Time* Magazine and had purchased every piece of film that could be purchased in Dallas, Texas, concerning the assassination.... BILLINGS pumped me real strong on the ZAPRUDER film and I said look uh I didn't even know that he had a film. I had heard rumors that he might have one but that I did not see it and he started really going in to so I said look turn that god damn tape recorder off. So he turned the tape recorder off and I called him a son of a bitch and I said you and I both know what happened in Dallas, Texas, and the ZAPRUDER film will prove it and he said well I'm going to turn this back on and I said like hell you will and so that was the end of the conversation about any film.

So it is from this background that we must evaluate Billings' recent remarks on the King assassination. Both he and Blakey harp on one key event that Ray has consistently denied, as evidence of Ray's guilt. In a televised session, Ray stated that he had not returned to Atlanta after purchasing the rifle that allegedly killed King. Ray told the committee, "If I did, I'll just take responsibility for the King case right here on TV." Chairman Louis Stokes then brought forth committee exhibit F-59, a blow-up of two receipts for laundry showing one of the aliases Ray had used, Eric Galt. To this day, Ray denies having been to Atlanta. And as will be shown in this article, a case can be made that Ray was unfairly ambushed in this regard, and that the Galt indicated on the laundry receipts could very well have been someone other than James Earl Ray.

G. Robert Blakey

G. Robert Blakey came to be the head of the HSCA after a concerted media campaign ousted both Henry Gonzales and Dick Sprague, two people who had made it clear they would investigate any and all, without fear or favor. Gonzales, in his comments to the House of Representatives prior to the formation of the HSCA, had said

...CBS did conclude that there is a need to investigate the possible 'Cuban connection' in respect to the killing of the President.

I would like to look into the 'Cuban connection,' too, but I would also like to know more about the whereabouts of certain domestic spies and what they were up to during November 1963. As well as his connection with Cuba, I would also like to know what Oswald's connec-

tion was with our intelligence community.⁷

The media campaign that brought Blakey to power and ousted Sprague and Gonzales was led by CIA-asset Jeremiah O'Leary, David Burnham of the *New York Times* (the man Karen Silkwood was on her way to see when she was killed in a car accident) and George Lardner, Jr. (perhaps the last person to see David Ferrie alive, as he was dead the morning after Lardner's post-midnight visit).

Blakey's role can only be characterized as covering up the true facts of the case. As Gary Aguilar and Kathy Cunningham show in their article

in this issue (see page 18), the HSCA under Blakey withheld from public view key evidence, now released, that would have brought us closer to the truth in the medical aspects of the case. The same can be said about other aspects of the investigation as well. One particular example from the James Earl Ray case will show just to what levels the HSCA was willing to stoop to avoid the truth and confirm the official verdict that Ray killed King.

Blakey's "Secret Weapon"

In mid-August of 1978, while Ray and his then lawyer Mark Lane faced TV cameras in public testimony, Blakey sprang a surprise on Ray and Lane, in the form of MLK Exhibit 92. Lane had asked for and been promised a chance to review the committee's evidence against Ray prior to its being presented. Yet on this hot midday in Washington, DC, Lane and Ray were ambushed with a transcript of an interview with Alexander Anthony Eist, a former member of a unit within Scotland Yard. Eist made some astonishing claims, notably that Ray had not only confessed to killing King but that he had exhibited an intense hatred of blacks.

Lane was furious. Not only had he not been given advance notice so that he could research these charges, but the statements had not even been made under oath. In *Murder in Memphis*, Lane wrote:

The unsworn answers given by Eist could have no legal import although they were designed to seem impressive to a waiting television audience. If Blakey and his staff of attorneys and investigators suspected or believed that Eist was not telling the truth the technique they decided to employ, securing remarks which were not given under oath, would spare them the potential embarrassment of prosecution for subornation of perjury. It also permitted Eist to make false statements with the knowledge that he could not be prosecuted for perjury. Blakey had issued a license to lie to Eist.

"I called him a son of a bitch and I said you and I both know what happened in Dallas, Texas, and the ZAPRUDER film will prove it" — Loran Hall to Dick Billings

Luckily for James Earl Ray, when one English barrister heard that Eist's remarks were to follow the lunch break, he called across the Atlantic to reach Lane to give him some background on Eist. According to the barrister, Eist had been dismissed from the Metropolitan Police force in London after being charged with theft and perjury—*specifically for having invented oral confessions*. He was later found guilty of corruption. Lane was able to use this information in front of the TV cameras, and chastised the committee for its unethical conduct in bringing such a man's testimony forward before millions of TV viewers. Lane railed:

If this information about Eist is true, which has just been given to me, if it was all public knowledge in England, in all of the newspapers as this lawyer told me, then I don't know why your investigators in London couldn't have found that out by reading any of the newspapers. If this is true, and if it was in the newspapers, this Committee has engaged in the most irresponsible conduct probably in the long history of Congress, and that is an awful long history of irresponsible conduct.

