

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Mr. DeLoach

DATE: 6-25-

FROM : T. E. Bishop

SUBJECT: ASSASSINATION OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING

Tolson	
DeLoach	
Walters	
Mohr	
Bishop	
Casper	
Callahan	
Conrad	
Felt	
Gale	
Rosen	
Sullivan	
Tavel	
Trotter	
Tele. Room	
Holmes	
Gandy	

M. J. Jones

In memorandum from Bishop to DeLoach of 6-24-70, it was stated that Bill King in the Information Office of the Department of Justice advised Bishop on 6-24-70 that the Department had decided it would not be possible for the Government to successfully defend the civil action by Harold Weisberg against the Department for the release of the documents which Weisberg is seeking to secure from the Department, and copies of these documents were, accordingly, furnished to Weisberg by the Department. King also advised that he was going to release these documents to the press at 3:00 p. m. on 6-24-70. The Director has inquired "Did you get a written instruction from Dept confirming conversation King had with you?"

For the information of the Director, a written notice has been received from the Department to the effect that it had decided that it would not be possible for the Government to successfully defend the civil action by Weisberg against the Department for the release of the documents in question, or that these documents were, therefore, furnished to Weisberg. The first notice of this action was when King telephoned Bishop at approximately 11:50 a. m. on 6-24-70, at which time King also stated that the Department was releasing copies of these documents to the press at 3:00 p. m. on 6-24-70. The Department subsequently, on 6-24-70, furnished Bishop copies of the documents being released.

RECOMMENDATION:

None. For information.

REC-3

JUN 29 1970

5887

- 1 - Mr. DeLoach
- 1 - Mr. Bishop
- 1 - Mr. Rosen
- 1 - Mr. Sullivan
- 1 - Mr. M. A. Jones

When you get out should insist on written confirmation of such matter.

only my own judgment.

TEB:hak (6)

70 JUN 30 1970

6-9-70

Memorandum

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By way of background, on 4/27/70 Assistant Attorney General William Ruckelshaus, Civil Division, Department of Justice, advised the Director that Harold Weisberg, the author of the books "Whitewash I" and "Whitewash II" has filed a civil action against the Department of State demanding copies of all the papers which were employed in the extradition in the James Earl Ray matter. These documents were used in the extradition proceedings against James Earl Ray in England and were thereafter returned to the State Department and were transferred to the Department of Justice. Included in the documents are a considerable number of affidavits of FBI Agents, affidavits covering fingerprint examinations, etc. Ruckelshaus asked if the release of these documents to Weisberg would in any way prejudice the work of the FBI. It is noted that Weisberg is an author who has been extremely critical of the FBI, the Secret Service and other police agencies in books which he has written about the assassination of President Kennedy.

By memorandum of April 30th the Director advised Ruckelshaus that the determination as to the release of the pertinent documents is within the province of the Department of Justice and the FBI interposes no objection. It was suggested, however, that the Civil Division communicate with the Civil Rights Division of the Department on this matter since the Federal process was still outstanding against Ray charging a violation of Federal Civil Rights Statute.

The Bureau is in possession of a copy of a letter dated May, 1970, from Jerris Leonard, Assistant Attorney General, Civil Rights Division, to Ruckelshaus stating that any release of any information in the files pertaining to the investigation regarding James Earl Ray would be inimicable to the investigation.

Enc. 1 - ENCLOSURE

- 1 - Mr. DeLoach
- 1 - Mr. Bishop
- 1 - Mr. Rosen
- 1 - Mr. Sullivan
- 1 - Mr. Jones

(CONTINUED-OVER)

JUN 30 1970

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125/3 JUN 29 1970

Memorandum to Mr. DeLoach
Re: Assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King
Current Developments

On 6/24/70 Bill King in the Information Justice, advised that the Department subsequently be possible for the Government to successfully defend Weisberg against the Department for the release of. Accordingly, copies of these documents were furnished to Weisberg the Department did not wish Weisberg possession of the documents and, accordingly, has copies available to the press and others who might that the documents to be released consist of approximately 200 pages of copies of affidavits, autopsy reports, affidavits with regard to fingerprint examinations and ballistics tests, and copies of other documents which serve to link Ray with the assassination of Martin Luther King. At Ray's request King furnished the attached set of the documents being released. King stated that these documents will be released to the press at 3 p. m. 6/24/70.

Office, Department of Justice, advised that it would not defend the civil action by Weisberg. King stated that he had released the documents to Weisberg. King stated that he did not wish Weisberg to make a profit from his possession of the documents and, accordingly, has decided to make similar copies available to the press and others who might desire them. King stated that the documents to be released consist of approximately 200 pages of copies of affidavits, autopsy reports, affidavits with regard to fingerprint examinations and ballistics tests, and copies of other documents which serve to link Ray with the assassination of Martin Luther King. At Ray's request King furnished the attached set of the documents being released. King stated that these documents will be released to the press at 3 p. m. 6/24/70.

The General Investigative Division has been orally advised of the above information.

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RECOMMENDATION

None. For information.

P

*Rec'd
Did you
investigate
concerning
King in
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*TJB
WSP
get a written
from Dept
of conversation
with you?
K*