

FBI WASH DC
914 PM 8P URGENT 7/3/68 ELS
TO DIRECTOR AND JACKSON
FROM ATLANTA 44-2386

RECEIVED
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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

MURKIN

*7/3/68
11:15
As held in original
Raymond Curtis
at 11:15 (FBI) initially
for
Mc Donough
9/25*

RE BUREAU TELEPHONE CALL TO ATLANTA JULY TWO LAST.

RAYMOND CURTIS WAS INTERVIEWED AT WHITFIELD CO. JAIL, DALTON, GA., JULY THREE INSTANT BY SAs [REDACTED] JR., AND [REDACTED] CURTIS IS CURRENTLY CONFINED WHITFIELD CO. JAIL AWAITING APPEAL ON LIFE SENTENCE FOR MURDER. CURTIS WAS ADVISED OF THE IDENTITY OF THE INTERVIEWING AGENTS THROUGH DISPLAY OF CREDENTIALS. HE WAS FURNISHED A RIGHTS AND WAIVER OF RIGHTS FORM WHICH HE READ, INDICATED HE UNDERSTOOD, AND REFUSED TO SIGN. HE ADVISED HE KNEW HE WAS BEING INTERVIEWED CONCERNING STATEMENTS HE MADE IN A LETTER HE HAD MAILED TO MR. SANDERS OF EBONY MAGAZINE. CURTIS STATED HE WAS MERELY TRYING TO SELL A STORY TO EBONY FOR APPROXIMATELY FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS TO HELP HIS MOTHER PAY OFF A MORTGAGE ON HER HOME, WHICH SHE MORTGAGED TO OBTAIN ATTORNEY FEES FOR HIS DEFENSE. FIRST HE STATED, WITH REFERENCE TO THESE STATEMENTS, THAT HE AND JAMES EARL RAY PULLED A CRIME IN FIFTYFOUR, WHICH WAS A PURGLARY IN JOLIET, ILL., IN OCT, OR NOV., FIFTYFOUR. AT THIS POINT IT WAS POINTED OUT TO CURTIS THAT CERTAIN

*Mc Donough
9/25*

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cc - Mc Donough

6-8-68

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STATEMENTS MADE BY HIM IN HIS LETTER TO EBONY COULD POSSIBLY INVOLVE HIM IN A CONSPIRACY WITH RAY CONCERNING THE KILLING OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. CURTIS CATEGORICALLY DENIED THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS WHICH WERE IN HIS LETTER TO EBONY MAGAZINE:

1. THAT HE AND JAMES EARL RAY PULLED A CRIME IN FIFTYFOUR.
2. THAT RAY WANTED THE JOB OF KILLING KING.
3. THAT HE AND RAY TALKED ABOUT KILLING KING FOR THREE YEARS.
4. THAT THEY TALKED TO THE MAN FROM MISSISSIPPI THAT KNEW ALL ABOUT THE KK BUSINESSMANS ASSOCIATION THAT WAS TO PUT UP THE MONEY TO KILL KING.
5. THAT HE KNEW THE MEN FROM MISSISSIPPI.
6. FOR THREE YEARS, THAT HE AND RAY MADE MAPS JUST TO FIND THE RIGHT PLACE TO KILL KING AND THAT HE HAD MADE THE MAPS OVER HIMSELF.
7. HE AND RAY KNEW JUST WHERE THEY WOULD GO AFTER THE KILLING OF KING.
8. THAT HE WAS TO BE IN ON THE KILLING OF KING.

