

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Memorandum *WLP*

TO : Director,
Federal Bureau of Investigation

DATE: FEB 1 1971

JL:KWO'C:MG:pg
DJ 144-72-662

FROM : *JL* Jerris Leonard
Assistant Attorney General
Civil Rights Division

SUBJECT: Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Mr. Tolson	_____
Mr. Sullivan	_____
Mr. Mohr	_____
Mr. Bishop	_____
Mr. Brennan	CD
Mr. Callahan	_____
Mr. Casper	_____
Mr. Conrad	_____
Mr. Felt	_____
Mr. Gale	_____
Mr. Rosen	<i>ll</i>
Mr. Tavel	_____
Mr. Walters	_____
Mr. Soyars	_____
Tele. Room	_____
Miss Holmes	_____
Miss Gandy	_____

en 5701
Reference is made to your memoranda dated December 22, 1970 and January 1, 1971, and to other communications in the captioned matter.

I. The material enclosed with your memorandum of 12/22/70, which appears to be an undated flyer or newsclipping, refers to an interview between Renfro T. Hays, Memphis private detective, and a "National Insider" reporter, possibly Jim Brown, in which Mr. Hays allegedly disclosed certain facts discovered by him in the course of his inquiries into the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Please interview Mr. Hays with respect to the statements quoted in the enclosed document and generally with respect to his knowledge of matters related to the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.

II. Your communication of January 1, 1971, contains information concerning a piece of mail addressed to James Earl Ray by one [redacted] return address Surrey, Great Britain, suggesting that [redacted] is or was "1/2 of the original 'Eric Starvo Galt'".

ST 151

EXP. PROC.

37. FEB 2 1971

UNREC COPY AND COPY OF ENCL. FILED IN 105-34074-2

*AIRTEL to SAC, AT & ME
2/5/71 REL/pwr*

REC-6 44-38861-590

FEB 2 1971

*Jim Turner at
Dept NOV 21 1971
to hold request
for info re
copy for state with him
not*

*XEROX
FEB 10 1971*

[Handwritten signature]

Please interview [REDACTED], allegedly of Charleston, South Carolina, with reference to any knowledge he may have of [REDACTED] of Eric Starvo Galt, or of the circumstances surrounding the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. The substance of [REDACTED] communication may be discussed with [REDACTED] if necessary. In addition, please make discrete inquiries of appropriate British sources to determine whether [REDACTED] has a record or reputation of mental instability, criminal activity, etc.

III. Please find attached copies of a memorandum prepared by Miss Gallagher of this Division, reflecting the report of an interview with Mr. Ken Smith, a "researcher" for the "Committee to Investigate Assassinations." Because of the serious implications of the information supplied by Mr. Smith, I believe it will be necessary to make appropriate investigation to determine the extent to which this information is factual and accurate.

However, because it appears that inquiries involving the Watsons or the persons involved with Magellan might if known jeopardize both the completion of the investigation and even possibly the physical safety of Byron Watson, I believe it would be desirable to obtain certain background and peripheral information before any of the principals become aware that an investigation is or may be in progress. Accordingly, please conduct the following investigation:

1. Please obtain full background information on Mr. Smith, including any information which would help to evaluate his reliability as a source.

2. Please provide name check and indices information for all persons identified by Mr. Smith, as reflected in the attached memorandum, including criminal records and, if accessible, index information reflecting investigation by other federal agencies such as the Internal Revenue Service, Customs Bureau, etc.

3. To the extent it can be obtained from records or from any other source except interview of the principals or interview of persons likely to communicate the fact of the interview to the principals, please obtain full background on Byron Watson and Mrs. Lillian Watson. Please include school records of Byron and employment, financial, etc., records for Mrs. Watson.

4. Please obtain from public sources all available information concerning the incorporation, licensure, business activities, financial status, etc. of the corporations or other business entities identified by Mr. Smith including Magellan, the establishments at 3340 Peachtree Road, "Par-Take-Of-Atlanta," and the Arnett antique dealership in Columbus, Georgia. Please supply any information contained in the incorporation papers or elsewhere which reflects the identities of persons having ownership or managerial interests in these businesses, and the amount of their capitalization.

5. Please ascertain the identities of the Secret Service personnel who interviewed Byron Watson and/or Mrs. Watson; obtain copies of any reports made by them in this connection; and interview the agents with respect to all details of their contact with the Watsons. If available in their files, please obtain a copy of the Watson letter to the President.

6. Please ascertain from appropriate Georgia Executive Branch personnel whether records would reflect that the Watsons made some presentation to Governor Maddox. If so, please supply any details reflected by such records, and interview anyone present at the presentation other than the Governor, attorney Maddox and the Watsons with respect to all details of what transpired. If there are no such records, or if they do not reflect the identity of anyone other than the above named persons who was present, please interview Governor Maddox about the details of his contact with the Watsons.

7. Please identify polygraph expert FNU Baxter in New York. Please ascertain from Mr. Baxter whether the polygraph chart, Mr. Baxter's report, or the tape recorded transcription of the Watson examination (or any of them) can be obtained for inspection or duplication from him. Please do not invite consultation by Mr. Baxter with Mr. Fensterwald or with the Watsons; if Mr. Baxter advises that the permission of any of the above would be required, please advise him that an attorney of this Division will make such arrangements as are deemed appropriate in that regard. (i.e., we would wish to consider the matter further before deciding whether to attempt to obtain such authorization). Please obtain copies or advise as to the contents of any of the above items which Mr. Baxter makes available.

8. Please ascertain the charges against Byron Watson arising out of the Columbus burglary; the identities and charges against his companions; the status of the cases against them including hearing and trial dates if set; and the identity of their counsel if apparent of record. Please obtain copies of any police records involving this incident and of any local news coverage.