

copy to = H. WELSBORG
graaff uses is taking quotations out of context. Consider this quote from David Raup ("Conflicts Between Darwin and Paleontology," *Field Museum of Natural History Bulletin*) on page 34:

We are now about 120 years after Darwin, and knowledge of the fossil record has been greatly expanded. We now have a quarter of a million fossil species, but the situation hasn't changed very much...we have even fewer examples of evolutionary transition than we had in Darwin's time.

Actually this quote is somewhat truncated. It should read:

We are now about 120 years after Darwin, and knowledge of the fossil record has been greatly expanded. We have a quarter of a million fossil species, but the situation hasn't changed very much...we have even fewer

examples of evolutionary transition than we had in Darwin's time. By this I mean that some of the classic cases of Darwinian change in the fossil record, such as the evolution of the horse in North America, have had to be discarded or modified as a result of more detailed information—what appeared to be a nice simple progression when relatively few data were available now appears to be much more complex and much less gradualistic. So Darwin's problem has not been alleviated in the last 120 years and we still have a record which does show change but one that can hardly be looked upon as the most reasonable consequence of natural selection.

Raup is certainly not saying either that the evolution of the horse has to be discarded nor that there aren't transitions. The evolution of the horse now shows considerable branching. Raup isn't contesting the fact of evolution,

but the degree to which it is controlled by natural selection. This is made clear earlier in the same article (emphasis in the original): "We must distinguish between the fact of evolution—defined as change in the organism over time—and the explanation of this change. Darwin's contribution, through his theory of natural selection, was to suggest how the evolutionary change took place."

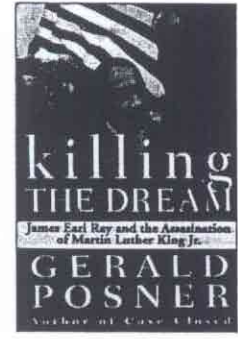
In other words, once Raup's words are put back in context, it is obvious that he is in no way denying either the existence of transitional fossils or the fact of evolution. Only by selective editing can creationists twist Raup's words to their use.

In conclusion, there is nothing new and little of note in this very minor book, with the possible exception that it serves as a reminder to keep one's arguments polished because creationists are still out there.

FOR HATE OR MONEY?

Review of Gerald Posner, *Killing the Dream: James Earl Ray and the Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Random House, 1998, ISBN: 0-375-50082-0. 447 pages. \$25.00.

RICHARD MORROCK



POLITICS MAKES STRANGE BEDFELLOWS, to be sure, but there can be few stranger sights in politics than the stomach-wrenching spectacle of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s family embracing James Earl Ray, the man who murdered their husband and father, and endorsing his claims that he was the innocent victim of a frame-up.

This bizarre event was orchestrated by Dr. William Pepper, a close friend of King's, and one of the few whites in the leadership of the civil rights movement. Pepper, who helped persuade King to take a stand against the Vietnam War, became convinced that it was King's position on this issue that sealed his fate, rather than his prominent role in the civil rights movement. Since that would implicate the military and intelligence communities,

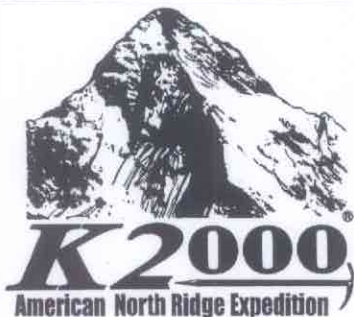
rather than racists, Pepper concluded that James Earl Ray had been set up. He signed on as the last in a long series of Ray's lawyers, and wrote a book—*Orders to Kill*—that places the blame for King's murder on a conspiracy involving FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, Texas billionaire H.L. Hunt, the Mafia, the Pentagon, the Memphis police, and a local bar owner who he claims fired the shot that killed King.

Pepper's far-fetched theory echoes speculation about the JFK assassination, and, true to form, lawyer-turned-journalist Gerald Posner has produced a book to reassure us that King's murder was not, after all, plotted in the Pentagon basement, and may have had something to do with his civil rights activities. Most of Posner's focus in *Killing the Dream* is on James Earl Ray and his family, and he gives us

a portrait of the underside of American life that would hold our interest even if the King assassination were not involved.

