

UNSOLVED MYSTERIES — PRODUCTION #1477-256
"MARTIN LUTHER KING": INT. WITH HAROLD WEISBERG

OKAY, JUST WANNA LET YOU KNOW—NOW ON CAMERA
ROLL 26, AND THIS'LL BE MARKER 21 NEXT—THIS IS AN
INTERVIEW WITH HAROLD WEISBERG.

THIS IS TAKE 21.

MARK.

INTERVIEWER Okay, Mister Weisberg, for starters, would you—could you just
gimme your full name with the correct spelling.

H. WEISBERG Harold Weisberg, W-E-I-S-B-E-R-G.

INTERVIEWER Okay. Gimme a—just a brief, little bit a' background about your
expertise in the King investigation.

H. WEISBERG Well, ah, I was Ray's investigator; I conducted the investigation
for the *habeas corpus* petition, which succeeded. I then
conducted the investigation for the two weeks of evidentiary
hearing in Memphis, the purpose of which was to determine
whether or not he would be given a trial—he's never had a trial.
And I then, ah, f— filed a lawsuit under the Freedom of Informa-
tion Act that lasted about a decade. To get from the Depart-
ment of Justice their records related to the King assassination.
You want my prior experience?

INTERVIEWER No, that's fine; just related to that is great. [CLEARS THROAT]
If you will, ah, gimme a brief summary of the, quote, official government version of how James Earl Ray, ah, allegedly assassinated Martin Luther King.

H. WEISBERG The official story is that Ray had rive a—rented a room in a flophouse in Memphis—in a rundown part a' Memphis—that he fired his shot with his rifle resting on the bathroom window sill. I killed King with one shot—he was so certain he would do it, he had no other shots in the repeating rifle. He then went to his room, made up a bundle, ah, and as he left without rushing, ah, he supposedly saw some police cars parked in the nearby fire station, and, according to the official mythology, he then turned around and dropped the bundle of all the stuff he put together—which even included a bob—bobbie pin—ah, outside a music store of a guy named Guy Warren Knipe. And then he fled. He went to, ah—to a number a' places, including Canada. And he went from Canada to England and from England to Portugal and from Portugal back to England, and in England he was captured at Heathrow Airport.

INTERVIEWER Let's cut for a second.

[BACKGROUND CONVERSATION]

BEEP. BEEP.

AND NEXT'LL BE SOUND 22.

MARK.

INTERVIEWER Okay. Mister Weisberg, if you don't mind, I'd like to just do those last two little bits again with our lighting adjustment here.

H. WEISBERG Right.

INTERVIEWER Ah, tell me once again what the official government version is, ah, related to James Earl Ray's involvement in the King death.

H. WEISBERG The official story—which I think is official mythology—the official mythology is that Ray went into the common bathroom of a flophouse in South Memphis, resting his rifle on the window sill, fired one shot that killed Doctor King, who was

across the street at Mulberry Street, ah, in the Lorraine Motel. He then went back to his room and made up a great big bundle of beer cans, bobbie pins—you name it—ah, and left. And when he left the f—supposedly he saw police cars parked at a nearby fire station, so he retraced his steps partially, dropped this package outside a' Guy Warren Knipe's secondhand record store and took off. Ah, the official mythology, ah, is true in saying he went to Canada. He went from there to London, from London to Portugal, from Portugal back to London, and it was in leaving London the second time that he was picked up.

INTERVIEWER

The, ah— What do you think a' this version?

H. WEISBERG

Oh, I don't think it would do credit to a high school freshman to make that kind a' cock-and-bull story up. Ah, I've sued the F.B.I. and gotten a lot a' records. Ah, the place he rested the rifle on the window sill could not be identified as having been made by a rifle. Ah, unless the F.B.I. conjectured on its side. This would have an assassin, ah, levitating in air. Ah, ah, the window sill was so hard that he'd a' had to use it like a sledge hammer to make a mark. And at the angle—from that mark on the window sill to where Doctor King was—in order to fire the rifle, the butt a' the rifle would've had to've been ten inches inside the wall. Ah, and that just for beginnings. They never investigated the crime in itself—this is important for people to understand. The King assassination was n—never officially investigated. Not the crime itself. Ah, as soon as they found the convenient bird in the bush, they didn't beat the bushes. And the evidence left to point to Ray was all they wanted.

INTERVIEWER

The, ah—there's a number—and I'm just gonna go through a—ah, a brief list here of a number a' the areas of real controversy about how Ray could not have done what, ah, they said he did. And if you could just speak briefly about each one. One of 'em is Ray's background as a marksman—whether his, ah, abilities could actually account for someone being that expert to make such a shot.

H. WEISBERG

Shooting, like piano playing and violin playing, ah, is a skill you have to keep on practicing. I don't know of any evidence anybody ever produced that Ray ever fired a rifle except in basic training in the Army. I don't believe that story. Ah, in no—he could not possibly have lucked into that kind of a shot.

Killing a man with one shot? At a distance a' several hundred feet? Nah.

INTERVIEWER There was also the, ah—several eyewitnesses account—eyewitness account of someone also seen in the bushes. Is there any possibility that the shot could've come from elsewhere—other than the window?

H. WEISBERG I think the most credible place is the bushes. And I think one a' the witnesses was credible, and the government went to a lot a' trouble to make him seem not credible. His name was Solomon Jones.

INTERVIEWER How did—how did they do that?

H. WEISBERG By saying that he said the man had thrown a sheet over his head. Things like that. And, ah, nobody in his right mind would think that anybody'd throw a sheet over his head in broad daylight. It was still daylight.

INTERVIEWER What about this, quote, eyewitness that saw Mister Ray in the hallway? And that is Mister Stevens.

H. WEISBERG [LAUGHS] Charlie Stevens was so drunk—I found the cab driver who'd come to pick him up and take him to buy whiskey. He was used to takin' a drunken Charlie Stevens to the liquor store, but that day he was so drunk, he wouldn't even do it. His name is Jim McCraw. Stevens was so drunk, that, later that night, outside the District Attorney's Office, he told a reporter, when a reporter asked him what he's doing here: I don't know. I interviewed that reporter in Memphis.

INTERVIEWER This—this bundle a' material that Ray allegedly dropped, containing all of the incriminating—

H. WEISBERG Yeah.

INTERVIEWER —fingerprints—does that make any sense to you?

H. WEISBERG Not a bit. Not a bit. Ah, the one thing—ah, ah, you know, he didn't have to take all that junk with him. He didn't even have to take the rifle with him. Even if he'd used the rifle, all he had to do was get out. And he was never, ever have done—had—

had done what they say. In addition to that, his car wasn't there, and he wasn't there.

INTERVIEWER What about the fingerprints? A lot's been made of, you know, the—the fingerprints on the weapon.

H. WEISBERG The fingerprints on the weapon are where you would never use it, if you were going to fire. The fingerprints were left on the weapon after it had been wiped clean. A number of people handled that weapon. No fingerprints or on there except three of James Earl Ray's. Where he would not have held it to fire it. None, by the way, where you fire it.

