

Nailed to the Cross: Gerald Posner on the King Case

By Mike Vinson

"Posner's research is prodigious and often extremely courageous." — *The New York Times*

"His work is painstakingly honest journalism." — *The Washington Post*

"More than 250 books have been written on the life and death of Martin Luther King Jr.... The best of all of them is *Killing the Dream*, written by Gerald Posner, a lawyer and prize-winning author. It is a remarkable work in which the author conducts an in-depth investigative analysis...." — John Seigenthaler, *Tennessean* (newspaper) Chairman Emeritus, former publisher of *USA Today*, former aide to U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy

For someone seeking success and recognition in the literary world, the above quotes are, without doubt, praises from the loftiest of sources—the kind that make careers! Having written several articles on the James Earl Ray-Martin Luther King case, I decided to read *Killing the Dream*. After finishing *Killing the Dream*, which focuses on the Ray-King case, I decided to do some cross-checking concerning claims Posner makes in his book. My conclusion after cross-checking: I take a degree of opposition to the above, and to the numerous other accolades bestowed upon *Killing the Dream*. Why? Because the book, though cleverly crafted, has an alarming number of mistakes. In the following paragraphs, in addition to substantiating my claims, I will share some of my findings with you.

In Two Places at Once

In May 1952, James Earl Ray was apprehended after attempting to hold up a Chicago cab driver. In June 1952, he was sentenced to the notorious Joliet prison in Chicago, where he remained until March 1954. In his book, Posner states: "Jerry Ray [younger brother of James Earl Ray], who was then on parole and working at a riding stable in suburban Chicago, read about the crime in the newspaper.... Jerry sent a clipping to his mother." (*Killing*

the Dream, page 105.) Impossible. How so?

In March 1950 Jerry W. Ray was committed to the Illinois State Training School for Boys at St. Charles. He was released on parole in March 1951. After only three weeks of freedom, Jerry violated his parole and landed back at St. Charles. Once back, Jerry took part in a riot, received an 18-month sentence and was transferred to an even tougher facility in Sheridan, Illinois, where he remained until January 1953. It's obvious Jerry wasn't out on parole working at a riding stable in 1952, because from spring 1951 until winter 1953 he was incarcerated. This is a matter of public record. It's disturbing to think Mr. Posner, a lawyer—Wall Street lawyer at that!—would unwittingly err on facts so accessible to a man of his connections. It's even more disturbing to consider the possibility that he knowingly did so.

Lying, but Quotable Trash

In *Killing the Dream*, Posner paints the Ray brothers, James Earl Ray, Jerry, and John, as being nothing more than lying, white trash thugs. He paraphrases Jerry Ray as saying the following: "his brother Jerry is almost certainly right when he said that Ray [James Earl Ray] believed killing King could be done only in the South." (*Killing the Dream*, pages 217-218)"

Concerning brother John Ray, Posner says: "Throughout late 1947 and early 1948, Ray [James Earl Ray] had begun drinking. According to brother John, this was also when he started experimenting with drugs, most likely amphetamines—he had 'not seemed right since,' John later said." (*Killing the Dream*, page 94) Hold on, here, there must be some kind of mistake. How can Posner use the Rays as a reference for the truth when, countless times throughout the book, he makes them out to be notorious liars? Such audacity! Is this not a direct insult to the intelligence of the reading public?

Posner plays James Earl Ray's alleged drug abuse to the hilt: "Ray evidently broke the cardinal rule of drug dealing—he began using the drugs he sold.... Inmates Walter Nolan and Harry Sero also knew Ray was an amphetamine abuser, and Frank Guinan said he was addicted to bennies." (*Killing the Dream*, pages 133-134) However, there's a flaw in Posner's claim: he uses convicted criminals as a source for the truth. Since when did one convicted criminal become more credible than another? James Earl Ray said he didn't deal or use drugs; various fellow inmates said he did. From a perspective of basic logic, why not believe James Earl Ray as opposed to Nolan, Sero, and Guinan? (For one thing, the condemnation of James Earl Ray carries a much higher marquee value; it sells books.) Again, Mr. Posner exhibits a degree of literary inconsistency: when convenient, he damns a criminal; when convenient, he quotes a criminal as telling the truth.

Jerry Ray claims that not only did James Earl Ray tend to abstain from alcohol and drugs, but also that he was health conscious, worked out, watched his weight and what he ate. "He used to stay on my back all the time about me drinking and smoking," Jerry told me. Dr. Cyril Wecht, considered the leading pathologist in the United States, oversaw the autopsy on James Earl Ray's corpse. At age 70, James Earl Ray succumbed to the effects of cirrhosis of the liver on April 23, 1998. Dr. Wecht told Jerry that "a young man would've been proud to have James's body." Wecht said all major drive-trains, heart, kidneys, etc., were in excellent condition, the diseased liver and the damage caused by the liver the only problems. He went on to say that had James Earl Ray received a liver transplant when the issue first came up, he would've had a good chance of surviving the transplant, and probably would have lived for several more years, due to the healthiness of the rest of his major

organs. Such postmortem revelations are hardly consistent with a 70-year-old human physiology ravaged by excessive drug and alcohol abuse.

