

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

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Dep. AD Adm.	_____
Dep. AD Inv.	_____
Asst. Dir.:	
Admin.	_____
Comp. Syst.	_____
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Training	_____
Telephone Rm.	_____
Director Sec'y	_____

TO : Mr. Gallagher

DATE: 2/3/76

FROM : J. S. Peelman

- 1 - Mr. Callahan
- 1 - Mr. Adams
- 1 - Mr. Gallagher
- 1 - Mr. O'Connell
- 1 - Mr. Peelman
- 1 - Mr. Helterhoff
- 1 - Mr. Moore
- 1 - Mr. Wannall
- 1 - Mr. Cochran

SUBJECT: MURKIN

(Attn: Mr. Balog)

PURPOSE: To advise of the status of the investigation recently instituted to resolve an allegation by [redacted] and his brother, [redacted], that prior to the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., they were offered payment to murder Dr. King.

BACKGROUND: This case pertains to the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on 4/4/68. James Earl Ray pled guilty to this murder and presently is in local confinement.

You were advised in previous memoranda that we are conducting an investigation at the request of the Civil Rights Division (CRD), U. S. Department of Justice, to resolve a recent allegation (made in January, 1976) by [redacted] and his brother, [redacted] that prior to the assassination of Dr. King, they were offered payment to murder Dr. King.

[redacted] claims he and [redacted], while in an Atlanta bar in October - November, 1967, were approached by a mutual friend, [redacted] who asked the [redacted] if they were interested in making \$50,000. [redacted] told them he would put them in contact with an individual who would pay them to murder King. Approximately one week later at the same bar, the [redacted] were approached by an individual named Ralph (last name unknown), who said "I guess you know why I'm here" and subsequently opened his briefcase displaying what he said was \$25,000, and then said, "If you decide to take the job, there's \$50,000 more when it's completed." [redacted] said they told Ralph they needed time to think it over. Ralph replied "if your mind is not made up now, I can't do business with you." Powell said

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HNH:bap (10)

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Memorandum to Mr. Gallagher
RE: MURKIN

Ralph never said the money being offered was to kill King. [REDACTED] states neither he nor his brother were involved in the murder of King.

[REDACTED] was interviewed and although he also claims a payment offer was made to kill King, his account differs somewhat from that of [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] states that three or four weeks prior to the murder of King, he and his brother, [REDACTED] were seated in a booth in [REDACTED] in Atlanta. [REDACTED] a friend of [REDACTED] joined them in their booth and engaged in conversation with [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] paid no particular attention to what they were talking about. [REDACTED] then left the booth and approximately ten to fifteen minutes later, an unknown subject (unsub), a white male, joined them in their booth and placed an expensive-looking briefcase on the table. The unsub told them he wanted them to kill King and would pay \$25,000 now and \$25,000 when the job was done. The unsub then opened his briefcase, which was full of wrapped currency. [REDACTED] stated he was shocked, assumed it was some sort of a joke and he ignored the unsub. The unsub then closed his briefcase and departed.

[REDACTED] has been fully identified as [REDACTED] and has advised that he did not talk with either of the [REDACTED] re the assassination of King nor did he introduce anyone to them re the assassination of King. He denied all knowledge of any assassination plot re King.

The CRD requested that Bureau polygraph examinations be afforded to [REDACTED] and to the [REDACTED] to attempt to resolve this allegation.

When [REDACTED] was interviewed on 1/13/76, and denied any involvement in this matter, he agreed to submit to a polygraph. When he was contacted on 1/16/76, however, [REDACTED] stated "I am innocent" and then advised he did not wish to take any polygraph examination and did not wish to talk to the FBI any further. He stated if the FBI needs any further information, they should contact his attorney.

On 1/19/76, [REDACTED], was afforded a Bureau polygraph examination at Midland, Texas. The polygraph examiner concluded that [REDACTED] response to certain questions indicated he is "truthtelling" in stating someone did, in fact, offer him and his brother \$50,000 to kill Dr. King. [REDACTED] response to another question and his reactions following the answer indicate he has possible knowledge regarding the unidentified person who made the payment offer.

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The results of our investigation have been closely coordinated with the CRD. Mr. Robert A. Murphy, Chief, Criminal Section, CRD, stated he desired to know the results of the polygraph examination of [REDACTED] who was not immediately available, before making a determination as to whether [REDACTED] attorney should be contacted concerning his polygraph examination, and before making a determination as to what additional investigation should be conducted to resolve this allegation.

DETAILS: [REDACTED] was not available for a Bureau polygraph examination until the p.m. of 1/29/76. During pre-polygraph interview, [REDACTED] stated [REDACTED] never mentioned the amount of money to be paid other than "big money." (initially stated [REDACTED] offered \$50,000.) He advised while at the bar, someone stated King should be killed, and [REDACTED] made statement to the effect he would kill him for the right amount of money. When questioned during the polygraph about Ralph (LNU) saying he had \$25,000 in the briefcase, [REDACTED] stated Ralph had only said "25," and there would be "50" (not \$50,000 as initially stated) when King was buried.

During the polygraph [REDACTED] appeared to have difficulty in breathing, and stated he was very nervous concerning the whole matter. The polygraph examination was determined to be "inconclusive."

On 2/2/76, this matter was thoroughly discussed with Departmental Attorney Murphy. He stated [REDACTED] attorney should not be contacted at this time, and the following additional investigation should be conducted to resolve this allegation: Reinterview the [REDACTED] to resolve differences in their accounts of the alleged meeting; have each of the [REDACTED] prepare a diagram of the bar and booth where alleged meeting took place; verify that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were in Atlanta at time of alleged meeting; interview co-workers of [REDACTED] to see if he has talked about this alleged meeting; identify and interview former employees and customers of

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██████████ re any knowledge of alleged meeting or of
Ralph (LNU); conduct investigation into the background of
██████████ interview ██████████ wife; reinterview ██████████
wife of deceased bar owner ██████████, to see if he had ever
talked of any such payment offer; show artist's conception of
Ralph (LNU) (as prepared by ██████████ to ██████████ and all pertinent
witnesses; show on an Atlanta city map location of
██████████ in comparison to where James Earl Ray stayed in
Atlanta; and conduct other obvious and logical investigation.

Mr. Murphy advised he was advising the USA, Atlanta,
and the USA, Memphis, of the institution of this investigation
re the ██████████ allegation.

Mr. Murphy stated the FBI should not comment to any
inquiries from the news media concerning this investigation,
and any such inquiries should be referred to the CRD.

Atlanta and El Paso are being instructed by separate
communication to promptly conduct this investigation.

ACTION: For information. You will be advised of any pertinent
developments.

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P.M.*

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