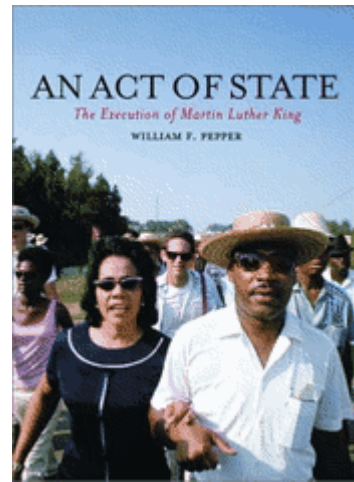


The following is a hypertext transcript of William Pepper speaking on the release of his new book, *An Act of State - The Execution of Martin Luther King* (Verso, 2003). Deepest thanks go to friends Penny Schoner and Maria Gilardin ([tucradio.org](http://tucradio.org)) each of whom made and shared audio recordings from which this transcript was created. Dr. Pepper was introduced by Amanda Davidson.

—ratitor

Dr. [William F. Pepper](#) practices international human rights law from London, convenes a seminar on international human rights at Oxford University, has represented governments and heads of state, and appeared as an expert on international law issues.



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Martin Luther King and Coretta Scott King leading the [March Against Fear](#) in rural Mississippi, June 1966.

## **William F. Pepper - *An Act of State* *The Execution of Martin Luther King***

Talk given at Modern Times Bookstore, San Francisco, CA

**4 February 2003**

Links last checked and made current: January 20, 2017

Tonight we have a very special author whose book, *An Act of State: The Execution of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, has just been [published by Verso](#). William Pepper is an English barrister and an American lawyer. He convenes a seminar on International Human Rights at Oxford University. He maintains a practice in the U.S. and the U.K. He is author of three other books and numerous articles. This book is the result of a quarter-century of an investigation. I will let Dr. Pepper give you more information. Let's give a warm welcome to William Pepper.

Thank you. And good evening. This story actually begins with Vietnam in 1966. As a very much younger person I was there as a journalist and didn't publish anything whilst I was there, but waited until I got back to the United States. Then I wrote a number of articles. One of them appeared in a muckraking magazine called *Ramparts*, that had its home in this city, published by [Warren Hinckle](#) in those days. It was called "[The Children of Vietnam](#)." That is what started me down the slippery slope of the saga of Martin Luther King; his work during the last year, and his death. And then an investigation which has gone on since 1978.

When Martin King saw the *Ramparts* piece he was at a—there are different stories of actually where he was—but I think he was at Atlanta Airport on his way to the West Indies and he was traveling with Bernard Lee, his bodyguard. They were having a meal and he was going through his mail,

according to Bernard, and he came upon this issue of *Ramparts*, January 1st, 1967. It had in it the piece that I wrote called “The Children of Vietnam.” Bernard said as he started to thumb through it he stopped and was visibly moved. He pushed his food away. Bernard said, “What’s the matter Martin, aren’t you hungry? Is there something wrong with the food?” And he said, “No. I’ve lost my appetite. I may have lost the ability to appreciate food altogether until we end this wretched war.”

Then he asked to meet with me and asked me to open my files to him that went well beyond what was published in the *Ramparts* piece in terms of photographs. Some of you probably saw, if you’re old enough to remember, a number of those photographs. Portions of them used to appear on lampposts and windows of burned and deformed children. That was what gave him pause. He hadn’t had a chance to read the text at that point but it was the photographs that stopped him.

The introduction of the article was by Benjamin Spock. It resulted, ultimately, in a Committee of Responsibility bringing over a hundred Vietnamese children, war-injured children to this country and our placing them in hospitals around the nation. This was so that people would have a chance to see first-hand what their tax dollars were purchasing.

He is depicted on King Day as a civil rights leader. And that’s the way you’re going to see him probably forever. But he was much more than a civil rights leader and that’s what no one in official capacity wants you to know. He had moved well beyond the civil rights movement by 1964-65 and he had become effectively a world-figure in terms of human rights people and particularly the poor of this earth. That’s where he was going. That’s the area you don’t really get into safely when you start talking about wealth, redistributing wealth. Taking, diverting huge sums of money into social welfare programs and health programs and educational programs at the grass roots. When you start going into that you begin to tread on toes in this country, in the United Kingdom, and in most of the western world.

On the way to Cambridge to open Vietnam Summer, an anti-war project, we rode from Brown University (where he had delivered a sermon at the chapel there) and I continued the process of showing him these photographs and anecdotes of what I had seen when I was in the country. And he wept, he openly wept. He was so visibly shaken by what was happening that it was difficult for him to retain composure. And of course that passion came out in his speech [on April 4th, 1967 at Riverside Church](#)[1] where he said that his native land had become [the greatest purveyor of violence](#) on the face of the earth. Quoting Thoreau he said we have come to a point where we use massively improved means to accomplish unimproved ends and what we should be doing is focusing on not just the neighborhood that we have created but making that old white neighborhood into a brotherhood. And we were going entirely in the opposite direction and this was what he was pledging to fight against.

We spoke very early in the morning following that [Riverside address](#) and he said, ‘Now you know they’re all going to turn against me. We’re going to lose money. SCLC [Southern Christian

Leadership Conference] will lose all of its corporate contributions. All the major civil rights leaders are going to turn their back on me and all the major media will start to tarnish and to taint and to attack me. I will be called everything even up to and including a traitor.’ So he said, ‘We must persevere and build a new coalition that can be effective in this course of peace and justice.’

That coalition came to be known as the National Conference for New Politics. It was an umbrella organization and [it held its first—and last—convention in Chicago](#) over the Labor Day weekend of 1967. It had 5,000 delegates, maybe the largest convention of people ever assembled in the history of this country, at the Palmer House in Chicago. They came from every walk of life, every socio-economic class, every racial group, every ethnic group. The purpose was to form this umbrella coalition that would effectively coordinate a massive third-party political campaign against the Johnson Administration and Johnson’s re-election; but at the same time develop grassroots organizing capabilities in the communities across America.



William F. Pepper with Martin Luther King  
at the 1967 Labor Day NCNP Convention

It wasn’t to be—although it continued and struggled for the period of a year—but it wasn’t to be because of government’s wiliness and our naïveté. We never appreciated the extent to which government would go to undermine and undercut that kind of movement. They were responsible for the formation of a first black caucus. That black caucus was largely led by *agente provocateurs* who came from the Blackstone Rangers, organizations of that sort in Chicago. And they corraled each black delegate who came in and brought them into a room and formed this unity of all-black delegates and this commitment to vote as a block and introduce resolutions as a block.

We thought, many of us, that this was a good thing because this was typical and representative of a growing black awareness, particularly urban awareness. Although in the caucus they of course brought in rural black leaders as well. We felt this was healthy and there would be then this block that would vote and introduce the concerns of the black community across America. We didn’t know that it was government-induced and government-sponsored and government-paid for and that

the leaders were gangsters. Blackstone Rangers would surface again and again in the course of the movement as capable of disrupting and causing havoc on behalf of their employers.

Martin [delivered the keynote address](#) at the convention. I introduced him and he delivered this address and the importance of this movement. As he was speaking a note was passed over my shoulder to me and I read it and it said, 'Get him out of here after he finishes his speech or we will take him hostage and humiliate him before the world.' They were so afraid that if this man stayed on for the substantive part of the convention that he, as a unifier, might bridge the differences and might overcome the provocation that was designed to disrupt the convention.

But I really felt at that point I had no choice. It was the first tip-off of what was going on. But still [I thought these were] just angry, hostile urban blacks, disaffected with non-violence and who had a different way of looking at things and different tactics that they wanted to follow. I didn't think at all that it was (of course) officially inspired. So we did get Martin out of the Palmer House very quickly after his speech and they went on with the convention.

It was all downhill from there. They forced through resolutions that simply were so antagonistic to sections of the movement and engendered such hostility that all the money dried up for that noble cause. They were successful.

That being the case, nevertheless we struggled and worked in that last year of his life. I remember the last time I saw him alive (I think it was in late February). He had already started to become involved in the sanitation workers strike. In his own mind he thought that this was the basis for the encampment of the poor people in Washington and this was a good launching pad. He sympathized with all the goals of the sanitation workers in Memphis.

We met at John Bennett's study at Union Theological Chamber in New York. There was just four of us: Martin, myself, Benjamin Spock and Andrew Young. Most of the dialogue actually came between Martin and myself in terms of my probing him about ways of bridging the gap between his commitment to peace and non-violence and that approach of Malcom[ X]'s which was confrontational and violent in self-defense.

We went away, with no resolution to the issue. And of course, the rest is history. He was assassinated on the fourth of April 1968, one year to the day (it's interesting) from the time he delivered the [Riverside speech](#).