A cross between the Addams Family and the Waltons, the Rays are the sort of people whose family albums are filled with "Wanted" posters. The average male member of the clan appears to have spent about three-quarters of his adult life behind bars, and the figure would be even higher, except that great-grandpa Ned got himself hanged. Born in an Illinois suburb of St. Louis, James Earl Ray grew up in northeastern Missouri, a dirt-poor region populated by transplanted Southern whites. Even there, the Rays were held in contempt by their slightly better-off neighbors. Notwithstanding Pepper's insistence that James Earl Ray was not a racist,

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Posner indicates that he was a Nazi sympathizer during World War Two, and had some involvement with the Wallace campaign in the months prior to King's murder. In fact, given Ray's background, it would be most unusual for him to have been anything other than a racist.

Ray was a career criminal by profession, usually working alone, and unable to hold down anything more than the most menial legitimate job. One would not even expect to find him at a cross-burning—he was too anti-social. And nothing links him to any Nazi-style cult that might have persuaded him to risk his life and freedom for the sake of twisted ideals, in a manner similar to Timothy McVeigh. Posner speculates that Ray might have killed King for motives of "ego," but on the basis of his own research, if that was the motive, Ray was among the least likely suspects in America. Approaching middle age, with nothing but a criminal past behind him, Ray would have had only one logical reason to assassinate King: money.

Posner reveals Ray to be a pathological liar, and a poor one at that. Arrested in London with a false Canadian passport, and accused of being the American wanted for King's murder, Ray insisted he was "Ramon George Sneyd" from Toronto, and suggested that the police speak to his brother, Jerry Ray, in St. Louis, if they doubted him. His tale of a mysterious "Raoul" killing King and using him as the patsy was nothing but a self-serving fable concocted by a convict with time on his hands. In this, Posner is backed by David Lifton, a researcher who has argued, in his book *Best Evidence*, that Oswald was framed. Curiously, Posner, whose *Case Closed* was publicized in full-page ads accusing Lifton of being "Guilty...of misleading the American public," offers profuse thanks to Lifton for his assistance. But, as I said, politics makes strange bedfellows.

Another Kennedy-assassination buff who makes an unexpected appearance in Posner's book is G. Robert Blakey, chief counsel to the House Committee that looked into the Kennedy and King assassinations in the late 1970s. Answering Pepper's charges that New Orleans mobster Carlos Marcello had

something to do with King's murder, Blakey—an authority on organized crime—declares that mobsters never engage in political assassinations; the risk is far too high, and the benefits too low. This sounds logical, but what is one to make of Blakey's own book, *Fatal Hour*, in which he argues that the same Carlos Marcello was behind the assassination of President Kennedy?

The question of who ultimately ordered Martin Luther King's murder is still open, but, after a mere 30 years, there are certain things of which we can be sure. First, James Earl Ray did indeed kill King; second, his only likely motive was to earn money; third, there had to be someone making the offer to pay him; fourth, the only people Ray would not have informed on after his capture were his two brothers, Jerry and John, themselves both career criminals; and fifth, neither Jerry nor John had the kind of money that would have tempted James to commit the deed.

It follows, therefore, that Ray's brothers—either or both—were in contact with someone who had put a price on King's head. Posner mentions two racists in St. Louis, John Sutherland and John Kaufmann, who he claims put up a "bounty," spreading the rumor in the right circles that they would pay \$50,000 to anyone who killed King. Of course, it is unclear why they didn't anticipate a dozen or more claimants demanding payment after King's death.

Unfortunately, Posner says very little about these two who, if he is right, were at least as responsible for King's assassination as James Earl Ray. More to the point, it was Blakey who first spoke of Sutherland and Kaufmann in an article published during the 1970s. But since Blakey now appears to have recanted his entire book on the JFK assassination, he is hardly the most credible source. And if Posner has another source on Sutherland and Kaufmann, aside from Blakey, why haven't we learned anything new about that pair over the last 25 years? Could they have been involved in anything else, one wonders?