INTERVIEWER Where were the fingerprints actually found?

H. WEISBERG I've forgotten exactly, but one was on the butt, and one was on the stock. There were, as I remember, the total of three.

INTERVIEWER Now, as I understand, there were no prints found in the room. Is that correct?

H. WEISBERG Oh, there were prints, but not James Earl Ray's. [BACKGROUND NOISE] And F.B.I. printed it thoroughly. When the car was found, ah, there were a few prints—not many—and Jimmy told me, when I was his investigator, that he'd wiped it clean during a rainstorm. There were prints in the car but not James Earl Ray's.

INTERVIEWER Let's, ah, just go over that bit again. Let me ask it a different way. What— What is the significance of the fingerprints found in the room and the car?

H. WEISBERG The fingerprints that are found in room show that the objects would pick up fingerprints. They don't show James Earl Ray's fingerprints. Ah, nobody can place Jimmy in Memphis at the time a' the crime. They can't even place him in his car, when he fled in his car. He told me about stopping and wiping it clean during a rainstorm. And F.B.I. fingerprinted the car, and there's not a Jimmy Ray fingerprint on it.

INTERVIEWER Ballistics tests.

H. WEISBERG What ballistics test? There were none.

INTERVIEWER

Ah, explain to me basically— The government claims that there was, ah—that their tests showed that the bullet that killed King was consistent with the weapon they found with James' fingerprints—

H. WEISBERG

It was consistent with half the weapons ever made by the same standard. When I was the investigator, again, I produced a criminalist, took him to the Clerk a' Court's office, he examined the remnant of bullet taken from Doctor King's body with a microscope, he took pictures of it, and he testified the next day in court that, given that rifle and ability to test fire it and recover specimens, he could state definitely whether or not, ah, the bullet had been fired from that rifle. And, ah, his testimony was not refuted, and—nor was he broken down on cross-examination. Now, when the rifle got to the F.B.I.—the first thing that it's always done in a crime, ah, in which a rifle is used—or a pistol—a revolver—is a swab test—it's a very simple, inexpensive test. You take a—a rag—clean rag, and you run it through the barrel. If there's oil on it, you know it wasn't fired. If there's no oil on it, and there are residues, then you know it was fired after the last time it was cleaned. And here they had this rifle. Doctor King had been killed. And the F.B.I. never ran the swab through the bar—barrel. This means that they knew the rifle had not been used in the crime. And that's why you have Robert Trace's evasive and misleading affidavit that used to get Ray extradited. However—

Frazier's
INTERVIEWER

Okay, we're gonna cut for a second and change our film rolls here.

H. WEISBERG

Is that all right?

INTERVIEWER

Yeah, it was great. Great.

BEEP. BEEP.

AND THAT'S THE END OF SOUND ROLL 13—THE END OF
SOUND ROLL 13—THAT'S THE END OF SOUND ROLL 13—
THE END OF SOUND ROLL 13.

HI—COSGROVE-MEURER—*UNSOLVED MYSTERIES*—TRAN-
SCRIPTION RECORDING FOR "M.L.K." INTERVIEWS—PRO-
DUCTION NUMBER 1477-256—THIS IS FROM THE 19TH OF

FEBRUARY, 1993, AND THIS MATERIAL'S ON SOUND ROLL 14 AND CAMERA ROLL 27, AND IT'S A CONTINUATION OF AN INTERVIEW WITH HAROLD WEISBERG, AND NEXT WILL BE MARKER 23.

MARK.

H. WEISBERG Shall I continue?

INTERVIEWER Yeah. Mister Wei—yeah, you go ahead.

H. WEISBERG Bef—before Jimmy bought the thirty-ought-six rifle that was found at the scene—near the scene of the crime, he had bought a point-two-four-three-calibre rifle. And, in the course of checking this out, the F.B.I. found he had bought it and returned it. They took the point-two-four-three rifle to the lab in Washington. It wasn't operative. There were encrustations of cosmoline—a preservative—that kept it from working. They knew the rifle didn't work. They knew the rifle couldn't be fired. They knew it had never been fired. But they did do a swab test [LAUGHS] on that rifle, believe it or not. But not on the one they said killed Doctor King. Ah, this is ballistics tests? They c—they did no test firing a' the rifle to try and compare it with the specimen removed from Doctor King's body. On the ground that there were not sufficient marks a' distinction on the specimen. The expert I produced, ah, said that it was a good specimen, and he could tell yes or no. That enough on ballistics?

INTERVIEWER How logical is it that anyone would've shot from the bathroom?

H. WEISBERG It's not only logical, it's—not logical, it's crazy. You can begin to get to the window to fire without having the rifle all the way out the window. With all those people in King's party facing that way? It doesn't make sense. You couldn't stand on the rim a' the bathtub—old-fashioned bathtub up against the wall? Had a sliding—sloping back? You could stand on it with one leg and lean on the rifle. You can't fire that way, and the rifle would still have to be out the window, or your body and the rifle would be in the wall. It makes no sense; it's a cock-and-bull story.

INTERVIEWER Knowing what you 'know about Mister Ray and his basic personality, how do you feel about him being capable of pulling off something like this the way it's outlined?

H. WEISBERG Ah, I only—not only think that neither he nor any of his family—male member a' his family is capable of it; I don't think it would ever enter their minds. Ah, the—the worst you can say for them is that some of 'em are petty criminals. Jimmy never had a—a crime of violence in all of his life, and he lived most of his life on crime; he's not that kind of a guy. But besides that—ah, even—you—the strange is: they're not dumb; they're bright. But when it comes to something like this, they can't plan it, or where they do, they make mistakes in judgement—let me tell you a story about Jerry. One time, Jerry met me at Memphis—ah, at Knoxville. We shared a room. I paid for the room, and he provided the transportation. I'd been to Brushy Mountain, the maximum security jail where Jimmy was, and Jerry'd been there weekly. All of a sudden I realized that it taking us much too long to get there—I said: Jerry, where are we? "Oh," he said, "I forgot to make a turn." We—in three days, we made one trip each way each day—six trips. Three a' the trips, ah, Jerry didn't make the turn, and finally I said: What the hell is this? He said: I can't talk and make a turn. And I found it was literally true. This kind of a guy's gonna conspire? This kind of a guy or his—anybody like this is gonna pull off a crime like that? Makes no sense at all, and it's out of keeping with their character in addition to not being within their intellectual capabilities. Besides which, Jimmy didn't have the mechanical capability. He couldn't a' fired that shot.

INTERVIEWER Accordin' to the official, government version, following the dropping of that bundle outside, the people saw a Mustang drive by.

H. WEISBERG That's not true. That's the official story. But the car they're talking about was a white Fairlane. And it was parked near Guy Knipe's. And it did pull away from the curb, and people didn't see it. But it was not a white Mustang, and Jimmy wasn't there.

INTERVIEWER Let's talk for a moment about the story of Raoul. Could you relate that to me? What, ah, Mister Ray's version a' that is?

