

"OUR FRIEND MARTIN" REDUX
(THE SWIMSUIT ISSUE PULLOUT)



by Mike Golden

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Enough about finding scandals in the Bush administration for a nanosecond, buckaroos; because this is the imperfect, inappropriate out-of-balance-with-the-news-of-the-day time to take another look back at the MLK assassination, without having to resort to the tired old cliché of media tie-ins to justify the raison d'être. Since the 35th anniversary of that august whack job brought nary a peep out of the polluted mainstream marketing mavens, and the 36th and 37th and 38th and 39th meant nothing to anyone in the biz of news, this 40th anniversary hopes to be an exception to the rule by making up for that omission by providing battered conspiracy theorists with their own hidden Swimsuit Issue Pullout section to dive into. Though it may be debatable in certain circles how ready mainstream media in the U. S. of A. is to take a look at the real hidden agenda of Bush "patriots", you can be sure that no one on either side of the coin wants to take another look at the late James Earl Ray in the flesh, bikini (hiding the warts) or not. Nor are they ready to peek in on that old cutie-fascist-pie J. Edgar Hoover waddling around the pool of history in glorious drag. Or handle finding out what's so mysterious about the mysterious Raul. Much less examining the preposterous charges that Jack Ruby did not die of cancer in 1967 as the government claimed. Or examining why (the seemingly invisible man) Frank Holloman, number-3 honcho at the FBI under Chez Hoover for 23 years, was suddenly named Police Chief and Fire Director of Memphis in the fall of 1967, right after retiring from the Bureau. And certainly no one wants to look down the barrel of the half-assed confession the late Loyd Jowers never quite made that *he done the deed* before copping out and fingering 101 innocent Dalmatians and a whole slew of dead coppers instead of himself as the MLK shooter. Is there a citizen in Chicago or Boston who wouldn't trade-in the goal of finding Osama Bin Laden in order to remove the curse from the Cubs and keep it from coming back as a pox again on their beloved Red Sox? Can you empty the threat of Iran nuking the world out of the old ball park as easily as chugging six bottles of sake for lunch and remembering that just yesterday it was North Korea, or do you want to get in on the office pool of what percentage of the billions of dollars raised for victims of the Tsunami or Katrina have been ripped off by the good old reliable institutionalized non-profit scamsters? Or as the lyrics of that inspirational 60s pop anthem should have proclaimed:

"WAR, what's it good for?

Absolutely MONEY!

Absolutely MONEY, honey."

Or as Jack Kerouac might've poeticized about the state of the present day meaning of meaning, "In America, when the sun goes down, "no news" is considered "great" news in this country." At this point, it's almost impossible to dig up the cat's cradle of history and re-examine the contradictions against the grain of the official "closed" version no one in authority seemingly ever wants to reopen. But if you've ever wondered how history will explain to future generations what mainstream media missed or deliberately ducked the first time around, then refused to re-examine by labeling it "old news", look no farther for a methodology that will pass (for vanilla) than Hollywood's infusion into an infotainment oriented animated translation of our recent past. Then picture all the characters in one animated "Cliff's Notes" version of the 00 Presidential election, or 9/11/01, or the blackout of the summer of 2003, or going all the way back to Clinton's impeachment scenario (because we can still tell those players without a program), and start casting which star of the moment will be chosen to do the voice-overs for say, Bubba, Ken Starr, Monica Lewinsky, Hillary, Linda Tripp, etc. Next, and this is possibly the most important element in whether "old news" will play in prime time as entertainment, is the fictional character or characters who Hollywood creates to go back into history and guide us poor lost souls through the labyrinth of the story, like the legendary (now outed) "Deep Throat" of yonder yore supposedly did for Woodward and Bernstein (obviously our so-called real life counterparts to Sherman & Mr. Peabody).

Now if you're one of those people who still can't quite grasp the massive triumph of infotainment over the traditional separation of news and entertainment, as a primer, maybe you too should consider this your own Swimsuit Issue pullout and check out the animated feature length home video /DVD "OUR FRIEND MARTIN", on this the 40th anniversary of the MLK assassination. Released several years back on MLK's birthday, by Phillip Jones' Intellectual Properties Management for the King Foundation, in association with Disney and CBS Fox, the stated purpose was to introduce young children (5-to-8) to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and explain how he influenced history.



