

MARTIN LUTHER KING - THE FATAL SHOT CAME FROM A DIFFERENT DIRECTION

In Memoriam: Ted Wilburn, the author of the piece which follows, passed away this morning, June 17, 2002. He had the courage not only to ask questions, but to find the answers when nobody else would.

UPDATE! BREAKING: FLORIDA MINISTER SAYS THAT HIS FATHER, NOT JAMES EARL RAY, WAS THE "TRIGGERMAN" IN THE ASSASSINATION OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

On April 4, 1968, while standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel, Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated.

The official story is that a single man, James Earl Ray, was staying at a rooming house located at 422 South Main Street.



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In the back of this rooming house was a shared bathroom with a window that looked out onto the swimming pool of the Lorraine Motel.



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According to the government, James Earl Ray shot Dr. Martin Luther King from that window. There is, needless to say, no physical evidence to prove this charge. James Earl Ray spent his life in prison based solely on a coerced confession which he immediately retracted. None of the ballistics tests, which were performed on the rifle James Earl Ray allegedly used, were able to link that rifle to the actual bullet that killed Dr. Martin Luther King. Dr. King's family does not think James Earl Ray was the killer, and recently won a civil court case proving there was a conspiracy.

Now, thanks to writer Ted Wilburn, in a story which follows, new evidence has surfaced to prove that the government and the media have been lying to the public about the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King.



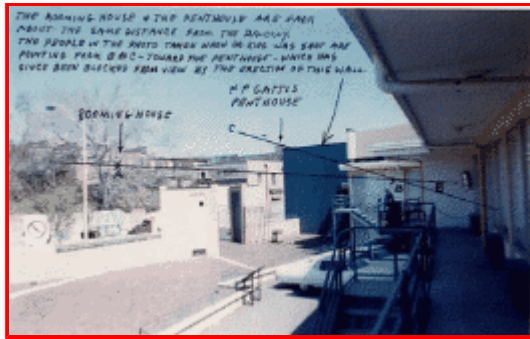
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Just moments after Dr. Martin Luther King was killed by a sniper's bullet, a photographer took the above picture. Dr. King lies on the balcony floor. The witnesses are all pointing in the direction the fatal shot was fired from. There is no confusion among the witnesses as to where the source of the shot was. They are not confused by echoes. There is no uncertainty. All three witnesses are pointing in *exactly* the same direction.

The official story is that these men are pointing at the bathroom window in the rear of the rooming house from which James Earl Ray is supposed to have fired a gunshot.

But is that where the witnesses are pointing?

As part of the research, Ted Wilburn went back to the Lorraine Motel, to the very spot where Martin Luther King was shot, and took a photograph of the crime scene location that shows a great deal of the surroundings.

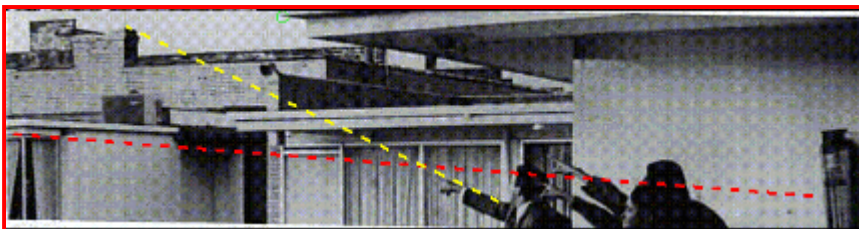


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Indicated at left is the actual window of the rooming house from which the government maintains that James Earl Ray shot Martin Luther King.

A line has been drawn from the rooming house window back to the balcony on which the pointing witnesses were photographed. Note the end of the line near the fire extinguisher and the intersection of the line with the top of the pale blue door.

Using the fire extinguisher and the top of the door as landmarks, a line is drawn on a detail of the photo taken just moment after the shooting, indicating the direction back to the window of the rooming house.



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As can be seen, NONE of the witnesses are pointing towards the window of the rooming house at 422 South Main Street!

Note the small green circle marking the corner of the roof right above where Dr. King was killed.