Congressman Richardson Preyer answered:

...I will point out...that Mr. Devine indicated this testimony is not being offered as evidence of the truth of those statements. The Committee does not make any statement as to the credibility of the witness and Mr. Ray was only being asked whether the statement was true and any comments he may—

at which point Lane interrupted with:

If you knew of this man's background, it was a height of irresponsibility not to inform the American people about that background. Yet, if I did not receive a phone call from the English lawyer, the American people would not know of the deceit of this Committee. This is perhaps the most outrageous thing this Committee has done.⁸

Indeed, to claim such charges were made only for the point of asking Ray if they were true, when the charges were aired over national television, strains credulity past the point of breaking. Such was the HSCA's method, under G. Robert Blakey. So again, how fair will he be to any question of Ray's innocence, in light of the depths to which he allowed his own committee to stoop in an effort to prove Ray's guilt?

Perhaps the only more hypocritical commentator in the latest round of media spokesmen has been former Attorney General Ramsey Clark.

Ramsey Clark

All of our evidence at this time indicates that it was a single person who committed this criminal act.⁹

Ramsey Clark made that incredible statement within the first few days after the assassination of Dr. King. How—*without a single suspect in hand*—could Clark even pretend to know that only a single person was involved?

Clark is familiar to those who study the Kennedy assassination as the driving force behind what became known as the "Clark Panel," a group of medical professionals gathered together to reexamine the medical evidence so poorly handled by the Warren Commission. But as this author has pointed out before,¹⁰ the people choosing the participants of this panel had long-standing, demonstrable ties to the intelligence community in general and the CIA in particular. And again, in the article in this issue by Aguilar and Cunningham, the reader will find that this panel's conclusions were no more forthcoming than the Warren Commission's regarding the truth about the medical evidence.

Clark is also famous to those who have studied Garrison's case against Clay Shaw. Bill Davy, in his monograph *Through the Looking Glass: The Mysterious World of Clay Shaw*, shows that Clark had asked the FBI if they knew anything about Clay Shaw, and was told by Cartha DeLoach that Shaw's name had indeed come up in the original December, 1963 FBI investigation "as a result of several parties furnishing information concerning Shaw."¹¹ Clark asserted to the press, upon Clay Shaw's arrest, that the FBI had checked him out already and found him in the clear. But since that immediately raised the question of why the FBI was checking out Shaw in the first place, the Justice Department issued a statement that Clay Shaw had *not* been investigated, and that his name had never come up. Despite Clark's certain knowledge, he let the Justice Department put forward that lie.

Given his record in these matters, for Clark to now say Ray shouldn't have a trial, as he did recently in *The Nation*, but that a government panel should be convened to restudy the case, is remarkable. Does Clark really think the government which produced the Warren Commission and the HSCA, and failed to reveal the truth about either the Martin Luther King case or the Kennedy assassination, should be given a chance to bamboozle us yet again?

Why do the calls for Ray to get a new trial bring forth such a barrage of criticism, and from people with such notorious records of covering for the national security state? And if there was a conspiracy, as the evidence strongly suggests, in the assassination of Martin Luther King, could it really have been constructed by a bunch of racist businessmen in St. Louis, as the HSCA posited on wafer-thin evidence? Or is the story more complex, re-

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quiring the participation of intelligence agencies? Rather than attempt to summarize the works by Harold Weisberg, Mark Lane, Philip Melanson, and most recently William Pepper in this regard, a brief accounting of a few key problems should put this question in perspective.

The Case for Conspiracy: Two Eric S. Galts

Eric S. Galt was one of the aliases used by James Earl Ray. But there is strong evidence that at least two people were using that alias at the same time. In the case of Lee Harvey Oswald, John Armstrong and others have presented solid evidence that more than one person was using the same identity. This is a common intelligence practice. For example, the name "Eduardo", a famous alias of E. Howard Hunt, was also usurped by James McCord, the former CIA/SRS officer who was arrested breaking into Watergate. Hunt and Sturgis shared aliases. J. Edgar Hoover put out a memo to the FBI at one point saying he thought someone else was using Oswald's birth certificate. This is standard procedure. Therefore, we should take notice that the FBI, in the earliest days of the investigation, was following the trail of not one but two different Eric S. Galts.

