

1:05 PM

June 25, 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. TOLSON
MR. DE LOACH
MR. ROSEN
MR. BEHOP
MR. SULLIVAN

Opmerkin

While talking to Attorney General Ramsey Clark on another matter, he asked how the James Earl Ray investigation looked now. I said I thought it was more or less stymied in legal technicalities in Great Britain as it has to go through a long process on extradition. I commented that, of course, the lawyer who has gone over to represent Ray is a former FBI Agent; that he is no good and was the attorney in the Mrs. Viola Liuzzo case, but, of course, we got convictions in that, but this lawyer has always been strongly pro-Klan. I said he was Mayor of Birmingham, Alabama, at one time and at that time he was a strong supporter of "Bull" Connor and I thought it significant that Ray should get a fellow who has certainly a strong smell of the Klan about him. I said he denies that he is a Klansman or that he ever attended any of their meetings and he claims he does not know how Ray came to ask for him as his lawyer. I said that Ray claims he read about him in the newspaper when he was in the penitentiary in Missouri. The Attorney General said he does not see how Ray would remember that. I agreed and told the Attorney General that the lawyer and his son, who is a partner, went over to England and we alerted our London Office to alert the British as to his background so they would know with whom they are dealing.

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The Attorney General asked how long ago the fellow was with the Bureau and I stated it must have been before the war. The Attorney General then asked how long he was with the Bureau and I told him about three years and that he then went into the practice of law and got into politics in Birmingham and, as I had said, he was a very strong supporter of "Bull" Connor in the use of police dogs, et cetera, in civil rights matters. I said he was the lawyer in the Liuzzo case and won in the local court and then it went into the Federal court on civil rights and he lost. I said he has made many public statements against Martin Luther King when King was living and he has strong animosity against King and against Kennedy. I said it was significant that he is the attorney selected by Ray to represent him in the trial in this country. I said

- Tolson
- DeLoach
- Mohr
- Bishop
- Casper
- Callahan
- Conrad
- Felt
- Gale
- Rosen
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he does not intend to ask for a change of venue if he is to be tried in Memphis. The Attorney General asked if we were getting any evidence that Ray had somebody helping him and supporting him and I told him none whatsoever. I said we were checking various lines as to Ray and Sirhan Sirhan in the Robert F. Kennedy case as to the mysterious woman in the pantry of the Ambassador Hotel and so far they have all fallen through. I said the girl in the Sirhan case has refused to take a lie detector test, but I thought the police were going to give her one although so far she has refused to take one. The Attorney General asked if this were the woman in the polka dot dress and I told him it was the one who claimed she saw the woman in the polka dot dress. The Attorney General said he had read the report on her and got the feeling she was unbalanced. I commented that she was seeking publicity.

I continued that we are also checking as to who was with Sirhan Sirhan at the rifle range when he was practicing with the revolver as well as persons with him when he bought the ammunition. I stated in these instances they were men.

I stated that in Ray's case, we have not found a single angle that would indicate a conspiracy. I said the only significant thing is the money he had and which he spent freely in paying bills and I thought that could have been obtained from a bank robbery. The Attorney General said that if we could show he robbed the bank at Alton, it would be helpful. I said we are working on that because he was paying his bills with \$50 bills up to his arrest. I said on the other hand he stayed at flop houses and never stayed at a first-class hotel but at the same time he spent, I thought, \$1200 or more in buying guns and the car, which I thought was \$1500, and then he took dancing lessons, bartender lessons, and lessons in picking locks, and that is why I think security is so exceedingly important not only in England but on the way back to this country and when he gets here.