When the concept of the video was first described to me by Phil Jones, my gut level reaction was, "Oh no, they've turned Dr. King's life into a Sherman and Mr. Peabody fable!" If you recall the characters in that *Fractured Fairy Tales* segment of the old *Rocky & Bullwinkle Show*, Sherman was a "gosh-gee" young boy who had history explained to him by a wise old four-eyed dog named Mr. Peabody. Narrated by the late great Edgar Everett Horton, *Fractured Fairy Tales* was funny, dumber than dumb and smarter than smart all at the same time. Sherman and Mr. Peabody, along with *Leave It To Beaver's* Eddie Haskell and *Hogan's Heroes'* "I know nothing" Sgt. Schultz, became cult television icons, representing and okaying different facets of modern humankind's ineptitude for mass consumption.

To my surprise, and Phil Jones' everlasting credit, OUR FRIEND MARTIN was in a different category altogether. It was serious, not funny. I actually found myself getting choked up several times when real newsreel footage of Rosa Parks, the march on Washington, lunch counter sit-ins, and Sheriff Bull Conner unleashing fire hoses on black children in Birmingham, were juxtaposed into the animation. And I wasn't alone. Since the video was meant for young children, in order to get the opinion of a true test audience, I invited Javier, a visiting friend's adopted eight-year-old Peruvian son (who had never heard of Dr. King), to watch the tape with me.



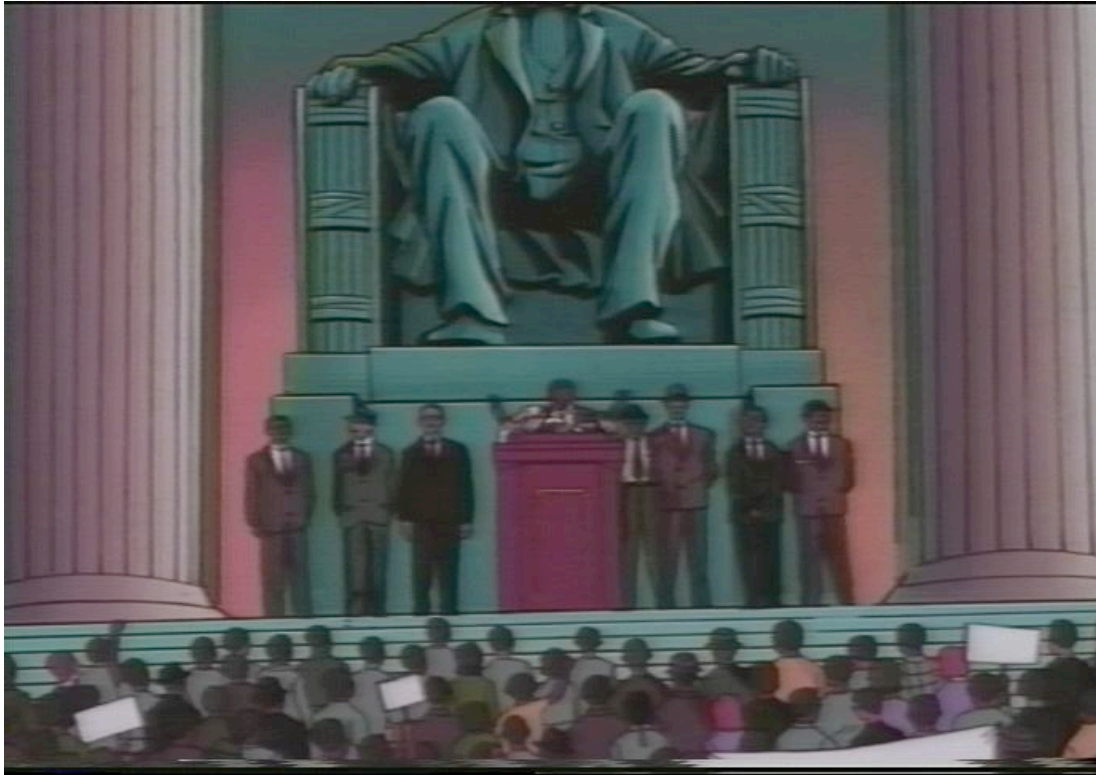
Featuring a hit Motown soundtrack, with famous voice-overs from, among others, Ed Asner, Angela Bassett, Danny Glover, Whoopie Goldberg, Samuel L. Jackson, James Earl Jones, Ashley Judd, Dexter and Yolanda King, Susan Sarandon, John Travolta and Oprah Winfrey, only Whoopie's voice was immediately recognizable. Basically this is the story of four sixth grade characters -- Myles, Randy, Maria and Kyle -- who go on a school field trip to Dr. King's boyhood home, and then suddenly find themselves time traveling through his life. What the characters were saying seemed a little overly hip for third graders to me, but my third grade companion didn't seem to be bothered by all the pop culture references, and was glued to the screen for all he was worth.