We went to the memorials, Spock and I, and the funeral and then I walked away from political activity. I had had my fill of it.

Ben and Julian Bond and others went up to see Bobby Kennedy who had asked, invited us all to come. I didn't know him in '68. I knew him as a much younger person when I handled the campaign of his as a citizen's chairman in Westchester County in New York when he ran for the Senate. And I didn't like him at all. I thought he was opportunistic and all those things that you have heard about Bobby Kennedy I thought were true. I saw them, confronted them, directly.

But the Bob Kennedy who was killed in '68, I think was a very different person. I regard it as one of my sadnesses that I did not see him at the end. Because he had made an overture to Martin to run as a Vice-Presidential candidate with him. It was not generally known. But when he made his announcement, March I guess it was 15th or 16th, he made contact with Martin and I'm sure that contact was known.

Eight, nine years later [Ralph] Abernathy called me and asked me to go up to the prison with him. Actually [it was] ten [years], it was in late '77, he asked me to go to the prison with him and interrogate James Earl Ray. I said, 'This is a funny request Ralph. Ten years after the fact. Why would you want to do that? Do you have some questions about it? Isn't Ray guilty?' I didn't know anything about the case. I didn't want to know about it at that point.

He said, 'I just have some questions. Will you come along with me?' I still don't fully understand why he did that. He said, 'But I want you to interrogate him and I want to watch him when you do that.' So I said, 'Well, it's going to take me some while to get up to speed on this case. Because I don't know anything about it.'

For the first time under oath in any assassination's case in the history of this country, or perhaps any other, there is the complete picture of how Martin Luther King was killed. There is every answer to every question. There is why the bushes were cut down the next morning. Who cut them down. Who asked to have them cut down. There is every piece of information there. For history more than anything else.

It did take some time. In August of '78, finally, we went and we went through this session of five hours intensive interrogation of James Earl Ray. His lawyer at the time, Mark Lane, was there. A body language specialist from Harvard, [Dr.] Howie Berens came and he sat in a corner, just watched James' movements as I put him really through a rather rigorous, painful time.

He was very different than we expected to find. He was shy, docile, soft-spoken, thoughtful and not at all the kind of racist figure that had been depicted in the media. Not at all. He knew very little about weapons, very clearly had virtually no skill at all with them. He was a petty thief and burglar, hold-up man. But he was totally incompetent in that.

He was known for showing up too late in supermarkets he wanted to stick up, the time-lock would already have been fixed on the safe [laughs]. The staff would say, 'Look, there's nothing we can do about this.' [laughing throughout remainder of paragraph] And they said, 'We'll give you our money.' He said, 'I don't want your money. I don't want to rob working people. I want the money from this corporation.' That type of thing.

He kept five bullets, typically, in his pistol. When he was arrested at Heathrow Airport he had five bullets in his pistol. He always kept the firing pin chamber empty. When I pressed him on that, a

long time, he wouldn't answer that question. Finally he admitted, with some embarrassment, that he kept the firing pin chamber empty because he shot himself in the foot once [laughs]. And he just didn't want to do that again.

He was incompetent when it came to rifles. He had a virtually non-existent marksmanship score when he took his test in the Army. He didn't know much about guns. When he was instructed to buy a weapon that became the throw-down gun in the assassination he bought a .243 Winchester rather than a thirty-ott-six [.30-06] that he was told to get. He didn't know the difference between them. When he showed the weapon he had bought to Raul, who was controlling him, he sent him back to exchange it. It was a matter of record. He went back and exchanged this one rifle for another the next day. That's not something he thought of himself. It just was the wrong gun. The guy wanted a .30-06 caliber rifle so they had a .30-06 rifle as the throw-down gun. So he had to go back and exchange it.

After the interview we became convinced, Abernathy and I became convinced that he was not the shooter. We didn't know what other role he might have played. But it was clear he was not the assassin of Martin Luther King. This guy couldn't have done that. But he raised so many questions that I had never heard raised before, that had never been answered, that I decided I would begin to go into Memphis and talk to some people, become familiar with the terrain and the crime scene and see if I could get some answers to those questions.

And I did. The more I began to probe around the more concerned I got about new questions that were unanswered. I had hoped that the [Select Committee on Assassinations](#) would solve that problem. Because they were in session at the time and I hoped they would solve it.

Their [report came out in 1979](#)<sup>[2]</sup> and they didn't solve it. All they did was to continue the official history of the state's case which was that James Earl Ray was the lone assassin and that he was guilty. I kept going back-and-forth visiting him and asking him questions and then going off-and-on into Memphis and then occasionally into New Orleans.

Slowly things started to come together to the point where ten years on in this process I became convinced that not only was Ray was not the shooter but that he was an unknowing patsy.

It was at that point in 1988 that I agreed to represent him. So I became his lawyer and was his lawyer for the last ten years of his life, trying very hard to get him a trial. He never had a trial. It's amazing—of course most people in the United States if not the world never understood that James Earl Ray never had a trial; that he was coerced into copping a guilty plea by Percy Foreman who was his second lawyer.

People would say, 'Well why would he plead guilty? Goodness me.' When you put that question to James his answer was always the same: "Look, he told me all kinds of things. I always wanted this trial. Right down to the end I was trying to get this trial. But Percy said to me, 'You know, your Dad's a parole violator. He's going to be sent back to jail fifty years after violating that parole.

They'll make sure he's locked up. Your whole family will be harassed forever. They convicted you anyway because the media has got you wiped out as the killer. You haven't got a chance. They're going to fry you Jimmy.'”

But the thing that *really* convinced him to get rid of Foreman by pleading, was Percy's statement that, “I'm not in good health, James. I cannot give you the best defense because I'm not in good health.” And he said to me, “That was it. When my lawyer said to me ‘I'm not in good health and I can't give you the best defense,’ that really started to worry me. Foreman said ‘What you should do is plead guilty, then make a motion for a new trial, get a new lawyer and you overturn the guilty plea and then you're off and away.’” James said, “But I don't have any money for a new lawyer.’ So Foreman said, ‘Don't worry about that James. I'll give your brother Jerry \$500 and he can go hire you a new lawyer. But you have got to make an agreement that you will not cause any problems at the guilty plea hearing. You'll just take that guilty plea.’”

Percy not only said that. He put it in writing. We got a copy of Percy's letter to James where he said, “Dear James, I'm going to give this \$500 to your brother on the condition that you plead guilty and you do not cause any undue disturbances at this guilty plea hearing.” He actually put that in writing. A remarkable admission.

So James certainly, he plead. He did cause a little problem at the guilty plea hearing, but nevertheless he plead. And Jerry got the \$500 and James didn't wait for a lawyer to be retained but he filed himself *pro se* (by himself) a petition for a new trial. He plead on March 10th, that was when he was guilty and convicted and sentenced to 99 years. And on March 13th, three days later, he filed. From March 13th until the day that he died, James Earl Ray was trying to get a trial.

On March 31st the Judge, who had sentenced him and who had overseen the guilty plea hearings was reviewing the petition for a new trial, had told some people that he was concerned about certain aspects of the case (whether that is serious or not one doesn't know) and he was found in his office dead of a heart attack, with his head on James' motion papers. You can speculate what that means. It may mean nothing. It just may mean that man was under a lot of stress for a lot of different reasons, he had a heart attack and he happened to be reviewing those papers and when he collapsed and the head down it was on James' papers.

But there is a law in Tennessee that says if a judge dies and you make a motion for a new trial and in the course of that motion before ruling on it the judge dies, you get a new trial automatically. There were two people who had filed those motions before [Judge] Preston Battle. One was James Earl Ray and the other person was the one who got the trial. James didn't, of course. So he went on, all of those years, trying to get that trial and was unsuccessful.

Meanwhile the state's case was articulated in a number of books, by Gerold Frank, a chap called [George] McMillan, eventually commentaries by David Garrow and ultimately a fellow called Gerald Posner. Always the same line, always the same story, unyieldingly: lone assassin, no conspiracy, no deviation at all. That's been the case from beginning to end.

I tried to get James a trial for many years. But in the initial stages we lost all the way up through the Supreme Court. We were denied. I guess we finished that process around 1990, . . . '89, '90, '91 it was certainly completed.

In 1992 I got the idea: Why don't we try to do this trial on television? So *HBO* in this country and *Thames Television* in the U.K. sponsored a television trial called "The Trial of James Earl Ray." The trial was prepared in 1992 and it began and was tried in 1993, the 25th anniversary of the assassination of Martin King.

The Judge was a former federal Judge, Marvin Frankel out of New York, a very tough judge. We fought all the time, particularly in chambers. Eventually we became friends. But it was very hostile during the trial.

The Prosecutor was Hickman Ewing Jr., a former U.S. attorney who had won 200 straight prosecution cases as a U.S. attorney. Some of you may know him and know the name. He was Ken Starr's Number 2 in the Whitewater investigations for a number of months if not years.