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The above photograph was taken from inside the bathroom of the rooming house at 422 South Main Street, looking through the window through which James Earl Ray is supposed to have shot Dr. King. At the very top of the photo can be seen the balcony of the Lorraine Motel. A small green circle identifies the roof corner marked in the detail from the picture right after the shooting. From this vantage point, we can confirm that the angle from the bathroom window to where Dr. King was killed is nearly level, as is indicated by the dotted red line on the detail photo.

The evidence in the photo taken just moments after the assassination is unequivocal. The claim that the witnesses are pointing to the rooming house where James Earl Ray was staying is a complete fabrication. The gunfire came from another direction high above the bathroom window.

Here follows Ted's story.

Overlooked evidence in the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

By

Ted Wilburn: Special Correspondent to What Really Happened.

Here is my brief biography and an overview of events, which led me to my discovery of this overlooked evidence, and of what it exists.

Theodore Carlton Wilburn; Date of birth, 11-30-33; Native Tennessean; Native Memphian; Native American.
Occupation: 38 year AT&T employee now retired.

For the first twenty years of my life I rode the Memphis Area Transit Authorities (MATA) means of transportation from South Memphis to Downtown Memphis. First it was the #12 Florida trolley car. After that it was the #12 Florida electric bus after the city upgraded its means of transportation. The #12 Florida name was derived from the fact that the southern segment of the route was Florida Street that ended in South Memphis where I spent the first two decades of my life. I mention this because old #12 that I customarily rode passed by the rooming house located in the 400 block of South Main Street from where James Earl Ray allegedly shot Dr. King.



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The day Dr. King was killed, April 4, 1968, I was at work on my 4:00pm to 12:00 o'clock midnight shift. Shortly after 6:00pm I heard the news of Dr. King being shot as it was broadcast over the radio. I recall that the Memphis Police Department was quick to discover an open bathroom window in the rooming house where James Earl Ray rented a room.

That news quickly made the Memphis newspapers, The Commercial Appeal, and The Memphis Press Scimitar. But there was also news that there was a tree standing between the bathroom window of the rooming house and the Lorraine Motel balcony where Dr. King was standing when he was shot. How much foliage was on the tree is unknown to me because I have never seen any pictures that show that area of the murder location. However, it was early spring when trees begin to develop leaves. My curiosity of Dr. King's death was never satisfied because of this.



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The Lorraine Motel was converted into the National Civil Rights Museum which was dedicated June 30-July 4, 1991, and opened September 28, 1991 per its web site. Work on the conversion actually began about eighteen months earlier as I can best determine at this time. Miss Jackie Smith, a resident at the Lorraine, had to be evicted before construction could begin. She took up residence on the sidewalk of Mulberry Street and to this day has been boycotting the museum. She is a true "street person" whose worldly goods consist of a sofa, a chair, a shopping cart, a few clothes, and some picture albums about the conversion of the Lorraine Motel into the National Civil Rights Museum, etc. Miss Smith is now in her twelfth year of boycotting the museum. Why, you may ask, is she doing this? Her complaint, which she personally voiced to me, is that the construction cost of turning the motel into a museum was some nine million dollars that would have been better spent had it been used to make public housing out of the Lorraine.



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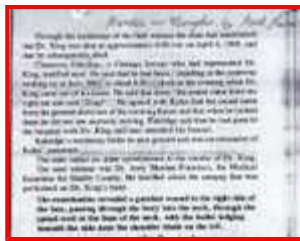
My curiosity about Dr. King's assassination was acutely aroused in January of 1994 when I went to The Memphis Commercial Appeal in mid January to get a back issue of their December 1993 Christmas week paper. While the CA clerk retrieved a copy of the paper for me from storage I began looking through the CA's book, I AM A MAN, for sale there at their counter. It is a picture book of the Memphis Sanitation Workers strike of 1968, the reason for Dr. King's presence in Memphis when he was shot. Page 101 is a picture of the murder scene.