H. WEISBERG

There's where you have a real unsolved mystery. Be—the creen—the King assassination's an unsolved mystery, and the key to that is the unsolved mystery of Raoul. What I've indicated to you is that Jimmy couldn't do this kind a' thing by himself; there had to be some such person as Raoul. And, ah, as I studied his career for the year he was out of jail—he always knew well in advance when he would be where and for how long. Now, you know, if he's on the lam, he doesn't need that; he can't live that way—he doesn't know—he—he improvises. J—ah, Raoul tested Jimmy—according to Jimmy's story—ah, saying, if he could smuggle something across the border, for example— And Jimmy got away with it; he pulled—he d—ah, he hid a—ah, a—a package of heroin behind the back seat a' the old car he was driving. Raoul and Jim—ah, kept Jimmy supplied with money. Jimmy described him—I've forgotten the exact details, but he described their meetings in Birmingham, ah, in, ah, Lar—ah was it Laredo? It was in Texas—a border town. Ah, in New Orleans—where he met him in New Orleans and things of that sort—and in Canada. And all of his accounts, ah, are consistently—oh, yes, and one in Memphis. Two in Memphis. Ah, it—the descriptions do not vary. It's not like a story he made up. He made up the name—or Raoul made up the name, but he's describing the same person all the time.

INTERVIEWER

What basically did he say about Raoul in terms of his being set up to take the fall for—

H. WEISBERG

He never—

INTERVIEWER

—the—

H. WEISBERG

—said that. Ah, he may think that—he may not. But he never said that Raoul set him up to—to—to take the fall. It's obvious. Ah, he said that he met Raoul in a bar in Canada, where he'd put out the word that he was looking for a job, so he could make enough money to go overseas with a passport. And he said Raoul hired him, said he'd take care of him for a year—he had a few small jobs for him to do; and then, at the end of the time—whenever the time came—ah, he'd give him the money and the false passport. And, ah, what happened to Jimmy after that is consistent with this is what—with this being what Raoul—what Raoul told him. Now, you know, there's a story

that Jimmy got these names—ah, Jimmy told the story—he got the fake names he used in the library in Canada by looking at birth notices. Ah, there's a dead giveaway on this. The name, ah, he was using on the passport, for example, and elsewhere—ah, before the passport in the United States, buying the car—was Ramone—no—I'm sorry—that's the wrong one. Ah, Gault. Well, the middle name, ah, for Gault, according to Jimmy, was Starvo. It was Saint Vincent. And Gault wrote, ah, his periods with a round O. And in reading the signature, Jimmy took the S-T, round O, ah, V, round O for Starvo. Now, you don't get that out of as birth notice in a library.

INTERVIEWER

Ah, what—what is the version that Jimmy gives—Mister Ray gives of his, ah—his activities the day of the King assassination?

H. WEISBERG

Well, he began earlier in the day with a meeting of Raoul at the Rebel Motel on the east side of, ah, Memphis, and then Raoul gave him the address of a flophouse and told him to go there and rent a room—that he'd meet him there later. Jimmy overshot the flophouse—he was told to identify it by a Jim's Bar downstairs. He went right past Jim's Bar—he went right past the street address, and about four or five blocks farther on the other side a' the street was a Jim's, ah—I had it wrong—Jim's Grill and Jim's Bar—he went to the wrong one. Then he went back and got to the right one—even with the street address, he made a mistake. He rented the room, and about four o'clock, Raoul came there—he had another man with him, and, ah, they sat and talked for a while. Ah, ostensibly about buying guns to sell abroad. And, ah, Raoul told Jimmy he would need the car. Ah, ah, ah, and he said: You—go to a movie or something. So Jimmy went down, and they noticed that one a' the rear tires was almost flat, and they remembered the day before, a crouper in Tennessee—a trooper—and he's an escapee—had stopped him and told him he had a—a partly flat tire. So Jimmy changed the tires, and then he thought: Well, my pal, Raoul, is gonna use the car tonight—he told me he needs it—I'd better get the tire fixed. He drove to a gas station—they told him it was, ah, rush hour—I'll put some in it and come back later, and they'd be glad to change it. He put some air in it, and he came back, and the barricades were up. He couldn't get there. And I believe that story; I have reasons for believing. So he wasn't there—I have a number of witness-

es confirmed that the car was not there. And his account is that he fled. He saw the barricades, he made a U-turn and took off. And then he heard on the radio, he said, what happened.

INTERVIEWER When you say you have reasons for believing it's true, what are—what are the main reasons?

H. WEISBERG Well, the—I found these witnesses who—who knew his car was not there. For example, ah, the cab driver I told you about—McCraw—who wouldn't take Charlie Stevens? When he pulled up there to do it, he hadda park double, because the—a car that he knew very well was parked exactly where the government said Jimmy's car was parked. That car was owned by Lloyd Jauers, who own Jim's Grill. It was a white Cadillac. I interviewed Jauers—he said: I was afraid I'd get a ticket, because I was parked too close to the hydrant, but it was the only place near my place a' business. So I have these two. McCraw says: I came there—I couldn't park, and I h—I parked double—ah, I parked against, ah, Lloyd's, because I knew he wouldn't be going anyplace. And Jimmy's white Mustang was not there—I could go on and on like this.

INTERVIEWER A lot has been made over trying to verify Mister Ray's presence at the gas station.

H. WEISBERG Excuse me. That's the *National Enquirer* version that Mark Lane cribbed and gave to the House Committee. You can't confirm that one. But there was another gas station that was across the street that went out a' business, and that's the one at which Jimmy was. Now, I give you a measure of Jimmy's honesty. With me and with an alibi that you could take to court. Ah, from the morgue a' the Memphis papers, I got a picture, ah, about this big—I got a Xerox of it—of a man named Willie Green in a Texaco uniform. And wh—

INTERVIEWER Okay, I'm sorry; we're gonna stop and change film rolls. We'll pick it up.

H. WEISBERG This good?

[BACKGROUND CONVERSATION]

INTERVIEWER You're doin' great. Thank you.

BEEP. BEEP.

OKAY, GOIN' TO CAMERA ROLL 28—CAMERA ROLL 28—
CONTINUING WITH HAROLD WEISBERG—IT'LL BE MARKER
24 NEXT.

THIS IS ROLL 28, TAKE 24.

MARK.

INTERVIEWER

Okay.

H. WEISBERG

Um-hum. In preparation for the hearing—

[BACKGROUND CONVERSATION]

H. WEISBERG

—which was to—

INTERVIEWER

I'm sorry—

H. WEISBERG

—determine—

INTERVIEWER

—[UNCLEAR]. I'm sorry.

H. WEISBERG

In preparation for the hearing that was to determine whether or not Jimmy would get the trial he wanted very much to get, I took him a picture that had appeared in the Memphis papers with the caption—it was a man named Willie Green in a Texaco uniform, who said that Jimmy Ray had stopped there at the time a' the assassination. I showed it to Jimmy. Now, here's a ready-made alibi—proves he couldn't a' been—ah, couldn't a' been him. The he killed—ah, killed King. Jimmy said: I was there, but that's not the guy. Now, that—ah, you know, if he'd been desperate for an alibi—ah, if he hadn't been telling the truth, he'd a' grabbed at that. It was already published. So, ah, I bo—there're a number of reasons why I believe the story, and that's another one of them.