The jury came from all over the country and very strictly adhered to were the rules, [Criminal Procedure of the State of Tennessee](#). It was a serious trial. Even though it had no script or anything. The witnesses were not scripted in any way.

It took the jury about seven hours after that television trial to come back with a verdict of Not Guilty, James Earl Ray. You probably never heard of that. Because it was not reported anywhere and if it was it was mentioned once or twice in a couple of media entities. It was called "entertainment." It wasn't really serious you see. It was a form of entertainment.

But what it did do was to bring to the fore, witnesses and information that had not been possible to get before that. So in that way it was very helpful. And in one instance, we had four witnesses whose testimony would have caused the indictment of a man called Lyod Jowers who owned Jim's Grill which was a café on the ground floor of the rooming house from which the shot supposedly was fired from the bathroom window. Behind Jim's Grill there's a big vacant lot, bushy area, heavily overgrown at the time and it backed onto the Lorraine Motel where Martin King stayed.

These people gave me enough evidence as a result of the trial and my discovering them and the investigation (we had over 22 investigators working for me in the course of that preparation) to indict Jowers. Jowers knew about it. I'd known Loyd Jowers since 1978. He's one of the first people I'd talked to. I'd known this guy for 14 years already and he (of course) never admitted anything and he lied about everything. But as these witnesses now started to assemble, it was powerful testimony against him.

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The consolidation of the control of the media is a major problem in this democracy as it is in most democracies today. I don’t know how democracy can function when people are not allowed information that’s essential for the decision-making process. But rather they get propoganda continually.

One of them was his former—and she was still active as his girl friend and lover at the time—she became former by 1992, but back in ’68 she and Loyd had a thing going. Her story was that she came into the Grill on the afternoon of April 4th. She didn’t see Loyd around anywhere. He was the manager and the short order cook and he helped do everything. And she saw the kitchen door closed which was unusual so she opened the kitchen door thinking that ‘Well maybe he’s out in the back fooling around with some of those local ladies.’ Because she never trusted him really.

As she got into the kitchen she saw the kitchen door was open leading to the outside. As she approached that open kitchen door she heard a gunshot. She was startled but she still went on. As she got into the doorway, here comes Loyd running through the bushes carrying a still-smoking rifle. He brushes past her quickly, comes inside, bends down to take the shell out and break it down and says to her plaintively, ‘Betty, you wouldn’t do anything to hurt me would you?’ And she said, ‘No Loyd of course not. Of course I wouldn’t.’ So he throws the shell down the commode, the toilet back of the kitchen and stuffed it up in doing it. Then he covered the rifle with cloth and brought it down and put it under a shelf.

Betty [Jean Spates] had known about this (of course) since 1968. It was only in 1992, I think December of 1992 where she finally agreed to tell me this story. I’d known her for a lot of years. Loyd tried to keep me from even finding out where she lived but she told me this story then.

There were three others with similar incriminating pieces of information—a taxi driver who saw the murder weapon, whom Loyd asked to get rid of the murder weapon, or hold onto it—a whole series of different witnesses. So Loyd was in trouble and he knew it. He said to his lawyer, ‘You go and get me immunity from prosecution and I’ll tell everything I know about this killing.’

So his lawyer, Lewis Garrison goes off to meet with the District Attorney General and tries to get immunity for Loyd. He said, ‘Loyd will tell you everything. This is the case of the century. You can be the most famous prosecutor in America. You can break this case.’ Not only does Loyd not get immunity from prosecution. But the District Attorney General never interviewed him. Never even spoke to him.

Nobody wanted to prosecute Loyd. But he still was worried because I sat a colleague of mine outside of the Grand Jury room for two weeks trying to get the foreman of the Grand Jury to let him in (he was a lawyer) to give evidence and provide the foundation for the giving of evidence of these

witnesses so that the Grand Jury independently of the Prosecutor (if we could get them to run away) would issue an indictment.

He never got in. But Loyd didn't know that. So Loyd conjures up with his lawyer and some others the idea that he'll try to get this story out publically. They contact Sam Donaldson. (I don't know if you know who he is.) He was an *ABC* journalist who ran a program called Prime Time Live. Donaldson agreed to put Jowers on and let him tell this story. So Jowers goes on television and tells his story on Prime Time Live and it seems like it's a big news story.

I actually got it covered in *The Observer* in England. I had been living all this time (by the way) in England. Not in the United States. I had moved to England in 1980-81. I had moved my family there and I was a visiting scholar at Cambridge at the time. And that was a much nicer place to raise children considering some of the things I was getting myself in to. But I had to come back and forth continually to commute on this, to do this work.

The next morning, after the Prime Time Live program, there is no coverage at all of this. Not even *ABC News* treated their own program as a news-worthy event. There was no coverage at all and no mention in the press. It just goes by-the-by.

So the investigation continues. In March, about March 20th or 21st, after the trial was over, a journalist named [Steve Tompkins wrote an article](#) in the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*. It was to have been the first of eight installments. It became the only piece, but it was a very lengthy piece. It dealt with the infiltration of the civil rights movement and black leaders throughout America by military intelligence going back to the second decade of the 20th century.

He traced the history of military intelligence's concern and surveillance of black community leaders and brought it all the way down (of course) to the [COINTELPRO operations](#)[3] in the '50s and '60s, particularly against Martin King.[4]

But the article showed that what happened in the '50s and '60s was just a continuation of what had been going on since around the time of the Russian Revolution. Because blacks were regarded as prime candidates for recruitment to the Communist Party after the Russian Revolution. So they had to be watched and surveilled.

Hoover's Number 2 of course, [Clyde] Tolson was an officer of military intelligence and Hoover himself was given a rank of Colonel which he only discarded after the Second World War.

In this article there was [one little paragraph](#) that caught my eye. It said, in Memphis on the day of the assassination of Martin King there was an [Special Forces] Alpha 184 Team there. And nobody understood why that team was there. Alpha 184 six-man unit was a sniper team. No one understood why they were there.

I was curious about that and I went to see Steve and I said, 'This is a whole other dimension to the case.' I was beginning to form the opinion pretty clearly that Martin King had been killed as the

result of a Mafia contract. There were any number of bounties on him in those periods of time and a fair amount of money had been raised to try to get him killed. None of the occurrences were successful and I figured ultimately one was and this was a Mafia hit. And that was it.

But now, all of a sudden, into this picture comes one of the most secretive aspects of the government of the United States: the role of the Army and the Army and military intelligence on American soil. That bounded and intrigued me so I said to Steve, ‘Will you arrange for these guys’—whom he knew, he knew two members of this sniper team—‘will you ask them if they’ll answer questions for me?’ It took awhile and he said No, he wouldn’t. He refused for the longest time. He didn’t want anything to do with these people again because he said they were nasty, they’d kill you where you stand, they’d kill your family, your kids, anyone else. These are just trained killers and that was the way it was. He didn’t want anything more to do with them.

So I kept going back and again [saying] ‘Look, we got this guy in jail and we believe he is innocent. Any information I can get I need to have.’ Finally he said he would help. They would not however meet with me. They would trust him because he had never betrayed them. He was a former Naval Intelligence officer himself. So he agreed to take questions from me and they agreed to take those questions and answer them. For a long, extended period of time I would give Steve questions. He would go and he would come back with answers. He’d go again, come back. This was all in his spare time and only his expenses were paid.

As he got the answers to the questions—he knew nothing really about the details of the assassination—he didn’t even know why I was asking certain things. But as he got those answers back to me—these people were in Mexico by the way; they fled the United States in the ’70s because they thought there was a clean-up operation underway so he had to make the trip to Mexico—the picture started to become clearer and clearer to me as I got the answers to these questions.

It became evident that the military did not kill Martin King but that they were there in Memphis as what I’ve come to believe was a backup operation. Because King was never going to be allowed to leave Memphis. If the contract that was given didn’t work these guys were going to do it. The story they told was that the six of them were briefed at 4:30 in the morning at Camp Shelby. They started out around 5 o’clock. They came to Memphis. They were briefed there. They took up their positions.

At the briefing at 4:30 they were shown two photographs who were their targets. One was Martin King and the other was Andrew Young. That was the first time I’d heard that Andrew Young might even conceivably be a target. But that’s what he was. The main informant who told us most of the information in fact was the sniper who had Young in his crosshairs.

Now as far as they knew they were going to kill these people. They had no regrets about it at all because they considered them as traitors and they used very unkind words about them. So they were going to kill them and they were prepared to do that. But they never got the order. Instead they heard a shot. And each thought the other one had fired too quickly. Then they had an order to

disengage. It was only later that they learned that, as they call it, ‘some wacko civilian’ had actually shot King and that their services were not required. But that’s how they worked.