END PAGE TWO

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PAGE THREE

9. THAT THERE ARE MEN IN FIVE STATES THAT ARE BEHIND THE KING KILLING AND THAT DO NOT KNOW WHAT HE KNOWS.

DURING THE INTERVIEW, CURTIS DREW CRUDE MAPS SETTING OUT HOW HE THOUGHT RAY WOULD STALK KING. THIS MAP SHOWED THE FOLLOWING TOWNS WHERE HE SAID KING MADE MOST OF HIS SPEECHES: ATLANTA, LITTLE ROCK, BIRMINGHAM, MOBILE, SELMA, JACKSON, VICKSBURGS, MISS., AND MARKS, MISS. HE FURTHER POINTED OUT THERE WAS A MAN LIVING ON A HOUSEBOAT IN VICKSBURG ON THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER (WHOSE FIRST NAME HE KNEW BUT WOULD NOT DIVULGE). THIS MAN WAS TO TAKE RAY DOWN THE RIVER ON HIS BOAT TO NEW ORLEANS AFTER THE KILLING. HE STATED IN THE PAST HE (CURTIS) HAD PULLED SEVERAL BURGLARY AND ARMED ROBBERIES (HE WOULD NOT COMMENT ON PARTICULARS) IN TOWNS ALONG THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER AND WHILE POLICE WERE LOOKING FOR HIM ON THE HIGHWAY HE WOULD BE ON A BOAT DOWN THE MISSISSIPPI. HE FURTHER STATED HE HAD WRITTEN A STORY CONCERNING THE KING KILLING WHICH WAS CURRENTLY OUT BEING TYPED AND IT WAS THE STORY HE MENTIONED IN THE LETTER TO EBONY AND INTENDED TO SELL TO EBONY.

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PAGE FOUR

SHERIFF G. T. MAULDIN, NA, WHO IS SHERIFF OF WHITFIELD CO., GA., AND OPERATES THE COUNTY JAIL, ADVISED CURTIS HAD SENT NO LETTERS OR COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE JAIL WHICH WENT OVER THE JAILERS DESK. HE SAID CURTIS WOULD PROBABLY SEND ALL MAIL OUT WITH VISITORS AND JAIL TRUSTEES AND WOULD PROBABLY NOT HAVE BEEN OBSERVED BY MEN OF HIS DEPT. IT IS FURTHER POINTED OUT THAT CURTIS' ATTORNEY, ERWIN MITCHELL, FORMER U.S. CONGRESSMAN FOR THE SEVENTH DISTRICT OF GA., IS OF THE OPINION THAT MOST OF CURTIS' COMMENTS CONCERNING HIS KNOWLEDGE OF RAY'S ASSASSINATION OF KING ARE PURE FABRICATIONS ON THE PART OF CURTIS OR AS A RESULT OF SOMETHING CURTIS HAS READ IN LOCAL PAPERS.

APPROXIMATELY ONE HOUR AFTER THE CONCLUSION OF THE INTERVIEW WITH CURTIS, HE SENT A NOTE TO SHERIFF G. T. MAULDIN REQUESTING TO AGAIN SEE AN FBI AGENT, THAT HE NOW WANTED TO TELL THE ENTIRE TRUTH. CURTIS WAS AGAIN INTERVIEWED BY SA [REDACTED], AND AGAIN FURNISHED A RIGHTS FORM WHICH HE REFUSED TO SIGN. HE THEN STATED THAT APPARENTLY IN HIS LETTER TO EBONY HE USED THE WORK "WE" INDICATING THAT HE AND JAMES EARL RAY HAD PLANNED THE KING MURDER WHICH WOULD INVOLVE HIM IN A CONSPIRACY AND FOR