INTERVIEWER

Explain to me again why the, ah, quote, official investigation claimed that no one at the gas station could support Jimmy's alibi.

H. WEISBERG It's because they went to the wrong gas station and get the guys who didn't see him.

INTERVIEWER I'm sorry—if you could just begin that by saying—

H. WEISBERG They began—

INTERVIEWER —you know—ah, I'm sorry—ah, just be—set it up for me by just saying—

H. WEISBERG The—

INTERVIEWER —the reason—

H. WEISBERG —the—

INTERVIEWER —why—

H. WEISBERG —ah, the reason why the House Assassins Committee couldn't find confirmation a' the fact Jimmy was at the gas station—they went to the wrong one, and when Jimmy had not been there, the people who had no trouble—who were there had no trouble saying Jimmy had not been there. You know, ah, Blakey was a Keystone Kop, who thought he was Sherlock Holmes—the hat came down over everything 'cept his mouth, and it's a great tragedy that it didn't cover that, because that mouth's gonna be the way Blakey's gonna be remembered in history. He could a' done these things I did and more. He had all this money—all that staff. And, besides that, I gave him the transcripts of the hearings where we had, ah, ah, these witnesses—like Jauers, ah, and—and, ah, ah, McCraw, that I mentioned earlier. He never used them.

INTERVIEWER What—what do you think of the a—of the, ah—the Committee's work? And where did they go wrong?

H. WEISBERG The Committee went wrong by starting. They never intended to investigate either crime, and they never did. Ah, you know, ah, people can build careers on a lot a' things. It's true a' congressmen, it's true a' senators, it's true of people who work on the Hill—I've seen it done. I was there. But if you're going to investigate a crime, you begin by establishing the facts a' the crime. Neither part of the House's Assassin's Committee

ever even thought of doing that. Not on the Kennedy part, and not on the King part. They, ah, asked the F.B.I. for records—the F.B.I. was so contemptuous of them, with Blakey running it—I got these records from the F.B.I., and the record I'm talking about—they said: Well, ah, we'll cut 'em down to as little as we can; ah, and if we can't hold 'em back, we'll give 'em part a' what we've already given Weisberg in Civil Action seventy-five-nineteen-ninety-six. Now, when Blakey wanted to get all this stuff that was not relevant about wiretaps on the Mafia—oh, the F.B.I. loved that; they loaded him up with so much. But it means nothing—it's not relevant. So instead of investigating the crime, he was, ah, fishing in the F.B.I.'s wiretap files to see if he could find something about his Mafia theory. Do you think a Mafioso talking about killing Doctor King would've talked about it on the telephone? So they never investigated the crime and never intended to—not either one.

INTERVIEWER

Gimme a bit of a summary as to why James Earl Ray pled guilty.

H. WEISBERG

James Earl Red played guilty for a very simple reason. If he hadn't pled guilty, he was afraid that his lawyer, Percy Foreman, would throw the case—if he were tried by a jury and found guilty, his situation was ever so much worse. If he entered a guilty plea, he could change that. Under Tennessee law, under thirty days, it's called a new trial, even if you never had one, and it's automatic. And that's exactly what he did as soon as he got out a' Memphis and got into the jail in—in Nashville. He wrote the judge. Said: Are you gonna file an appeal? And then he filed an appeal. Now, it's a lot worse, if a jury convicts you. Percy Foreman, this great criminal lawyer, spent a total of ten hours with James Earl Ray from the time he took the case until the time he threw it. And he did throw it. He—he told Ray that, if he didn't enter a guilty plea, he be g—killed. And those days, nobody was being killed. He got Ray to plead guilty to the maximum possible sentence as part of a deal? That's a deal for the country's most famous criminal lawyer? He put Ray away for the go—for the government. And the government paid him back. He got convicted, ah, in the Hunt Brothers' case and never served a day.

INTERVIEWER

The, ah— What happened once Ray filed that appeal?

H. WEISBERG



The judge dropped dead, and he started to write something on a piece of paper. His judge name was Preston Battle. He was using a yellow pad—ah, I have a Xerox of it—we got this on discovery, as we investigated it. Judge Battle's office was purged; his calendar only had his medical appointments. But he had started to write this out on a yellow pad. And Jim Lesar, who was the lawyer, and I both thing he was beginning to write in longhand the granting of the motion for a new trial. But he dropped dead with a heart attack, that I have ever reason to believe was precipitated by an argument with the staff a' the prosecutor. One a' the reasons I believe it is because a lawyer heard the argument. He didn't know that the judge died from it, but he heard the argument.

INTERVIEWER

And what then happened once he died? Where—where did the appeal then go?

H. WEISBERG

Well, ah, Jimmy made—ah, as I told you before, the Rays always, ah, use bad judgement. Jimmy changed counsel. His counsel were not effective. And, ah, he got, ah, some r—extreme right-wingers. They filed an appition—ah, petition before the new judge, whose name was Faquin, F-A-Q-U-I-N. And the judge rewrote the Tennessee law. To say that the—the law applied to an appeal for a new trial only before the judge, ah, who'd heard the case. And with Judge Battle dead, he couldn't do it. And that's how Jimmy didn't get the automatic appeal. These things that are so—seem to be so ludicrous are real. They really happened. That's the only reason Jimmy didn't get a trial.

INTERVIEWER

What is your opinion—if Jimmy had gotten a trial, what do you think would've happened?

H. WEISBERG

Case would've never gone to the jury.

INTERVIEWER

If he—if—if—

H. WEISBERG

If Jimmy—

INTERVIEWER

—[UNCLEAR]—

H. WEISBERG

—if J—if Jimmy had gotten the trial at any time, beginning when he was first brought back to this country—a competent

law school student would've walked him. They can't place Jimmy in the State a' Tennessee at the time a' the crime. They can't place him in Memphis at the time a' the crime. They can't place him at the scene a' the crime at the time a' the crime. They can't prove that the rifle was fired at the time a' the crime. What in the world is there to convict him? There is nothing to go to the jury. Nothing at all. Every bit a' the scientific evidence that I got in the—in the Freedom of Information lawsuit says exactly the opposite of the official representation of it. The mark on the—on the window sill could not have been made by that rifle, except by a marksman who was floating in the air. On the s—on his side. The rifle knocked the window screen out. There's no mark on either the screen or the rifle from it. The screen was down on the ground. On and on and on. There is no single part a' the story that stacks.

[BACKGROUND CONVERSATION]

INTERVIEWER

Gimme a little background about your efforts to get the files.