For example, on April 26, 1968, *Time* magazine reported the following:

By December, Galt was in Los Angeles, where he presented two distinctly different personalities....Dance Studio Manager Rod Arvidson remembers Galt's alligator shoes, lack of coordination, and quiet disposition....If Galt was remembered as shy and pleasant by most of his acquaintances, the Hollywood drinking crowd in the area of an apartment he rented and at the St. Francis Hotel, where he also stayed, recall him as an obsessive racial bigot, an abrasive patron who belted screwdrivers, dozed on the bar stool and bickered with anyone around.

Two days later, in the *New York Times*, in a surprisingly frank article by Martin Waldron titled "Weird Trail of King's Killer," Waldron outlines even more serious discrepancies:

For at least two weeks, there have been two separate investigations, one centered in Alabama, and one centered in Alabama and Georgia. FBI agents have been investigating two Eric Starvo Galts, two rifles, two white Mustang cars, two driver's licenses, and an airplane ticket. Some thought this might have been the result of a deliberate attempt by the murderer and possible accomplices to lay down false and conflicting trails....

Eric Starvo Galt bought an Alabama driver's license last September when he was creating his false identity. He took the test on Sept. 6 and got his permanent license

mailed to him on Sept. 30. Last March 1, when Galt was finishing up a bartender's course in Hollywood, Calif., Alabama was asked to send him a duplicate of the license. The duplicate was mailed to the Economy Grill and Rooms in Birmingham, and although Galt was in California the duplicate license was received and a bill accompanying it was returned to the driver's license division in Montgomery along with 25 cents....

Varied physical descriptions of Galt have been widely reported. [Emphasis added.]

A *Newsweek* article demonstrated one way the FBI tried to explain the varying physical descriptions away: "...bureau insiders said he was taking amphetamines off and on and his weight might well have fluctuated sharply as a result."¹²

Clearly there were at least two people using the Galt identity. And if there were two Galts, how can Blakey and Billings be so certain that the Galt indicated by the laundry slips, assuming they were not forged in the first place, belonged to James Earl Ray's Galt and not some other Galt? And to add to the confusion, beyond two fake Galts there was a real Eric S. Galt, living in Canada.

It should also be mentioned here that Birmingham was one of the key staging grounds for the CIA's ill-conceived Bay of Pigs invasion. Four non-Cuban participants in the invasion attempt died, leaving widows in Birmingham who received payments after their husbands' deaths from Double-Check corporation.

And as the article stated, the weirdness doesn't end with the multiple Galts.

Two White Mustangs

Two white Mustangs, one of which ostensibly belonged to Ray, are part of the story. A white Mustang purchased by an Eric S. Galt was found abandoned in Atlanta after the assassination. Despite this having allegedly been Ray's getaway car, Ray's fingerprints were not found anywhere in the car. In addition, the car purchased by Galt and found by the FBI was an automatic, but men who remembered working on Ray's white Mustang told of how they worked on his clutch. Waldron reported in the article previously cited:

The young man with a pointed nose who the FBI said shot Dr. King, drove away from the scene of the murder in a white Mustang. Another white Mustang parked about 200 feet further down the same Memphis street drove away about 10 minutes later.

And then, there was the fake Mustang radio chase. The *Time* article mentioned above also reported:

[There was] a mysterious radio call [which] described a continuing police chase after the Mustang. The chase went one way, the Mustang another, and the broadcast later was discovered to have been a fake. The killer had been given his chance to escape.

In 1975, Dan Rather did a series of programs on the assassinations of the 60's. One segment of this four part series was dedicated to the James Earl Ray case. In that show, which I was recently able to view, the radio broadcast is played. For years we have been told this was a hoax perpetrated by a teenager. I can personally attest that the voice was certainly not that of a teenager, and sounded instead like that of a middle-aged man. Once again, no one seemed to want to find the truth about who made the fake broadcast. It's unlikely someone not directly involved would 1) even know enough about what was transpiring to intelligently perpetrate such a hoax and 2) would escape prosecution once the hoax was exposed. Yet someone did abet the escape of the real killer, and no one was ever prosecuted for interfering with a police broadcast.

