

# 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	✓
Mr. Tavel	✓
Mr. Walters	✓
Mr. Soyars	✓
Tele. Room	✓
Miss Holmes	✓
Miss Gandy	✓

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'".

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*Airtel to SAC, AT & ME  
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FEB 2 1971

*JIM TURNER of  
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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.

# Memorandum

TO : K. William O'Connor  
Chief, Criminal Section

DATE: January 25, 1971

MG:pg

FROM : Monica Gallagher  
Attorney  
Criminal Section

SUBJECT: Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.

At your request Mr. Queen and I met on January 13, 1971 for some four hours with Mr. Ken Smith, a self employed "researcher" and sometime investigator for the "Committee to Investigate Assassinations" which is headed by Attorney Bud Fensterwald. The following is a report of the significant or possibly significant matters which Mr. Smith reported to me. Mr. Smith advised that he can supply addresses and further information in connection with some of the persons referred to if we so desire. Mr. Smith did not interrogate me or Mr. Queen about our knowledge of the case, nor did either of us volunteer any information whatever. Mr. Smith advised as follows:

## I. Personal Data

I retired in 1960 from my employment with the U.S. Treasury after 22 years as an investigator with the Alcohol-Tobacco-Tax unit. During my government employment I worked mainly out of Chicago although I also had other assignments. During a portion of my government employment I worked for the Internal Security Division as a supervisor of criminal investigations, and I was a deputy chief of an investigative unit.

After my retirement I opened a real estate office in Washington, D.C., and I still work in real estate part time. Recently I have been spending much of my time as a contract researcher for various clients. For example, I did research for a legislative lobby seeking

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prohibition of the "soreing" of Tennessee Walking Horses; I am now engaged to do research on baby seals in the Alleutian Islands. I accept these projects when my services are not needed by my old friend Bud Fensterwald, who has first call on my time. Also I work for Mr. Fensterwald for \$50 per day plus expenses, whereas my usual rate is \$100 plus expenses.

I met Fensterwald when I testified before Senator Long's Committee on Wiretapping, of which Fensterwald was Chief Counsel. Thereafter I worked as Chief Investigator for the Committee for about three years, until the whole staff resigned when Senator Kennedy assumed the chair.

In checking my references, you will find that a bad report will be given by the Assistant Commissioner for Internal Revenue. Otherwise, I believe my superiors have thought reasonably highly of me and my work.

## II. The Ray - Raoul Linkup in Atlanta

I have a source nicknamed Fruitjar, whose full identity I do not care to disclose at this time. Fruitjar (hereinafter FJ) is a former small-time criminal. He is about my age; in poor health (in and out of, mostly in, a government hospital in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area); married to a much younger woman (possibly 30 or so), a former prostitute. FJ got his nickname because he sold moonshine out of a fruit jar during prohibition. I do not believe FJ is presently engaged in any criminal activities.

FJ came to Fensterwald in approximately February, 1970, and volunteered that he had information concerning James Earl Ray's activities in Atlanta. I was asked to and did check out FJ's background. He has in the past been a paid informant for the A.T.U., and an agent whom I knew while working for the government told me this man had sometimes furnished reliable information.

When I went to interview FJ I found him difficult to draw out. I thought at first he wanted money - more than I was able to offer; but it turned out what he really wanted was legal representation in some civil suit he wanted to bring. I think it may have been against the government. Fensterwald agreed to represent him; but as far as I know the action has not yet been filed.

FJ said he knew a man in Atlanta called "Starvo" whom he identified from pictures as identical with James Earl Ray. He said that in Atlanta I would find other individuals, frequenters of the 10th and Peachtree area or people who "hang out" there, probably mainly small time criminals, who would remember Starvo and his association with Raoul. FJ said Starvo, Raoul and two girls went away for several days to a fishing camp together. The leads furnished by FJ were checked out by me as follows.