H. WEISBERG

Well, after—I'd started to write a book after the, ah, evidentiary hearing [CLEARS THROAT] based on, ah, the work I had done. Ah, even though most of it was already a matter of court record, it was my work. Ah, then I decided, ah, when the Freedom of Information law was amended over one a' my suits and the F.B.I. corruption in it, that I'd use the Freedom of Information law to get the F.B.I.'s and the Department of Justice records, ah, and I applied for them, and, as usual, they stonewalled me. But, ah, the end a' the year came, and they were still stonewalling me, so I filed suit for these records, and then they really stonewalled me. And I felt it would be dishonest, ah, to write the book, until I had the last a' the records. But that is how I started to get the records; it was in 1975 that I filed the suit—toward the end a' the year. And, ah, it was at least after 1985, when the last action a' that suit was over—went to the appeals court several times. I established a precedent a' copyright law in the course of fighting all these things. You have no idea a' the pa—the obstacles that they throw in your way. But I got about, ah, sixty-, eighty-thousand pages of records. And that's not an inconsiderable total. And I read every one.

INTERVIEWER

Okay, we'll cut for a minute and changes rolls here.

H. WEISBERG I know these answers are too long, Jim, but—

INTERVIEWER Ah, no, no—ah, you don't—

BEEP. BEEP.

OKAY, THAT'S THE END OF SOUND ROLL 14—THE END OF
SOUND ROLL 14—THE END OF SOUND ROLL 14.

OKAY, CONTINUING WITH HAROLD WEISBERG NOW ON
SOUND ROLL 15 AND CAMERA ROLL 29. MARKER 25 NEXT.

MARK.

INTERVIEWER Okay. When you began to get the, ah, F.B.I. files, you ran
across something regarding a man named Hardin. Could you
explain that to us?

H. WEISBERG The, ah, first Hardin record I got—ah, when I was going
through the files or the Los Angeles F.B.I. office, I found where
a man who used the name of J.C. Hardin had called Jimmy
from Atlanta. Ah, left word for Jimmy to return his call at the
Saint Francis Hotel. When Jimmy didn't return the call, so far
as we know, Hardin then went out to California. And he met
with Jimmy. This is con—this is a confirmed story in the
F.B.I.'s records. Hardin had no sooner left, than Jimmy left on
the trip that ended with Doctor King being killed. Jimmy went
east, after Hardin went out to visit him. Now, there is a man
named J.C. Hardin, who was an F.B.I. informer of the Atlanta
office. I have no confirmation that they're the same person.
But I knew that there was an informer by that name, and the
F.B.I. confirmed it to me. And he was not in the city director
for that year. Well, this is another one a' the unsolved myster-
ies a' the King assassination—now let me ad lib something for
you. The unsolved mystery a' the King assassination really
begins with the corrupting of the entire system of justice by a
wealthy, egocentric writer named William Bradford Huey. One
thing that should not be permitted in this country is a writer
buying his way into a criminal proceeding. He bought the
lawyer—he didn't buy Jimmy Ray; Jimmy never got a penny.
The lawyer's obligation was to Huey. And Huey actually
believed he bought a confession by giving Jimmy's lawyer
money. He was so indignant—Huey—that he went to Memphis

and voluntarily testified before the grand jury—I got the transcript. And he said Jimmy gypped him by not confessing. Now, this is the way the unsolved mystery starts. That corrupts the entire system of justice. The First Amendment, of course, has to be observed, but courts would not put up with anything like that. I'm—I wanted to get that—is that enough—

INTERVIEWER Absolutely—

H. WEISBERG —on Huey?

INTERVIEWER —no, absolutely. Absolutely.

H. WEISBERG You don't need any more on Huey, do you?

INTERVIEWER No. Ah, that's fine. When, ah—when you ran across the references to Hardin, did you run across any background checks that the F.B.I. did—

H. WEISBERG None.

INTERVIEWER —on him?

H. WEISBERG I—I found no references to Hardin. I filed for the records, and I didn't get 'em. Ah, these were within my request, ah, and, as I said before, if they wanna stonewall you, they can stonewall you. There were records that were subsequently, ah, released to other people that they never gave me. But I fought it in court and couldn't get anyplace. One a' the things that happens in Freedom of Information lawsuits—and it may be even more so now—when the government stonewalls the case, they overload the judges. The judges say: Oh, my god; more a' that stuff? And the judges will tolerate anything and do anything to wipe the case out, ah, worrying only about being reversed on appeal. And they just wear the judges out and wear the appli—the requester out.

INTERVIEWER Now, are—

H. WEISBERG Ah—

INTERVIEWER —you familiar with the references in those files that Har—that Hardin was involved with the James Meredith business?

H. WEISBERG I—I'm only generally aware of it—not f—I'm not—ah, not in specific detail.

INTERVIEWER Okay.

H. WEISBERG They were not disclosed to me, by the way.

INTERVIEWER The, ah— What're the chances, ah, in your mind, that James Hardin possibly could've been Raoul?

H. WEISBERG I don't think it's impossible, at all. Ah, but I think that this requires that you establish a regular base of operations for Hardin in New Orleans, because Jimmy could get in touch with a New Orleans contact. Ah, an alternative would be Baton Rouge. And, ah, if you can place Hardin there regularly, so that he can return the call placed to the bar, ah, then he can be a candidate. But in order to qualify as a candidate, I think he has to meet that test.

INTERVIEWER Why has Jimmy been so vague about Raoul? I mean, there's—there's a part a' you that would say, you know, ah, if—if—if—if Raoul is his alibi, why not be specific with that?

H. WEISBERG There are two reasons why Jimmy is p—ah, on sp—not specific about Raoul. First of all, in the criminal world, names are like dresses are for women; you change 'em all the time. Ah, Raoul was certainly not his correct name. The telephone number which Jimmy had, ah, to make contact certainly was not listed from Raoul's right name. It was where Raoul could pick up a message. And, second—and Jimmy and I had a lot a' correspondence about this—I was worried about him getting knocked off. And what the—our code word—ah, he knew the—the Cleaver book was *Soul On Ice*. He wasn't worried about gettin' killed, but he also said that he would not get out of jail by putting somebody else in jail. I wanna translate that to you from the altruistic to say Jimmy didn't wanna get killed. Because, if he'd opened his mouth, he knew very well he could get killed, and this was our code word—*Soul On Ice*—because it talks about violence and—ah, Cleaver talks about violence in jail.

INTERVIEWER I'm gonna just have you go over that once more, 'cause that's pretty important. Without making references to the, ah—to the code word—because that requires us a lot a' setup there—

H. WEISBERG Okay.

INTERVIEWER —just ex—explain to me again why Jimmy has been reluctant to get more specific about Raoul.

H. WEISBERG Jimmy has been reluctant to get more specific about Raoul for two basic reasons. One is—and it's the important one—of he opens his mouth, he's gonna get killed. The second one is—he's lived by the code of *omerta*. He wasn't gonna get himself out a' jail by putting somebody else in jail. But I'm satisfied that, if he talked, he'd be killed; and I'm satisfied the reason he has not been killed is because they know he won't talk. He can't identify Raoul by taking you to his house. But he knows how he got in ton—in contact with Raoul. And that could still be traced by the police. Assuming people are still alive.

INTERVIEWER Finding something like the Hardin references in the F.B.I. files—What—what's the significance a' those to you?

