

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : MR. ASH *LKY*

DATE: 2-2-77

FROM : L. K. York *LKY*

SUBJECT: INVENTORY OF FINGERPRINT RECORDS -
JOHN F. KENNEDY AND MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
ASSASSINATION CASES

Assoc. Dir.	_____
Dep. AD Adm.	_____
Dep. AD Inv.	_____
Asst. Dir.:	
Adm. Serv.	_____
Ext. Affairs	_____
Fin. & Pers.	_____
Gen. Inv.	_____
Ident.	_____
Inspection	_____
Intell.	_____
Laboratory	_____
Legal Coun.	_____
Plan. & Eval.	_____
Rec. Mgnt.	_____
Spec. Inv.	_____
Training	_____
Telephone Rm.	_____
Director Sec'y	_____

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this memorandum is to set forth information regarding inventory of fingerprint records of principal individuals in the John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., assassination cases.

SYNOPSIS:

Inventory of fingerprint records of principal individuals involved in John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., assassination cases conducted Identification Division. Complete records of James Earl Ray, Lee Harvey Oswald, and Marina N. Oswald, located. Fingerprint jackets of Jack Leon Ruby and Martin Luther King, Jr., located Latent Fingerprint Section Special Dead File. Master fingerprint cards and master index cards for Ruby and King not located. Established procedures indicate these cards destroyed in routine purge, 1975, of deceased masters, since both records had been deceased seven years. No records found to indicate any disposition of these two master fingerprint cards other than routine purge. Former Special Agents assigned to Identification Division when death notices received indicate cards in all probability would have been purged during routine dead purge.

RECOMMENDATION:

For information

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LKY:mjk

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FBI/DOJ

Memorandum to MR. ASH
RE: INVENTORY OF FINGERPRINT RECORDS

DETAILS:

In accordance with your request, there follows an inventory of available fingerprint records concerning principal individuals involved in the John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., assassination matters, as well as an explanation of the probable disposition of any part of these records which cannot now be located.

JAMES EARL RAY, FBI #405 942 G. The fingerprint jacket was found filed in its proper location in the Assembly Section, 1-7-77. The master fingerprint card was found filed in the proper location in the Technical Section on the same date and the master index card was located in its proper place in the Card Index Section on that date. All have been charged out in the respective sections to the Assistant Director, Identification Division.

LEE HARVEY OSWALD, FBI #327 925 D. The fingerprint jacket, master fingerprint card and master index card were located 1-7-77 in the office of Assistant Director, Identification Division, where it has been filed since 1-6-65. This record, which is stamped Dead, has been re-charged to the Assistant Director.

MARINA NIKOLAEVNA OSWALD, DOB 7-15-41, IN-U.S.S.R. A single alien fingerprint card, submitted by Immigration and Naturalization Service, U. S. Department of Justice, 7-21-62, was found misfiled in the male Civil File, Technical Section, on 1-7-77. The civil index card was found in its proper location in Card Index. The address of the person fingerprinted is indicated as 7313 Davanport, Fort Worth, Texas, Alien Registration number A12-530-645. This record may be identical to Marina Oswald, wife of Lee Harvey Oswald. This fingerprint card has been researched and no additional record found. Both the fingerprint card and master civil index card have been charged to Assistant Director, Identification Division.

JACK LEON RUBY, FBI #693 083 E. The fingerprint jacket (deceased) was found 1-7-77, in the Latent Fingerprint Section Special Dead File. The master fingerprint card and master index card were not with the jacket and after an extensive search, neither could be located in the Identification Division files. The missing master fingerprint card is for an arrest by Police Department, Dallas, Texas, of Jack Leon Ruby, #36398, on 12-5-54, charged with Investigation Violation State Liquor Law. The disposition on the docket sheet shows complaint dismissed.