If James Earl Ray had lived longer, a new trial would have been a sure deal, and he very well could have been exonerated, just as he was in the 1993 HBO mock trial. But, the liver transplant was blocked by authorities who knew death was just around the corner, and that if they waited it out, as they did, James Earl Ray would die, and the embarrassing results likely from a real trial would be buried with him.

In 1981, while an inmate at Brushy Mountain State Prison in East Tennessee, James Earl Ray was stabbed and slashed repeatedly by three inmates. 77 stitches were required to close the resulting wounds. During the course of the surgery, due to loss of blood from the wounds, James Earl Ray received blood by transfusion. Over the years, there has been speculation that James Earl Ray, by way of the transfusion, contacted hepatitis C, which could have developed into cirrhosis of the liver. This theory is at least as plausible as alcohol-related liver damage in a man not known to drink.

Racist Ray?

Was James Earl Ray a racist? According to his book, Gerald Posner thinks so: "But fame alone does not explain why Ray killed King. Another reason was likely his demeaning and dismissive view of blacks.... His racism alone would have made it easier for him to murder Martin Luther King, Jr." (*Killing the Dream*, pages 333-334) What does Posner offer as proof that James Earl Ray was a racist. The following: "James Brown, a fellow inmate who knew Ray for years, recalled that after John Kennedy was shot, Ray said, 'That is one nigger-loving S.O.B. that got shot.' ... Inmate Harry Sero said Ray had a great dislike for blacks.... Thomas Britton knew Ray from his cell block.... Ray once told him 'there are more ways of making money than robbing banks.' When Britton asked what he meant, Ray said there was a 'businessman's association' that was offering up to \$100,000 for King to be killed. 'King is five years past due.'" (*Killing the Dream*, pages 135-136)

Uh-oh! Here we go again with that convict/criminal credibility thing. What if inmate Britton claimed he'd never broken the law, was, in fact, the angel Gabriel in disguise, and had never ever told a lie? Should we believe him? Why not? Gerald Posner expects us to believe him when he has something incriminating to say about James Earl Ray, something that bolsters the desired effect of his book. I'm surprised that some of the convicts didn't

secretly record James Earl Ray making a racial slur or threat on tape. Now, that would be impressive! Tangible, physical evidence that can't be denied. On the other hand, James Earl Ray quite possibly was recorded; only he was never captured making racial slurs or threats. Maybe, James Earl Ray was not a racist, and therefore never made such statements.

The Velcro Victim

Let's see how easily a particular profile, if needed, can be created. It's going to have to stick, like velcro; the public has to buy it. Okay,

It's obvious Jerry wasn't out on parole working at a riding stable in 1952, because from spring 1951 until winter 1953 he was incarcerated. This is a matter of public record. It's disturbing to think Mr. Posner, a lawyer—Wall Street lawyer at that!—would unwittingly err on facts so accessible to a man of his connections. It's even more disturbing to consider the possibility that he knowingly did so.

the subject: James Earl Ray: a two-bit, petty crook; a four-time loser; a fugitive on the run, needing some fast cash! A rabid racist! If Ray says he's not a racist how do we convince the public that he is? Simple. All we have to do is interview a few convicts who did time with James Earl Ray. We tell them that if they can (please!) remember hearing James Earl Ray making derogatory and threatening statements against blacks—against Martin Luther King, in particular—they'll get their names in a famous book. But, are convicts credible (yeah, that again)? If necessary, they are. Just imagine a convict, starving for attention, tearing through the pages of a famous book to get to that one page that bears his name. Oh, what a thrill! Case closed! And how dare anyone, even if he or she holds elements of the truth, try to reopen it?

The book hits the bookstores. Now, all that's left are book signings and the cocktail parties. The gown-and-tux type of cocktail

party, where waiters are wandering around with a full tray of champagne stems, and everyone is batting eyes, smiling ear-to-ear, and nodding 'yes' as the toast of the party proclaims that "Shit smells good."

Melodramatic? Or frighteningly real?

Sins of Omission

In 1976, the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA) was formed to reinvestigate the Martin Luther King and John F. Kennedy assassinations, Nashville Attorney Jack Kershaw was James Earl Ray's lead defense counsel. Jerry Ray says that around this time, Kershaw was invited to attend a meeting in Nashville with noted author William Bradford Huie and two other unidentified males.