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In this picture Dr. King is lying on his back on the walkway with his feet stuck beneath the wrought iron balcony railing. His legs are bent at his knees forming an inverted "V"; his back lying flat on the walkway that turns left and passes the side of room 306 where he was staying. The balcony turns right again at room 307, which is offset from room 306 by a distance of nearly the length of the room. I belabor this point because it is important to know the physical layout of the rooms to determine where Dr. King was actually lying immediately after being shot.

I had no prior knowledge that day in mid January of 1994 that the CA's book I AM A MAN existed. But I left the CA with their book and newspaper less some twenty-five dollars and went to the city library located at Peabody & McLean to do some genealogy research. As I passed a display of books about Dr. King in the library's history department one book caught my attention, The FBI & Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., by Mark Lane. Picking it up I opened it to within about three pages of Dr. Jerry Francisco's autopsy report testimony he gave at Ray's trial about a year after the murder.



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Dr. Francisco stated that the death bullet entered Dr. King's body on the right side of his face, traveled downward right to left through his neck, and lodged beneath the skin close to his left shoulder blade. That information is consistent with where the eyewitnesses (one of whom is Reverend Andrew Young) in the murder scene are pointing. Finding this interesting I went to a copy machine and copied the page with Dr. Francisco's statement regarding his autopsy report.

In the murder picture Rev. Young is actually looking in the direction of his pointing finger, but I couldn't see any rooming house where he or the others with him were pointing. Page 107 of I AM A MAN is a picture of the Lorraine Motel taken from inside the bathroom window of the rooming house.



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The write-up on page 106 about this picture says "Officers soon discovered the bathroom window at 418 1/2 S. Main through which they say James Earl Ray aimed when he shot Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Also on page 106 there is a statement made by Charlie Stephens who lived in the room next to the one rented by Ray. Stephens is quoted here as having said this after he heard the shot: "I went to the door and walked out into the hall. I could see the man in the offset in the hall. He had in his hand something wrapped in a newspaper." Even though Stephens doesn't mention Ray by his name its obvious that Ray is the person to whom he refers.

My curiosity now fully aroused I left the library and went home, got my Pentax K1000 camera and a supply of film, and drove directly to the Lorraine Motel which was then open to the public as the National Civil Rights Museum. There I found Miss Jackie Smith living on the street in her 5th year of boycotting the museum. It was she who pointed out the bathroom window of the rooming house from where police officers claimed Dr. King was shot. It was not even close to where Andrew Young and the other witnesses were pointing! I used two rolls of film that day taking pictures of the area from the street, the courtyard of the museum, and the Lorraine balcony.

Over the next few weeks I used up several more rolls of film photographing the area. Twice I paid the entrance fee and was allowed to use my camera inside the museum. On my third trip to the museum the employees were very helpful. One of them took me up directly to room 307 and unlocked the door and we went out on the balcony where I used up another roll of film. Incidentally, room 307 is the one next to room 306 (Rev. King's room) where the offset of the rest of the rooms begins.

This museum employee who escorted me to the balcony even posed for me pointing exactly like the eyewitnesses are pointing in the murder picture. I put several of these together to form a panorama.



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These pictures were taken during the summer when the trees behind the rooming house were in full leaf. Consequently none of the rooming house is visible in my panorama. I was never able to get the museum employees to cooperate with me again to take pictures from the balcony during the winter when all the leaves were gone.

One of my photographs I took from the Lorraine balcony is a wide-angle view. The bathroom window of the rooming house is visible in this picture because I got it when there were no leaves on the trees.



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When I took this picture in January of 1994 it didn't occur to me to take enough shots to make a panorama. It is among the first pictures I took when I didn't know what I was looking for. The blue tiled facade of the museum entrance was blocking my view of a building in the direction where the eyewitnesses were pointing when the murder scene picture was taken. So I took a few steps backward until it came into view and then I took my wide-angle picture. I still didn't know what it was even after I saw the developed photo, but it didn't take me long to find out that it was the top of the Fred P. Gattis building elevator shaft. This part of the Gattis Building is actually a penthouse that houses the motor and control equipment for its freight elevator.