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PAGE FIVE

THAT REASON HE DENIED THE STATEMENTS IN LETTER TO EBONY. HE THEN ADVISED HE HAD WRITTEN A STORY WHICH HE INTENDED TO SELL TO SOME MAGAZINE FOR THE PURPOSE OF OBTAINING MONEY FOR HIS MOTHER WHICH STORY WAS STILL IN HIS POSSESSION AND WHICH HE HAD NOT YET SENT OUT TO BE TYPED. HE ALLOWED SA HENRY TO READ THIS APPROXIMATELY TWENTY PAGE STORY, HANDWRITTEN, ONE PAGE AT A TIME. HE DECLARED THIS STORY WAS TRUE. THE FIRST FIVE OR SIX PAGES OF THIS STORY MERELY SET OUT HIS EARLY LIFE IN CRIME AND THE PRISON SENTENCES HE HAD SERVED AS A RESULT OF THESE CRIMES FROM THE AGE OF FIFTEEN. THE REMAINDER OF THE STORY IS THE SAME AS WAS SET FORTH IN THE ORIGINAL INTERVIEW WITH CURTIS IN APRIL, SIXTYEIGHT CONCERNING HIS KNOWLEDGE AND ASSOCIATION WITH RAY. THIS STORY DOES REFLECT THAT HE FIRST BECAME ASSOCIATED WITH RAY IN FIFTYFOUR WHEN THEY PULLED A PAYROLL HEIST IN QUINCY, ILL., WITH A THIRD INDIVIDUAL. SHORTLY THEREAFTER, HE LOST CONTACT WITH RAY WHEN HE AND THIS THIRD INDIVIDUAL WERE CAUGHT IN A FIFTY-SIX THOUSAND DOLLAR BANK ROBBERY AT SOUTHWEST CITY, MO. AFTER THAT HE AGAIN BECAME ACQUAINTED WITH RAY IN PRISON AND WHILE IN PRISON THEY BOTH LEARNED OF THE DEATH OF

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PAGE SIX

PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY. RAY THEN STATED IT SOUNDED LIKE A BIG JOB AND HE WAS ALWAYS ON THE INSIDE OR A PRISON WHEN BIG JOBS AND BIG MONEY WERE TO BE HAD.

SHORTLY AFTER THE DEATH OF JOHN F. KENNEDY, MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., BECAME PROMINENT AND RAY STATED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS THAT SOMEBODY WAS GOING TO KILL KING. THE STORY WENT ON TO REFLECT THAT DURING THIS PERIOD AN INDIVIDUAL CAME INTO THE MISSOURI STATE PENITENTIARY AT JEFFERSON CITY FROM VICKSBURG, MISS., AND WHO, UPON LEARNING OF JAMES EARL RAY'S FEELINGS TOWARD KILLING KING, ADVISED HIM OF THE KK BUSINESSMEN ASSOCIATION OF THE SOUTH AND OF THE FACT THAT PEOPLE IN FIVE STATES WERE PUTTING UP MONEY FOR KING'S ASSASSINATION. THE STORY FURTHER POINTED OUT THAT RAY INFORMED HIM THAT HE INTENDED TO HAVE EVERYTHING SET WHEN HE KILLED KING AND THAT RAY, THROUGH MAPS, LEARNED OF KING'S MOVEMENTS SO HE COULD LATER STALK HIM TO THE POINT OF ASSASSINATION. THE STORY FURTHER POINTED OUT THAT RAY ADVISED HE WOULD LEAVE A FALSE GUN AND FALSE TRAIL IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE MURDER. RAY WAS SUPPOSED TO

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GO TO VICKSBURG FOLLOWING THE MURDER, CONTACT THE MAN FROM VICKSBURG, MISS., WHO HAD THE HOUSEBOAT, AND THIS MAN WAS TO TAKE HIM EITHER TO NEW ORLEANS OR CANADA VIA THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER.

AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE INTERVIEW, CURTIS STATED HE WOULD NOT TESTIFY TO ANY OF THE ABOVE. HE DID ADVISE IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE THAT THE NAME OF THE INDIVIDUAL ON THE HOUSEBOAT IN VICKSBURG, MISS., WAS (FNU) WILLETT, ALSO KNOWN AS MISSISSIPPI WHO SERVED TIME IN THE MISSOURI STATE PENITENTIARY.

THE STORY ALSO MENTIONED A MAN FROM NEW ORLEANS WHO COULD OBTAIN ANY KIND OF IDENTIFICATION AND CURTIS LATER IDENTIFIED THIS MAN AS JOE COIN, WHICH INFORMATION HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN SET OUT IN AN INTERVIEW WITH CURTIS. THROUGHOUT THE INTERVIEW WITH CURTIS, AND WHILE READING CURTIS' STORY, HE CONTINUED TO EMPHASIZE THE FACT THAT HE WOULD NOT TESTIFY AGAINST RAY AS HE FEARED FOR HIS LIFE. HE INDICATED THAT ANY STATE PRISON HE WAS SENT TO WOULD PROBABLY HAVE INDIVIDUALS WHO WOULD KILL HIM AS A RESULT OF PREVIOUS INFORMATION HE FURNISHED THE PRESS AND TV MEDIA AND IT IS FELT HE WAS USING THIS AS AN EXCUSE AS TO WHY HE