Two Ramon George Sneyds

Another of Ray's aliases and the one he was eventually apprehended under was Ramon George Sneyd. But, as in the case of Eric Galt, there are multiple Sneyds involved, along with one real Sneyd, again from Canada (and who just happened to live within a few miles of Canada's only Eric S. Galt).

A mystery surrounds Ray's very apprehension itself, on June 8, 1968. The earliest press reports indicated that Ray/Sneyd had been arrested at Heathrow airport as he was passing through immigration upon his arrival from Lisbon, Portugal. But evidence soon surfaced that a Ramon George Sneyd had checked out of his London hotel the same morning that he was apprehended, after having been in London for some time. Then there was a confusion over what time he was arrested. Early reports claimed Ray was arrested at 11:15 a.m. London time. But then reports came out that he had been arrested at 6:15 a.m. London time. Then this became twisted to say America heard about it at 6:15 a.m., because of the five hour time difference. But on more careful study, it appears that Sneyd was apprehended twice because there were two Sneyds.

Respected London publisher Peter Dawnay followed this case closely and uncovered some very startling information. Dawnay found a passenger from the inbound Lisbon flight and heard the following strange tale told. The passenger claimed that in Lisbon, the flight had originally been delayed for an hour. But then a special Trident flight from London had arrived, and shortly thereafter the Lisbon-to-London flight was called ahead of its expected delay time. Quoting from Dawnay's account as published in the *L.A. Free Press* of March 21-27, 1969:

When the passengers had taken their seats and the doors were about to be closed, an official came running over from the airport building with another man. Breathlessly he asked the steward how many passengers on board. Ninety six was the reply. "Then you have room for one more" said the official, indicating the man with him. Since subsequent accounts all said that there were ninety six passengers on that plane, it is clear that the additional passenger was not on the passenger list.

On arrival in London, the passengers filed into the airport building along a raised catwalk. As they did so, they were scrutinized by two senior officers from the Flying Squad at Scotland Yard, Superintendent Butler and Inspector Thompson, both in plain clothes. Suddenly they stepped forward and accosted a man, asking him to step aside. A few minutes later he was hastily taken in a Flying Squad car to Cannon Row police station in central London. The arrest must have taken place at almost exactly 6:15 a.m.

Dawnay calls this man Sneyd I. He then tells us what he found about the other Sneyd:

Almost three hours later [circa 9:30 a.m.], the second Sneyd (Sneyd II from now on) left his hotel and made for London Airport. At 11:15 a.m. he passed through immigration and presented his passport, all unaware that a man who bore the same identity as himself had been arrested at the airport just exactly five hours previously. One look at the name in his passport was enough for the immigration official who immediately called in Scotland Yard's Special Branch which has an office at the airport. Detective Sergeant Philip Burch arrived and obviously had no alternative but to place the man under arrest. He was charged with carrying a forged passport and a loaded revolver.

Adding to the confusion was the fact that in James Earl Ray's pocket was an outbound ticket to Brussels for a flight scheduled at 7:50 a.m. If Ray had flown in from Lisbon, his apprehension would make sense. But why would the usually cash conscious Ray have bought a ticket for a 7:50 a.m. flight, then left for the airport at 9:30 a.m? It makes sense if Ray is the first Sneyd, but no sense at all if he is the second one. Adding support to the suspicion that Ray was not the Sneyd who checked out of the Pax Hotel is the fact that the man who checked out of the Pax Hotel at 9:30 am was not identified as Ray by witnesses. Yet this second arrest became the official version in the states. To Dawnay, however, Scotland Yard confirmed that they apprehended James Earl Ray coming off a flight from Lisbon. In addition, Dawnay found another pattern. Sneyd I was described as having a southern American accent, whereas Sneyd II was described as having a Canadian accent. There is much to ponder here.

Two Guns

Perhaps the most salient discrepancy, given the current media-generated controversy over whether or not the gun that has long been alleged to be the murder weapon should be

tested, is the fact that originally the FBI was looking for two guns. Returning again to Waldron's "Weird Evidence" article:

Dr. King was shot...by a bullet fired from a Remington 30.06 caliber rifle. A rifle of this description was stolen from a Memphis gun dealer on April 2. Another rifle of the same description was bought at the Aeromarine Supply Company in Birmingham, Ala. on March 30, 1968, by Eric Starvo Galt. The Birmingham rifle was found outside the Memphis flophouse where the shot was fired....

One has to wonder why the FBI, which—as of April 28—was still not sure which rifle killed King, didn't run their own tests on the weapon they did have. Why were they concerned with a second rifle if they already knew they had the murder weapon? The only answer is that they weren't sure,

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for whatever reason. Maybe they did run tests, and didn't like what they found, and had to keep looking. That would also explain the current vehement opposition from some quarters to having the rifle tested now, in 1997.

