

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Mr. Gebhardt *REG 100*

DATE: June 26, 1975

FROM : J. S. Peelman *JS*

- 1 - Mr. Gebhardt
- 1 - Mr. Peelman
- 1 - Mr. McDonough
- 1 - Mr. Moore

SUBJECT: MURKIN

Assoc. Dir. _____
 Dep. AD Adm. _____
 Dep. AD Inv. _____
 Asst. Dir. _____
 Adm. _____
 Comp. Syst. _____
 Ext. Affairs _____
 Files & Com. _____
 Gen. Inv. _____
 Ident. _____
 Insp. _____
 Intell. _____
 Lab. _____
 Plan. & Eval. _____
 Spec. Inv. _____
 Training _____
 Legal Coun. _____
 Telephone Rm. _____
 Director Sec'y _____

BACKGROUND: This is the case involving the murder of Martin Luther King in Memphis, Tennessee, in April, 1968. James Earl Ray had pleaded guilty in State Court, Tennessee, and is presently serving a 99-year sentence.

Ray had appealed his conviction on grounds that he was not properly represented or counseled by his attorney at the time he entered his guilty plea in 1969. However, in February, 1975, a Writ of Habeas Corpus was denied Ray in U. S. District Court, Western District of Tennessee.

On June 21, 1975, the Wire Services carried information revealed by Atlanta, Georgia, Public Safety Commissioner Reginald Eaves, to the effect that Eaves was in possession of "... strong information on the conspiracy" in the death of Martin Luther King. Eaves indicated that he had received this information from a second party, which information "warrants our serious consideration." A copy of this information was furnished by Eaves to our Atlanta Office.

A review of this information by the Atlanta Division revealed that the source, Robert Byron Watson, previously had been interviewed by Special Agents of the Atlanta Division on 4/7/71. At that time, Watson admitted that his information pertaining to the murder of Martin Luther King was completely fabricated. Subsequent investigation also failed to substantiate any of the information as revealed by Watson. The results of that interview and of the subsequent investigation were furnished to the Civil Rights Division, U. S. Department of Justice, in April, 1971.

The information furnished by Mr. Eaves to the Atlanta Office is identical to that previously furnished to the Atlanta Office in 1971.

44-38861
Enclosure

EJM:hap (5)

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6- Peelman
JS
in Atlanta

Peelman to Gebhardt memorandum
RE: MURKIN

ACTION: If approved, to preclude any further misguided releases on the part of Mr. Eaves, he will be advised of the previous receipt and resolution of the information from Watson. Attached is an airtel along these lines.

The Civil Rights Division is being furnished a copy of the information received from Mr. Eaves and its attention will be directed to the results of the previous investigation conducted thereon.

EBM

JK

JK

REC/JP

[Handwritten signature]

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