This was not a one-off for these guys. They were trained snipers. You remember a hundred cities burned in America in 1967. These guys were sent around the country, teams of them, into different cities. These particular fellows had been in Detroit, Newark and Tampa and possibly L.A. They were given mugbooks. Those mugbooks were the photographs of community leaders and people who were to be their targets. And they would be put in positions and they would take out community leaders who would somehow be killed in the course of the rioting that was going on in various cities.

The assassination of Martin King was a part of what amounted to an on-going covert program in which they tried to suppress dissent and disruption in America.

He was shot from the bushes behind Jim’s Grill, not from the bathroom window. And he was shot as a result of a conspiracy that brought a man called Frank Liberto—who was a [Carlos] Marcello operative in Memphis, he ran a wholesale food place—in to see Loyd Jowers whom he knew. Jowers owed him a very big favor. And in addition to that he paid Jowers \$100,000 and that was to take complete use of that Grill facility for planning and staging of the assassination and the room upstairs that Raul (who was controlling James Earl Ray) would have James rent and then keep out of most of the afternoon.

The final stages of the assassination logistically were planned in Jim’s Grill itself and there were a number of Memphis Police Department officers—some of them were senior officers—who were there. One of them was a black officer called Marrell McCollough.

Marrell McCollough is still alive and well today in Memphis, Tennessee. He went from the Memphis Police Department to the Central Intelligence Agency where he worked for a number of years [in the 1970s]. Before he became an undercover Memphis Police Officer, he was brought back to active duty by the [Army] 111th Military Intelligence Group [MIG] on June 16 1967.

So he was seconded from military intelligence to become a policeman to go undercover with a black group called the Invaders, a local group. So McCollough was very much in the frame, in terms of all of these that were happening. He participated in the planning. And Jowers named the other people who were involved in the planning as well.

It became evident that the military did not kill Martin King but that they were there in Memphis as what I’ve come to believe was a backup operation. Because King was never going to be allowed to leave Memphis. If the contract that was given didn’t work these guys were going to do it. . . .

This was not a one-off for these guys. They were trained snipers. You remember a hundred cities burned in America in 1967. These guys were sent around the country, teams of them, into different cities. These particular fellows had been in Detroit, Newark and Tampa and possibly L.A. They were given

mugbooks. Those mugbooks were the photographs of community leaders and people who were to be their targets. And they would be put in positions and they would take out community leaders who would somehow be killed in the course of the rioting that was going on in various cities. The assassination of Martin King was a part of what amounted to an on-going covert program in which they tried to suppress dissent and disruption in America.

Each of these groups of people only knew what they had to know about this overall assassination scenario. There were two photographers on the roof of the Fire Station and they filmed everything. They were still cameramen and they filmed the balcony, the shot hitting Martin King, the parking lot, up into the bushes and they got the sniper just lowering his rifle.

So the whole assassination of Martin King is on film. We negotiated for a year-and-a-half with those guys—who were psychological operations Army officers—to try to get it. They didn't know there was going to be an assassination. They were there to take photographs of everybody and everything around the Lorraine Motel at that point in time. The guy just happened, when he heard the shot, to spin his camera up into the bushes. That's why they got the photographs that they did.

We came close to getting an agreement with them. Then my contact made a mistake and used his own name on a flight into Miami. The FBI field office sent a team to track him. When he was meeting with them in an open park area one of the FBI guys put a big long lens camera out the passenger side of the car and the Army officer saw it and spooked him. He thought we were trying to set him up and he split. That broke down the negotiations.

But they didn't know what was going on. The guy who shot King was a police officer and he would only be told what he needed to know. The Alpha 184 team knew nothing about the Mafia operation that preceded them. The Memphis Police Department knew of the Mafia contract and they covered that up. The FBI's role was to take control of the total investigation and to cover it up.

There isn't enough time to go into the details of the evidence. I'll be happy to answer any questions that you have. I try to cover all of the evidence that we have—and that we eventually put before the court—in the book.

Needless to say all of this started to flesh out in 1993 and '94. I did a work-in-progress up to that time called *Orders To Kill*. That book was never reviewed in America. This book will never be reviewed in America. Most masses of people here will never know anything about this story because the book will receive no attention whatsoever.

I have friends in a lot of media organizations, sometimes fairly senior journalists and reporters and they say, 'Bill it's just not worth our jobs. Don't expect us to have you on in terms of this book. It's not worth our jobs.'

The consolidation of the control of the media is a major problem in this democracy as it is in most democracies today. I don't know how democracy can function when people are not allowed

information that's essential for the decision-making process. But rather they get propaganda continually.

*Orders To Kill* came out. It was unnoticed except by the King family whom I kept in touch with over time and they knew about the work. At one point it became evident that James Earl Ray was dying and he needed a trial, desperately or he would be dead and there would be no possibility. He was dying of hepatitis, a liver disease.

We put extra pressure to try to get this trial based upon a lot of the evidence we had. We had a sympathetic judge, Judge Joe Brown. Joe was very much inclined to give us a trial. Then at the midnight hour, I think just within the week before I think he would have ruled in our favor, he was removed from the case. The state made a motion that he was prejudicial, he was behaving improperly as a judge, and he was removed. There went the possibility of that trial.

The family came very strongly in support of a trial for James and the family suffered as a result of that. They lost millions of dollars of contributions to [The King Center](#) and they knew it would happen. I didn't have to tell them but I did. I said, 'Remember what happened to Martin when he opposed the war. You know what is going to happen to you. Once you take this one on, and you align yourself now with the accused assassin of your loved one, you know what's going to happen to you. You know you're going to be called fools. They're going to start finding reasons to attack you. You're going to lose corporate contributions.' And all of that happened. But they struggled on.

We had an arrangement for James to get a liver transplant at University of Pittsburgh Hospital. Dr. John Fung agreed to do that, put him on the list and he had the criteria to move forward. I made a motion to the court for that permission to have him taken to Pittsburgh for that operation. We had him evaluated in Tennessee. And we were denied, the motion was denied. Even though it wasn't going to cost the state anything it was denied.

He died in 1998. I always wondered if there was anything more that I could have done and was I not attentive enough. Any lawyer would go through that when you have a person who has spent most of his life in prison and you know he's innocent. You want to get him out. I'm not a criminal lawyer by trade. It's not what I do. But nevertheless I wasn't hardened to it, I guess you could say, and I took it pretty badly that this guy eventually died without a trial.

The family and I met and made a decision. Or rather, Mrs. King made the decision. I just laid out what options were left in terms of getting the truth out. And the one option that was left was a civil suit, a civil action. It was a wrongful death civil action that I proposed against Loyd Jowers and other known and unknown conspirators.

There were members of the family that wondered if it was worthwhile. 'We'd been hit and beaten down so much,' they said, 'is this really worth it? Why are we doing this? We're just going to get hit more. Nobody is even going to hear about this.' This debate went around for a long time.

Finally Mrs. King stopped the debate and she said, 'I always have to think about two things when

we have these difficult decisions to make. One is, what would Martin have done in these circumstances? And two, what would he want us, his heirs, to do in these circumstances?’ Then she looked at me and she said, ‘Bill, we’re going to trial.’

So we filed that lawsuit in 1998 against Mr. Jowers in the Circuit Court in Tennessee and we waited a year until we were sure we were going to get the judge we wanted to get who was a black judge named [James] Swearingen. He had a reputation of being an independent guy. He’d been on the bench for a long time. He’d been involved in the movement in his youth. He was also going to retire. He didn’t have much longer to go. As it turned out this was his last case.

So we got this case before Judge Swearingen, who was not in good health. We tried the case in 1999 for 30 days: [70 witnesses, 4,000 pages of transcript](#) that today is [up on the website](#) of the King Center—[thekingcenter.org](#) has all of the testimony of this.[5] And for the first time under oath in any assassination’s case in the history of this country, or perhaps any other, there is the complete picture of how Martin Luther King was killed. There is every answer to every question. There is why the bushes were cut down the next morning. Who cut them down. Who asked to have them cut down. There is every piece of information there. For history more than anything else.

It took this jury 59 minutes to come back with an award and with a verdict on behalf of the family against Jowers and known and unknown conspirators in the government of the United States, the state of Tennessee, and the city of Memphis.

The family felt and feels vindicated. They feel comfortable that they know now how it happened and why it happened. The reasons were all laid out.

Martin King was killed because he had become intolerable. It’s not just that he opposed the war and now was going to the bottom line of a number of the major corporations in the United States; those forces that effectively rule the world at this point in time, the transnational entities. But more importantly, I think the reason was because he was going to bring a mass of people to Washington in the spring of ’68. And that was very troubling. He wanted to cap the numbers. But the military knew that once he started bringing the wretched of America to camp there in the shadow of the Washington Memorial, and go every day up to see their Senators and Congressman and try to get social program monies put back in that were taken out because of the war—and once they did that, and they got rebuffed again and again they would increasingly get angry.