A. Ralph George Dickerson or George Ralph Dickerson, aka Rocky, aka Raoul, is an ex-prize fighter. He is half Norwegian (paternal) and half Indian (maternal), has a swarthy complexion, is a "torpedo" or muscle man, and was or may have been in army intelligence at some time in the past. He is now an alcoholic and on the two occasions I saw and spoke to him he was pretty well gone on alcohol. Accordingly, I got no useful information from him. I do know he speaks Spanish and I have heard him called Raoul, although he is apparently more often called Rocky. Raoul hangs around a bar called "Doc's Place" at 10xx Peachtree.

I understand from FJ that Starvo had let it be known in Atlanta that he was a "safe man", i.e. that he specialized in safecracking. FJ says he tried to interest Starvo in a safe "job" involving \$200,000 in cash, and that Starvo told Raoul he would do it. However, this job never came off.

I do not have a picture of Raoul but I do have a picture of a Mexican friend of Fensterwald's who looks quite a lot like Raoul. Sometimes I show people this picture of the Mexican in seeking an identification of Raoul.

B. Becky aka Betty Mart aka Becky Jones (allegedly after a man named Jones whom she lived with for a while) and Martha aka Martha Palmer. I believe that these two girls went with Starvo and Raoul to a fishing camp for several days. Neither of these girls provided me with any directly useful information, but that did not surprise me greatly.

[REDACTED]

Becky and Martha lived at a rooming house operated by Mrs. FNU Edwards at 107 6th Street, N.E. in Atlanta. Mrs. Edwards told me she remembered the girls' driving a white Mustang, sometimes alone and sometimes with two men who meet the descriptions of Starvo and Raoul.

C. FJ had described to me roughly the place where he thought Starvo and Raoul had gone with the girls. I followed his directions to a fishing camp about 10-12 miles from Perry (phonetic), Florida, where Route 14, a gravel road, goes down toward the gulf and dead-ends. The camp is called Nutall Rise. The operator of the camp, name unrecalled, told me he vaguely remembered a white car, red-headed girl, blond girl, Indian fellow and white fellow being around the area for several days. He did not think they stayed at his camp, but wasn't sure.

As I was walking back to my car on Route 14 I saw what appeared to be a "path" leading to a still, and I found and interviewed the moonshiner, name unknown. He was driving a 1951 or 52 faded blue Chevrolet quarter-ton pickup. He said he remembered these four people clearly, as they were doing a lot of shooting, possibly target shooting, in the area (which made him nervous) and it was after the Turkey season. He identified pictures of Ray and of the Mexican who resembles Raoul. He described the girls as one redhead and one short brunette, and thought they were driving a car with Georgia plates.


D. A person who told me he remembered Raoul (Rocky) and Starvo hanging around together, and going on a fishing trip together, is Henry (I think that is his first name but it could be his last name). He is a "wino" and an itinerant house painter, and possibly a small time criminal,



### III. The Overhead Conversation

#### A. The Substance

Byron Watson is a boy now 17 years old. His father, a former Deputy Sheriff, was killed in December 1966. His mother, Lillian Watson, is an overbearing individual and the boy's principal companion. The boy is extremely intelligent but in my judgment very strange or "weird". He has been preoccupied since childhood with antiques, relics, rare coins, etc., to the exclusion of usual youthful interests. I understand he is reputed to be one of the most skilled coin appraisers in the United States. He impresses me as a modern but non-hippe type boy, mildly anti-establishment as today's youth tend to be; he reminds me of the fellow on "Laugh In" who carries the flower (Harry Gibson). He does not smoke; uses no drugs (except for his asthma); drinks only wine with dinner.



In the spring of 1968 Byron (then 14) was employed part-time after school and on Saturdays at an establishment in Atlanta called Magellan, 3340 Peachtree Road, apparently a semi-museum and semi-sales outlet for antiques, rare coins, gems, relics, etc. I believe that Magellan or its associates may also have been involved with smuggling, as appears below. Byron was being paid \$5.00 per hour plus the opportunity to buy coins at wholesale prices.

