Huie

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Harold Weisberg
Frederick MD 21701.

James Ray-65477
BSP
Nashville, 37219.

Dear Harold:

I have your letter dated 29th September. A couple days after receiving it I heard from the FBI re Alexander Eist. According to the documents Eist contacted the bureau and said he was going to make a "financial move" (sell the confession apparently), but out of respect for the bureau wanted to speak to an agent. However two agents instead talked to Scotland yard and the yard told the bureau that: He (Eist), didn't know anything since he was never with me alone & if he did he would have reported it when he received the information. The yard went on to say that he was "disaffected and controversial and had been suspended from the yard for corruption, although a court later acquited him--without a jury I believe. Anyway the agents then spoke to Eist and he told them I had confessed the MLK homicide to him--when he testified before the SC he said I didn't confess, rather told him a lot of incriminating things.
As to his testimony, the FBI document is dated 22 June 1978 which means the SC had access to it and knew Eist was lying. The documents won't help me much but when I later sue the committee (Stokes, Blakey & the clerk of the H or R), I'll attached the document as an exhibit.
I got a copy of the November issue of the "Progressive". I thought it was pretty good, althpught I see where Ramsey Clark changed his story: in 1979 he told Rev. Abernathy & others that he had seconds thoughts about the FBI investigation of the MLK case.
As to FOIA suits, the FBI recently sent me the Indictment papers on Percy Foreman. The Hunts payed him $100,000 to hush up two clients. And Foreman told them if they testified they would end up dead. Subsequently all of the defendants were convicted of something except Percy. Griffin Bell authorized that all charges be dismissed against Percy. It appeared that Bell initiated the dismissal.
Note in the Progressive article where Huie say's Foreman had him leak a story to the press hoping it would influence me to cop a plea. Someone must have built a fire under Percy's fat ass to have him jumping around like he did to get the plea.

I sent Carol the address of the progressive and she can get a copy there. If not then I'll get a xerox from here later for her.

If I didn't mention it in the last letter Hosea Williams, Anna and a local reporter was on the Sally Jesse Raffell show discussing the k case. I heard some of it via phone & I guess it will air shortly--it aired live in St. Louis. I never have watch Raffell (a Spanish lass I guess) so don't know much about her game...a female Donehue I guess.

That's about it for now. I'm going to leave the Eist thing go since I could not get any better documents than what was sent assuming the jd/fbi has more.

Later,

J. Ray

Dear Jimmy, 10/25/86

Hasty response to your 10/23 because I'm tied up in other things.

I had a hunch that you'd gotten some Eist records from the FBI because out of the blue, I also got a few. From what you say you got a few I didn't get, so I'd appreciate it if you'd send me a copy of each one that you got so I can compare them. If by any slight change I got what you didn't, I'll send you a copy.

From what they call the completeness of file, I'd appreciate also a copy of the records showing that the charges against Percy were dismissed by DJ. Jim and I both knew the underlying story. We got it from the lawyer for the young man Percy sold out. He had airtight proof. Thought I'd told you that story long ago. Kid's name is Jon Kelly and his lawyer was his cousin, Jerry somethingorother. I have a suspicion that in the end they got to him, too. Brief summary: they got Kelly a job to keep him quiet anf it gave him a chance to steal the proofs which, incredibly, had been left laying around!

You spotted the one thing in the Progressive story that was news to me, that your protector Foreman got Huie to leak that story to pressure you into copping a plea. I was always sure that Huie had done the leaking but I'd not suspected that Precy was behind it. I'm still not sure, although Huie seems to admit it. Have you thought of suing Huie over this? You'd do better for yourself that Percy did.

What will be your grounds for suing the committee? Aren't they immune in all official actions? Remember, and I'm sure you saw it, when Stokes started getting nasty with our boy Jim, whose major flaw is that he doesn't get mad enough, he got mad and dared Stokes to repeat what he'd said outside the committee room. Stokes didn't. He gave the chair up to Fauntroy instead.

There is one big gap in the Eist papers I got, as I now recall it. The story then is that others got in touch with HSCA, or with the FBI, and there were no such records. Also, there is no record indicating any FBI investigation before he testified or any record of their asking Scotland Yard for thei opinion or evaluation. And there is no record indicating what I'm sure the FBI thought of, comparing his story after he testified with their own records. I sent you copies of the 1968 records they had which made it impossible to believe Eist.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

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'It would be real satisfying to have this all cleared up, but I don't ever expect that, and I don't think they'll ever find the person who killed King.'

he didn't want the Bureau to get involved in the investigation. It was Ramsey Clark who insisted that we enter the case. But the FBI didn't look for a conspiracy. That would have given validity to the injured side, to the blacks. So if we had to be in it, Hoover wanted in and out as quickly as possible. He wanted to pin a criminal offense on somebody before it could be shown to be a conspiracy, a political crime."

Murtagh takes care to avoid the direct assertion that FBI officials were knowingly and purposely involved in a plot to assassinate King. Instead, he says that many people in the Bureau leaned to the Right with Hoover and "worked within the informal network of right-wing groups to get and sometimes give information, and supported informers who committed serious crimes, including murder.