H. WEISBERG There're a number of significances, ah, of these kinds of records—like the J.C. Hardin record. First, it shows the point I made earlier that nobody ever investigated the crime itself—nobody ever intended to. This certainly—whether or not Hardin was a—was a conspir—wa—was a killer—it's certainly involved in m—the con—ah, the—as a potential conspirator—he was in contact with a man that was escaped—how was anybody gonna know where Jimmy was? How did anybody knew he'd get out a' jail? How did they know him under a pho—phony name? There're a number a' cases like that, where the crimes just were not—ah, the—ah, the leads were just not investigated. The classic example is not even testing the rifle to see if been fired since the last time it was cleaned. And there are a number of other leads like that that just were never followed. There're also things that Jimmy told me that, ah, the F.B.I. could a' had. Ah, that Blakey could a' had, and they didn't want. Of some a' the contacts he had with Raoul. For example, he smuggled something *into* Mexico for Raoul. Everybody talks about smuggling *out* of Mexico. Jimmy

smuggled something *into* Mexico for Raoul. That's a lead. Ah, if you follow it, you know. Ah—

INTERVIEWER What—why do you think that they did not investigate further?

H. WEISBERG Ah, ah, ah, the simplest version, ah, that I can think of—they didn't investigate the crime itself, because they, ah, had a bird in the hand—they weren't gonna beat the bushes—they hadn't the slightest idea what happened—they didn't see any leads— whoever did it got away, and, above all, J. Edgar Hoover had called, ah, Doctor King the biggest liar in the country. Ah, Hoover had been out to get King—to ruin him—he really tried hard. And it looked bad for the F.B.I. So they wanted to wipe it out—it was just as in the Kennedy case. You got a patsy? You go with the patsy. All this evidence pointed to Ray, and they had no other evidence. They didn't look for it, though, either.

INTERVIEWER The files of the, ah, Committee that aren't due for release until two-thousand-twenty-something—what do you—what do you think those files would show, if they were released now?

H. WEISBERG They'll show that the Committee defrauded the taxpayers by not conducting the investigations they were paid to investigate. There could be a lot of interesting things there. I don't think that—ah, if there's anything of importance about the crime, it's gonna be an accident—either crime—it's gonna be an accident. But what is important about those files—and what's important of all these things—is for the people to know how the institutions of their society work—how their government works. And for—ah, how—how this congressional committee worked. People have to understand these things for representative society to work the way it's supposed to. [BACKGROUND NOISE] It's true in all the political assassinations. And while they won't tell us who kill—who the assassins were, they help us better understand the flaws in government, the flaws in society, and we can only hope that, by using the institutions of representative society, we can make some improvements. We don't want these things to happen again.

INTERVIEWER Based on all of the problems that—over the years—that've been, ah, seen in investigating these major assassinations, it doesn't appear that we've learned very much, does it?

H. WEISBERG Doesn't appear what?

INTERVIEWER It doesn't appear that we've learned very much, does it?

H. WEISBERG We have learned, ah, an enormous amount, ah, despite the fact that neither crime itself was ever investigated. We've learned what some a' the agencies are capable of. We've learned what some a' the people in the agencies are capable of—what they did do. I'm not just talking theory; I'm talking fact. We learned how the F.B.I. works. We learned, ah, how it worked in the Kennedy case—how it didn't work in the Kennedy case—the same is true in the King case. We know that it is possible for a president of the United States to be killed and consigned to history with a dubious epitaph of a fake inquest. We know the same thing can happen with a great man like Doctor King, and it happened with both of 'em. There're all sorts of things that we have learned, and we can learn more. But, again, it gets back to making our societies work, making the institutions work— I wish I thought there were a chance that either crime was gonna be solved—I see none. There were no leads, because there were no initial investigations. But if we can, ah, keep these things from happening again, ah, it's a great service to the country, and it's a boon to the people.

INTERVIEWER Okay, we're gonna cut and change our film rolls again here.

[BACKGROUND CONVERSATION]

BEEP. BEEP.

OKAY, GO TO CAMERA ROLL 30, PLEASE—CAMERA ROLL 30. NEXT'LL BE MARKER 26.

MARK.

H. WEISBERG Should I repeat any of it?

INTERVIEWER Ah, well—ah, well, I'll, ah, just re-ask the question. What do you— What do you feel is the significance of what you found in the files concerning Hardin?

H. WEISBERG Shall I start?

INTERVIEWER

Yeah.

H. WEISBERG

When I saw the name, J.C. Hardin—of a man who got in touch with Jimmy Ray—when Hardin's in Atlanta, and Jimmy Ray's in Los Angeles—here is a live one. Here is a person you can talk to. Then I got a record that he'd gone out there and seen Jimmy Ray. How the F.B.I. could avoid grabbing Hardin—ah, especially when I found out later he was a symbol informer for the F.B.I.—and sweatin' the hell out of 'em—there's no evidence they ever spoke to him. I'm not saying they didn't. All I'm saying is: they don't have it in the Merkin file, and they withheld it from me—whatever file they do have. Here, if anyplace in all of these sixty-, eighty-thousand pages, was a live lead—a person who can talk—a person who knows some things that have to be known—for example, how did he know, ah, where Jimmy Ray was? How he know the name was Gault? And they did nothing at all about it. And according to the records, not a single thing. Except to withhold the records from me, when I was entitled to them as a matter of law. It is a live lead. The one thing you have to question—given the history a' this whole thing—Hardin goes to California, Jimmy goes east—Jimmy goes east on the trip in which Doctor King gets killed—ah, it's not like pushin' buttons, but it's the next thing to it. And that should a' been investigated. And the F.B.I. knew well about Hardin, because he was a symbol informer. That means that his employment by the F.B.I. was approved by F.B.I. headquarters. Just—ah, it wasn't picked up as a source in the field. He had a six-month probationary period, and after that, he became a symbol informer. So they knew him.

INTERVIEWER

You know what? We've, ah—we tried to talk to the investigator from the Committee who actually wrote a report on that area, and he basically kind a' wh—whitewashed it over, saying that he doesn't recall any particular name like that, and he's—he's pretty much, ah—ah, he—he did—it didn't stand out in his mind.

H. WEISBERG

May I tell you a story? Les Payne, who is now the national editor of *Newsday*—this friend a' mine—he was once the na—the, ah—the minority reporter. And he asked me, ah, once about Mark Lane as an investigator. And I said: As an investigator, Mark Lane couldn't find pubic hair in an overworked and

under-cleaned whorehouse. And Les added: At rush hour. This is what applies to those jerks—even the professional investigators in the crime like this were jerks. They didn't know what the hell they were doing; they were utterly lost. Utterly, absolutely lost. But just imagine—I did get sixty-thousand pages loose for them. Anybody's entitled to these pages. Not only can they get them from me, but they're in the F.B.I. reading room. And they can't do anything with these pages? They see a man—Hardin—who knew how to find Jimmy, when he wasn't using his own name—called him up—goes out to see him—King gets killed. And they don't do anything about it? They can't do anything about it? That— Don't send 'em to find pubic hair. They won't. The—all the—all these guys are big on theories; they wanna be Perry Mason. The dirty footwork—the slogging work [BACKGROUND NOISE] they don't do. They won't take the time to read the records to pick up on somebody else's work. They were all following Blakey's theory that the family conspired. That family couldn't conspire to, ah—to invade Woodward and Lothrop's. And in case you don't know, Woodward and Lothrop's was once Washington's most famous department store.