If there's a template for the story, it's more *It's A Wonderful Life* than one of Mr. Peabody's *Fractured Fairy Tales*. By the time the four time traveling characters have decided Martin is one "cool dude", they see a picture of Coretta King in funeral garb next to a newspaper clipping of the assassination and realize that Dr. King is going to be murdered. They immediately go back in time again, and bring Martin back to the future so he won't be assassinated. But the future they bring him back to is quite different than the one they left behind a few minutes earlier. The four friends aren't friends anymore, since the civil rights movement never happened, and black and white relationships don't exist on that kind of level. None of the other social changes we take for granted today have happened either. Realizing that one life can make a difference in this world, Martin, leaves his young friends behind and chooses to go back to the past and live out his destiny. Though we don't see what happens on screen, we hear a shot go off!

"WHO SHOT HIM?" my viewing companion sat straight up and asked. These are the first words Javier has said since we started watching the video. He turns to me and asks, "Why did they shoot him?"

A good question, if there ever was one.



On November 15, 1999, a jury of six whites and six blacks convened in Judge James Swearingen's Memphis courtroom to hear the King family's "unlawful death" suit against one Loyd Jowers. If you're not familiar with why Jowers was being sued (in the same manner Paula Jones sued Bill Clinton), it seems that the then 72-year-old owner of the grill under the rooming house authorities have always claimed James Earl Ray shot Dr. King from, told Frank Donaldson on ABC's *Prime Time Live* in 1993, that Frank Liberto, a Memphis mobster-businessman, had given him \$100,000 to find someone to shoot Dr. King, and that someone he paid was not James Earl Ray. Despite this very public confession, City, State or Federal authorities never charged Jowers with a crime, much less brought him in for questioning, incredulously claiming whenever they were asked why they hadn't talked to him, that they "didn't want to give Jowers credibility"(even if that meant permanently erasing the possibility of ever having credibility of their own).

Though Jowers attended the first week of the end-of-the-century trial, his attorney Lewis Garrison stated that he was too ill to testify in his own behalf. In order to simplify the case and avoid media accusations that this was nothing but a bunch of "conspiracy freaks", the King family's lawyer, Dr. William Pepper (who had, up until his death, been James Earl Ray's lawyer as well), not only didn't call Jowers to the stand, he didn't call Glenda Grabow or Donald Wilson, the two other major witnesses in the investigation. Grabow, a Mississippi woman who had been giving sworn depositions ever since Ray's mock HBO trial in 1993, claimed that in the early 1960s in Houston, at the tender age of 14, she had done kiddie porn flicks for Jack Ruby and his partner Jack (before he became LBJ's "Little Valet") Valenti. So startling was this accusation that Oliver Stone ran, didn't walk, away from the movie he was going to make about the assassination. Because it looked like Grabow was going to go public, Valenti came out and denied her accusations in Gerald Posner's bestselling shill job on the investigation, *Killing The Dream*. Grabow, however, never went public. Ex-FBI agent Wilson, on the other hand, did go public in 1998, claiming he had found notes linking the mysterious Raul and Jack Ruby in Ray's abandoned white Mustang in Atlanta, several days after the assassination (<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/crim/mlk/jpg1.htm>). The other major witness, a shadowy figure always referred to as "the mysterious Raul", was subpoenaed, but didn't respond. Despite this, Dr. Pepper felt there was enough evidence to prove his case without any of them, leading to the decision to avoid any testimony that would directly link the MLK assassination back to the JFK assassination, which he knew would not only get him labeled as an "opportunist" in the media, but as a "conspiracy freak" as well. Three years later he repeated that questionable strategy by selectively removing all mention of Grabow's

alleged relationship with Valenti from *An Act Of State*, his barely released book on the case and the trial.



If you recall, under the cloud of a virtual mainstream American media blackout, three weeks and 70 witnesses later, the jury convened for all of 60 minutes in the "unlawful death" trial in December 1999 before returning with a unanimous verdict, which declared that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination was a massive conspiracy carried out by the mob, the military and elements of the local, state, and federal governments.