On a Thursday in March 1968, which I believe to have fixed as March 28, 1968, (Byron remembers hearing the noon news about the garbage workers strike), Byron reported for work at about 12:30 p.m. There was no school that day. In the building occupied by Magellan there is a room just to the right of the main entrance which was used as the office; it was a "den" when the building was

formerly occupied as a residence. Byron went into the office where he observed a meeting in progress. Present were Gene Purcell, Larry Meier, Bayne Culley, and five or six other men unknown to him, of which he thinks perhaps one and possibly two were Negroes, although because of the physical layout and lighting he is not at all sure. Gene Purcell handed him \$2.00 and said "Go get yourself some lunch." Byron told Gene he had just had lunch. Gene said then "go get me a pack of cigarettes, and get yourself a coke, and take your time about it." Byron left with the \$2.00. Outside in the rear he saw parked a black Cadillac, thought to have had New York license plates, which he associated with the unknown persons inside at the meeting.

Byron returned in about 10-15 minutes with Gene's cigarettes. He found that he had left the door slightly ajar and, as he stood in the entryway, he overheard the following conversation:

Gene said: "I'm going to kill that nigger bastard King next Thursday in Tennessee just like I killed Kennedy."

Larry Meier said: "You sure pulled that one off good. They'll never know in a hundred years who did it."

Gene: "I've got a jailbird set up to take the rap on this one just like the other one."

Byron became frightened. He rattled the door which had been ajar as though he was just coming in, entered and delivered the cigarettes to Gene. The meeting seemed to be breaking up or broke up shortly afterward.

When the meeting had broken up, Gene and Larry Meier interviewed Byron about whether he had been eavesdropping. Their manner was very threatening, and although Byron denied having overheard anything, they seemed to be suspicious. Byron thinks it is possible someone in the office may have seen him as he approached the house or just before he came in. At one point in the interview Gene threw a bowie knife into the wall near Byron and said that it could as easily have gone through him, or words to that effect.

Byron claimed he wasn't feeling well, called his mother, and went home with her. He told his mother about the conversation that afternoon. Both became frightened and decided that Byron should not continue working at Magellan. However, they decided they should go back on Saturday to make an explanation rather than just having him fail to return.

On Saturday Mrs. Watson took Byron to Magellan where she explained to Gene Purcell that Byron could not work there any more because it was interfering with his school work. While Mrs. Watson was talking to Purcell in the office, Byron was taken by Larry Meier to Meier's apartment on the second floor, where he was again interrogated about overhearing the conversation, which he continued to deny. During this interview Meier threatened Byron, saying in effect that if he had overheard anything he had better forget it fast, or a bomb might explode in his mother's car or he could be shot by a high powered rifle from a long way away.

On or about April 1, 1968, Purcell, Meier and Culley left Magellan and are believed to have left

Atlanta. They did not return until June 10 or 11, 1968. During this interval Jean Sayre operated Magellan.

B. Other Accounts

The preceding information reflects what Byron and Mrs. Watson told me. I understand they have reported substantially identical information to others, as described below. What follows incorporates information received from the Watsons, Mr. Fensterwald and Atlanta attorney Lynwood Maddox.

At some point Mrs. Watson became concerned about the fact that the information she and Byron had concerning the overheard conversation had not been communicated to the proper authorities. She wrote a letter to the White House, possibly addressed to President Nixon, in which she said she had some information. Thereafter she and Byron were called on by two Secret Service agents, one of whom was named Manning. According to the Watsons the Secret Service agents received this information with open disbelief and hostility, one of them saying to Byron, among other things, "Don't tell me what happened in Dallas; I was there." Mrs. Watson and Byron were badly frightened by this interview.

Attorney Lynwood Maddox represented Mrs. Watson in connection with a civil suit she wanted to file or filed against William S. Arnett, an individual formerly associated with Magellan and who she claims defrauded her of some \$50,000. Trusting Mr. Maddox, Mrs. Watson reported to him both the substance of the overheard conversation (as substantiated by Maddox to me) and the incident with the Secret Service.

