

C. Eardly W. R. Wilson
 Dep. AAG Assist. AG
 Civil Div. Criminal Div.

DEC 15

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 DJ 144.

Mr. Tolson	_____
Mr. Sullivan	_____
Mr. Mohr	_____
Mr. Bishop	_____
Mr. Brennan, C.D.	_____
Mr. Callahan	_____
Mr. Casper	_____
Mr. Conrad	_____
Mr. Felt	_____
Mr. Gale	_____
Mr. Rosen	_____
Mr. Tavel	_____
Mr. Walters	_____
Mr. Soyars	_____
Tele. Room	_____
Miss Holmes	_____
Miss Gandy	_____

Jerris Leonard
 Assistant Attorney General
 Civil Rights Division

Files Pertaining to James Earl Ray,
 Martin Luther King, Jr.

Department of Justice file number 95-100-473 contains materials pertaining to the extradition of James Earl Ray from Great Britain for the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr. and for his escape from the Missouri State Penitentiary. As an international extradition proceeding the matter came within the jurisdiction of the Criminal Division. File number 125-12-1403 contains materials pertaining to a civil suit against this Department under the Public Information Act in which the plaintiff sought access to certain documents filed in the Ray extradition proceedings, and is assigned to the Civil Division.

The Department's investigation of the King assassination was predicated on a possible conspiracy violative of 18 U.S.C. 241, and accordingly the substantive investigation file (144-72-662) is assigned to this Division.

I am aware that, in connection with the civil suit brought under the Freedom of Information Act, certain portions of the extradition file have been made available to the private plaintiff and thereafter to members of the public, including publishers. In order that the Department will continue to observe a

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uniform policy with respect to this matter, I am going to notify those authors, publishers and others who have requested access to the Ray files through this Division, or who have been referred to this Division through the FBI, that they may now inspect these papers.

However, because there is an outstanding complaint charging Ray with a civil rights violation, and because the matter is still under consideration in this Division, I do not believe it would be appropriate to disclose any further contents of the Ray files at this time.

Accordingly, I am seeking your agreement to restrict access to each of these files to officials of your Division who may have responsibilities in connection with the matter and to officials of this Division. With your agreement, I would ask the Records Administration Office to notify the responsible attorney in this Division whenever one of these files is charged out, so that we will stay advised as to the status of this matter.