INTERVIEWER

What is your basic—ah, after all these years of investigation, what is your basic feeling about the possibilities that have all been raised in terms of possibility—Ray—fired the shot—what was involving conspiracy—poli—possibility that Ray did not fire the shot but was a patsy for a conspiracy—possibility that Ray acted alone.

H. WEISBERG

I think I can simplify it by saying: I don't think Jimmy would have consciously been part of anything that he knew was gonna be a murder—especially a murder of Doctor King. Even though he's not particularly fond of blacks. None a' the rest of it makes sense, and there's nothing in the evidence to credit—to accredit any of it. He was set up. There's no question about that. All these things that were left at the scene of the crime, ah, pointed to Jimmy. I don't think anybody ever expected, ah, the—the whole thing to go the way it did; I think all they were looking for lead time—just paint s—ah, ah, ah, I—ah, leave some false leads, let everybody go rushing in the walk—the wrong direction, while you walk across the street and disappear. I don't think anybody expected any more than

that. But they hit the jackpot. Nothing else was ever looked at.

INTERVIEWER

If you don't mind, just once more I'd like to go through that government version of what happened that day. In as much detail as you can—just in terms of Jimmy's operations and whereabouts—you know, leaving the bundle—ah—

H. WEISBERG

Well, suppose I give you a longer one, and, ah, you can take out what you want?

INTERVIEWER

Great. Great.

H. WEISBERG

And I'll begin the day before.

INTERVIEWER

Okay.

H. WEISBERG

There's a part a' the investigation that doesn't—ah, the investigation I made that the F.B.I. didn't make—that was a lead. Jimmy stayed at the DeSoto Motel just over the T—ah, Tennessee line, ah, ah, the night before. Now, the DeSoto Ho—Motel, ah, was a hot sheet joint. And I presume I won't have to explain what a hot sheet joint is. He went from there all the way across to the opposite side of Memphis and, ah, went and registered at the Rebel Motel. Jimmy told me that he met with R—Raoul and another man at the Rebel Motel and showed them the rifle. The deal was they were gonna sell rifles to be exported. He stayed at the Rebel Motel, and the next morning, he left with the address of a place Raoul told him to go get a room. That was, ah, on South, ah, ah, Main Street—four-twenty-two and a half. Raoul gave it to him on a piece a' paper—Raoul knew Jimmy. He'd never get it straight. He gave it to him on a piece a' paper. And Jimmy missed it. He also told him there was a landmark—ah, Jim's Grill. Well, ah, three or four blocks later, on the other side a' Main Street there's Jim's Bar, and that's where Jimmy went. Before he found [BACKGROUND NOISE] out where Jim's Grill was. He went, and he rented a room at the flophouse. Ah, and a lot a' details a' that that are not necessary, but the government's story is, ah, that, at six o'clock that night, Jimmy was in the g—ah, come into the common bathroom, which was at the—

INTERVIEWER

I'm sorry—start that again, just saying: The government's story is...

H. WEISBERG

The government's story is that Jimmy went, ah, from his room into the bathroom with this Remington, ah, pump rifle and, standing in the bathroom with a rifle resting on the window sill, leaving a mark on the window sill—a knocked-out pla—ah, a knock-down place—fired one shot across Mulberry Street into the balcony of the R—R—the Lorraine Motel, where Doctor King was, and that one shot killed him. The story is—ah, the official mythology is—and you gotta be crazy to believe this, but this is the story—that Jimmy went back to the motel room, took a sp—bed spread that he found someplace, got a box that he had the rifle in—which was a shotgun bon—ah, box and not a rifle—he'd bought some beer he hadn't used—it was in a bag—he got that, he got, ah, his toilet goods, ah, he got even bobbie pins—literally, bobbie pins—made a bundle out of it, walked down the corridor—it was a long corridor—of the, ah, northernmost of the two buildings that constituted the flop-house, went down the stairs onto Main Street, ah, made a left turn to go to where they say his car was parked—in the course of this he wa—walked past the secondhand record shop of Guy Warren Knipe—then he came to a firehouse. Where there were some police c—cruisers and some, ah, Sheriff's tach crews taking a break. And the official story is, ah, that Timmy saw these police cars, and he got scared, and he went back and threw the bundle down outside a' Knipe's and theng—then got in his car away, and everybody as far away as Montana heard the tires screech—if you believe the official story—[LAUGHS]—and, ah, disappeared. The, ah—he wa—they s—they know he went to Canada—he was traced to Canada, but the leads on that they got from Bill Huey and not from their own investigation. And he did go to Canada. And Canada—ta—he was—he was out of money—oh, he went to Atlanta first. In Canada, he ran out of money, so he knocked off a whorehouse—he knew that wouldn't be, ah, reported to the police. Ah, he got, ah, ah—ah, he got a passport through a travel agency which got it for him. He got to London. He went from London to Portugal. In Portugal, he was about a hundred dollars shy of passage to what was then called Rhodesia. He wanted to get there, because there was no extradition law. He didn't dare try and pull a crime in Portugal, where he didn't speak the language. He went back to London. He, ah, found, ah, another crook;

and between the two of 'em, they knocked off the bank at Fulham—F-U-L-H-A-M—and they got a little bit over two-hundred dollars American, which didn't help Jimmy very much. He, ah, wanted to try and get in touch with some mercenaries, where he'd have a place where he could have refuge. And he was leaving for Belgium at Heathrow Airport, when he was picked up. He was brought back to the United States by the F.B.I. and taken to [BACKGROUND NOISE] Memphis to stand trial. Is that enough?

INTERVIEWER

Plenty. And just briefly— What's your feeling about that story?

H. WEISBERG

Ah, I feel that what Jimmy told me is the truth. Ah, ah, I feel that he did go to Atlanta—ah, that he did go from Atlanta—I know he went from Atlanta to Canada, and I know he went from Canada to England, and I believe the story, ah—ah, that he has another—in fact, the F.B.I. found traces of Ray—they even found a whore he was live—with in—in, ah, Portugal. Ah, and instead of giving her money, he got her—he gave her clothes. Ah, and it makes sense. Ah, going to a—for Jimmy, who was a—

H. WEISBERG

Ah, we're gonna stop again.

[BACKGROUND CONVERSATION]

BEEP. BEEP.

AND THAT'LL BE THE END OF SOUND ROLL 15—THE END OF SOUND ROLL 15—THAT'S THE END OF SOUND ROLL 15—THE END OF SOUND ROLL 15.

