

23 Sept 1968

Harold:

Enclosed are ^a copies of a recent letter from Sprague and a portion of a letter from Murr concerning the False Ray.

I am somewhat confused concerning who knows what. No matter: Sprague still seems the chief repository of information on the Ray case, and I shall continue to tell you and him all that I know.

I suspect that Gough is holding out on Sprague ~~regarding~~ regarding his interviews with Toronto witnesses who saw Toronto Ray. Perhaps he wants to let his info hang-fire until he can gain publicity for his committee. If that's the case he's a damned fool, for he is keeping us guessing about the matter like the blind men feeling the elephant.

I recommended to Sprague that if he has sufficient evidence, he should try to persuade Ralph Abernathy, King's successor in the SCLC, that Memphis Ray is probably innocent. Hopefully, then, Abernathy could publicly disclose that he does not believe Ray killed King. The effect of such a revelation from Abernathy would be tremendous, on both blacks and whites. Best of all, the press cannot ignore the issue, and dare not ridicule it.

I want to keep Dawnay (ergo Joesten) in the dark for a while concerning Beckham. Therefore I intend to apply to him the pseudonym "Buzzer" in my correspondence with Dawnay. I don't like holding out on Dawnay, for he is doing good work and deserves trust, but if Joesten gets hold of this there is no telling where he will take it.

If you can add data on ^{description of} Beckham, I would appreciate it-- especially I would like to know whether he speaks with an accent, and if so, is it a German accent. Also other stuff that you think may be relevant. I thought of asking Garrison about Beckham, but Garrison doesn't know me and there is no reason why he should bother to answer my questions without a prior explanation why I want the information. Perhaps you can get it from Garrison.

I am using the names Toronto Ray, London Ray, Memphis Ray, and the like because I wish to leave open the possibility that each of the various Rays is a different man, and that none of them is James Earl Ray-- not even the man in custody in Memphis. I suspect that that is the case.

Still,

Dick

↓
e.g. is he a
dope addict?

Here is what Gary Murr says in his 11 Sept 68 letter to me (transcribed exactly as it appears):

with a few irrelevant changes.

About the Ray thing. I've talked to Sprague and Gough and am sorry but can tell you practically nothing for now. I can say that the Toront Ray does not match the description of London Ray. Also I will say that some definite recognition of Frenchy was shown on the part of some witnesses involved. I'm sorry but that's all I can really tell you at this time. Trent and Sprague intend to turn everything over to Ray's lawyer once they see the trial started and the path Ray's lawyer is going to take. Also, Sprage told me that he believes Frenchy shows up in some NBC video-tape taken in the L.A. kitchen moments after Robert Kennedy was shot. He wouldn't elaborate any further than that for now though. Gough did verify this for me and said that they had some other leads on the Frenchy thing.

COPY OF LETTER
FROM STRAGUE

37 Harvard Drive
Hartsdale, N. Y. 10530
September 20, 1968

Mr. Richard Bernabei
Queens University
Dept. of Classics
Kingston, Ontario

Dear Dick:

I think you really have something with the false Ray in London and Memphis. The guy in jail has not yet had his picture taken or published except for the one issued by the sheriff. In the last court hearing he did not show up. A radio broadcast the other day quoted Hanes as saying he was afraid his client is having a mental breakdown and will not be able to stand trial.

I believe I told you of my suspicions that Hanes is part of the Company act. Maybe the guy in London and the guy in Memphis are two different Company employees, set up to make the public believe Ray was caught and is in jail. The plan is that he will die of some mental disturbance causing suicide and we'll never see a photo of him.

I sent Hanes all the info I had including Frenchy's photo, sketches, etc. I put in a test, however; I said I know who French is and that he shot King. If Hanes were level, he would have replied pronto. As it is, he hasn't answered, and several weeks have passed. For my money that makes him part of the act.

I thought about contacting Ray's two brothers who were supposed to be holed up in Memphis, but they have probably been paid to say it's their brother in jail, or else just to shut up. With both the FBI and the Company in on the King frameup, almost anything can be expected.

Mrs. Thomas' description sounds a lot like Thomas Beckham and/or the guy in the DCA film wearing sunglasses that I'm sure is Beckham. I'll have some copies made of both photos for you to send to Downay.

I don't know any more than you do about the guy who stayed in Toronto.

The man who interviewed the Memphis, Birmingham and Atlanta witnesses was Jeff Paley, Paris newspaperman, and son of William Paley, chairman of the board of CBS. Jeff tried to show Frenchy's photo to Bessie Brewer, but she refused to look at it or to talk to Jeff. She also prevented him from seeing Charles Stephens. However he did show Frenchy's photo to Peter Cherpes the Birmingham landlord, who did seem to recognize it but refused to talk also.

Hanes requested a chance to interview all of these witnesses but was turned down by the judge. The FBI have instructed all of them not to talk to anyone.

Can you figure a way to get into the Memphis jail and get a look at the false Ray and a photo? Or can you figure a way of getting into the courtroom with a camera the next time he shows up there? (If he ever does.)

Regards,

Dick

P. S. Beckham looks like he uses dope, but I have no other info that he's an addict.