The Attorney General commented that he hoped my men can bring him back and asked if that were satisfactory. I told him it was and that I would be strongly of the opinion, unless there is a compelling reason to the contrary, that he ought to be brought back by military plane; that I could not see any difference between a military plane, a Cunard liner, or Pan American; and on the Military plane we would have our Agents and have Ray confined with

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leg irons and handcuffs. I said he is a dangerous individual and is not a damn fool; that he is desperate and will make any effort to escape that he can. I said I thought he should be landed at the Naval airport in Memphis and not the regular airport. The Attorney General asked if we should have a representative of the Memphis Police Department on board or not, and I said I would not think so. I said I would think we would be responsible for taking him from the British and arrange with Frank Holloman to have the Memphis Police at the airport in Memphis on arrival, but to do it almost on an "eyes only" basis so there will be no leak as to where or when he is coming in because we will be plagued by the press, as they are trying everything they can in England to get a line on when he is being moved. I said I noted the lawyer says he expects to be advised exactly when and where he will depart. The Attorney General commented that he will know when he gets in.

I said there is a military airport in London and I thought that is where the military plane should land if it goes from this country with absolute silence on the part of the Commanding General as to its departure; that the first knowledge in this country would come when he is delivered to the Memphis Police with sufficient time to get him into jail. I said the plane should arrive so as not to allow them to go through the city in the daytime but to arrive around 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning. The Attorney General said he was sure that was exactly right. I said otherwise there will be efforts to kill him if there is a conspiracy and if there is no conspiracy, the supporters of Dr. King will do everything in their power to kill him. I said the same thing is true in the case of Sirhan Sirhan in Los Angeles because the feeling on behalf of the Kennedy followers is so strong that they will have to take great precautions to see he is not killed. I said it would be a horrible thing as it would be charged it was done by the Federal Government or something like that and for that reason it must be very carefully handled both as to transportation of Ray from London and incarceration, if he is ever extradited as I think it is going to drag on for five or six weeks. I said what I am afraid of is that there is going to develop in this country criticism on the part of the British in getting this fellow back here. I said people have asked how soon he will be brought back and I have told them it is up to the British as it is not our responsibility as we have done everything so that he has legal representation.

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The Attorney General stated that Assistant Attorney General Fred Vinson, Jr., will be going back over to England Monday night as the Home Secretary and our Ambassador asked that he come back. He said that we have urged in every way that it be speeded up because of the strong feeling in this country about it.

The Attorney General asked then if I thought a military plane is better than leasing a commercial plane and I said I did because when you lease a commercial plane, you would have a crew, unless you put a military crew on it, but there would be no purpose putting a military crew on a commercial plane. I said I could not see any legal difficulty as the method of getting him back does not make much difference as to the legality of the thing or the image of it. The Attorney General commented that he had been thinking the other way. I said he is a dangerous man and has proven himself to be very clever as he headed for various parts of the world as I thought he was headed for Brussels to join the mercenaries and he had plans to go to Rhodesia and he was in Lisbon where he laid around for about a week and came back to London. I said the London Police have never been able to pick up what he was doing for the balance of the time. I said he is a slippery, shrewd individual and he is most contemptuous in manner and action with the prison authorities over there. I said another thing about the British is that they are not tight on security as they do not search a person unless he is convicted and they do not search anybody visiting someone in jail, but that is the old British procedure. The Attorney General commented that it is absolutely wrong. I said I thought any person visiting a prisoner ought to be searched. The Attorney General said he thought my men talked them into doing that. I said they finally did, but they always talk about traditions over there. The Attorney General commented that they were about as strict as anybody on those.

I said I thought we have a very serious problem in moving this fellow and we ought to do it with very carefully laid out plans and take him into the Naval airport in Memphis and arrange to turn him over to Holloman and then announce he is in the custody of the Memphis Police. The Attorney General said he hoped my men were working on that so we will be ready and I told him we were.

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I told the Attorney General that the men who were in London were back here, as one man's father had a serious heart attack. I said one is Special Agent Zeiss, whom he may remember, and the Attorney General said he did, that he was a close friend of his father's and his son knows him, too. I said he will be on the plane and so would John T. Minnich. The Attorney General commented this would be ideal.

