

NEW WEST INTELLIGENCER

Mystery Project: Scoop at CBS

A special investigative team from *60 Minutes* has secretly finished work on what may be the program's biggest show ever. Mike Wallace and a CBS team have been working on what is dubbed "The Mystery Project" at network headquarters; they've reportedly developed new information in the case of missing skyjacker D.B.



Missing link: D.B. Cooper.

Cooper, and have linked Cooper to the Martin Luther King assassination.

Two reliable TV news sources—one close to the *60 Minutes* producers—confirm that the story is completed and in the hands of attorneys and high-level officials at the network.

Details are sketchy on the big scoop, but it has been learned that the *60 Minutes* crew has filmed interviews in Seattle,



King killer: James Earl Ray.

Hawaii and Los Angeles (recent Los Angeles interviews were filmed at the L.A. airport using a fictitious story as a cover). They have reportedly found people who knew the mysterious Cooper, who parachuted from a Northwest Orient 727 with a \$200,000 ransom on November 24, 1971, and was never found. One TV journalist said the news story reports that Cooper survived the jump—and may be alive today.

It is unclear how Cooper has been tied to the King slaying (April 4, 1968), for which James Earl Ray is presently serving a 99-year prison sentence. None of the *60 Minutes* people contacted was willing to talk about the Cooper-Ray connection.

A former CBS producer, Dirk Summers, now a freelance author and screenwriter in Los Angeles, has been working on the story for more than two years and has picked up "a five-figure" advance from a

book publisher for a "docu-drama" on the subject. He brought *60 Minutes* into the picture nine months ago, and is orchestrating public release of the blockbuster. Although he admitted he has spent "a lot of time in the mountains of the Northwest" and that the story involves a hijacking and murder—"one of the biggest crimes in the past century"—Summers refused to discuss specifics of the story. "We're not ready to break it for several months." Then he added: "The story reaches the highest offices of the government. It's the kind of story an investigative reporter waits a lifetime for." Summers said a top newsman at CBS has told him the piece "might be the story of the century."

Another TV journalist close to the story said if the CBS hierarchy decides to go with the program it will be aired on the first or second show of the new season. —Bruce Henderson