

TRANSCRIPT OF MERV GRIFFIN SHOW

GRIFFIN: You were attorney, weren't you, for Martin Luther King, Mr. Kunstler?

KUNSTLER: I was called his special trial counsel for four years.

GRIFFIN: And you, Mr. Foreman, are the man who got the decision for James Earl Ray, the man who assassinated Martin Luther King. It may very well put him back out into the streets someday.

FOREMAN: No, I doubt it. Not for 33 years, at which time he'll be 74 years old. Won't be much of a menace under the laws of Tennessee.

KUNSTLER: Percy, what was the real reason behind that plea? Uh, many of us suspect that there were other people involved and that the plea was an arrangement to prevent anything from coming to light.

FOREMAN: Well, I would expect some of you to believe that. (Laughter) Wasn't anything behind it except 43 years of trial work and my judgment and his that . . .

KUNSTLER: But why did he shoot Martin Luther King? What was his motive?

FOREMAN: Let me answer your first question. That he would be executed if we didn't plead, the same reason that 98, 95 percent of all criminal cases and most, 95 percent of all civil cases are compromised. Now as to why he killed Martin Luther King, it was because he was a racist. He hated Negroes all his life. He refused to move into an honor farm where he'd have practical liberty because it was . . . uh . . . not . . . he state . . . uh . . . the prison he was in was . . . uh . . . segregated. But the honor farm wasn't and he wouldn't accept clemency from . . . uh . . . Missouri because . . . uh, he'd have to be in a room with Negroes.

KUNSTLER: Where did all the money come from? The thousands of dollars that he had to purchase the car and get to England and the whole bit. That's what I don't understand.

FOREMAN: Well, uh, that's a common question. I'm asked that many times. He robbed a large grocery store in Montreal and got \$1700. Every dollar that he accounted for Bradford Huie . . . every dollar he spent, Bradford Huie has account . . . accounted for to almost to the dollar. He smuggled jewelry from the United States into Mexico. He got \$2100 for that, from automobile tires carrying stolen jewelry across the line into Laredo . . . uh . . .

KUNSTLER: I still have, as you must imagine, many doubts as to whether this was a single operation of a man who was already an escapee from a prison to go out and shoot a figure like Martin Luther King which almost insured his being returned to prison. I just don't understand it.

FOREMAN: Well, you would if you understood Ray's mind. Ray thought that he would be the hero of the white people. But the only people that really mattered to Ray was the inmates of the . . . at Jeffersonville, Missouri in the Penitentiary. Ray would never have been caught. He wanted to be caught. Ray carried his transistor radio with his number from the Missouri Penitentiary that he had bought through the commissary there, it was pasted on there and the number printed. It was left with the gun which had fingerprints all over it but only three were found and he was irate because the FBI had only found three fingerprints. He said there were 31 there. He wrapped it up with a bedsheet, a cover, with his laundry mark on it, not his initials but a laundry mark that was traced, uh He laid all of these down at the foot of the stairs. In the presence of a half dozen people watching him. He walked on 60 steps and got in his car and drove off. He could've carried them all, put'em in the car and they never would have been found. He wanted to be known, he wanted the credit for killing Dr. Martin Luther King. He thought that he would be the hero. That's the type of mind the man has. You gotta understand him to understand why he would do it. You wouldn't have a bit of trouble, if you could talk to him about 45 minutes, of understanding him.