The Attorney General asked how we thought Ray got the three names he used. I said this again shows his astuteness as all three are living people residing in Canada who never knew him and never heard of him. I said on the other hand, Ray spent last year, when he was wandering around the country, a great portion of the time in Canada and I thought he was planning this thing and seeking a double identity like Sneyd, Galt, and Bridgeman and checking out those names so if there were any check made on his application for a birth certificate, they could ascertain such a person existed. I said this shows his shrewdness. I said I think we are dealing with a man who is not an ordinary criminal in the usual sense, but a man capable of doing any kind of a sly act. The Attorney General said he was exceptionally clever.

I said Sirhan Sirhan is a different individual as he is a fanatic and killed Robert Kennedy because he spoke in favor of Israel and this fellow being an Arab became intensely bitter against Kennedy and felt he should be killed, which he did, but he is a fanatic and Ray is not a fanatic in that sense. I said I think Ray is a racist and detested Negroes and Martin Luther King and there is indication that prior to the Memphis situation, he had information about King speaking in other towns and then picked out Memphis. I said I think he acted entirely alone, but we are not closing our minds that others might be associated with him and we have to run down every lead.

I said we are getting more crank letters and letters about other people who are going to be killed who are in high office, such as Senator Edward Kennedy, et cetera. I said one does not realize how many nuts are loose in this country until we have a case like this. The Attorney General said it brings them out. I said we have to be careful of all of them; that we take about three away a week who come to my office who complain about persecution and sometimes they are armed and we send them to the hospital and then they are sent to St. Elizabeth's and in two or three months they are back on the streets. The Attorney General said we are going to have to find new ways to deal with that problem as it is not effective now. I said it

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is a problem for the psychiatrists but they are apparently doing little to cure them, but they are mentally unbalanced. The Attorney General said it is a public safety problem now. I said I do not favor the view that the country is depraved and all that. I said I think we have a great block of fine people in this country; that there may be some depraved citizens, but it is not a depraved society. The Attorney General said he thought there was too much emphasis today in the press that society is sick; that it is the fashionable thing to do.

I said I hoped the new Commission the President has appointed will keep a balanced viewpoint as to that because the other Commission went far astray in regard to white racism. I said there is racism but not as predominantly as the Kerner Commission found it to be. The Attorney General said he had never found it so. I said as an example take the meeting yesterday (Solidarity Day); that more than 50% of those who attended were white and it was not predominantly Negro. The Attorney General said that was surprising to him and he felt better to see it that way. I said this shows that white racism is not as predominant as we have been led to believe. I said I hope the Eisenhower Commission when they get around to their findings view it with an unemotional attitude. The Attorney General said there are some good people on the Commission. I said it seems it should be done without emotionalism or crying fire. I said I get annoyed with the editorials about our sick society as I do not believe there is such a thing in this country although there are some sick citizens. The Attorney General said that if I could make this point in the Law Enforcement Bulletin on the Director's page, he thought it would be helpful. I said I have been working on that just recently; that the idea was given to me by McGill of the Atlanta Constitution. I said he had a fine editorial about the attacks on the FBI because we had not found the King murderer after two months and the cracks that we were not trying to find him and then he quoted several verses of the Bible which portrayed Christ as not interested in the poor, but it showed again that there is always an effort to tear down and destroy. I commented that I thought there was a tendency to debunk our Patriots in history. I said it was that sort of thing that I thought drove President Johnson from running for a second term and the Attorney General agreed.

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I mentioned the Students for a Democratic Society as a minority group dominating and the Attorney General said it was a tiny group. I said it is a bad group and it played a big part yesterday at this meeting as they attended but it was just like the Columbia University thing. I said that was staged only about thirty individuals who closed the university which has thousands of students. The Attorney General said they are a pretty clever and effective group and have to be watched carefully. I said they are more effective than out and out communists. The Attorney General said they are doing more harm. I said they are moving into every area they can and we have been watching them closely and we have some good informants. The Attorney General said he thought that is really vital because they are a dangerous group.

The Attorney General expressed his appreciation and said he would keep me posted on this registration of guns.

Very truly yours,

J. E. H.

John Edgar Hoover
Director

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TIME 11:45 AM
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BY [Signature]