Current Shelby County Prosecutor John Campbell has expressed his opposition to any moves that would lead to a new trial for Ray. Campbell made a most interesting statement recently, perhaps a Freudian slip. He said, "If we are ordered to try him, it would be pretty much the same as releasing him."¹³ That's most likely true, if Ray were ever to get a fair trial. The government's case against Ray has always been tenuous. And the only person to ever, however hesitatingly and qualifiedly, identify Ray as having been at the Rooming house (never mind shooting) at the time of the murder was Charles Stephens, a man so drunk a cab driver even refused to take him anywhere that day. Imagine how drunk one would have to be to be refused by a cab driver.

Campbell, amazingly, claims Stephens' eyewitness identification is compelling. "Of course they will say that," said Campbell, referring to critics of the prosecution's case who cite Stephens drunkenness. But there's an even more compelling reason not to believe Stephens' identification—from Stephens himself. Campbell must have been talking about himself when he said "Americans are bad historians. Nobody has any idea what's been happening in this case...." Campbell evidently does not know that Charles Stephens could not identify a photo of James Earl Ray as the man he remembered seeing when Ray's photo

was shown to him on camera during the CBS special mentioned earlier.

McCullough or not?

An interesting recent development has been a mini-controversy over the identity of the man in the famous photo of King's associates all pointing up towards the rooming house while a single man is bending down examining King. That man has for years been identified as Merrell McCullough, a police informant and long-rumored CIA employee.

In an April 7, 1997 article, Jack E. White of *Time* magazine reported that the claim that Merrell McCullough was the man pictured was false. That man, wrote White, was really *New York Times* reporter Earl Caldwell. Does White read his own stories? Under his own

byline, in February, White had written about Earl Caldwell. He described him as being on the first floor at the time of the shooting. He even tells how Caldwell ran to the embankment between the rooming house and the Lorraine motel, the location from which many researchers believe the real killer fired the shot. Caldwell, White related, said he saw a "shadowy figure" crouching near the edge of that embankment right after the shot, "focusing his attention on the balcony where King's aides were hovering around the fallen civil rights leader." How then, just over a month later, could White claim that now, Caldwell was with King on the second floor?

He can't. Why is this important?

Sam Donaldson recently did a *PrimeTime Live* segment featuring Dexter King's meeting with Ray, and the hurdles to getting a new trial for Ray. But curiously, the *PrimeTime* segment ended on a remarkably interesting note. Since it has long been rumored that McCullough worked for the CIA, Donaldson reported that ABC called the central switchboard at CIA and asked to speak to Merrell McCullough. The call was transferred and a voice answered. The caller asked McCullough if he knew Lloyd Jowers. (Jowers was the man in 1993 who, in an earlier *PrimeTime Live* segment, had claimed he had been hired to find a man to kill King, and that Ray was not the man he hired.) McCullough said yes, he knew Jowers, and what was the call about. When he was informed this was in relation to the King assassination, McCullough abruptly ended the

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King Assassination

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call. It seems the effort to protect McCullough was suddenly in free fall.

In what could be viewed as a limited hang-out, Jack E. White in *Time* magazine on April 14, 1997, wrote:

For years, conspiracy theorists who believe that the U.S. government plotted the murder of Martin Luther King Jr. have focused on Merrell McCullough, an undercover Memphis, Tennessee, policeman who was seen crouching beside King's body moments after the civil rights leader was shot....

Last week *Time* confirmed from U.S. government sources that McCullough has in fact been a CIA agent since at least 1974. McCullough denies being on the intelligence agency's payroll at the time of the murder and, for that matter, being part of any assassination conspiracy.

No mention was made that White had previously tried to identify McCullough as someone else. McCullough is now circled in the very photo White claimed earlier showed Caldwell.

Latest Developments

Despite the media attempts to recage this case, it continues to move forward. When Judge Brown's court was granted authority to order the rifle tested, Judge Brown ordered the testing to be scheduled immediately. The defense, perhaps caught off guard that the permission to retest was granted so quickly, asked for some time, and the official date is not yet set as we go to press.