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DID NOT WANT TO BE SENT TO A STATE PRISON ON HIS CURRENT LIFE SENTENCE. HE STATED HE WOULD NOT ALLOW HIS STORY TO BE XEROXED NOR WOULD HE WRITE IT OVER AGAIN OR ALLOW THE PAGES TO LEAVE HIS CELL. HE DID STATE HE WOULD TRANSCRIBE HIS STORY OVER A DICTATING MACHINE AND WOULD REDRAW CERTAIN MAPS HE PRODUCED FOR HIS STORY.

HE THEN PRESENTED CRUDE SKETCHES OF THE FED. PENITENTIARY AT LEVENWORTH, THE MISSOURI STATE PEN, IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE MENTIONED MAP CONCERNING THE TOWNS WHERE KING MADE NUMEROUS SPEECHES.

UACB, CURTIS WILL BE ALLOWED TO DICTATE HIS STORY ON A DICTATING MACHINE IN THE PRESENCE OF SA [REDACTED]

DUE TO THE UNRELIABILITY OF CURTIS, NO LEAD FOR AN EXTENSIVE INVESTIGATION IS BEING SET FORTH FOR JACKSON IN CONNECTION WITH IDENTIFYING (FNU) WILLETT, AKA MISSISSIPPI UACB.

END

CAB

FBI WASH DC

TUP

July 5, 1968

1 - Mr. McDonough

AIRTEL

REC-19

44-23861 *11/11/11*

TO: SAC's, Jackson, Atlanta

FROM: Director, FBI

MURKIN

ReATTel 7/3/68.

Jackson should make reasonable efforts to identify and interview (FNU) Willett, and run out any pertinent information developed and surep or LHM.

Since Curtis refuses to furnish "his story" for appropriate copying, it will not be necessary for an Agent to have him dictate on a dictating machine in the Agent's presence. Curtis is not to set the terms on which he will furnish information to the FBI, particularly since to date he has not furnished anything of substantive value. Atlanta Su LHM.

For information of Memphis, "Ebony" Magazine forwarded letters from Raymond Curtis, inmate of Whitfield County Jail, Dalton, Georgia, in which he alleged among other things that he and Ray planned the King killing and businessmen put up money for the King murder. Curtis was previously interviewed and furnished nebulous information along the same lines which was run out and nothing of substantive value was developed (See report of Alan G. Sentinella dated 5/17/68, at Atlanta, copies to Memphis). On re interview on 7/3/68, Curtis originally recounted substantially the whole story he had set out in his letters to "Ebony" but then recontacted the Agents and claimed that the "story" was true. Among his allegations, he indicated that an individual named (FNU) Willett who was also known

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SEE NOTE PAGE TWO.....

JUL 13 1968

MAIL ROOM TELETYPE UNIT

AIRTEL, SAC'S Jackson, Atlanta
RE: MURKIN

as "Mississippi" was supposed to be contacted by Ray at Vicksburg, Mississippi, after the murder and Willett was to take Ray to either New Orleans or Canada via the Mississippi River in Willetts' houseboat.

As indicated above, the Jackson Office is being instructed to run out the Willett allegation.

NOTE:

Curtis, as of this point, has indicated almost complete unreliability, however, it is felt that reasonable efforts should be made to identify the individual Willett and run out this aspect to a logical completion. Other allegation made by Curtis relative to a mysterious visitor of Ray's while in prison, the alleged bounty on King and the individual named Joe Coin, who furnishes false identifications has previously been explored and nothing of value developed.

Atlanta is being instructed that Curtis is not to set any terms of interview with FBI Agents. Curtis' correspondence with "Ebony" and results of his interviews are being furnished the CRD.