

Assistant Attorney General
Criminal Division
Attention: Mr. Robert ~~BERKOWITZ~~
Director, FBI

June 10, 1977

- 1 - Mr. Held
- 1 - Mr. Adams
- 1 - Mr. Fehl
- 1 - Mr. Peelman
- 1 - Mr. Lawn
- 1 - Mr. Mintz
- 1 - Mr. Cochran

ASSASSINATION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

As you will recall, in March, 1977, U. S. Congressman M. G. Snyder, Kentucky, publicly revealed that a former police officer had received an offer from FBI Agents and Louisville police officers to kill Martin Luther King, Jr., for \$500,000. The police officer reportedly made tapes of two meetings concerning this offer in his automobile where he had a tape recorder secreted. One of these tapes reportedly was misplaced or stolen, and the other was turned over to the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA). Newspaper accounts subsequently identified the officer making this allegation as Clifton E. Baird. Pursuant to the authority of the Attorney General, an attempt was made to interview Baird concerning this allegation, however, he refused to be interviewed and stated he would "say it all to the House Committee."

Kyr Clifton Baird

By my memorandum dated April 5, 1977, it was recommended that in order to resolve this allegation, you request the HSCA to furnish all information furnished by Mr. Baird, including a copy of the alleged tape, and that you consider calling Mr. Baird before a federal grand jury and request his testimony concerning this allegation.

On April 29, 1977, Mr. James Chenowich, HSCA, delivered to FBI Headquarters the alleged tape for reproduction by the FBI. Reproduction of this tape was made by the FBI and the original tape was returned to Mr. Chenowich per his request.

(ENCLOSURE)

Enclosed is a memorandum containing a transcript prepared from the tape made available by the HSCA and an examination of this tape by our Technical Services Division.

As reflected in this transcript, the only reference to Martin Luther King, Jr., appears in the first portion of the tape (pages 2-5 of enclosed memorandum). A male voice identifies himself as Clifton Baird and makes an "introduction" on the tape by saying "Today is September 20, 1965, on

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- Asst. Dir.:
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- Laboratory _____
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HNH/gjw (12)

44-38861-6231
SEE NOTE PAGE 47 JUN 14 1977

JUN 24 1977 ROOM 6000 TELETYPE UNIT

Assistant Attorney General
Criminal Division
Attention: Mr. Robert L. Keuch

September 18, Officer Blair (or Bair) (phonetic), riding home with me while his car was broke down made the offer to me said he belonged to an organization that wanted Martin Luther King killed. The price he mentioned was \$500,000 to anyone killing this man. I refused the offer and tonight I will attempt to find out who made this offer. I will see if Officer Bair (or Blair) wants a ride home tonight while his car is broken down. This is Officer Clifton Baird. The next voice you will hear will be that of Arlie Blair (phonetic) and myself."

A conversation then takes place on this tape reportedly between Baird and Arlie. After some idle chatter, Baird and Arlie, in essence, say the following regarding King: Baird says, "Talking about Martin Luther King the other night, who is it you know who wants him knocked off?" Arlie replies, "Somebody" . . . "a lot of them that want him knocked off." Baird agrees and says there are only two organizations that would have that much money, the "Communist Party and the Ku Klux Klan." Arlie says ". . . he (King) can be had." Baird agrees and says ". . . when you do, you have to start a civil war, probably." Baird says ". . . I don't know, I just don't want no part in it, do you? I sure don't." Arlie says "the only way I would operate is if the money was right - which I ain't even involved, not now and I don't intend to be . . ."

It is noted that part of the examination by our Technical Services Division suggests that the "introduction" (on this tape reportedly made by Baird as set forth above) may have been inserted over the existing recording but a more definitive conclusion on this point cannot be reached without developing and examining the magnetic patterns on the HSCA tape.

There is no further reference to Martin Luther King on this tape, (other than the information on Pages 2-5 of the enclosed memorandum summarized above) and no mention is made of the FBI. You were previously advised in my April 5, 1977, memorandum that the only reference in the files of the FBI to Mr. Baird is that he was the subject of a civil rights brutality complaint in 1963. The only reference to an Arlie Blair (or Bair) in the files of FBI Headquarters and our Louisville Office is that an Arlie Blair, an officer of the Louisville police department was the subject of a civil rights brutality complaint in 1957. Insufficient identifying data exists to know whether or not the Arlie Blair reportedly mentioned on this tape is identical with the Arlie Blair who was the subject of this 1957 civil rights complaint.

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Inasmuch as no reference is made to the FBI on this tape, and since the HSCA has furnished no additional information regarding the Baird allegation, no further action is being taken by the FBI concerning the reported Baird allegation.

Enclosure

- 1 - Assistant Attorney General
Civil Rights Division (Enclosure)
- 1 - Office of Professional Responsibility (Enclosure)

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NOTE: This furnishes the Department with a copy of a transcript of an alleged tape which reportedly was made by Baird to record a meeting between FBI Agents and Louisville police officers in an alleged plot to assassinate Martin Luther King, Jr., and furnishes the Department with an examination of this type by our Technical Services Division as set forth in a W. D. Campbell to Mr. Cochran memorandum dated 6/7/77. This advises the Department we are taking no further action since no mention was made of the FBI on this tape and since the HSCA has furnished no additional information re the Baird allegation. Information concerning references re Baird obtained from Bureau file 44-21236 and re Blair obtained from 44-12387.

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APPROVED:

Director *[Signature]*
Assec. Dir. *[Signature]*
Dep. AD Adm. *[Signature]*
Dep. AD Inv. *[Signature]*

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[Handwritten initials]