It was the assessment of the Army that he would lose control of that group. And the more violent and radical amongst the forces would take control and they would have a revolution on their hands in the nation’s capital. And they couldn’t put down that revolution. They didn’t have enough troops. Westmoreland wanted 200,000 for Vietnam. They didn’t have those. They simply didn’t have enough troops to put down what they thought was going to be the revolution that would result from that encampment.[6]

So because of that I think, more than anything else, Martin King was never going to be allowed to

bring that mass of angry, disaffected humanity to Washington. He was never going to leave Memphis. And that was the reason for the elaborate preparations that they had.

That trial (of course) was not covered, with very few exceptions. You probably never even heard of the trial. General Counsel of Court TV is a friend of mine. He said, 'Bill we're going to cover this live because this is the most important trial in terms of the history of democracy in this country; these issues that are being raised of any I can think of.' Court TV's camera stayed in the hallway with the rest of them except when Mrs. King testified or Andrew Young or Dexter [King] or somebody. They never came in and they certainly didn't cover it live. All the other media people came and stayed in the hallway and came in at selected points and came and went. None of this was ever reported.

There was one ABC local anchorman [[Wendell Stacey](#)] who came in, very cynical in his outlook, and he started to film for his local station. As he started to listen to the evidence he was fascinated and intrigued. He decided he was going to stay and he was going to film this thing. He was told by his producer, 'Don't do that. Get yourself out of there.' He ignored that, under threat of being fired and eventually he was fired. But he tried—and he did film it—and finally got his job back, ultimately through wrongful dismissal. But it was a chastening event for him to sit there and to listen to this evidence and to realize that he was being told to suppress it. To his credit he tried to hang on.

But there was a narrow window of about 12 hours where there was some minor reporting. And then it just all went away and has never been heard of again. [A member of the audience interjects: "Page 15 of the *Washington Post*, five paragraphs."] Yeah. The *New York Times* did a bit of it too. But then it just disappeared and it was never again reported or commented upon.

*Except* wherever it was raised, critics would start attacking. None of them had ever been there [laughs] at the trial. They started attacking the Judge. They attacked the defense counsel. They attacked the jury. They attacked the King family. There were various shots of that sort to try to say that this trial was a farce, it didn't make any sense, and made no difference anyway.

It was the assessment of the Army that [King] would lose control of [the Poor People's Campaign in Washington D.C.]. And the more violent and radical amongst the forces would take control and they would have a revolution on their hands in the nation's capital. And they couldn't put down that revolution. They didn't have enough troops. Westmoreland wanted 200,000 for Vietnam. They didn't have those. They simply didn't have enough troops to put down what they thought was going to be the revolution that would result from that encampment.

The family decided that was basically it for them. They had the answers. The answers were on the record. But at least they would take it one step further and see if on the basis of all of that evidence now, there could be an independent evaluation. So they asked for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. They visited with President Clinton and asked for that. He refused that request.



Instead he turned it over to Janet Reno and she appointed her Civil Rights division to put together a task force to do the investigation. They did and they came away with a whitewash which was predictable and which was the reason why we had wanted an independent commission to look at this that had subpoena power and the power to grant immunity from prosecution to get at the truth. But nobody was going to go that route.

I deal in detail in the book, almost line-by-line, with the report of the Department of Justice in terms of the investigation and deal also with the state's case as it has been articulated by various writers over the years. Because I think it is important that people have a look at what the state has said and what the facts are about that and also what the Attorney General's report said. To see that in the context of the evidence that came out at the trial.

That I suppose really is the end of the story at this point in time. This work is probably the last that can be done in terms of bringing everything out. Although, twenty-five years later people still come forward. And there are a couple of loose ends that just have to be tied up (and I'll probably try to do that for the paperback version). But I don't think we really have much hope of going anywhere legally with it. James is dead. The family has won a civil action against one of the few people who could be sued. There are still some others. But I don't think we can go very much further with the case.

It is important for Americans to look at this case history in terms of the health of democracy. Particularly during these times which are more troubling than ever before. One chapter of the book deals with Martin King. That's why it's a little different kind of assassination book because I think in many ways that's the most important chapter. Yes it's important to have the details and the evidence of how this whole thing took place and how he was taken from us.

But what's more important is to understand how such a leader comes forward. What his roots are. What makes him so special in terms of all of the co-opting pressures that are on people who emerge in leadership capacities? Why has there been no one to replace him ever since? And why is there a strange inaction in terms of the involvement of people in leadership and organizations with respect to the major problems of the economic situations of vast numbers of Americans in terms of the unequal distribution of wealth in America and the quality of life of at least 30 million Americans and their children?

These movement issues are as much with us today as ever before and yet there is silence. What was there about King and his roots? I trace Martin King back to John Ruskin. Not to Gandhi but to Ruskin. John Ruskin is the true father political economist in Victorian times in England, the true father of Martin King's political and economic philosophy and commitment to the poor of this world. He is depicted on King Day as a civil rights leader. And that's the way you're going to see him probably forever.

But he was much more than a civil rights leader and that's what no one in official capacity wants you to know. He had moved well beyond the civil rights movement by 1964-65 and he had become

effectively a world-figure in terms of human rights people and particularly the poor of this earth. That's where he was going. That's the area you don't really get into safely when you start talking about wealth, redistributing wealth. Taking, diverting huge sums of money into social welfare programs and health programs and educational programs at the grass roots.

It's important to have the details and the evidence of how this whole thing took place and how he was taken from us. But what's more important is to understand how such a leader comes forward. What his roots are. What makes him so special in terms of all of the co-opting pressures that are on people who emerge in leadership capacities? Why has there been no one to replace him ever since? And why is there a strange inaction in terms of the involvement of people in leadership and organizations with respect to the major problems of the economic situations of vast numbers of Americans in terms of the unequal distribution of wealth in America and the quality of life of at least 30 million Americans and their children.

When you start going into that you begin to tread on toes in this country, in the United Kingdom, and in most of the western world. When you start associating with the poor of this planet and the exploitation of what's happened to whole cultures and tribal cultures in Africa in particular, and you see the results of the exploitation of western colonial powers and when you want to see a movement to not only arrest that process which still goes forward today under different guises but to actually reverse it and to give an opportunity for people to control their destinies and their own natural wealth, that's dangerous ground to get on. So you have to deal with that another way.

King was committed, increasingly, to that kind of political view which you will not hear about in terms of the 'I have a dream' speech which is typically what he is associated with. He wept in India as early as '60, '61 when he was there. He had never seen such poverty in such a massive scale. 'How can people live like this?'

I sympathize with that because when I was a 12-year-old I couldn't get my middle-class kids in my neighborhood to play baseball with me in the summer heat. So the only way I could do it was to go across to the ghetto which was quite a distance from where I lived, with a little brown bag, and played ball with black kids all day. I did that all summer long just because I loved the game. But it taught me a valuable lesson of how people were forced to live. Because I would be a guest in their homes and I'd see the rats running across the floor, Herbie Fields throwing his shoe at the rats. Things like that.

There's a lot of people live that like this. Why do people live like this? Most of America doesn't see that. We are residentially segregated society forever. King saw that, wanted to bridge it and the solutions were too radical, too potentially dangerous. Jefferson was an idol of his. With all of Jefferson's foibles, remember he said, 'You need a revolution every 20 years. You need to sweep the room clean every 20 years,' said Mr. Jefferson. You need that revolution. King believed that as well.

How wise was Jefferson? Jack Kennedy once said, when he had a dinner for all the living nobel prize winners of the United States and they were all gathered around the table, he lifted a toast and said 'I'm going to toast you this evening because never before has so much brilliance, so much wisdom, eaten in this room, except when Mr. Jefferson dined alone.' That's the impact of that perception, that political perception that Kennedy appreciated so much.

That's the background and the overview, I suppose, the summary of the case as it is contained in the book and of my history of involvement with it. In many ways I had put it behind me when this book was finished and now I've had to come around and it's a pleasure to come and see folks like you and talk to you. But there's a whole part of me that's now in a whole other world.

I convene a seminar on International Human Rights at Oxford with the motto of our seminars being *Non nobis solum nati sumus*, which means We exist not for ourselves alone. That's in honor of Martin Luther King, whose son, Martin the 3rd opened the series last year. So I've gone away from this and I spend a lot of time in Caracas with Hugo Chavez who was at Oxford as a guest of my seminar[7] and whose Bolivarian revolution I've come to believe in very much as a continuation of the legacy of Martin King.

But I'm back in the throes of this as a result of the book tour. I'm happy to be with you. Thank you for coming and I hope it has been useful for you. I'll try to answer any questions that you have.

