

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

# Memorandum

TO : SAC (44-1987)

DATE: 6/10/68

FROM : SA HARLEY E. GYLFE

SUBJECT: MURKIN

RE: RALPH MEREDITH CARPENTER  
4844 DURBIN STREET  
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE  
(EMPLOYEE OF YORK ARMS)

Miss E. STOCKARD, Registered Nurse, Supervisor of 5 West, Psychiatric Hospital and Institute, State of Tennessee, 865 Poplar Avenue, advised on 6/9/68 that CARPENTER is a patient in this ward but she cannot furnish any information concerning his condition and suggested that Dr. MAX WEST be contacted at 9 a.m. on 6/10/68 concerning CARPENTER.

Dr. WEST advised on 6/10/68 that he is on the faculty of the University of Tennessee Medical School, is assigned to this hospital, and has charge of the 5th floor of the hospital. Dr. WEST stated that CARPENTER is a patient at this hospital and according to his records CARPENTER's wife obtained a warrant on May 3, 1968, to have him committed. Dr. WEST said CARPENTER entered JOHN GASTON Hospital for evaluation on 5/10/68 and entered this hospital on 5/20/68 for treatment.

Dr. WEST stated CARPENTER is a manic depressive. He said sometimes he is "high", then he calms down and sometimes he is depressed, but then returns to normal. He said he is not functioning on a psychotic level at the present time. According to Dr. WEST, CARPENTER at times seems to be hostile to his wife, the doctors, and the hospital. He said at the present time CARPENTER is calmed down but he is unpredictable. He said CARPENTER is not ready to go out and take care of his personal affairs as of now.

Dr. WEST commented it appears the initial contact was made with CARPENTER's spouse on about 5/10/68. He said it is indicated that CARPENTER's present disturbance began about 1 1/2 weeks prior to this first contact, for it occurred during the latter part of April 1968.

Dr. WEST commented that according to the records of CARPENTER's first few treatment periods with the doctors he had mentioned his involvement with investigators concerning the murder

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of MARTIN LUTHER KING and his selling binoculars to the individual who probably shot MARTIN LUTHER KING. Dr. WEST commented that CARPENTER's involvement in the MARTIN LUTHER KING investigation has no bearing on his current condition in the hospital. He stated CARPENTER would likely sign an affidavit or any paper given to him. He said in his opinion CARPENTER will be competent to sign these papers. He said CARPENTER is quite competent when he is not involved in his current disorder and he is quite normal at those times. He again commented that CARPENTER has a psychotic disorder. He further commented that the selling of the binoculars is not part of his disorder.

Dr. WEST stated CARPENTER's present condition should have no bearing on his previous identification or information furnished relating to the investigation of the murder of Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING, although attorneys may try to make something of it.

Dr. WEST suggested he contact CARPENTER and tell him that Agents of the FBI were in his office. He said he would like to test CARPENTER's reaction to this and said if CARPENTER appeared to want to talk to Agents of the FBI he suggested that Agents talk to CARPENTER and relay the request to him.

CARPENTER was shortly thereafter brought into Dr. WEST's Office by Dr. WEST. CARPENTER was apprised of the reason the Agents had talked to Dr. WEST. CARPENTER said he did not think he could sign anything while he was in the hospital. To this, Dr. WEST replied that this could be taken care of. When CARPENTER heard this comment of Dr. WEST, CARPENTER turned to the Agents and comment to bring the papers in and he would be glad to look at them.

Dr. WEST, since being contacted in person, telephonically contacted the writer and stated that he had discussed this matter with the Superintendent and Administrator of this hospital. He said they were all concerned with the legality of the signature should CARPENTER sign an affidavit. Dr. WEST suggested that since CARPENTER was committed to the hospital on a Probate Court commitment a guardian and counsel had been appointed for him, Mr. C. CLEVELAND DERNNON, and that Mr. DERNNON should be contacted concerning this matter. He further stated that he had attempted to contact Mr. DERNNON but determined Mr. DERNNON is out of the city for the remainder of the week. He said Mr. HEARN W. TIDWELL of Mr. DERNNON's office is familiar with the matter and is handling DERNNON's work in his absence. He said Mr. TIDWELL is in court today but should return to his office at about noon. No effort was made to contact Mr. TIDWELL; however, his address is Suite 1101, Home Federal Building, #526-0241.