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There are two structures in the murder scene photo in the direction where the eyewitnesses were pointing. The closest one is a chimney on the rear wall of the Lorraine Hotel where the Lorraine Motel building begins. The farthest one is the Gattis penthouse. My telephoto shot of the penthouse shows that it was a perfect location for an assassin to fire on Dr. King from and not be seen. The hotel chimney was much too small and too close to accommodate a killer in such a manner (as the Gattis penthouse) that he wouldn't be seen. The Gattis penthouse is obviously the only structure in the entire area whose location supports the eyewitnesses' silent testimony and Dr. Francisco's autopsy report. The bathroom window where police officers claimed the bullet was fired from obviously does not support the eyewitnesses' pointing fingers or the doctor's autopsy report. James Earl Ray could not have been in two places at the same time (1) the rooming house, and (2) on top of the Gattis penthouse. Obviously, someone other than Ray was the killer and he fired on Dr. King from atop the Gattis penthouse.

From my collection of photos I produced five pages of pictures of my discovery, and a three-page explanatory document. Each page is numbered, and each photo is numbered and identified for cross-reference to the written document.



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Attorney William Pepper, Ray's London based lawyer, was in Memphis in April of 1994. One Sunday evening I received a phone call from a private investigator, Kenneth Herman, who was working for Pepper and his associate attorney, Wayne Chastain. They had learned of my discovery and wanted to see what I had. I had provided Jackie Smith a copy of my pictures and document shortly after I completed them. I learned from her that someone in the Memphis Police department, another private investigator from Jackson, Mississippi, and someone from Twentieth Century Fox had been there and asked her for copies of my work.

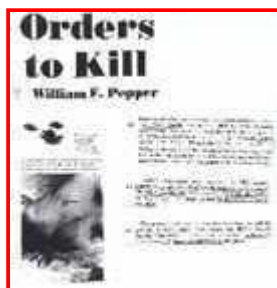


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I can't say where Pepper & Chastain or the others heard about it. Anyway, I met with Pepper and Chastain later that same Sunday when Herman called me. I hand passed Pepper a copy of the same five pages of photographs and document that I gave Jackie Smith and carefully explained it all to him and Chastain. I never heard anything more from either of them, but I did visit with Herman twice at his home. He was interested then, but a year or so later when I called him he was very rude. He let me know that he was no longer interested in Dr. King's murder because nobody was paying him for his services.

Pepper's book Orders to Kill, his conspiracy theory first edition, was printed in 1995. I bought a copy in 1996 after discovering it in a bookstore at Corpus Christi, Texas. Pepper had been in possession of my photographs and three-page document for about a year before his book was published, but he made no mention of any of my material in his book.

However, I found a map of the murder area, a photo of Dr. King's body lying in the morgue with the shape of the bullet showing beneath the skin on his left shoulder blade, and comments about the bullet being all in one piece when it was removed. The bullet I've seen in TV specials and in Pepper's book is in three pieces.



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The bullet I've seen in TV specials and in Pepper's book is in three pieces. It's a mystery to me that the death bullet is claimed to have been in one piece when removed from the body, sent to the FBI in one piece, but came back from the FBI in three pieces.

The map in Pepper's book shows the geographical layout of the murder location, with the exception of the Gattis Building penthouse. It also shows where the bushes and trees behind the rooming house are located. So I made two copies of the map, enlarged them, and drew in the Gattis Building. I marked the maps to show the penthouse, the rooming house, the Lorraine balcony, and a Memphis fire station communication tower at Main Street and Butler Avenue toward the left of the balcony.



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The fire station tower is considerably higher than the penthouse and the balcony. I mention it for this reason: If there was a conspiracy in Dr. King's murder there would be the possibility that someone with access to the top of the communications tower would have observed that the penthouse overlooks the balcony.



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But my writing is not to promote conspiracy theories. It is to show certain facts that were missed during investigations. My triangulations drawn in Pepper's map show that the trees and bushes behind the rooming house do not block the view

between any two of the three buildings I mention, the Penthouse, the balcony, and the fire station tower. However, the tree does completely block the view of the balcony from the rooming house when it has leaves on it, and partly when it is bare.