**Question:** I don't know if I heard correctly. Did you say that a police officer shot Martin King?

**William Pepper:** Yes.

**Q:** And where does Loyd Jowers come in?

**WP:** He was out there in the brush area with him. When Betty saw him coming in she said he was white as a sheet and his knees were all covered in mud. He had obviously been kneeling. It had rained the night before and it was pretty muddy out there. Which is why they cleaned the area up thoroughly the next morning.

**Q:** What is it thought that he did? Did he fire too?

**WP:** No he didn't. He just was there to retrieve the gun and bring it inside. That was his only role. At that point in time. He didn't do it.

**Q:** Is the policeman known? Who he is?

**WP:** I know who the policeman is, yes.

**Q:** It's mentioned in the book isn't it?

**WP:** Sorry -

**Q:** His name is mentioned in *Orders To Kill* . . . Earl -

**WP:** That's a very interesting story. I thought that Earl Clark was the killer of Martin Luther King. He was a sharp-shooter, brilliant shooter, hated King, racist guy who ran the rifle range for the Memphis Police Department. I thought as early as 1988-89 that Clark was the killer, the shooter. He died in, I believe it was '82, '83. I visited with his first wife and interviewed her for a period of several hours with his son sitting there, a young boy, I think he was about 15.

She gave him an alibi. She said 'He came home that afternoon and he was tired. He'd been on duty around-the-clock. He went to sleep. He asked me to listen to the radio. If they called him, wake him up, and then run and get his uniform from the cleaners and he would take a shower and get ready to go back in.' She said that's what happened.

She got this call right after the assassination. She'd heard it on the radio, on the dining room table. She went and she woke him up. He was asleep on the sofa. He went to take his shower and she went off to get his uniform. And she gave him that alibi.

I thought, Why would she do this? There was a lot of animosity. He divorced her. Why would she protect him? I believed her and went away from Earl Clark for quite a period of time.

Then when Jowers came on the scene and he decided he would tell the whole truth in pre-trial interviews and depositions; when he, to Andy Young and Dexter King, separately, and then to Dexter and myself, told the whole story, he implicated Earl Clark. And he said, 'Clark was out there in the bushes.' I remember saying to him, 'Are you sure that Clark was the shooter? Clark was the one that gave you gun?' He said, 'Yeah I'm pretty sure. I'm pretty sure.' I wondered why he would even say it that way. And Clark was in on all the planning sessions. So I came back to believe that that was the case and put Mrs. Clark on the stand in the trial and she told the same story and she stuck to it. She held up well under cross-examination.

And then I found the young man who was the son of the owner of the cleaning establishment. He was, and is, on the island of Guam, a school teacher. I found this guy (his name is [Thomas] Dent) and I said to him, 'Let me ask you a question: Where were you on the 4th of April when Martin King was killed?' He said, 'I was working in the store.' 'How late were you opened?' He said, 'Dad shut the store at about 6:15 or 6:20, shortly after the killing. I had gone about ten to or five to six. It took about 20 minutes to get home, something like that. Dad was home for dinner at about 6:35, 6:40.' I said, 'Did you see Mrs. Clark come in and get Earl Clark's uniform? Did you know who Earl Clark is?' 'Oh yes, of course I know who Earl Clark is. He was a buddy of my father's. We knew him well.' I said, 'Did you see Mrs. Clark?' He said, 'Well I never saw Mrs. Clark. In fact I don't think I ever even seen her at all.' 'You mean she didn't come into the shop that afternoon?' He said, 'On no, no.'

And then I tried to put two and two together. King was killed at 6:01. She woke him up and then she went to the store. We drove the route and even asked her how long does it take to get there? She

said about 20-25 minutes. So she clearly could not have gotten there when the store was open anyway. It was already shut on the basis of what young Mr. Dent said. I questioned him further and finally he said to me, 'She definitely didn't come in to pick up his uniform and I don't even remember that she ever did that. He used to pick up his own uniforms and drop by and have a word with my father. And in fact, that afternoon he came into the store at about ten past five, quarter past five. He went in the back with my father and he was there for about fifteen or twenty minutes.' I asked, 'You're sure of that?' He said, 'I'm sure of that.'

So Clark was in the store, talking to the father. I said 'So why would he talk to your father?' He said 'They were hunting buddies. Dad used to provide him with specially packed cartridges. I don't know if that's what they did that day but he went back there.' So that broke her alibi entirely. She was clearly lying. He was not there. That doesn't mean he was the shooter. But the alibi was gone, he was somewhere else.

So I went back to him and came away with the conclusion, based on what Jowers had said that he probably was the killer. Then there have been some developments since then which lead me to believe that yes he was out in the back there with Jowers. But there was another man there as well. And the other man was the actual killer of Martin Luther King.

I convene a seminar on International Human Rights at Oxford with the motto of our seminars being *Non nobis solum nati sumus*, which means We exist not for ourselves alone. That's in honor of Martin Luther King, whose son, Martin the 3rd opened the series last year. So I've gone away from this and I spend a lot of time in Caracas with Hugo Chavez who was at Oxford as a guest of my seminar and whose Bolivarian revolution I've come to believe in very much as a continuation of the legacy of Martin King.

**Q:** The government has so much power and resources on their hands. How can we effectively organize now, grassroots organizing against war or civil rights and even justice?

**WP:** If you look around—I see the building of a movement now that I haven't seen in a long time because of the threatened assault on Iraq. I think that there is a developing movement in terms of the anti-Iraqi war effort that is coming on. But also over the last several years the anti-globalization campaigners have brought a tremendous amount of force to building a coalition around the world. It's not just (of course) an American threat anymore. There is that movement.

It's a question of linking up, it's a question of networking and linking up and finding out who—in this community, for example, there is a strong anti-war movement from what I understand—who is a part of that? It's a question of linking up, developing the synergy and being concerned to move it not just in terms of these major international issues which people bind together in solidarity over but local community issues as well.

You have to relate the many ways of what's happening to you in the local community, in terms of

jobs, in terms of discrimination, in terms of police problems—you have to relate that to what’s going on all over the world. The number of prisons that are being built in a state like California. Why are prisons being increasingly built? Who are the prisoners? Who is the prison population? What percentage of young blacks in this country have not served some time in prison? What happens to disruptive community leaders? What is going on in terms of that? Is that a government policy?

What has been the result of the amount of drugs that have been brought into communities, urban communities, black, hispanic communities across this country now? For many years—30, 40 years—there have been drug problems sapping, destroying the strength of local leadership by getting people hooked on this stuff. Where does that come from? If you look at how LSD was developed (for example) and if you look at the whole history of the importation of cocaine from Columbia [through Mena Airport in Arkansas](#) when Clinton was Governor of Arkansas and how that was spread by gangs throughout the country and sold and what happened to the profits.[8] It’s a devastating situation in terms of controlling a population. But it shouldn’t shock people. This is what’s going on.

The Northwoods plan—anybody hear the Northwoods plan? Anybody know what the Northwoods plan was? You know, you know. That tells you something about this government that shouldn’t shock you but should make you aware.

[Northwoods](#) was a plan that was developed by General Lemnitzer when he was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. That plan called for the killing of American citizens on the streets of a number of cities in this country under the guise of having those killings be done by Cubans in order to justify an American invasion of Cuba. That was Lemnitzer’s plan back in 1962. When Jack Kennedy saw it he was absolutely horrified. That they would kill Americans and use that as a means for then invading Cuba.[9]

When you see these things there is *nothing* you should put past the capability of government to do, either in propagandizing its people and killing its people, enslaving its people, imprisoning its people; whatever it has to do to maintain power, it does. We were so naïve back in the ‘old days’ as I like to say, and we had to learn, I’m afraid, the hard way.

Martin King was naïve, totally naïve. He never stayed overnight at the Lorraine Motel. He came there for day meetings but never stayed overnight. I know this because I know the black detectives who used to guard him and where they were. I know where he stayed every time he was in Memphis. He never stayed at the Lorraine. But he came to the Lorraine on the third of April because he was told, This is where you have to go to show your solidarity with the poor people and stay overnight Martin, don’t go to the Rivermont or one of those other hotels. He was supposed to be in a court room, 202, down below where he was safe, protected. And somehow, mysteriously he got moved to room 306. Because there was a ‘request’ that he be moved to room 306 so he could have a better view. *He* was manipulated. *He* didn’t have proper security. Of course he paid the ultimate price.

But if they want to kill anybody I suppose they can anyway. Every day I'd go into court in Memphis, I'd get a phone call the night before or early in the morning about how I was never going to make it through the day. If I managed to get into the Courthouse alive, I certainly wouldn't get back to my hotel alive [laughs]—they'd get me going in or coming out. But that was just to unnerve me I think. They missed their chance a long time.

