

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 1/28/69

MR. DON WOOD, Aeromarine Supply Company, Airport Road, Birmingham, Alabama, was contacted in connection with another matter, and during this contact, related the following information:

Mr. WOOD advised that on Saturday, December 21, 1968, at approximately 5:30 p.m., he was visited in his store by WILLIAM BRADFORD HUIE, noted author from Hartselle, Alabama. Mr. HUIE requested conversation with Mr. WOOD concerning certain facts surrounding the purchase of a rifle by JAMES EARL RAY, the alleged assassin of Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING.

Mr. WOOD stated that he told HUIE initially that he intended testifying in this matter during the trial of JAMES EARL RAY in Memphis, Tennessee, and did not wish to discuss any of this information with HUIE. Mr. HUIE stated then that he desired to purchase a rifle similar to the one purchased from WOOD by JAMES EARL RAY, and stated more specifically, that it was a Model 760 Remington 30.06 caliber. Mr. HUIE likewise requested that WOOD mount a telescopic sight similar to the one purchased by RAY, on this rifle. Mr. WOOD advised that he sold Mr. HUIE this rifle and while mounting the scope on this rifle, Mr. HUIE questioned him at length concerning the technical aspects of bore-sighting this scope, which questions Mr. WOOD answered.

Following the transaction involving this rifle, Mr. HUIE asked Mr. WOOD for a Browning Rifle box similar to the one furnished JAMES EARL RAY at the time he purchased the rifle. Mr. WOOD stated he told Mr. HUIE that he did not have such a box but did furnish him with a Browning shotgun box which was much shorter in length than the box Mr. WOOD furnished to JAMES EARL RAY. Mr. WOOD stated that the rifle Mr. HUIE purchased would not fit in the Browning box he gave Mr. HUIE.

Mr. WOOD advised that HUIE told him he intended taking this rifle to Memphis, Tennessee, where he would re-enact the alleged shooting of Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING from the rooming house of the Lorain Motel.

On 1/20/69 at Birmingham, Alabama File # BH 44-1740 - 2121
by EA NEIL P. SHANAHAN:rte Date dictated 1/28/69

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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : SAC, BIRMINGHAM (44-1740)

DATE: 3/13/69

FROM : ASAC RALPH J. RAMPTON

SUBJECT: JAMES EARL RAY;
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING - VICTIM
CR - CONSPIRACY

During the evening of 3/12/69 AUSA R. MACEY TAYLOR telephoned me to say he had watched the Huntley-Brinkley report on television earlier, during which program ARTHUR J. HANES, SR. was interviewed concerning captioned case. TAYLOR said HANES made reference to having information and names concerning organizations connected with this case which he had offered on several occasions and no one had accepted his offer or seemed interested. TAYLOR said HANES did not mention any agencies and in particular did not mention the FBI; however, TAYLOR felt the impression was left by the interview that official agencies had turned down HANES' offer of additional assistance in this case. It was TAYLOR's feeling the record should be set straight and he asked me if the FBI had been contacted in the past by HANES concerning this matter. At the time of the telephone call I did not have the file at hand; however, I told TAYLOR it was my recollection HANES had contacted the FBI and offered information in exchange for information from the FBI and that he had been told that we would be interested in receiving any information he had bearing upon this case. I told TAYLOR I would check into the matter and call him after I had an opportunity to review the file.

On 3/13/69 I telephoned TAYLOR and briefly discussed the contact HANES had with us on 10/22/68 and the fact that we had written HANES and specifically told him we would be interested in receiving any information in his possession concerning this case. TAYLOR said that in view of the FBI letter which recorded an offer to HANES to receive information in his possession he, TAYLOR, felt he should call HANES and tell him the USA's Office also would be interested in receiving any information in his possession in view of the inferences on the Huntley-Brinkley report.

RJR:fc
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Inasmuch as no reference was made to the FBI and the fact we have already, on the record, contacted HANES for any information in his possession; and in view of the fact HANES is obviously seeking publicity to maintain his connections with this case, I feel no further action is necessary and this memorandum is for your information.

ADDENDUM: 3/14/69

Today TAYLOR telephoned me to say he had talked briefly to HANES and brought up the television interview. TAYLOR requested HANES to furnish him any information and offered to set up a three-way conference with the FBI, USA's Office and HANES at HANES' convenience. HANES mentioned that he had offered to give information to the FBI previously but the FBI did not seem too interested and TAYLOR said he told HANES this was an incorrect impression since HANES was trying to "trade information" with the FBI and the FBI was not in a position to furnish any information from its files to HANES with a pending trial of the subject. According to TAYLOR, HANES reluctantly agreed this might be the case. No agreement was made for a conference but the door was left open in the event the three possible parties could reach mutual agreement as to a time and place.

I told TAYLOR the position of the FBI was still the same, i.e., we will receive any information HANES has to offer at any time. I told TAYLOR I could see no objection to an agent of this office meeting with TAYLOR and HANES at a mutually agreeable time to receive any information HANES might have. I also told TAYLOR I felt HANES did not have anything new to offer but was only interested in furthering publicity which would benefit HANES. TAYLOR seemed uncertain as to whether he wanted to pursue the conference idea any further and asked when you would return which, I gathered, means he wants to talk to you further about it.