HI—COSGROVE-MEURER PRODUCTIONS—"M.L.K." INTERVIEWS—PRODUCTION NUMBER 1477-256 FROM THE 19TH OF FEBRUARY OF '93—THIS IS TAPE NUMBER THREE IN THIS SERIES OF TRANSCRIPTION TAPES, AND THIS IS SIDE ONE—THIS IS AN INTERVIEW WITH HAROLD WEISBERG, AND THIS IS MATERIAL THAT'S CONTINUED ON SOUND ROLL 16 AND CAMERA ROLL 31, AND THIS NEXT IS MARKER 27—CONTINUING THE INTERVIEW WITH HAROLD WEISBERG.

MARK.

INTERVIEWER

Just briefly summarizing, what's your opinion of that, quote, government version?

H. WEISBERG

The government version is a disgrace. And it's not tenable. And it was accredited only because the major media let it get accepted. No part of it stacks. No part of it is reasonable. And all of the evidence that exists disproves it. Ah, the government version really started with the Memphis police—not the F.B.I. Ah, they had nothing. They did—all this happened, and it's a big scandal; so they went with what they had. And they built it into what it wasn't—they—they were suckered. The federal government was suckered. The House Commit—I mean, the House Committee suckered itself. It didn't have to be—too many years had passed—too much was available. [BURPS] There is no single part of the story that can be credited. If you—if you begin with Ray and the kind a' person he was and, ah, whether or not he had the capability of firing a rifle that way—whether or not the rifle was even used in the crime—whether Ray was in Memphis or the State a' Tennessee at the time a' the crime—none of it is proven. And the official story amounts to a theory. The dropping of the bundle is a theory—that Ray saw the police cars and got scared and dropped the bundle. I could disprove it, if I had to in a trial. Ah, no part of the story makes sense. And no part of the official story is true. Except that there was a man named James Earl Ray. He was a petty criminal. And he used about ten aliases. The—the rest of it's not true.

INTERVIEWER

What're—what're the implications here for this larger conspiracy?

H. WEISBERG

The implications—if you're asking in terms of who conspired—ah, we really don't know. But clearly—well, there're two—there's another implication, of course—what does it mean when this can happen? And the government doesn't even try and investigate the crime, and that people can get away with it? When the le—when our leaders can be knock—bro—can be knocked off, and nobody, ah, who was guilty is brought to trial—now, that's a terrible implication for a society like ours. When the—a crime like this can be committed and never really—the crime itself never really being investigated. All people were tryin' to do was prove that Jimmy Ray did it. Beginning when, ah, they knew him as Gault. Same thing

happened in the Kennedy assassination. Ah, the coun—the—the country just can't work that way. If you look at the differences in our system of justice between the time a' these assassinations and now, you'll find that one a' the, ah, byproducts—one a' the consequences, if not a byproduct—one a' the things that happened is that more and more authoritarian standards are being applied. People have less freedom. Prosecutors can now lie in court and get away with it, if they're federal prosecutors. The courts have now held that the bar can't discipline the members of the bar who work for the government. And since they commit these abuses for the government, the government is not about to, ah, ab—to, ah, punish them. So so many things have happened—you—you—we don't know if there's cause-effect relationship. But we do say it didn't happen then, and it does happen now. So many things have changed—ah, so much disenchantment. Especially among young people. Ah, and especially with the King assassination among blacks. But among both blacks and whites about the Kennedy assassinate—disenchantment because the government didn't do the job. So many ways society has been hurt. And so many ways that hurt's going to last.

INTERVIEWER What're the possibilities—under your research that you've done—of the conspiracy having actually broadened into other aspects of government—like the F.B.I.?

H. WEISBERG I have no reason to believe, on the basis of any a' the records I have or any a' the work I've done, that the F.B.I. was involved in the crime, at all. In addition to that, I don't believe they were. And I know how much Hoover, ah, hated King, and I know how many racist agents the F.B.I. had—they're not all racist; they just—I've known some who're fine people, too—there's no reason to believe it. Ah, people just make this up, because, well, Hoover hated him, or, well, the F.B.I. was like this, but there's no basis for it.

INTERVIEWER And from the research that you've done, what would you say is the most likely scenario, if there is a conspiracy?

H. WEISBERG This—now, I have to deduce, because there's nothing to point to it. But I would say that, ah, Doctor King was not killed before he was killed, because he was just another uppity nigger

then. I would say that Doctor Killed was kinged at the—was killed at the time he was killed, because he'd, ah, come to basic change in his understanding of the real world in which he lived. He come to realize that marching and protesting, ah, and getting the vote and all a' that was good. But people hadda eat, and people hadda have jobs. He'd come to realize, ah, that their needs—of all people—not just blacks—hadda be met. And he started the poor people's campaign, ah, to bring some relief to these people and to dramatize the need for b—taking—doing something about people in need. Now, this represented a economic threat. Not only—not to the—ah, to the employers of those who had no jobs but to the employers of those who didn't even get minimum wage. To those who could keep wages low, because, ah, there was no organization among the poor people who hadda work for them. So when he, ah, started to organize the poor people's campaign and had covered all ca—ah, crossed all cover li—color lines, then he became a hazard to some people. And I think that it was because a' the change in Doctor King's policies—he still believed in non-violence, but he had learned that, in this country—he learned that non-violence will work when there's a moral conscience to be appealed to, and he found that lacking in this country.

INTERVIEWER

What's been the hardest part of all this for you?

H. WEISBERG

The hardest part? I guess the hardest part has been to realize that all of our institutions can fail the way they did. That there are people who are determined to make it fail, and they can get away with it. That there are those who should keep it from failing, and they don't. The major media failed terribly in the major assassinations. If they hadn't, all of history would a' been different. So I'm, ah—you know, I'm old-fashioned in many ways. I'm more than a third the age a' the country. Ah, I'd like this country to be what they taught us when I was in school. It's changed; it's not that way anymore. And this is the kind a' thing that has caused the change. And I believe that the, ah—ah, when I was a reporter—that reporters had responsibilities, and they reported. And I when I was an investigative reported, I could do some a' that. But, ah— I guess another part is that there was so much indifference. Ah, it's part of the same thing but a different aspect. So much indifference on the part of people in authority. And the—and the Congress. And the Senate. In all aspects of life, including

the major media, the White House and, above all, the Department of Justice, where these responsibilities lay. I guess these—the failure of our institutions is, to me, the hardest thing. We can't bring these key people back to life—it'd be wonderful. I don't think there's much possibility of finding, ah, the assassins—the real assassins in either case. So I think that the most we can hope for is that it can help us understand what has happened to the country and the [UNCLEAR] and probably is to succeed in some ways of restoring it to what those, ah—those, ah, beautiful, glorious, ah, ah, political thinkers of all time thought when they created this country. Our founding fathers were really great political thinkers. And we're getting too far away from it. With all these things that're happening in courts, in particular. Their—their shift toward authoritarianism—it's a danger.

INTERVIEWER

Okay, cut. Beautifully done.

H. WEISBERG

Thank you.

BEEP. BEEP.

[END OF INTERVIEW WITH HAROLD WEISBERG.]