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Dear Ms. Riley:

I really enjoyed your article on James Earl Ray, as I have enjoyed all your columns. I am possibly Kentucky's expert on both the murder of President Kennedy and Dr. King. I have always been interested in these cases, as I am a historian. Several years ago, I became close friends with Harold Weisberg, the nation's leading expert on both of these murders. He is the author of the famous Whitewash series of books on JFK's murder, among other books on JFK's death.

Weisberg is the author of the only completely accurate book on the King murder, called Frame Up. This book has been reissued as Martin Luther King: The Assassination, Carroll and Graf. I suggest you might want to read this book. Weisberg appeared briefly on the Unsolved Mysteries feature on Dr. King's death, as well as on the 1993 Fox documentary on this subject.

After writing this book, Weisberg and famed Watergate attorney Bud Fensterwald, along with Freedom of Information Act expert and lawyer Jim Lesar, worked with James Earl Ray in trying to get a trial for Ray. Weisberg met with Ray several times. Weisberg sued the government under FOIA over a dozen times, resulting in over 250,000 pages being disclosed concerning JFK, and over 80,000 involving Dr. King. I enclose a sample of the FBI memos that concern Dr. King. As you can see, the FBI tried to destroy King, and in my opinion also the Civil Rights movement.

Along with Weisberg, there are three college profs who are experts on both JFK and King. Jerry McKnight of Hood College, in Frederick, Maryland is an expert on both cases, as well as author of an unpublished book on the Poor People's Campaign. Dave Wrone, of Stevens Point, Wisconsin, is an expert on the above as well as the death of Robert Kennedy, also Abe Lincoln. Gerry Ginocchio, of Wofford College in Spartanburg, SC is also a JFK and King expert, as well as the death of Malcolm X. Among other pearls of wisdom I have learned from them, is that Robert Kennedy died of a shot to the head that was larger than the .22 that Sirhan used. Ginocchio tells me that two of the three men sent to prison for Malcolm X death may have been innocent. These fellows know their stuff. They all knew the late Greg Stone, the man primarily responsible for California putting the Robert Kennedy material in the state archives at Sacramento.

Most college history departments tend to make fun of those of us who study these subjects. However, they are very serious subjects, that have long been ignored by various segments of the press. Ray's lawyer, Bill Pepper, is a fine attorney but a poor historian. His book is not considered credible by the above men.

James Earl Ray never confessed to killing King, he did plead guilty in a plea bargain that he was not involved in, by a lawyer who told him he would surely get the electric chair otherwise. Ray then fired his lawyer, and tried to revoke his plea. Ray was tortured by the Federal government, by being kept in a lighted prison cell for a year, with few if any amenities. He probably suffered psychological damage.

Ray is an interesting guy. An escaped felon from the Missouri prison system, most of his crimes were grocery store holdups and the like. He was not especially racist, he was only motivated by money and not going back to prison. Why would he kill King, which would make him Public Enemy #1. A surprisingly intelligent man, street smart, he is not the dummy portrayed by the popular press. He did not kill Dr. King, and I doubt if even the FBI really believe he did.

At the state bar association in 1995, I met Benjamin Hooks. I asked him about the case, careful to be tactful since he was a close friend of King. He believes Ray was the triggerman, but that he acted as a result of a conspiracy. This seems to be the consensus among the black community, although I believe Jesse Jackson realizes Ray was not the killer.

The FBI hated King, his code name was Zorro, perhaps because the FBI considered him to be a swordsman. Public demonstrations in general were not as popular back then. The fact is, the murder of Dr. King was never properly investigated. The sad fact is, in the second half of this century, the two most important white leaders, Robert and John Kennedy, and the two most important blacks, King and Malcolm X, were murdered and none of the murders was investigated. Like Richard Jewell, the FBI always gets their man, though it may be the wrong one.

I donated a set of Weisberg's books to UK, they already had Frame Up. I have done research in Sen. John Sherman Cooper's archive at UK, read over a hundred books on JFK and RFK, and several on King. I am not trying to brag, but there are very few true scholars on these subjects, and I have been lucky to know most of them. Getting to know them has been one of the highlights of my life.

Most writers on these subjects are charlatans or worse. What does a student of these subjects do? We go to Harold Weisberg's basement and copy his documents ! I hope you find the ones I send you to be interesting. Weisberg has been a guest on the Jane Norris show, two times. He is a great guy and a hero to many. The FBI has kept close tabs on him over the years, I think they are afraid he will make a disclosure that will embarrass them. He is a former Senate investigator, in fact investigated the 1937 Eastern Ky coal mine union riots, etc. He also was in the OSS. A very open and friendly man.

You are welcome to any of my documents or info, including the above mentioned documentaries. I hope to make a talk on this subject later this year, touching on both JFK and King. I will say, I doubt Ray can shed much light on this subject, he was a patsy, and had no contact with any others involved after the murder. Believe it or not, Weisberg probably knows more about it than Ray. Or Oswald, for that matter.

Keep up the good work.