"I'm not saying that FBI agents murdered anyone, but I am saying that they created and arranged a climate in which death took place. I have no knowledge that any specific person in the Bureau was a direct participant in this conspiracy—but I'm absolutely convinced in my own mind that there *was* a conspiracy, and that it included some people known to and even paid by the FBI. That means there are people out there walking around now—unless they've since died—who took part in the King murder, who know what happened, and who believe what they did was right. That's a sad truth, but it is the truth. It's also J. Edgar Hoover's legacy."

Writers, no less than investigators and lawyers, have widely divergent perceptions of the story. George McMillan, author of *The Making of an Assassin*, believes now, "more than ever, that Ray acted alone to commit this crime. Hundreds of people have spent thousands of hours trying to demolish the facts, and they have all failed. Ray was the lone assassin; that's the indestructible fact."

William Bradford Huie reached that same conclusion in *He Slew the Dreamer* and in numerous other public pronouncements on the case. His views and those of Harold Weisberg, author of *Frame-Up*, a private investigator's "defense of James Earl Ray," represent the poles of opposite opinion.

Huie made contact with Ray while he was still in jail in London and began the procedure by which the author and the two attorneys—first Hanes, then Foreman—came to control the legal rights to Ray's story.

"Everyone wanted to believe there was a conspiracy," said Huie, now seventy-five years old. "I certainly believed it, and that's what I set out to prove." But sometime in the fall of 1968, just as Ray was about to drop Hanes and engage Foreman to defend him, Huie began to have doubts.

"I came to realize that Ray was just a small-time criminal," he said. "He wanted recognition, glory, so he planned this crime and carried it out on his own. He had no help, none whatsoever—he was just lucky, and he almost got away with it. Believe me, I'm an old reporter, and a damn good one. I didn't take anything for granted, and I even had Ray's cooperation through his attorneys, although I didn't talk to him personally until after he had pleaded guilty and gone to the penitentiary in Nashville.

"You have to understand that I had more interest than anyone in finding a conspiracy. It would have been a sensational story, and it would have made lots of money—magazines, books, movies, TV. I put up at least $60,000 to secure the cooperation of Ray and the lawyers, and the lawyers ended up with almost all of that money. What I ended up with was a story saying that one little insignificant man killed Dr. King. It was hard to believe, and it certainly wasn't the sensational story I thought I'd find, but it was the truth, and there was nothing to do but tell it just that way."

In an interview with a Nashville reporter in 1977, Huie said Foreman got Ray to plead guilty because "he simply saw that Ray was an unstable racist who could not be controlled" in a courtroom. In a recent conversation from his Alabama home, Huie said, "Foreman was more interested in avoiding a trial than the Government was. There was no conspiracy, so there would be no big money, and no drama, and he didn't want to get tied up in a long drawn-out case that he couldn't win. Foreman wanted to make a deal and get out. He called me from Houston just before the scheduled court appearance in March 1969. Ray had told him he didn't want to plead guilty, he wanted to testify, and Foreman was worried."

According to Huie, Foreman said, "We ought to leak a story to the press that Ray is going to go into court on Monday and plead guilty. It'll make Ray mad, and then scared, and when he simmers down he'll be ready to do what I'm telling him to do."

And so, Huie recalled, "That's just what I did. I leaked the story to a reporter in Huntsville, Alabama, and it was big news all over the country. And sure enough, by the time Foreman got to Memphis, Ray was ready to cooperate. The deal had been made—a guilty plea in exchange for ninety-nine years—and Ray had to go through with it or he'd have been sent to the electric chair."

The way eighty-four-year-old Percy Foreman recalls it, he didn't have any trouble convincing Ray to plead guilty. "Hell, it was Ray's idea," he said from his office in Houston. "Once I saw how strong the state's case was, I was sure they wouldn't settle for anything less than a death sentence. I might have been able to get a hung jury if I could have hired a prominent black lawyer or a white liberal like John Jay Hooker Sr. of Nashville, but Ray wouldn't agree to that. He wanted me to try to make a deal to keep him out of the electric chair. Hugh Stanton, the public defender, was working with me, and he said he thought Phil Canale would consider a proposal from us. So I got Ray to write it out in his own handwriting that he would plead guilty, and I took that to Canale and the judge, and that's how the agreement was reached."

Foreman said he has no doubt at all that Ray was Martin Luther King's lone assassin. "He not only did it," the attorney asserted, "he wanted to be known as the one who did it. He wanted the boys back in the Missouri penitentiary to know he had made it to the big time. That was his motive. He did it without any help, except from his brothers, and he'd have gotten away if he hadn't thrown down the bundle that had his rifle and his belongings in it. I saved his life, and he practically got down on his knees to thank me—and then within a day or two, he repudiated everything and started trying to reverse it."

Author Harold Weisberg draws upon the tens of thousands of pages of information he has accumulated on the King assassination to contradict virtually every important assertion made by Foreman and Huie. The seventy-three-year-old Weisberg, a Maryland resident, is a forme newspaper reporter and private investi gator. He has studied and written abou assassinations in this country since 1963 when President Kennedy was murdered i Dallas. In *Frame-Up*, his meticulously de tailed account of the King-Ray murde case, he maintains, among other thing that Ray was a decoy, not a knowing cor spirator, that neither the FBI nor the sta ever even looked for a conspiracy, that th state's case could have been destroyed u der cross-examination, that Ray's guil plea was coerced, and that the people wh planned and carried out King's assas nation are still at large.