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The city cut down the trees and bushes the day after the murder so there may not be any pictures that show how much foliage there was. But it was April and people were walking around in their shirt sleeves at the murder location shortly after Dr. King was shot. A police officer was also standing in front of the rooming house in his shirt sleeves guarding a bundle of things allegedly belonging to James Earl Ray. See page 105, I AM A MAN.



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I mention this because it shows that the temperatures were warm enough for trees to start putting forth leaves and the possibility that they blocked the view of the balcony from the rooming house. The city cut down the trees & bushes the day after the murder, but they grew back. So the tree in my pictures isn't the same tree that was growing there the day Dr. King was killed, but it is (or rather was) growing where it blocks the view as my pictures show. In 1999 the City of Memphis again cleared the trees and bushes from behind the rooming house as it did April 5, 1968.



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A Commercial Appeal article of 5-7-98 tells about the museum's plans to take in the rooming house and some other buildings on South Main Street to expand its exhibits. Mr. Ellis Chappell had owned and lived in the rooming house for some twenty years where he had his art studio, as I understand the CA's article.



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This article about Chappell and the museum's intentions to take his building for expansion purposes appeared only two days after Janet Reno made her 5-6-98 appearance at the Memphis museum. (More about that later). I called Chappell on the phone the following Saturday morning and talked with him for about a half-hour. He was very upset over his predicament. As I recall he informed me that he had the options of either selling out to the museum or face having his building condemned by the City of Memphis to get him out. It was also my understanding that he wasn't being offered a good price for his property. The CA article also had this to say about the intended purchase of Chappell's property:

"Autozone founder and civil rights benefactor J. R. Pitt 'Hyde' Jr. intends to buy Chappell's building and donate it to the Lorraine Foundation, which operates the museum, said Beverly Robertson, museum executive director."

June 2, 1997 I wrote to Ray at River Bend Prison at Nashville, TN where he was incarcerated. I let him know about my discovery and sent him copies of some of my photos.

I also told him about a Commercial Appeal story of 4-10-97 about a three-judge panel in Memphis that wanted to see evidence of his innocence before they would consider reopening his case. (Only judge Joe Brown is mentioned in this 4-1-97 CA article).



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I received a letter from Ray dated 6-15-97 giving me the names of attorneys William Pepper and Wayne Chastain indicating that he wanted me to give my discovery to them. I wrote to Ray again on 6-18-97 and informed him that Pepper and Chastain had had my discovery material since April of 1994. After that I received a second letter from Ray asking me if he could call me as a witness if his case should be reopened. I wrote to Ray again agreeing to appear for him as a witness.



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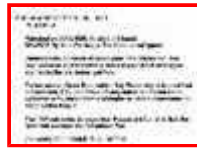
The Memphis CA's story 4-10-97 story also mentions that Ray had a defense attorney named Jack McNeil. (Fourth paragraph). Their story says that McNeil was pleased with the three-judge ruling and that Ray's defense team was expected in court at the end of the week. Ray told me in his letter of 6-15-97 that he never heard of Jack McNeil except in the papers. Ray got McNeil's name wrong in his letter to me. He wrote McCain, but it's spelled right in the newspapers and in my letter to him.

As for the scientific evidence that three judge panel wanted to see, these things are day-one documentation, (1) the eyewitnesses fingers pointing at the Gattis penthouse and, (2) Dr. Francisco's autopsy description of the bullet through Dr. King's body that agrees with the eyewitnesses' pointing fingers.

After my correspondence with Ray I received a phone call from another lawyer, Andrew Hall, who said he was representing Ray. He wanted to know if I had any expertise in criminology. I sent him a copy of my materials, but never heard from him again. Hall was later mentioned several times in the Memphis Commercial Appeal.