At the meeting, Huie persuaded Kershaw to take an offer to his client, James Earl Ray. The offer consisted of the following: a cash payment in excess of \$200,000.00, a pardon from the governor of Tennessee, a waiver of the outstanding warrant on him from the Missouri Department of Corrections, and a new identity, in exchange for his "unequivocal admission of guilt" in the assassination of Martin Luther King. When James Earl Ray escaped from the Missouri State Prison in April 1967, he was serving a twenty-year sentence for robbing a Kroger's store. At the time of his escape, he had served only seven of the twenty years; he had thirteen to go, thus the waiver, I suppose. Attorney Kershaw took the offer to James Earl Ray. James Earl Ray turned it down. Here's some food for thought: if James Earl Ray was Dr. King's murderer, why did he turn down such an offer? Just think, not only would he have gotten away with killing someone he wanted dead, but he would have been amply rewarded for his crime. Maybe, it was a matter of principle?

Sometime later, after Attorney Mark Lane took over as James Earl Ray's lead defense counsel, Huie again made the offer, only this time to Jerry Ray, via two telephone conversations that Jerry recorded. Huie, in making such a brazen offer, no doubt had the highest echelon of government backing. Who else could have approved such? Remember, there were two unidentified men present at the meeting with Huie and Kershaw. Mark Lane and William Pepper, who replaced Lane as James Earl Ray's lead defense counsel, ended up with transcripts of the tape. Whoops! Posner fails to mention this in his book. Reckon why? Rather obvious, isn't it? Since when does the System cut a deal with a killer whom it has the goods on? Possibly, the System felt it didn't have adequate goods on James Earl Ray and needed a little back-up.

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Posner

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Oliver Patterson was an undercover operative for the HSCA. The HSCA assigned Patterson the task of befriending Jerry Ray and getting as much dirt on him as possible, such as collecting a hair sample and prowling through Jerry's belongings. In a sworn affidavit, dated August 1978, Patterson disclosed his undercover role and how the HSCA had pushed him to give a private interview to *New York Times* reporter Anthony J. Marro. Patterson was to tell Marro that Mark Lane was homosexual; that Lane had told him, Patterson, that he, Lane, knew there was no person named "Raoul," the shadowy figure James Earl Ray claimed was responsible for bringing him to Memphis that fateful April 4, 1968 day; and that Patterson's undercover work left no doubt that James Earl Ray killed Martin Luther King.

Enter Susan Wadsworth, an acquaintance of Patterson. She tipped off Lane concerning Patterson's intentions and HSCA undercover role. Lane braced Patterson down, and Patterson not only admitted his covert role but agreed to cooperate with Lane. On the day that Patterson was supposed to give Marro the interview (a few days before Patterson signed the affidavit), in a designated St. Louis hotel, Marro arrived as scheduled, only to be welcomed by a room full of news reporters, cameramen—and Attorney Mark Lane! Captured live on film, Marro immediately took flight, with Lane in hot pursuit, asking Marro if he sought the truth. (If Marro was on the up-and-up and had the truth as his reinforcement, why did he run?) Funny thing, going back over *Killing the Dream* I failed to find any mention of the above incident.

William Sartor, a writer who had some big time magazine and newspaper connections, became interested in the Ray-King case. Sartor was convinced that Dr. King's murder was connected to organized crime, and that James Earl Ray was a patsy groomed to take the heat. Sartor pursued his theory with diligence.

In 1971, William Sartor died unexpectedly in Waco, Texas, from—rumor had it—a drug overdose, even though he had no known history of drug use. Coincidentally, Sartor was set to interview an important witness, pertinent to the Ray-King case, the next day. No one, even Sartor's mother, was able to get a postmortem report. The death certificate was evasive, stating that the cause of death was undetermined. Raised eyebrows trailed Sartor's death and the way it was handled.

Twenty-one years later, the hospital post-mortem report of William Sartor's death was

finally released. It stated that Sartor had died from an overdose of methaqualone. Since, as stated, Sartor had no known history of drug use, the Waco district attorney saw fit to look into the case, eventually ruling Sartor's death a homicide.

In *Killing the Dream*, Posner mentions William Sartor one time, in a footnote at the bottom of page 285: "In an unpublished manuscript, often referred to by conspiracy buffs, Sartor offered one of the wildest mob-related theories about the case; the only thing missing was the evidence." Strange that Posner fails to mention the nature of and facts surrounding William Sartor's demise. Here, again, the problem is not so much what Posner says; it's what he doesn't say.

"I got a call from *The Today Show* few days after James's death. The lady who called said she'd received information that James made a confession tape right before he died. I asked her the source of her information. She replied, 'Gerald Posner.' I said, 'That's Posner, alright.' To this day, the tape has never surfaced." — Jerry Ray, brother of James Earl Ray

Cruella D'Evil?