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Ruby died 1-3-67, of cancer, as indicated on the official death notice submitted by Sheriff's Office, Dallas, Texas. This notice was executed 1-9-67 and was received by the Identification Division on 1-16-67. On that date the Identification Division processed this death notice. The processing would have required the retrieval of appropriate index cards from the Card Index Section, the master fingerprint card from the Technical Section, and the fingerprint jacket from the Assembly Section. The master index card would have been charged out in the Dead Files of the Card Index Section. The records should have then been forwarded to the Dead Desk, Assembly Section, to be handled. The master fingerprint card should have then been charged out in the reference file of the Technical Section, indicating on the charge card that subject was deceased. This charge card should have been destroyed after 60 days. The fingerprint jacket would have then been charged out in Assembly as a dead jacket, 1-17-67. The record would have been ready to be microfilmed at that point.

Prior to August, 1969, the master fingerprint cards were not microfilmed with the fingerprint jackets as is now done. The master print should have been stamped Dead, and information obtained from the death notice would have been written on the back of the print. The master fingerprint card should then have been routed to the Technical Section to be filed in the Dead File. All documents in the fingerprint jacket were microfilmed and, according to procedure, after insuring that the entire jacket had been captured on film, the jacket would have been destroyed under normal circumstances. In this particular case, the jacket was not destroyed, probably due to the possibility that the original jacket might be needed for some reason, since latent fingerprint examinations had been conducted using the fingerprint cards in this jacket.

At that time, 1-19-69, a decision was made to retain this jacket in the Special Dead File in the Latent Fingerprint Section. The master fingerprint card, which had been stamped Dead, had already been routed to the Technical Section Dead File and the master index card likewise should have been routed and filed in the Dead File in the Card Index Section.

In January, 1975, a Dead File purge began in the Technical Section. All master prints in the Dead File were reviewed and when it was determined by examining the stamp and information on the back of the master that the individual had been dead for seven years or more, the master

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print would have been pulled, routed to Card Index to have all index cards pulled, and thereafter destroyed. No definite proof can be given that this is the procedure followed in this particular case; however, it is a fact that a purge of the Dead File in the Technical Section began in January, 1975, and subjects deceased seven years or more were removed from the file and destroyed. Since index cards are only taken from file when dead masters are pulled by the Technical Section, it is reasonable to assume that since neither master print nor index card for Ruby can be found, then they were purged during a routine dead purge. There is no indication in the fingerprint jacket for Ruby that any other disposition was made of the master print. Ruby's fingerprint jacket has been charged to Assistant Director, Identification Division.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., FBI #169 213 C. On 1-7-77, the deceased fingerprint jacket of King was also located in the Latent Fingerprint Section Special Dead File. The master fingerprint card and master index card were not with the jacket and after extensive search cannot be located in Identification Division files. The missing master fingerprint card is for an arrest by Police Department, Montgomery, Alabama, of Martin Luther King, Jr., #80161, on 1-26-56, charged with Speeding. The disposition on the docket sheet shows "\$10 & cost appealed."

King died 4-4-68, according to information received 4-5-68, from SAC, Memphis. This jacket was processed and microfilmed 5-6-68, and bears a notation that it is to be retained in Special Dead File for a period of 60 days, pending additional instructions. The record, including the master fingerprint card and master index card, should have been handled as a deceased record in a manner identical to that described above for Jack Leon Ruby. There are no notations in the record which would indicate any other disposition of the master fingerprint card and master index card other than a routine Dead File purge. A copy card or charge card using alias M. L. King, Jr., was found filed in the Card Index Dead File. This would indicate that the alias card was not pulled when the deceased master fingerprint card was handled. Alias cards are destroyed on deceased individuals provided that no more than five cards separate the master card or other alias cards on subject. If more than five cards separate the alias card from master, the alias card is not purged.

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The investigative files in both the King and Kennedy matters contain no original fingerprint cards. Former Inspector Beverly E. Ponder and former Supervisory Special Agent Eugene W. Whitwam, former Section Chief of Latent Fingerprint Section, who were assigned to the Identification Division when the death notices on both Ruby and King were received were contacted and indicated that in all probability the master fingerprint cards and index cards in both cases were purged during routine Dead File purge in the Technical Section. The fingerprint jacket for King has also been charged to Assistant Director, Identification Division.