


UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

# Memorandum

TO : Michael Shaheen, Counsel,  
Office of Professional Responsibility

DATE: August 24, 1976

FROM :  Fred G. Folsom, Leader,  
Martin Luther King, Jr., Review Task Force

SUBJECT: Progress Report: Evidence Examinations  
in Atlanta, Birmingham, New Orleans,  
St. Louis, Springfield and Chicago

## I

During the week of August 2-6, 1976, the Task Force attorneys visited Atlanta, Birmingham and New Orleans, reviewing the "Murkin" (Martin Luther King, Jr. murder investigation) files in those three cities in which (with Memphis) events crucial to the F.B.I. investigation occurred. The "Murkin" files in those three cities totaled 73 sections with 5,830 serials. In addition the Task Force was sufficiently ahead of schedule in Birmingham and New Orleans in the interest of economy to review the small "Martin Luther King, Jr., Security" files in those two cities. There were two sections in each of these "Security" files with more than a total of 337 serials.

We interviewed agents in each of the three offices who had either been the "case agent" on "Murkin" or significantly involved in the investigation.

There were no startling developments in Atlanta, Birmingham or New Orleans. The agents interviewed in Birmingham and New Orleans assured us that there had been no technical (electronic) surveillance in any investigation in connection with Dr. King. There was no point in making this inquiry in Atlanta as there clearly had been such "elsur" activity there aimed at Dr. King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

## II

Mr. Joseph Gross was detailed to St. Louis and Springfield, Missouri, Monday, August 16, 1976, to review the F.B.I. files in those two Bureau field offices. He covered 35 sections and some 2245 serials of "Murkin" and "Martin Luther King, Jr. Security" files. And, in the last three days of the week of the 16th, the rest of the attorneys of the Task Force performed the on-site review of the Chicago field office "Murkin" file. There were 24 sections in this file with 1794 serials. Again, in the interest of economy, the four attorneys in Chicago began the chore of reviewing the pre-assassination "Martin Luther King, Jr., - Security" file of 17 sections

OPR #23

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and 2,225 entries or serials. All but five of the 17 sections were completed. There will be some 18,000 more serials in security related files to look at on another trip to Chicago.

The interview of the "Murkin" case agent in Chicago was as productive, or rather non-productive, as might be expected. The agent's recollection was not good because of the passage of time and because the assassination investigation was not the primary responsibility of his office (as compared to Memphis). It was developed, however, that unsolved robberies in the Chicago area run around 600 or so a week and this leaves an open possibility for James Earl Ray to have financed some of his activities by armed robberies after his escape from the Missouri State Prison in April of 1967 through his return by way of Chicago from Canada in August of 1967. (Ray related to author Huie a grocery store hold-up early in July of 1967 in Montreal netting him \$1700).

### III

Between trips the Task Force attorneys have been reviewing zerox copies of minor "Murkin" files from F.B.I. field offices only peripherally involved in the investigation. We had these small files sent in to avoid unwarranted travel and yet to insure the completeness of our inquiry. We have completed 48 of the 59 such files and we should complete the remaining 11 ones this week.

The device of having minor files sent to Washington for our perusal will be employed when we concentrate on the second phase of our review, the inquiry into the Bureau's activities in connection with King in the pre-murder period. This will materially speed up our work.

### IV

The Task Force's staff of analysts has completed its review of FBI file #100-3-116, captioned: CPUSA, Communist Influence in Racial Matters, Internal Security. Hope Byrne has submitted a report on the contents of the 49 sections of the file which includes contributions by Dana Boyd and Renee Holmes. With regard to a portion of the Sub A file, newspaper clippings, Ronnie Keith has completed and is presently preparing for submission the results of her review of the second volume on the three volume Sub A file series. In addition, she is gathering background data on the SCLC.

Dana Boyd has submitted her preliminary biographic profile on James Earl Ray and in the coming weeks will make appropriate changes in the draft and prepare the final report. Hope Byrne will continue with her review of the DOJ Internal Security files on Dr. King and will also prepare a paper containing information on O'Dell and Levison which has been gleaned from the DOJ files. The notes taken during the trips to the FBI field offices, with the exclusion of those taken during the Chicago trip, have been typed. As the typing load lightens, Ms.'s Keith, Holmes, and Boyd will have more time

to devote to the review of both Bureau and DOJ files.

In our report of July 23, 1976, we noted that we had been unable to locate 11 sections of the Department's Internal Security file. To date, those sections have yet to be located and both the Criminal, Civil Rights, and Civil Divisions have advised that the files are not in their respective Divisions. These sections contain both Top Secret and Secret documents and deal with the Bureau's investigation of Dr. King from 12-30-67 through 1-22-71

V

We anticipate full scale concentration beginning August 30 on the "security" phase of our inquiry. The first order of business will be review of the pertinent headquarters files. Until we have determined the scope of this chore and discovered how rapidly we can progress no accurate termination date can be forecast. We plan to report by early November.

*How could so much just disappear from FBI files?  
and with such high  
classification suggests  
it was so embarrassing  
to the FBI*