In 1977 James Earl Ray met Anna Sandhu, a courtroom artist then in her early thirties, and married her in 1978. Of Anna Sandhu, Posner says the following:

... attractive, blond courtroom artist ... Sandhu, though, filed for divorce in November 1990, citing "inappropriate marital behavior." The divorce was finalized in 1993. Sandhu went on another national press tour, including appearances on *Geraldo!* and *The Phil Donahue Show* in which she now claimed that Ray was an expert manipulator and she no longer believed him innocent. In 1997, she told the *National Enquirer* that the real reason she divorced Ray was that during a phone argument she told him, "I've never believed you could have killed Martin Luther King," and Ray yelled 'Yeah, I did it. So what?' (*Killing the Dream*, footnotes, pages 260-261)

Somewhat impressive, the above description, right? It's what Mr Posner fails to tell us

that sheds new light on the image of one Anna Sandhu/Ray.

Jerry Ray claims that his ex-sister-in-law Sandhu lived in Nashville in the early 90s. When she vacated her Nashville home, neighbors kept hearing the constant barking of dogs coming from inside the house. Not seeing Sandhu for days, the neighbors eventually called the authorities. What the authorities found was mind-boggling: better than 30 cats and dogs left abandoned inside the house. After relocating back in Knoxville, Tennessee, Sandhu was involved in a domestic dispute. When the police arrived, they found the situation with the upkeep and hygiene of Anna's personal quarters had worsened: she had more than 40 felines and canines living inside her Knoxville home—only this time some of the animals were dead!

Challenges Jerry Ray: "Both incidents are recorded. Hell, up in Knoxville she was arrested for cruelty to animals! If you don't believe me, just check the Knoxville and Nashville papers." Something about a human being living with 30 plus mongrels in two separate establishments, dead carcasses involved in one situation, tarnishes the modifier "attractive" and places a big question mark at the end of Anna's claim that James Earl Ray over a prison telephone admitted to her he killed Martin Luther King. Jerry says that Sandhu also expressed an interest in writing a book on the Ray-King case. Uh-huh (\$\$\$\$\$). By the way, Gerald Posner was also a guest on *Geraldo*, actually on one of the last airings. Both *Geraldo* and Posner failed to mention Anna's fondness for cats and dogs. Well, well, every picture, indeed, tells a story. Moving right along...

Phantom Tape, Phantom Robbery

The weekend of April 4, 1998, the 30-year anniversary of Dr. King's assassination, Gerald Posner was in Memphis (site of the assassination) promoting his book, *Killing the Dream*. Jerry Ray was also there. Jerry confronted Posner about the errors in his book, and Posner dodged Jerry's direct questions like a man dodging bullets. This is on video, folks.

Recently, I spoke with Jerry Ray. I asked Jerry if he'd ever challenged Mr. Posner to an open-forum debate.

Jerry Ray: "Posie-Wosie did contact James by letter and asked to talk to him. James wrote back and said he had no intentions of talking to him [Posner]. James knew Posie was a robot writer and would misrepresent what he [James Earl Ray] said, you know, whichever button the government pushed, that's the way he'd write. He even claimed James made a confession tape before he died."

What about a confession tape?

Jerry Ray: "I got a call from *The Today Show* a few days after James's death. The lady who called said she'd received information that James made a confession tape right before he died. I asked her the source of her information. She replied, 'Gerald Posner.' I said, 'That's Posner, alright.' To this day, the tape has never surfaced. [Posner also claimed to have a tape of one of the autopsists in the Kennedy assassination reversing a long-held stance on the position of JFK's head wound. To date, that tape has never surfaced either, despite repeated requests by the ARRB and others. — Eds.] I wonder if Posie is holding on to the tape and plans to cash it in for big bucks one day? [Laughs] If Posie can produce the tape, I'll confess to being Raoul. Some of the prosecution, as well as some writers who side with the prosecution, claim I was—am—Raoul."

You got any proof that you're not?

Jerry Ray: "Yeah."

Let's have it.

Jerry Ray: "In 1981 I appeared on a show called *Lie Detector*, broadcast nationwide and hosted by prominent attorney F. Lee Bailey. Ed Galb, a highly regarded specialist in the field of lie detector tests, administered two lie detector tests to me. Bailey said the results of the first test proved I wasn't Raoul, nor did I have anything to do with or know anything about the King assassination. Bailey said results of the second test proved I didn't rob the bank in Alton, Illinois [about 25 miles from St. Louis], nor had I ever robbed any bank—period! As bad as the government wanted to connect the Rays to the Alton bank robbery, they, if they'd had a smidgen of evidence, would've arrested me in a split second."

Again, Posner chooses the "small print" to superficially mention the situation with Jerry Ray and the lie detector tests. In a footnote at the bottom of page 263, Posner states: "Jerry Ray repeatedly bragged to the author about passing two polygraph examinations. He says they indicated that he was telling the truth when he denied having any part in the Alton bank robbery or the King assassination." What Posner conveniently chooses to omit are the following—stout and crucial—facts: the polygraph/lie detector tests were administered by a highly respected professional, Ed Galb; the tests were given on *Lie Detector*, a highly respected show broadcast nationwide; and the results were verified and announced by one of the legal geniuses of the century, Attorney F. Lee Bailey!

