

SUPPLEMENT # 5
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., MC, 39
Homicide No. 3357
Thursday, April 4, 1968, 6:00 P.M.

RE: Consent for autopsy and autopsy

REPORTED BY: LT. B. N. LINVILLE
LT. J. D. EMBY

On Thursday, April 4, 1968, at 8:15 p.m., Insp. M. E. Zachary instructed Lt. Linville and Lt. Emby to go to the John Gaston Hospital Morgue, and pick up Dr. J. T. Francisco, and carry him to the St. Joseph Hospital, in order that he might examine the body of Dr. Martin Luther King.

Upon our arrival at the Morgue, we were informed by Dr. Francisco, that he had just received a call from one of the police officers, at the St. Joseph Hospital, and that he had been informed that the body was to be transferred from the St. Joseph Hospital, to the Morgue, by a City Ambulance, as soon as one became available. Dr. Francisco told us that he would prefer examining the body in the Morgue, and would just wait there, until the arrival of the body.

We then went to the Emergency Room of the St. Joseph Hospital, where we were met by Det. E. S. Berkley, and he stated to us that he had all of the clothing of Martin Luther King, and that he would see to it that it was properly tagged and placed in the Administrative Services Division.

Upon entering the Emergency Room, we found that it was being guarded by a number of Uniform Police Officers, and upon entering the room where the victim was, it was observed that there was a large gaping wound on the right side of his face, which tore the lower jawbone out, and then a gaping hole in the top of the shoulder, entering into the chest cavity.

It was learned that the following doctors worked on Martin Luther King, after his arrival at the hospital, in an effort to save his life. Dr. T. Calyon, Dr. R. Ercow, Dr. J. Barrasso, Dr. C. Riggs, Dr. F. Gioia, Dr. William Brown, Dr. H. Fiechl, Dr. C. Kesner, Dr. J. Willhite, and Dr. J. Fleming. Dr. Martin Luther King was pronounced dead at 7:05 p.m., by Dr. J. Barrasso.

It was learned, from the hospital attendants, the nurses and doctors who were on duty, that the wife of King and the persons who had accompanied him to the hospital, had been informed of his death, and informed by the doctors of the procedure usually carried out by transferring the body of the victim to the John Gaston Morgue, for examination by the County Medical Examiner. Before leaving the hospital, these aides, including Dr. Abernathy had agreed to the transfer of Dr. King's body. There was some delay in transferring the body, as no City Ambulance was in service.

The nurses on duty in the Emergency Room requested that someone sign the paper which would authorize the removal of Dr. King's body from the St. Joseph Hospital, to the John Gaston Morgue. At 8:40 p.m., Lt. B. N. Linville did sign this form.

At 8:45 p.m., April 4, 1968, City Ambulance Unit 49, which operates out of Fire House #15, at Saxon and Decatur, and being driven by Fireman Paul Smith, did arrive at the St. Joseph Hospital, and Dr. King's body was transferred to the John Gaston Hospital Morgue, by this ambulance.

At the John Gaston Hospital Morgue, photographs of the body of Martin Luther King were made by Calvin Ellis, Police Photographer, to show the position of the wound, as well as photographs for identification purposes.

Upon examining the body of Martin Luther King, it appeared that he had been shot by a high velocity weapon, and that the bullet ranged downward. The point of entry was in the left cheek, 61" from the right heel, and while lying flat on the back, looking straight ahead, 8½" from the rear. This projectile ranged downward, causing a gaping hole, severing the right side of the mandible, then coming out of the skin, re-entering the body and entering in a downward motion into the top of the right shoulder, apparently passing on downward, being deflected by the collarbone, to the left, and the bullet came to rest just under the skin on the median side of the left scapula, 55½" from the left heel.

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At approx. 9:30 p.m., Apr. 4, 1968, Dr. J. T. Francisco did remove this slug from the body of Martin Luther King, and the removal of this bullet was witnessed by Lt. J. D. Hamby, B. N. Linville and Roy Marshall. After the bullet had been removed by Dr. Francisco, it was wrapped in cotton and placed in a brown envelope and sealed, in order that it might be taken to the FBI laboratory in Washington, D.C. for identification purposes.

This bullet was approximately .30 inch in diameter and weighs approx. 4.7 grams. This is the approx. size, and gave the appearance of being a 30-06 caliber slug. This slug apparently had a soft nose as it was very flattened, but the steel jacket around the base had what appeared to be naked eye to be distinct lands and grooves.

At approx. 9:45 p.m. the Rev. Abernathy, along with three of Dr. Martin Luther King's aides, and the owner and driver of R. S. Lewis Funeral Home, came to the morgue and requested to see Dr. Francisco, stating they wished to obtain some information in regard to the body, and when the body could be released. At this time it had been understood by the police that Dr. Martin Luther King's wife was to have arrived in Memphis by plane at approx. 8:30 p.m.

The Rev. Abernathy informed Dr. Francisco that Martin Luther King's wife was not coming to Memphis, and asked if it would be possible for the autopsy to be performed by receiving a verbal consent by phone from the wife of Martin Luther King. Dr. Francisco informed them that this would be sufficient, as long as one of them would speak to her first and identify her as the wife of Martin Luther King, and witness her consent, with the understanding that a telegram stating her consent would follow at a later time. This was agreed to, and the phone call was completed, at which time his wife did give a consent for the autopsy to be performed.

Dr. Francisco immediately began performing the autopsy, and it was completed at approx. 11:30 p.m. Thursday, April 4, 1968. At the time of this writing Dr. Francisco's report has not been transcribed, but at the time it is completed, a protocol of his report will be furnished the Office of the Attorney General to be used in the prosecution of this case at the time of trial in court.

Dr. Francisco did outline and diagram several forms which show the extent of the injuries caused by this bullet to the body of Martin Luther King. Lt. J. D. Hamby did use these forms to complete a set of four, being chart numbers 11, 11, 14, and 17. The autopsy number is A-63-257.

Dr. Martin Luther King's body was identified by the Rev. Abernathy, which is to be used as a corpus witness, and he did sign the book in the morgue as identifying the body.

The slug which was removed from the body of Dr. Martin Luther King by Dr. J. T. Francisco was properly tagged in the Administrative Services Division property room under receipt no. 201270, and then checked out by Lt. Hamby and turned over to Inspector Zachary in order that it might be carried to the FBI Laboratory in Washington, D. C. along with the other evidence, for proper identification.

A guard of police officers did remain with the body of Dr. Martin Luther King until it was removed from the morgue by the R. S. Lewis Funeral Home.