**Q:** The Mafia in Memphis: where did they get their orders, was their control from Chicago, New York, New Orleans?—

**WP:** New Orleans, [Carlos] Marcello. There was a Marcello contract. Marcello was involved in a joint venture with the 902nd Military Intelligence Group who coordinated this overall effort. Marcello would receive stolen weapons from arsenals and camps and forts. They would be trucked in to him. He would then put them on a flatboat, they'd go around into the Gulf and be taken off in Houston, repackaged and sold into Latin/South America and they'd split the profits 50-50. Glenda Grabow who came forward, ultimately was one of our witnesses who identified Raul—who was the first one to really do that—used to go down with Raul and some of these people to pick up these weapons. So she came to know about that. This was a Marcello contract.

**Q:** In terms of those four assassinations: both Kennedys and Malcom X and Martin Luther King, you have done work in this area that no one else has done. We know that there were two sniper teams from Army intelligence that had King and Young in their scopes at the time that he was shot. They didn't do the shooting but they were prepared to do the shooting if the contracted killer didn't do the job. So we have those identities, we have those shooters, we have a direct connection with the state apparatus. We have this country that has a national holiday; the same country that killed King is the country that has a national holiday. This stuff is suppressed but the fact of the matter is you've done an incredible job. People know there are other shooters in the Kennedy case. But they haven't been taken to court, there hasn't been a jury trial, it hasn't been identified who the killers were. In all of these cases you've done a breakthrough job and I want to acknowledge and thank you for that.

**WP:** It's been a long haul, a long expensive haul.

**Q:** [same person] The one thing I did want to ask, I don't know if you want to go into this. Given that we now know that governments are capable of killing their own citizens and given the experience of 9-11 where, just to mention two items: the stock trading on the day before[10] and the fact that the normal intercept procedures for planes in U.S. airspace off course for upwards of 15 minutes— and they were off course for an hour or more—were not followed;[11] if you think it's possible given these four assassinations—Gore Vidal has argued this point[12] but no other single, famous American intellectual is prepared to go to the point . . . of saying the government let it [9-11] happen [unintelligible—indicated in the following with “. . .”] . . .

**WP:** I would say you can't put anything past this government or any other government of this sort. Because the people who are in power, officially, are really only foot soldiers for the people who run

things from the shadows. 9-11 has personally given me a lot of difficulty. But this is not just something that is unique to the United States.

Lord Salisbury planned the assassination of Queen Victoria. He had his guys go get two IRA shooters to kill Queen Victoria, put them on the route, and as the Queen was going down the route and the shooters were getting ready—boom!—out come the Special Branch guys and they arrested them. They took them away and that was the basis for offensive action against the IRA.

This is what governments do and have always done. The Brits have taught the Americans over the years and taught them well. 9-11 is a problem that you have to look at carefully. You have to analyze what's going on. I can tell you just one anecdote because I haven't done any work on it. I represent the government of Pakistan on asset search-and-recovery work. It has to do with recovering money that's been stolen from the government by previous Prime Ministers.

That's what I do for them but because of that I had established relationships with some people who were there, very thoughtful people, a couple of whom are on the General Staff. They asked me to draw up a proposal with respect to what the government's policy should be in terms of cooperating or not with the United States. I opposed strongly the collaboration with the United States in terms of the Afghanistan adventure because of a whole variety of reasons I can't go into right now.

You can't put anything past this government or any other government of this sort. Because the people who are in power, officially, are really only foot soldiers for the people who run things from the shadows. 9-11 has personally given me a lot of difficulty. But this is not just something that is unique to the United States.

One of the things I learned in the course of the discussions was that the head of ISI, that's Pakistani Intelligence, is a fellow called General Mahmoud Ahmad. General Mahmoud had instructed Sheikh Umar who was an undercover operative for them—a covert liaison operative with Muslim groups: the Taliban as well as Kashmiris—he had instructed and authorized Umar to send \$100,000 to Mohammed Atta in Florida. That's not even denied anymore. When that became public Mahmoud was immediately removed from his position as head of ISI and put under house arrest so no one could interview him.

That one little fact is very troubling to me because it means that somehow, the head of Pakistani intelligence through Sheikh Umar, one of his operatives, sent \$100,000 here to the United States to a Florida bank account of one of the hijackers, a leader of one of the hijacking operations, Mohammed Atta. Now how did that happen? What is that all about?[13]

There are only two options: (1) either this was a rogue operation and ISI has a number of fundamentalists, even in the General Staff, who were involved with them; or (2) that it was programmed by a foreign intelligence agency that had been running ISI in the anti-Soviet activities in Afghanistan for a long time. The Brits had an MI6-guy (for example) in residence all the time



there. I don't know the answer to that. And when I ask friends of mine about that they don't know.

**Q:** He was in Washington—

**WP:** Mahmoud was in Washington at the time on September 11th. But I don't honestly have the answer. All I can do is raise that question which is troubling. And you might know that Umar is the fellow who's been convicted of killing Danny Pearl, the *Wall Street Journal* journalist. The President of Pakistan has said quietly but publically he would never allow Sheikh Umar to be extradited to the United States. That he would hang him himself first. I think that's probably because of things that he knows.[14]

**Q:** I have a couple of comments. I haven't read your book yet so I don't know if you cover these or not. One is about the mysterious death of the Judge who supposedly died of the heart attack. I saw a play many years ago . . . the CIA has a poison gas they use to assassinate people with, they spray in people's faces that simulates a heart attack that supposedly is undetectable. The other comment, many years ago I saw a couple of . . . quotations attributed to . . . One was that he wasn't interested in really finding out who killed King (I'm not sure what his reason was) and the other is he was saying something about how he thought that somehow King was better off dead. Do you know anything about that?

**WP:** Andy Young often said he thinks that the movement itself, somehow, initially anyway, benefitted from the martyrdom of Martin King. When I met with Andy for several hours for the first time after I learned about him being a target, and it was actually well after it was published in *Orders To Kill*, he was shocked and I think his perspective changed. Because he then became involved with us. He met with Loyd Jowers and he has become convinced that this was an official conspiracy. I think he has sobered up now. He's quite a different guy with respect to the assassination.

**Q:** . . . It just always strikes me that the work you did was a very a dangerous enterprise . . .

**WP:** . . . That was always a possibility and we had to confront those problems of various types of setups that even went beyond killing. But I think they missed their chance. For a long time I worked very quietly. No one paid any attention, shrugged their shoulders, and I didn't attract much attention. Then all of a sudden after the television trial [in Spring 1993] things started to heat up a bit and it started to get a bit worrying. But they suppressed anything having to do with Jowers. So I think they still thought they were safe and they could just beat us down.

When the King family then became formally and publically involved it was too late. I don't think at that point in time they could do anything to me. I think they missed their chance. I've just time for one more—

**Q:** Does Hoover have any involvement with MLK's death?

**WP:** He knew everything that was going on, he was aware of it. He didn't participate in the

assassination but he ran the cover-up. It was his job to take control of the investigation which he did and he ran the cover-up. That's what he did.

Thank you.

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1. "[Beyond Vietnam](#)," Address delivered to the Clergy and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam, at Riverside Church, 4 April 1967, New York City. [[↔](#)]
2. U.S. House Select Committee on Assassinations Report, [Findings on MLK Assassination](#) *Report of the Select Committee on Assassinations of the U.S. House of Representatives*, Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1979. [[↔](#)]
3. COINTELPRO is an acronym for the FBI's domestic "counterintelligence programs" to neutralize political dissidents. Although covert operations have been employed throughout FBI history, the formal COINTELPRO's of 1956-1971 were broadly targeted against radical political organizations. See [COINTELPRO: The FBI's Covert Action Programs Against American Citizens](#), US Senate, Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities ("Church Committee Final Report"), *Final Report – Book III: Supplementary Detailed Staff Reports on Intelligence Activities*, 94th Congress, 2nd Session, 23 April 1976, pp. 1-77.  
See also: [COINTELPRO: The Untold American Story](#), by Paul Wolf with contributions from Robert Boyle, Bob Brown, Tom Burghardt, Noam Chomsky, Ward Churchill, Kathleen Cleaver, Bruce Ellison, Cynthia McKinney, Nkechi Taifa, Laura Whitehorn, Nicholas Wilson, and Howard Zinn. This compilation was presented to U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson at the World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa on September 1, 2001 by the members of the Congressional Black Caucus attending the conference: Donna Christiansen, John Conyers, Eddie Bernice Johnson, Barbara Lee, Sheila Jackson Lee, Cynthia McKinney, and Diane Watson. [[↔](#)]
4. From the Church Committee reports see "[Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Case Study](#)," April 23, 1976, Supplementary Detailed Staff Reports on Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans, ("Church Committee Final Report") [Book III](#), *Final Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities of the United States Senate*, 94th Congress, 2nd Session, 1976. [[↔](#)]
5. See the [Complete Transcript of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Assassination Conspiracy Trial](#) conducted November 15 to December 8, 1999 in Memphis, Tennessee [[↔](#)]
6. Note that the 7,000 (at its peak) protesters who lived in Resurrection City between mid-April and 19 June 1968 comprised less than 2 percent of the 500,000 people Martin King was committed to bringing to Washington that Spring to force the United States government to abolish poverty. See *An Act of State*, page 7. [[↔](#)]
7. The Honourable Hugo Chavez Frias, President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, 17 October 2002. President Chavez gave a lecture followed by a seminar on 'Globalisation and Poverty'. See also: [english translation of the new Venezuelan constitution](#). [[↔](#)]
8. See writings of Catherine Austin Fitts, a former managing director and member of the board of directors of Dillon Read & Co, Inc, a former Assistant Secretary of Housing-Federal Housing Commissioner in the first Bush Administration, and the former President of The Hamilton Securities Group, Inc (see the story that includes this at [dunwalke.com](#)). She is the President of [Solari, Inc.](#), an investment advisory firm. Solari provides risk management services to investors through Sanders Research Associates in London:

“Solari Rising,” 11/15/01

- “Narco-Dollars for Beginners - How the Money Works in the Illicit Drug Trade,” 2001
- “A Conversation About The Popsicle Index,” 1/26/03
- “The Myth of the Rule of Law,” November 2001
- Excerpt from “Solari & The Rise of the Rule of Law,” September 2002:

The ability of the net energy plus people in the US to understand what is happening and how and why has been surprisingly poor. This general ignorance has been helped along by corporate control of the media (which, for this reason, I call the ‘corporate media,’ to distinguish it from the independent media), ‘info-warfare’ and covert operations. The more public form of information warfare promotes divide-and-conquer tactics and incentives (men vs. women, rich vs. poor, black vs. white, Christian vs. non-Christian, Republican vs. Democrat and so forth). The more private form of covert operations includes targeting by tax and regulatory authorities, blackmail, financial and sexual bribery that support ‘control file’ systems, assassination and the use various other forms of covert operations that diminish a more general communication about what is happening and why.

A review of the economics helps us understand why and how. If we can presume that 10% of revenues is a reasonable advertising and marketing budget for a high-margin industry, then organized crime in America as measured by the Department of Justice’s estimate of \$500 billion to \$1 trillion in annual money laundering through the US financial system has about \$50 billion to spend annually on ‘marketing’ in ways more subtle than explicit Madison Avenue T.V. and magazine ads. Add that amount to the government budgets that can be used to police franchises, and the amount of money spent on controlling and influencing the ‘official reality’ is stupefying. When an understanding of the amount spent to mislead is combined with an understanding of our intentional failure of disclosure regarding government investment and performance, particularly place-based disclosure, the intentional and increasing centralization of economic and political power by unlawful means can be much better understood.

The advantage of such a system to current US leadership is clear. By centralizing the holding of equity in local institutions or in outside institutions that affect local matters (whether through McDonalds franchises or national telecommunications companies) and denying equity to those who do not support the centralization process, the few at the top can amass the political base of operations and resources they and their global investors need to dominate global political and economic power. It is fair to say that that if we could eliminate narcotics trafficking and the so-called ‘War on Drugs’, the US political and business leadership would be more likely to resemble a representative sampling of the US population than a G-7 gathering of global financial elites.

As new technology promotes meaner and far more subtle and invisible forms of economic warfare and social control, the centralization of political and economic power in the US continues with the latest transformation from the War on Drugs to the War on Terrorism. The latter moves the targeting of continuous ‘clamp down’ supported by sophisticated relational database technology and digital surveillance to whiter, wealthier and better-educated populations at the same time that this population’s economic and political power and resources are diminishing.

The Solari challenge is to create a transformation out of the current win-lose situation in which we find ourselves. The key is to provide a trustworthy flow of information locally that— when combined with equity incentive systems—promotes and incentivizes high standards of responsibility and accountability going forward. Only a system that creates significantly greater amounts of wealth can do so. The fundamental principle that all humans want more energy—not less- along with the mysteries of freedom and intelligence tell us that it is possible.

Making it possible starts with increasing the flow of energy to the net energy plus people and moving them back into leadership positions locally. This can happen in a model in which a portion of the resulting capital gains flows to the capital that was amassed through organized crime and government corruption. In exchange for offering the leadership of organized crime a ‘double’ on their ill-gotten gains, the local ‘net energy plus’ people can buy back control of their local areas. This alignment is necessary to achieve breakthroughs in reengineering place-based government investment. Without it, the risks to both sides are significant.

This is why the Solari Stock Plan is at the very core of the solari model. The economic

productivity that can be unleashed when the high performance people are in control subject to traditional conditions of fiduciary accountability and performance are so extraordinary that ‘buying’ our way into such a system turns out to be surprisingly economic for all concerned.

[↔]

9. See [“Operation Northwoods: Justification for U.S. Military Intervention in Cuba,”](#) 3/13/62, available from the National Security Archive:

In his new exposé of the National Security Agency entitled *Body of Secrets*, author James Bamford highlights a set of proposals on Cuba by the Joint Chiefs of Staff code-named OPERATION NORTHWOODS. This document, titled “Justification for U.S. Military Intervention in Cuba” was provided by the JCS to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara on March 13, 1962, as the key component of Northwoods. Written in response to a request from the Chief of the Cuba Project, Col. Edward Lansdale, the Top Secret memorandum describes U.S. plans to covertly engineer various pretexts that would justify a U.S. invasion of Cuba. These proposals—part of a secret anti-Castro program known as Operation Mongoose— included staging the assassinations of Cubans living in the United States, developing a fake “Communist Cuban terror campaign in the Miami area, in other Florida cities and even in Washington,” including “sink[ing] a boatload of Cuban refugees (real or simulated),” faking a Cuban airforce attack on a civilian jetliner, and concocting a “Remember the Maine” incident by blowing up a U.S. ship in Cuban waters and then blaming the incident on Cuban sabotage. Bamford himself writes that Operation Northwoods “may be the most corrupt plan ever created by the U.S. government.”

See also: [“Friendly Fire - Book: U.S. Military Drafted Plans to Terrorize U.S. Cities to Provoke War With Cuba,”](#) by David Ruppe, *ABCnews.com*, 5/1/01 [↔]

10. See

- [“Suppressed Details of Criminal Insider Trading Lead Directly Into The CIA’s Highest Ranks— CIA Executive Director ‘Buzzy’ Krongard Managed Firm That Handled ‘Put’ Options On UAL,”](#) by Michael Ruppert, *From The Wilderness*, 10/9/01
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- [“Mystery of terror ‘insider dealers’,”](#) by Chris Blackhurst, *[UK] Independent*, 10/13/01

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11. See [“9-11 Timeline: minute-by-minute - Stand Down from Incompetence or Complicity?”](#) from [“Broadening Our Perspectives of 11 September 2001”](#) by David Ratcliffe, September 2002, and [“The Complete 9/11 Timeline,”](#) *History Commons*> [↔]

12. [“The Enemy Within,”](#) by Gore Vidal, *The Observer [UK]*, 10/27/02 [↔]

13. See [“Political Deception—The Missing Link Behind 9-11,”](#) by Michel Chossudovsky, *Centre for Research on Globalisation*, 6/27/02 [↔]

14. See [“Sept. 11’s Smoking gun: The Many Faces of Saeed Sheikh - His actions prove the involvement of Pakistan’s secret service in the September 11 attacks, and suggest a possible CIA role as well,”](#) by Paul Thompson, *History Commons*, 9/4/02 [↔]

When you start associating with the poor of this planet and the exploitation of what's happened to whole cultures and tribal cultures in Africa in particular, and you see the results of the exploitation of western colonial powers and when you want to see a movement to not only arrest that process which still goes forward today under different guises but to actually reverse it and to give an opportunity for people to control their destinies and their own natural wealth, that's dangerous ground to get on. . . .

King was committed, increasingly, to that kind of political view which you will not hear about in terms of the 'I have a dream' speech which is typically what he is associated with. He wept in India as early as '60, '61 when he was there. He had never seen such poverty in such a massive scale. 'How can people live like this?' . . . King saw that, wanted to bridge it and the solutions were too radical, too potentially dangerous. Jefferson was an idol of his. With all of Jefferson's foibles, remember he said, 'You need a revolution every 20 years. You need to sweep the room clean every 20 years,' said Mr. Jefferson. You need that revolution. King believed that as well.

## See Also:

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- [The Assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. Was An Act of State](#), book review by David Ratcliffe, 1/20/03
- [William Pepper on the MLK Conspiracy Trial](#), in letter to John Judge, 4/7/02
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