

**Digest of the Transcript of the
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Assassination Conspiracy Trial**

Martin Luther King Family

v.

Loyd Jowers and Co-Conspirators

Nov. 15 through Dec. 8, 1999

The Circuit Court of Shelby County, Tennessee
30th Judicial District at Memphis

Digester's Statement:

It was in 1990 in the pages of the Chicago Reader, a free weekly newspaper, that I first learned that there might be more to the story of the death of Dr. Martin Luther King than the simple tale that most of us have half-invented – that of a failed petty criminal and bigoted drifter, James Earl Ray, obsessed with the celebrity and political power of the leading advocate of non-violent revolution in the world.

The Reader ran stories that The Tribune and the Sun-Times would not, but which were generally intelligent enough and well-written enough to deserve that they seemed to deserve the presumption of respectability. One I remember alleged that 36 Chicago-area priests had been charged with child-molestation and then sent by the Church off to some funny farm before being quietly reassigned to new parishes. This information was later after long delay validated by the Boston Globe, and by the movie “Spotlight”. Another alleged that an accused cop-killer had been tortured by the Chicago police until he confessed. Not long ago I learned that he had been released from prison with a substantial monetary settlement.

The trial the King Family put on was not perfect. In opening statements Mr. Jowers's defense attorney indicated that he agreed with the Kings' lawyer, Dr. William Pepper, about 80% of the case. The defense was there only to minimize Mr. Jowers's role in an alleged conspiracy that he agreed existed.

The testimony of certain alleged military operatives makes me very uneasy. I am reluctant to call cooperating witnesses liars, and reluctant to call ex-military personnel liars, but I wonder if maybe Dr. Pepper accepted some testimony that was too good to be true, and went “a bridge too far” by including credibility-killing testimony -- resulting in a news blackout. I wanted to ask him about his epistemic processes in evaluating which witnesses to believe and which to discard. Unfortunately I was unable to attend his recent public appearance in Oakland. In any case, with that caveat I consider the information developed in this trial to be extremely important to an understanding of American history of not so long ago, which is why I have gone to the trouble to offer it to the public in this format.

VOLUME I

November 15, 1999

Jury selection begins. It is closed to the public. *The Memphis Commercial Appeal* is granted permission to file an appeal against the public being excluded for jury selection.

VOLUME II

November 16, 1999

Testifying:

- Mrs. Coretta Scott King, wife of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., currently-Founder, The Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, Inc.
- Dr. Cobey Smith, founder, The Invaders (Black Organizing Project)-1968, educator consultant (current)
- Mr. Charles Cabbage, Executive Secretary, The Invaders
- Mr. John McFerren, founder, Fayette County Civic & Welfare League and local businessman
- Mr. Nathan Whitlock, taxicab driver, musician
- Captain Thomas Smith, Memphis Police Department, Homicide Detective (1968), currently retired
- Mr. Charles Hurley, advertising manager, National Food Stores, Memphis (1968), Division Manager, Save-A-Lot Food Stores (current)

VOLUME III

November 17, 1999

Testifying:

- Mr. James Milner, taxicab driver
- Mr. Floyd Newsom, Memphis Fire Department, retired
- Mr. Norville Wallace, Chief, Memphis Fire Dept., retired
- Mr. Leon Cohen, special deputy at Juvenile Court, took photos around the Lorraine Motel the morning after the assassination, retired
- Mr. Ed Redditt, Memphis Police Department, detective, Community Relations Officer, retired, volunteer high school coach
- Mr. James McCraw (deceased), taxicab driver, via previous deposition
- Mr. Jerry Williams, captain, Memphis Police Department (1968), real estate currently
- Mr. Phillip Melanson, professor, political science, author "The Martin Luther King Assassination"
- Ms. Kaye Pittman Black, reporter, The Memphis

Press Scimitar (1968), via sworn testimony in 1993

VOLUME IV

November 18, 1999

Testifying:

- Rev. James Lawson, Jr., SCLC Board Member, Pastor, Centenary United Methodist Church in Memphis (1968), retired
- Mr. Maynard Stiles, Division Superintendent, Department of Sanitation, retired
- Ms. Olivia Catling, neighborhood resident around Lorraine Motel
- Mr. Ed Atkinson, Memphis Police Department, Traffic Division, retired
- Mr. Hasel Huckaby, South Central Bell, employee, via sworn statement in 1993
- Mr. James Lesar, lawyer, represented James Earl Ray (1970-76), currently specializes in Freedom of Information Act litigation
- The Honorable Andrew J. Young, Executive Vice President of SCLC (in 1968), currently Chairman, GoodWorks International, LLC

VOLUME V

November 22, 1999

Testifying:

- Videotape of the meeting between Loyd Jowers, Dexter Scott King, Andrew J. Young and Lewis Garrison, Little Rock, AR
- Mr. Arthur Haynes, Jr., James Earl Ray's first attorney (with his father), currently, Circuit Judge 10th Judicial Circuit, AL
- Ms. Bobbie Balfour, Jim's Grill, employee, currently a cook
- Mr. William R. Key, Clerk of Court, Shelby County
- Mr. Joe B. Brown, Judge, 30th Judicial District, State of TN, Division 9, Criminal Court, Shelby County

VOLUME VI

November 23, 1999

Testifying:

- Dr. Jerry Francisco, professor of pathology, University of TN, Shelby County Medical Examiner (1968 and currently)
- Mr. John Billings, surgical assistant, St. Joseph's Hospital (1968), private investigator (current)
- Mr. Royce Wilburn, master electrician (1968-

present), brother of Ms. Glenda Grabow

- Mr. Sidney J. Carthew, merchant seaman, British Merchant Navy, via teleconference deposition in 1999
- Mr. Joe B. Hodges, Memphis Police Department, dog squad (1968), retired
- Mr. James W. Smith, Memphis Police Department, special services (1968)
- Ms. Barbara Reis, journalist, Publico newspaper, Portugal
- Rev. James Orange, Executive Staff, SCLC, via previous affidavit

VOLUME VII

November 24, 1999

Testifying:

- Mr. Jack Saltman, television producer, BBC, Thames, HBO, and ABC- TV
- Dr. Clayborne Carson, professor of history, Stanford University, Editor-The King Papers project

VOLUME VIII

November 29, 1999

Testifying:

- Mr. William B. Hamblin, taxi-cab driver (1968), part-time security guard (currently)
- Mr. James Joseph Isabel, taxi-cab and charter bus driver (1968), retired
- Mr. Jerry William Ray, brother of James Earl Ray
- Mr. Willie B. Richmond, captain, Memphis Police Department-Internal Affairs, retired
- Mr. Douglas Valentine, author, *The Phoenix Program*
- Mr. Carthel Weeden, Memphis Fire Department (1968), construction company owner (currently)
- The Honorable Rev. Walter E. Fauntroy, SCLC Washington, DC Chapter Director (1968), later chair of the Congressional Subcommittee investigating the Assassination, pastor
- Ms. April R. Ferguson, attorney, one of the post conviction defense attorney for James Earl Ray.
- James E. Adams, taxi-cab driver
- Yolanda King, actress/producer, eldest daughter of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mrs. Coretta Scott King

VOLUME IX

November 30, 1999

Testifying:

- Mr. Jack Kershaw, attorney, for James Earl Ray ('77)
- Mr. Jack Terrel, Civilian Military Assistance, via videotaped deposition
- Mr. Louis Ward, security police and taxi-cab driver (1968), part-time roofer (current)
- Mr. Raymond Kohlman, attorney
- Mr. Earl Caldwell, reporter, the New York Times (1968) via videotaped deposition
- Mr. Roy Grabow, husband of Glenda Grabow
- Mr. John C. Smith, member, The Invaders
- Mr. William Schaap, attorney, military and intelligence specialization, co-publisher "Covert Action Quarterly"

VOLUME X

December 1, 1999

Testifying:

- Mr. Loyd Jowers, via deposition Nov. 2, 1994
- Mr. Mark Glankler, investigator, appointed by District Attorney General-December, 1993
- Mr. Dexter King, Chairman, President & CEO-The Martin Luther King, Jr. Center For Nonviolent Social Change, Inc., youngest son of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mrs. Coretta Scott King

VOLUME XI

December 2, 1999

Testifying:

- Rev. Samuel B. Kyles, pastor, Monumental Baptist Church, Memphis, TN, (1968-present)
- Mr. Frank W. Young, Shelby County Criminal Clerk's Office
- Mr. Eli Arkin, Memphis Police Department inspection bureau (1968), currently-The Cottonwood Company
- Ms. Rebecca A. Clark, ex-wife of Captain Earl Clark, Memphis Police Department (1968)
- Mr. John Doe, via videotaped desposition of November 5, 1999

VOLUME XII

December 6, 1999

Testifying:

- Ms. LaVada Addison, restaurant owner (1968), self employed, LaVada Estate Sales (current)
- Mr. James Earl Ray, deposition of March 11-12, 1995 in the case of James Earl Ray versus Loyd Jowers

VOLUME XIII

December 7, 1999

Testifying:

- Mr. James Earl Ray, deposition of March 11-12, 1995 in the case of James Earl Ray versus Loyd Jowers (continued)
- Ms. Betty Jean Spates, waitress--Jim's Grill, deposition of November 3, 1999

VOLUME XIV

December 8, 1999

Closing Statements and verdict