The HSCA tried desperately to connect all three Ray brothers, James Earl Ray, Jerry, and John, to the July 1967 Alton bank robbery. The bank robbery netted \$27,000.00. Had the HSCA been able to irrefutably connect the Ray brothers, it could have explained how James

Earl Ray financed his movements, for the most part, anyway, from the time he escaped from the Missouri State Prison in April 1967 until he was arrested, for Dr. King's murder, at London's Heathrow Airport in June 1968. Thus, the existence of Raoul, who James Earl Ray claimed financed and guided his movement during that time frame, could have been dispelled. No Raoul, no Raoul-related conspiracy. No Raoul-related conspiracy and it's easier to sell to the public the theory that a monetarily-motivated, racist James Earl Ray killed Martin Luther King.

Prior to December 1978, Mark Lane, representing James Earl Ray before the HSCA, called Jerry and informed him of the HSCA's

Jerry turned himself in, told the lieutenant in charge he would take a lie detector test, waive his statute of limitations (it had been more than 7 years), and stand trial. If the police had any evidence, Jerry wanted them to produce it. The police lieutenant told Jerry he was not and never had been a suspect in robbing the Bank of Alton.

claim that he and his brothers were the perpetrators of the Alton bank robbery. The next day, Jerry hooked up with respected reporter John Auble, and the two of them drove to the Alton Police Station. With reporter Auble filming, Jerry turned himself in, told the lieutenant in charge he would take a lie detector test, waive his statute of limitations (it had been more than 7 years), and stand trial. If the police had any evidence, Jerry wanted them to produce it.

The police lieutenant told Jerry he was not and never had been a suspect in robbing the Bank of Alton. Later that night, the whole scene with Jerry at the Alton Police Station was aired on *KSD Television* in St. Louis.

As though lost in a fantasy world, the HSCA spent much of its time trying to connect the Rays boys to the Alton bank robbery. The HSCA never came close to connecting the brothers to the robbery. To this day, as of this

writing, anyway, no one has been charged with the Alton bank robbery. So much for the HSCA's hard-headed contention that the Ray brothers robbed the Bank of Alton. (And so much for how the American taxpayers' dollars are spent.)

Frank or Fictive?

"Early on, when searching for the papers of several authors who had written about the case, I stumbled across relatives or spouses who often turned into friends.... Dr. John Frank, the son of author Gerold Frank, agreeably answered my repeated requests to pick through his father's papers...." — Gerald Posner (Acknowledgment from *Killing the Dream*, page 339.)

Celebrity author Gerold Frank wrote *An American Death*, published in 1972. For years, *An American Death* was hailed as the official word on the King assassination. Like Gerald Posner, Gerold Frank portrays James Earl Ray as being Dr. King's assassin. Still, though, there remains a missing factor in the equation possessing author Gerold Frank and his writing on the Ray-King case, and that missing factor is necessary if the equation is to yield the truth.

In his book, *Orders to Kill*, William F. Pepper, James Earl Ray's lead defense counsel for several years, up to Ray's death, reveals a March 1969 memo from then Assistant FBI Director Cartha DeLoach to Clyde Tolson, second in command to then FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover. The memo states:

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 ... and proceed with a book based on this case.... If the Director approves, we have in mind considering cooperating in the preparation of a book with either Reader's Digest or author Gerold Frank.... Frank is a well known author.... Frank is already working on a book on the Ray case and has asked the Bureau's cooperation.... We have nothing derogatory on him in our files, and our relationship with him has been excellent. (*Orders to Kill*, pages 51-52.)

Any author writing on an assassination as historically significant as the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. should maintain an objective perspective—considering getting to the truth is the writer's main drive. As he wrote *An American Death*, how could author Frank possibly have maintained an objective perspective? Do you believe, with the FBI opening its doors and arms to him, he even remotely dared portraying James Earl Ray as being innocent in the death of Dr. King? The picture is beginning to take shape and, hopefully, the following will project it with clear focus.

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upon his examination of photographs... [then] re-evaluated his earlier opinion when shown *actual* photographs in the National Archives." (Emphasis added.) This use of the word "actual" is misleading in the extreme. It suggests great differences between the duplicate photographs and the *actual*, that is, the original photographs. But even bad Xeroxes of duplicates show the back of the head intact, and *that* was the problem. The contrast was not between two sets of photographs; it was between the photographs — and the *actual* back of the head.

5/12/78: Large wound in back of head

Riebe recalled seeing... one very large wound located around the rear of the head near the top. [p2]

5/7/97: Large wound in back of head

The right side of the back was gone... Just a big gaping hole with fragments of scalp and bone hanging in it.

When you said that, you put your hand on the back of the head.

The occipital. [pp44-45]

5/7/97: Revises memory of the wound based on suspect photographs

Mr. Riebe, previously you described a wound in the occipital region of the head whereas in these photographs it appears that there is no wound there. What would be your explanation for that?