There is one clue that few have looked into: the background of Eric S. Galt, the Canadian defense plant employee whom Ray was impersonating for months before the King

murder. One might want to take Pepper with a grain of salt, but he gives us more detail about Galt than does Posner. Galt, who bore a passing resemblance to Ray, had clearance from the CIA and NSA. In fact, the photo of him which both Posner and Pepper feature in their books comes from his NSA file, although only Pepper makes note of it. This has been grist for the conspiracists' mill,

allowing them to hint that powerful intelligence agencies may have been involved.

But since Ray turns out to be guilty and Galt innocent, is it possible that someone was deliberately setting up the CIA and NSA to take the blame for the King assassination? That would seem to be beyond the horizons of a pair of Midwest businessmen with shady connections and a mere \$50,000 to spend.

And, by the way, what made Sutherland and Kaufmann so confident of avoiding prosecution—or vengeance—that they used their own names? Odds are those were aliases.

Gerald Posner has given us a definitive biography of confessed killer James Earl Ray, and has put to rest the ludicrous myth that he was innocent. But the story of the men who put Ray up to the killing has yet to be written.

PHYSICIAN AS PRIEST AND COUNSELOR

A review of *Medicine in the English Middle Ages*
by Faye Getz, Princeton University Press, 1998, 174 pp.

HARRY K. ZIEL, M.D.



7 HIS IS A BOOK FOR THE SERIOUS student of medieval English medical history. It covers a time span of 700 years from 750 to 1450. The reader will realize that although technical medical advances were nil during that period, the basic philosophy of who physicians should be and how they should function became established then, and this concept of what a physician should be is still the same today as it was half a millennium ago.

Physicians at that time were measured by their ability to predict the time of death, then considered for the most part unavoidable, so that the dying individual would have both his worldly and spiritual houses in order before he passed on. Death with quiet dignity and decorum was the medieval goal.

Early in this period anyone who wanted could take up the medical trade—no formal training or standard methods of care existed. Any individual at any level of society might declare himself a practitioner. Some priests for example functioned as physicians by dispensing the healing powers of the sacraments.

The author, a historian of medicine, rather compulsively chronicles the recorded history of medical care. Getz has

compiled an extensive bibliography, both a name and a subject index, and detailed notes which total an impressive 84 pages. The text of the five chapters of her book, by comparison, consists of only 92 pages. Accordingly, the reader recognizes that the book is a resource for scholars of early medical history. Getz correctly points out that the written history of medicine during this 700-year period was probably quite different from actual practice. Practitioners who ministered to the masses with their herbs, poultices, and nostrums never recorded their methods of care. As a consequence, we know only what the upper level providers did for the upper classes and nobility, and not much else.

Toward the end of this 700-year era, the rudiments of today's medical practice arose. English law then required certain standards of medical vocabulary and judgment—the beginning of “quality assurance” as we know it today! Fraternal organizations, or guilds, arose first to exercise social controls, then to train the unemployed in a trade, and later to promote trade. Toward the 15th century, large cities had stable guilds of barber-surgeons which had attained official recognition by the city administrations.

Perhaps most interestingly, Getz offers insight into the social ills of the times. She recounts how property inheritance laws affected the moral thinking of the English community. “The fact that a childless woman would almost certainly lose her property on the death of her husband to a male relative...has occasioned a number of posthumous pregnancies. The claim by one such woman that her (newborn) son was his late father's heir was overturned by jury in 1294 because the child's birth had occurred 40 weeks and 11 days after her husband's death, which was 11 days past the legal limit.” (We know today that 3% of pregnancies exceed 42 weeks in duration.) Getz further notes: “A thirteenth century legal formulary advised women who claimed they were pregnant after a husband's death to be examined by lawful and discreet women and thereafter (stay) isolated.”

The author concludes, “But then as now, all lives must come to an end. The human need for a wise and kindly advisor...who had the learned judgment to determine that death was near and the courage to let the sufferer know it, is with us still. Medieval English medicine...left us with an ideal: the physician as a priest and counselor.” □