Mr. Maddox arranged for Mrs. Watson and Byron to have an appointment with Governor Maddox of Georgia, during which, in Attorney Maddox's presence, the story was repeated. According to Attorney Maddox, Mrs. Watson insisted to the Governor during this interview that they were entitled to some reward as a result of furnishing this information; the Governor was unreceptive; and the interview was not successful. The Governor's position was, in effect, that the matter was a federal one and should be taken up with federal authorities.

After this interview Attorney Maddox contacted Congressman Weltner, who knew of the work of the Committee to Investigate Assassinations and referred Maddox to Mr. Fensterwald. This is how we learned of the Watsons' story, and this happened about the first week in August 1970.

Mr. Fensterwald thereafter arranged for Byron to submit to a polygraph examination. This was done by an expert named (FNU) Baxter in New York. I have listened to the tape recording of this examination and I believe that the results are utterly invalid. It appears from the tape that within a few hours prior to the examination Byron had had some six shots of isopril (medication for his asthma), which would alone completely negative the possibility of reaching any conclusions from the polygraph. Also in my judgment the examiner used an overbearing tone and manner which would tend to intimidate the person questioned, thus affecting the polygraph results. I understand that Mr. Baxter's report indicates that the examination was "partly inconclusive and partly negative," suggesting that Byron was lying in certain areas. I think this examination must be regarded as wholly inconclusive. While Byron may be lying about whether he deliberately eavesdropped (he says it was accidental and not deliberate, whereas I

believe it was probably deliberate), I honestly believe from my interviews and impressions that he is telling the truth about what he heard or thought he heard.

C. Persons Associated with Magellan

The following are people who have been associated with Magellan:

1. William S. Arnett, aka William S. Arnowich, of Columbus, Georgia. Arnett managed Magellan for a period of time on a 10% commission basis until December 1967, when he was "thrown out," possibly because he is Jewish. (This version reported by Byron and confirmed by Arnett). He is engaged in antique dealing. Mrs. Watson thinks Arnett defrauded her of \$50,000 in connection with antique transactions. Mrs. Watson also claims to have evidence against Arnett of smuggling and income tax violations. (See the Byron burglary, below). Arnett admitted to me that he has been arrested for smuggling but told me that he beat the rap. Arnett told me Magellan robbed him and that he is now being "extorted" of \$500 per month by Magellan interests. Arnett was financially backed in Magellan by William Moog, a real estate developer. Arnett told me that Adams, Sutherland and Nelson were all admitted John Birchers. He also said he thinks Purcell, Culley and Meier are violent or potentially violent individuals.

Arnett told me that Sutherland told him that Purcell is now occupied as a part-time gun-runner in or near Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

2. FNU Clifford, financially backed by William Thibodeaux, Atlanta-Decatur real estate speculator and bank president. He leased the premises at 3340

Peachtree and was licensed as Magellan, Blocade Runners, and Southeast Restoration Laboratories.

3. Harold Eugene Purcell, aka Gene Purcell, knowledgeable about guns and relics and in charge of that phase of the Magellan operation, as well as apparently exercising the biggest share of control over the whole Magellan operation. Purcell has bragged of "beating the rap" in connection with the burning of a Negro church in Tennessee in the late 1950's. Also he is proud of having his picture in Life Magazine in connection with the Clinton, Tenn. "school riots" during the same era. He allegedly told Arnett he had been tried and acquitted three times for aggravated assault on "niggers".

4. Jean (Mrs. John) Sayre (phonetic), who managed Magellan for a short time. She and her husband have disappeared from Atlanta and can't be found. Her husband was president of a corporation called "Par-Take-Of-Atlanta" which may have been a non-existent corporation. They are originally from Virginia, she from an old-line Virginia family. After Magellan closed, she also operated the premises for a short time doing business as "Tudor Fair".