I just didn't remember it properly. [p71]

... it was chaos in that room that night, and I just misjudged where the wounds were. [p77]

Edward F. Reed, Jr.

In 1963, Edward Reed was a student in the x-ray department at Bethesda who operated the portable x-ray machine on the night of the autopsy. During his deposition before the ARRB, Reed seemed unusually receptive to several superimposed images.

4/21/78: Large head wound "occipital"

According to a summary of his interview by the HSCA, he said the large head wound was located "in the right hemisphere in the occipital region." [Summary of HSCA interview]

10/21/97: Large head wound "anteriorly forward"

Could you describe where those wounds were?

It was in the temporal parietal region, right side.

... And anterior. Slightly anterior. Slightly forward. As we say in the medical field, anteriorly forward.

... Did you see any wounds on the back of his head?

No. [pp27-28]

Authenticates Films

Without being asked, Reed authenticates the x-rays:

And this is the right side of the patient here... and these are the metallic fragments I saw originally. These are the real original films. [pp83-84]

When Dr. John Ebersole, the radiologist on call that night, was presented with the skull x-rays, he was puzzled.

You know, my recollection is more of a gaping occipital wound than this... I would have put the gaping wound here rather than more forward." [3/11/78 HSCA Interview, pp62-63]

Reed also seems to be the only one to recall the 6.5mm diameter metal fragment showing in the frontal x-ray. This x-ray image that magically appeared in 1967 when the Clark Panel first described it, was not described by any of the pathologists or the radiologist on call — even though they described two smaller ones.

... There is a semi-circular white dot there. Do you see that?

Yes, I do.

Do you recall seeing that on the night of the autopsy.

Yes, I did. [p85]

Enjoying the Spotlight

Excerpts from RT Image 1992; 5(11):

Over the years, when I meet people in radiology, I always tell them that they can say that they've met the person who x-rayed President Kennedy. They usually ask me a lot of questions.

Then, when I lifted him up... I found a large 1 1/2 inch wound that looked like an exit wound...

When I saw Kennedy... he had a large, gaping wound about the size of my fist in his right carotid temple and frontal areas... Because his head went back, a lot of people think he was shot from the front. But that wound could have been from the back because it could have been what we call an implosion.

Floyd Boring

Secret Service Agent Floyd Boring reversed his testimony as to which car contained a skull bone fragment.

9/18/96: Bone found in follow-up car

...In about the middle of the interview, Mr. Boring remembered that he and Mr. Paterni had inspected the President's limousine and the Secret Service follow-up car... Mr. Boring said that he (Boring) had discovered a piece of skull bone with brain attached in the rear of the follow-up car... in the footwell just in front of the back seat bench. He said... the dimensions... were approximately 1" x 2". He said he never picked it up or touched it him-

self, but that he simply pointed it out to Mr. Paterni... He said he did not write a report about this, and he did not know whether Mr. Paterni had written a report or not. He said he did not know what the disposition was of this debris/medical evidence. Mr. Boring made very clear during the interview that this fragment was in the rear of the follow-up car, not in the rear seat of the Presidential limousine. Initially, ARRB staff members Zimmerman and Horne had misunderstood Mr. Boring to mean that the bone-brain fragment was in the rear seat of the President's limousine, and Mr. Boring took specific pains to correct our misunderstanding during follow-up discussions on this matter.

9/19/96: Bone was in JFK car; "Stroke" may explain "error"

Mr. Boring called me [Douglas Horne] at about 9:30 A.M. this date, and said he wished to make a correction of, and retract, something he said yesterday during his interview. He said that upon further consideration, it could simply "not be" that the skull bone-and-brain fragment he told us about had come from the back of the follow-up car, and that therefore it must have been seen in the back seat of the President's limousine, and not the follow-up car. He said that his stroke may perhaps have had something to do with his error...

Kenneth Vrtacnik

Kenneth Vrtacnik, a medical photographer at the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, told Douglas Horne (reluctantly?) that he had seen Kennedy's brain in a locked room at the AFIP's National Museum of Health and Medicine, immersed in liquid in a steel tray inside a glass case. Most people were forbidden access to it. Highlights of the 11/13/96 interview:

Number of Bullet Paths? Unsure

He described it as "one long section, tan in color" with "wooden pegs (or arrows) showing bullet trajectories running through it. Asked if there was one peg, or more than one peg, he said he was unsure, but later in the interview again used the word "pegs."

Size? Unsure

Asked what percentage of the brain it was, he said he could not be sure and declined to give an estimation. He would not even say whether it was less than one-half, or more than one-half, said he "could not be sure."