Ray died in prison April 23, 1997, at age 70 without ever seeing his case reopened, only ten months after I first wrote to him

Pepper was eventually interviewed on ABC's TV Turning Point. In his interview Pepper was questioned about claims he made of a U.S. Government conspiracy to kill Dr. King, and particularly about Major Billy Eidson who he said was in charge of it. Pepper confirmed his accusations to ABC's host, Forrest Sawyer. Sawyer then called Billy Eidson and Former U.S. General Henry Cobb into the conference room for a face to face meeting with Eidson's accuser, William Pepper. General Cobb had charge of the 20th Special Services Group in Alabama & Major Eidson was under his command. Cobb and Eidson disputed Pepper's claim of their being involved in any conspiracy. Pepper thought Eidson was dead when he wrote accusations about him in his "conspiracy" book, Orders to Kill, but he was very much alive. Major Eidson filed suit against Pepper for libel in Charleston, South Carolina in 1997 according to a Memphis Commercial Appeal article of 03-09-99.



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New York Times reporter Earl Caldwell was also interviewed on ABC's Turning Point program, which aired the same evening as Pepper's interview. Caldwell talked about Dr. King's driver Solomon Jones telling him that he (Jones) saw someone in the bushes and saw the "puff of smoke from the shot being fired from there," however, modern ammunition uses a charge of smokeless powder.

During these past six years I have reported my discovery to the authorities from Memphis to Washington, DC, including President Clinton and Attorney General Janet Reno. I have had no response from any of them except Tennessee Governor Don Sundquist and ABC News 20/20.



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They indicated that they weren't interested. My letter to Reno was sent to her on June 12, 1997. Although I didn't hear anything from her I learned from Jackie Smith that she was in Memphis at the museum on Tuesday, May 5, 1998. Her picture appeared in the Memphis Commercial May 6. I arrived in Memphis the next day to visit my daughters and grandchildren. Miss Smith informed me then that Reno walked out on the balcony looking over the murder area. In the CA photo Reno is pictured with Dr. Benjamin Hooks, museum board chairman, and Rev. Samuel Billy Kyles. The three of them are looking out the window over the wreath that marks the balcony where Dr. King was shot to death. The room they are in is 307. Dr. King's room was 306.



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Now as a matter of interest, there aren't three levels of rooms in the Lorraine, and there never were. Miss Jackie Smith informed me that the Lorraine Hotel's rental rooms started at 100 on the second floor because the ground level consisted of a restaurant, offices, and some guest rooms for their personal friends. When the Motel was constructed the ground level rooms started at 200 and the upper level rooms started at 300.

Last June 1999 I was in Memphis again visiting my daughters & grandchildren. Late one evening I was with my daughter Terri at an office supplies store on Union when I ran into Dr. Benjamin Hooks and his wife Mrs. Frances Hooks. With Terri looking on I took the liberty of showing them my two wallet sized photos of: (1) the murder scene, and (2) my wide angle picture of the murder area. After briefly explaining to them that these photos tell a different story about where the fatal bullet was fired from, I asked Dr. Hooks if he had any interest in my discovery. He told me "No."

Among those to whom I have sent my discovery materials from which I have had no response are:

April 30, 1997, Mrs. Coretta Scott King.

Life Magazine, owner of the murder scene photograph, 6-7-97

Memphis Mayor, W. W. Herndon, 5-13-97

The Commercial Appeal, 6-21-97

Memphis Judge Joe Brown, 5-12-97

Modern Maturity Magazine, 5-22-97 (Because they ran a story about Dr. King's murder featuring Rev. Andrew Young, one of the eyewitnesses in the murder photograph)

Janet Reno, 6-12-97

President Clinton, 6-18-97

With as much interest as these have publicly shown in Dr. King's murder I thought that by now I would have had some positive acknowledgments, but I haven't. However, besides all these people to whom I have showed this evidence I have also shown it to some police officers, doctors, lawyers, ministers, personal friends, family members, and complete strangers, not a few. So far I have not had one disagreeing comment from anybody to whom I have personally shown this evidence. I have given this information free to everybody I have contacted. It is not for sale. All my letters to these people have been sent by certified mail - at my personal expense. I have not made any accusations or issued any conspiracy theories as others have done, nor do I intend to.

NEW! Letter from Jackie Smith.

Jackie Smith, the homeless lady mentioned in the article above, read about herself at this web site and sent Ted Wilburn the following letter.



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Additional information on the assassination of Martin Luther King and evidence of a cover-up can be found [HERE](#)