5. Lawrence (Larry) Meier, who is now teaching in a high school in Six Flags, Georgia. Meier is a notorious homosexual and has been involved in a car theft ring. He specialized at Magellan in restoration and appraisal of antique pottery.

6. Bayne Culley, a muscle man whose association with the others is unknown.

7. John Seymour, executive at Lockheed in Atlanta, who was involved in an unknown way, and was apparently the largest stockholder (of a total of 22) in Magellan.

8. Jerry Adams, private detective and possible wiretapper, sometimes operating as a TV-radio repairman. Formerly employed Jimmy Kempf, now deceased. Present employer of Buzz McQueen, a bill collector and "tail".

9. Ben Sutherland

10. FNU Nelson

11. FNU Sutton



D. Peripheral Matters Related to Magellan

At 3177 Peachtree Road N.E. there is a building which appears to have four establishments in it. They are: (a) Adams Associates, a private detective agency operated by Jerry Adams; (b) Atlantic Clearing Exchange, allegedly a clearing house for trading stamps; (c) E.E. Inc.; and (d) Answering Northside, which apparently purports to be an answering service but does not seem to be wired to conduct this business.

I have gone by there several times but never found anyone there when I knocked on the doors. They are all listed as having the same telephone number, which is also the telephone number which Magellan had when it was in operation.

When I was in Atlanta on August 11, 1970 I called that number (261-4184) and asked for "Gene". The person who answered, who may have been Jerry Adams' employee Buzz McQueen, said he had never heard of Gene. Then he called someone else to the phone who I think may have been Jerry Adams. I told this person that Gene Purcell had given me this number and told me he could always be reached there. I told him I wanted to "do some business" with Gene like I had in the past. He told me Gene was on the West Coast but would be back in about three weeks and would check in with him. I said I would call again.

E. Other Miscellaneous Information from Byron

1. Byron has identified a picture of the Mexican who resembles Raoul as being very like a person whom he saw at least once at Magellan, "except for the pock marks." I noted that Raoul has noticeable pock marks on his face, whereas there are none discernable in the Mexican's picture.

2. Byron has also identified a picture I showed him of Clay Shaw as a person whom he has seen at least once at Magellan.

3. Gene Purcell once told Byron he knew how to reactivate a deactivated machine gun.

4. Byron has seen, in addition to antique firearms, some seven to ten modern rifles at Magellan.

5. Gene had a room in the Magellan basement where he worked on guns.

6. 

7. Purcell bought a new yellow streamlined deluxe Ford pickup truck in March, 1968, just before the meeting on 3/28. He also had a Firebird.

8. Byron saw a 24 carat emerald which Purcell may have smuggled into the United States when he went on a trip abroad with Clifford.

#### F. The Byron Burglary

On December 23, 1970, Byron Watson and two friends, Thad Barnes (19 years old) and Doug Hale (17 years old) drove from Atlanta to Columbus, Georgia. Byron's intention allegedly was to threaten Arnett with exposure of his smuggling and income tax evasion if he did not deliver certain antiques and art objects which Byron and his mother claim belong to Mrs. Watson. Allegedly, Byron and companions went to Arnett's mother's house, where they found no one at home; then to Arnett's house, where they found no one at home; then to Arnett's "Museum Shop." There they allegedly arrive about 1:30 p.m., found no one, but found the back door open. They apparently entered and removed some \$26,500.00 worth (Arnett's estimate) of art objects which they loaded into Thad's car. It is alleged that two little boys, aged 7-8, observed this and called Arnett's wife, Judy, who together with a neighbor called the police and went to the store with a gun. The police allegedly found Byron's pocket filled with Jade and other gems.

The three boys were allegedly charged with burglary; afforded a preliminary hearing on 12/24/70 which received extensive news coverage; and released on bail on 12/26/70.

Attorney Lynwood Maddox has allegedly had a falling-out with Mrs. Watson, no longer represents her in any connection, and refused to represent Byron in connection with this charge. Byron may be represented by Attorney Paul Killpatrick of Columbus, Georgia.