I have seen brains displayed in nearly duplicate circumstances, and visibility is not a problem. I find it hard to believe that because he was unsure he could not express a range of possibilities with all appropriate caveats, especially after some 30 years in medical photography. His description of "one long piece" sounds very much like less than half a brain. Few would describe an intact brain as "one piece." (The brain looks something like a walnut, with two

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Wilson

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ment in the reopened case by the FBI, whose effort to get King to commit suicide through their use of surveillance tapes has long been public knowledge. Janet Reno agreed to the King placement of the FBI as out of bounds. However, how realistic was it to expect the covert action arm of a guilty government to be tied up by its Attorney General?

Is there anything in the papers seized from Wilson by the Justice Department that could be indeed "critical"; not to a bogus investigation of the death of a martyr but to the legitimacy of the government conducting it? There are two separate papers, according to Wilson. One is what he calls the "telephone document". This is a page from a 1963 Dallas telephone book from the 'H' section. The page included Hunt Oil Company. Wilson says he was astounded to learn from Pepper that a phone number written at the top of the page, preceded by the letter 'J' and followed by the name "Raul" and the Dallas area code, was listed in 1963 as belonging to Jack Ruby's Vegas Club in Dallas. Wilson calls the second paper from James Earl Ray's Mustang the "pay-off schedule document." It has a written list of itemized expenses, what appear to be dollar amounts for names and places that add up to a total of \$450,000.00. The items include "hospital", "M. Gallina," and "Sonesta". At the bottom of the paper is a message: "before 4-15 H. man after Raul," followed by an extension number. Opposite "Canada", the final item in the list, is the figure \$75,000.00. Canada was Ray's destination after Atlanta. But the handwriting on the papers does not match Ray's.

When Wilson looked in Ray's car, he saw that its ashtray was overflowing with cigarette butts. Ray did not smoke. Wilson also noticed that the right front door was slightly ajar: "Like when you lock a door sometimes, you slam it but it just doesn't quite catch all the way." It was when he opened this door that "a small white envelope the size of a kid's valentine fell in front of his shoes. The envelope contained the Raul papers. Also in the envelope, Wilson says, were a business card from a gun shop in Dallas, Texas, and a business card for a Baton Rouge, Louisiana towing company.

On the King holiday of January 18, 1999, it was reported by both CNN and the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, that Donald Wilson had been at least partially vindicated in his claims. Justice Department sources conceded that scientific examination of the documents have shown they are not likely forgeries. What they

do actually represent is something else awaiting to be shown by a real investigation. Nevertheless, I asked Wilson if he thought that the papers may have been planted as a false trail for someone like him to find. He answered, "There are several possibilities. Number one, someone simply dropped them in their haste to leave that car. Secondly, they were planted there to create a false trail. Or third, they were planted there to create actually a legitimate trail, for whatever reason."

Whatever the correct explanation is for the papers, Donald Wilson seems to be pushing the Justice Department in directions it finds uncomfortable. The government knows it has an experienced opponent in its former FBI agent. As a member of the department told Wilson privately, "You're the FBI's worst

One government move Wilson does not anticipate is a serious examination of his evidence. He expects the Justice Department to dismiss it as "irrelevant, bogus, or something they can hang their hat on to say, 'There's no need to go any further.'" Wilson feels that there is no real intent to do an unbiased, objective probe.

nightmare. You were trained by them. You think like them. So they're trying to anticipate your next move, but you're anticipating theirs."

One government move Wilson does not anticipate is a serious examination of his evidence. He expects the Justice Department to dismiss it as "irrelevant, bogus, or something they can hang their hat on to say, 'There's no need to go any further.'" Wilson feels that there is no real intent to do an unbiased, objective probe.

In 1999 at age 56, Donald Wilson is a teacher in a special tutoring program for high school students with behavioral problems. He takes a special pride in the achievements of his students, whose respect for their teacher has perhaps been deepened by their recognition of him on television as a dissident FBI agent in the King case. In one of our phone conversations he said quietly, "This takes a lot of faith. It's so disheartening what these people of power do." ♣

Posner / King

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"The district attorney general's office in Memphis at times seemed like a second office. District Attorney General Bill Gibbons encouraged his staff to help my wife, Trisha, and me.... Particularly stellar was Assistant District Attorney General John Campbell. As lead prosecutor for the past four years, he knows the case better than anyone in the office, and he saved me from heading down many fruitless paths of inquiry...." — Gerald Posner (Acknowledgment from his book *Killing the Dream*, page 338.)

Several months ago, I wrote to Assistant Attorney General John Campbell, explained who I was and what my intentions were, that I was writing on the Ray-King case and I wanted to talk to him. In my letter, I also included my area code and telephone number (have an answering machine), my mailing address, and an S.A.S.E. If necessary, I was even willing to drive to Memphis at Mr. Campbell's convenience. To this day, I have not received a single response from Assistant Attorney General Campbell.