Meanwhile, state prosecutor Bill Gibbons has called for Congress to release the records from the Martin Luther King assassination investigation. Opposing voices claim the records may damage the reputation of Martin Luther King. But Ray himself had a suggestion for the handling of personally damaging, but ultimately irrelevant data. As he said in his interview with Dexter King:

I think that some kind of small committee could look at these records and if there is anything in there that maybe shouldn't be appropriate you could throw it away. It's not relevant to your situation or my situation. I think too—all these scandals and all—don't have no place in a court of law as far as I'm concerned. The things that should be relevant should be the facts of the case.¹⁴

And why should outside parties care when it's the King family themselves looking for the truth in the case? Who are they trying to protect? The King family deserves answers as much, if not more, than Ray. And no one who

cares about the King family can pretend that obstructing the final exercise of a trial is in any way in the family's best interests. Dexter made very clear both why he and his family care, and the level of their commitment to the cause:

While it's the 11th hour, I've always been a spiritual person, and I believe in Providence. I believe in divine intervention. I believe that in some way, we will make a way out of no way....As my father used to say, we are all caught up in a mutual garment of destiny; what affects one directly affects all indirectly.

In a strange sort of way, we are both victims. I have personally carried this for a long time. My family has carried this burden. So we will do everything in our power to try to bring what has been in the dark, what has occurred in the dark, to the light.¹⁵

Let justice be done though the heavens fall. Set the King family free at last. Give Ray and the King family both the trial they seek. ♣

If you want to see a new trial granted to James Earl Ray, please write to the Tennessee Court of Appeals, P.O. Box 999, Jackson, TN 30302. Ask for justice on behalf of Ray, the King family, and all of us who care about the truth about the assassination of the Martin Luther King.

ARRB Report

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The report is so chock full of information, that I have left out several new items it contains. The report confirms that the ARRB staff has located former government employees "who were subsequently interviewed regarding the possible existence and location of additional assassination records." This is something that many, including *Probe*, have urged. Also new is the information that the Board has availed itself of two federal databasing networks to locate witnesses— Treasury's FINCEN (Financial Crimes Enforcement Network), and the Pentagon's NPRC (National Personnel Records Center) in St. Louis.

Another important nugget in the investigation is the appointment of a Compliance Official with 25 federal agencies. This person is accepted to be the liaison from that agency to the Board. In addition to submitting written and oral reports to the Board, at the end of its life, the Board may conduct sworn depositions with that official to investigate if that agency has fully complied with the letter of the law. There are two other matters of the utmost importance mentioned in the report.

Notes

1. *Three Assassinations, Volume 2* (New York: Facts on File, 1978), p. 245. Fauntroy's original charge was made 4/27/77.
2. William Pepper, *Orders to Kill* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 1995), pp. 53-54
3. Mark Lane and Dick Gregory, *Murder in Memphis* (formerly *Code Name: Zorro*) (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1993), pp. 232-233
4. CIA Memo from Donald Jameson, Chief SR/CA, dated December 11, 1962.
5. Lane and Gregory, pp. 230-251
6. Warren Hinckle & William Turner, *Deadly Secrets* (formerly *The Fish is Red*) (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1992), pp. 188-194
7. *Three Assassinations, Volume 2*, p. 233
8. Lane and Gregory, pp. x - xvii
9. Pepper, p. 33
10. See "The Formation of the Clark Panel: More of the Secret Team at Work?", *Probe* (November-December, 1995)
11. Bill Davy, *Through the Looking Glass: The Mysterious World of Clay Shaw*, p. 34
12. William Pepper, p. 41
13. Sue Anne Pressley, "Historic Interests Meet at Memphis Crossroad", *Washington Post* 2/27/97
14. CNN Live report, March 27, 1997
15. *Ibid.*

First, duplicates of the five drawer file cabinet of Jim Garrison left in the possession of Harry Connick are now being made available to the Archives. The Board is still in court trying to get the originals from the DA, but while awaiting that outcome, this is a satisfactory development. Finally, mentioned in the report, and confirmed in interviews with David Marwell and Chief Counsel Jeremy Gunn, the FBI has agreed to drop all of its outstanding appeals to President Clinton. Even more surprising, the Board got about 99% of what it wanted in this dispute. In other words, all the *information* in the reports will be intact. This should set a precedent that will allow the FBI and the Board to ratchet up the rate of declassification a significant degree.

The Board now awaits the vote on its extension. At press time, there was no mounting of opposition to this request. In fact, according to Gunn, they are trying to get through the CIA bureaucracy, a letter of recommendation to present to both the Senate and House committees on the matter. Let us all hope and help in this matter. If the 1996 report is this candid, with this much good news, we can all await an even better Final Report, hopefully dated 1998. ♣