At first, I thought, maybe, he doesn't like me, but I quickly deleted that as a possibility, because Mr. Campbell and I have never met in the flesh. Therefore, he can't pass judgment on my personality. So, what is it? My stance on the Ray-King case? Surely not, for Mr. Campbell is an intelligent, highly educated human being, holding the position of assistant attorney general. In holding the position of assistant attorney general he is sworn to uphold the law, and in order to uphold the law he must remain unbiased. Here's the kicker: I've never said that beyond any doubt James Earl Ray did not kill Martin Luther King. That was my whole reason for wanting to talk to Assistant District Attorney General Campbell. If the prosecution had/had evidence proving beyond a reasonable doubt that James Earl Ray killed Martin Luther King, so be it. Still waiting. Get the picture?

What about you, Jerry? Have you ever challenged Posner?

Jerry Ray: "Posie was scheduled to appear on *CNBC's Equal Time*, a show hosted by Bay Buchanan, sister of former presidential candidate Pat Buchanan. When he found out I was gonna be on the show, he cancelled. It doesn't take an Einstein to figure out why: I would have proved him to be the liar he is. I don't have much education, and he's a Wall Street lawyer and big-time writer, but I've got the truth on my side, and that's what counts. I'll meet him, or any of the others, for that matter, G. Robert Blakey, David Garrow, who-

ever, head on in a debate, on a platform of their choice, television, radio, whatever. That way, it's a matter of public record, and I can't be misquoted. But you know what?"

What?

Jerry Ray: "Posie will never meet me in a debate like that. He'll just keep on working his jaw behind my back, without ever meeting me face-to-face. Of course, I can't say that I blame him. I wouldn't want to meet someone in a debate, either, if I knew I was gonna get my ass nailed to the cross."

What you've just read is merely the tip of the iceberg. I could go on and on, but that would be another book in itself. In closing, I would like to challenge you with the following: just because someone of high rank says "something is so" doesn't necessarily mean "it's so." The current status of our nation's Executive and Legislative bodies is living proof. Don't let the silver-tongued spin doctors, be they for the prosecution or for the defense, disrespect you by allowing them to condition you to believe what they want you to believe. Ask yourself: what do they stand to lose by telling the truth as opposed to what they stand to gain by lying? Promotions-demotions? Riches-rags? Longevity-death?

And don't be fooled by the oh-so-old diversionary tactic: when someone makes a valid point, and the opposition, sensing defeat, attacks that individual from another angle, totally irrelevant to the subject at hand, still misleading and damaging, none-the-less. Read, stick to the subject and closely related facts, evaluate, and decide for yourself. In short, *nail 'em to the cross.* †

R.I.P.

Pearl Gladstone

1938-1998

By Steve Jones

Citizens for Truth about the Kennedy Assassination suffered a terrible loss with the sudden death of longtime supporter and activist Pearl Gladstone on December 19th. The first time I saw Pearl, she was standing at the microphone during the Q&A session at the Assassination Symposium on John F. Kennedy in Dallas in 1993. She was vehemently speaking her mind about the absurdity of a Mafia or low-level government conspiracy to assassinate President Kennedy. She argued that the weight of the evidence and the nature of the cover-up ruled out anything but a crime carried out by the highest levels of the national security state. I thought to myself, "This woman is surely not afraid to speak the truth."

But it was not until later that I learned how courageous Pearl really was. In 1996, Pearl and I helped organize two speaking engagements for Jim DiEugenio in the Philadelphia area. Pearl was not the kind of person to be content with knowing herself that the CIA killed President Kennedy. She felt that for our democracy to function properly all citizens must be made aware of the true nature of the assassination. To drum up interest in Jim's talks, Pearl paid for advertising in local papers and stood at the door of the student center at Temple University handing out leaflets. She drove through the city of Philadelphia with huge signs on her car announcing "Support Citizens for Truth About the Kennedy Assassination" and "Stop the Lies".

Pearl clearly understood the mainstream

media's continuing role in suppressing an honest and open dialogue about the assassination. She often did battle with the editors of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, but they refused to print her letters to the editor. She found the smaller *Bucks County Courier* more amenable and was a frequent contributor to its letters section.

But the cause nearest and dearest to her heart was educating young people about the assassination. For the last 17 years of her life Pearl taught science and social studies at the Benjamin Rush Middle School in Bensalem, a suburb of Philadelphia. Students who had Mrs. Gladstone for science were treated to a rigorous examination of how the scientific method obliterates the government's lie of the single bullet theory. Her legacy will live on through the countless students who learned how to think for themselves and to be more skeptical about government and media propaganda.

Pearl's family asked in her obituary notice that donations in honor of her memory be made to CTKA. Jim DiEugenio once told me that if he had one hundred Pearl Gladstones he could close down the CIA. Of that I have no doubt. Those high class murderers and drug dealers would have had no chance against that army. She was special and unique, belonging to that rare class of people who dedicate their lives to making the world a better place for us all. She will be sorely missed. Rest in peace, dear friend. †

The *Probe* offices have moved! Please update your records!

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