Though the verdict was critically acknowledged in the press, it barely received any unbiased front page media coverage around the country. And certainly not nearly as much attention as the bogus confessions of one Reverend Ronald Denton Wilson, the so-called Looney Tune in Gainesville, Florida who came forward in 2002 on the anniversary of the assassination and claimed that it was his father Henry Clay Wilson who killed Dr. King. The FBI supposedly interviewed Wilson extensively, which is more than they did with Jowers or any of the actual major witnesses in the case. The right-wrong Rev Wilson got approximately a thousand times as much media space around the world as the trial got three years earlier because Wilson was so easily discredited that his existence alone plants the idea that anyone (past, present or future) who disputes the official James Earl Ray lone gunman party line is a crank. From where I sit, it's only natural to wonder if there'll be a whole series of kook confessions like the Reverend's manufactured in the future, in order to discredit any real evidence that might break through the media blockade.

And if what's going on in the Mideast now hasn't convinced you that the mainstream media isn't that good at distorting anything or anyone that challenges *the official party line* view of history, ask yourself when was the last time that you heard Oliver Stone's name mentioned in either print or broadcast media, without a conspiracy joke or yuk being attached to his name, no matter what the context of the story was. If you said "before he made *JFK*" give yourself a kewpie doll, and duck for cover.

Startling as it may be, after Coretta Scott King's opening day statement there was not one mainstream journalist in the courtroom covering the King v Jowers "unlawful death" trial during the entire six weeks that it ran. Not one! This did not stop the biggest known conspiracy shill in America,

Gerald "Case Closed" Posner, from attacking the trial on cable news shows and in the New York Times, and at its conclusion, writing high profile columns that appeared in the Washington Post and New York Post, among other mainstream publications, criticizing the trial, even though he had never set foot in the court room and didn't have the slightest clue as to what any of the 90 witnesses had testified. That these publications had to know he had never been there, yet published his "theories / opinions / or more accurately, his lies as facts, pretty much says all there is to say about the mainstream media's treatment of this story. In fact, only one journalist covered the entire trial. When interviewed on Court TV during black history month, two months into the 21st Century, he said, "Somehow, throughout it all, I guess I've managed to maintain my sense of innocence, because when I looked around, I was completely amazed that I was the only journalist in America sitting in that courtroom."

Three months after the trial, Loyd Jowers died of cancer. Less than a week after that, the Justice Department limited report on the case (that President Clinton asked Janet Reno to investigate 21 months earlier) was finally released. The report said that the Justice Department's findings in the investigation "were based on over 200 witness interviews, scientific testing and analysis of relevant documentary evidence, and review of tens of thousands of pages of records, including the files and papers from four previous official investigations, related litigation including King v Jowers, private parties, and the media."

If you're interested, you can find the report at:

<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/crim/mlk/part2.htm#over>.

The summary at: <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/crim/mlk/part2.htm#summary>.

The Table of Contents at: <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/crim/mlk/part1.htm#toc>

Among other totally new revelations, the report claimed that the late Loyd Jowers, who had spent the past seven years refusing to speak to them, had called Mark Glankler, an investigator for the Shelby County Attorney General, and had told him everything he had said to the King family and their investigators about the assassination was false. Glankler, who claimed under oath to have spent every working day of the previous five years investigating the case, had been the only state witness called who testified during the end-of-the-century trial, but had alternately angered the jury and made them laugh out loud at his contention of how much he knew about the case when he was only able to recognize the names of three of the 23 witnesses who'd been called to the stand before him.

The report also determined that the allegations relating to Raoul's participation in the assassination, had no merit. One of the most whispered names around both the Bay of Pigs and the Kennedy assassination, it was always assumed Raoul was a Cuban CIA agent until James Earl Ray was arrested and started talking about this shadowy Portuguese mob figure (Remember, after the assassination Ray escaped America and went to Portugal) who told him he didn't drive, and paid Ray to chauffeur him from Birmingham to New Orleans to Mexico, etc. It was this Raoul, according to Ray, who told him to buy both the white Mustang and the 30.06 rifle with scope that the FBI has always claimed was the gun that killed Dr. King. Coincidentally, if you believe in that sort of thing, this was the exact same caliber rifle that Frank Holloman, the former #3 Hoover inexplicably turned Memphis Police Chief and Fire Director in the fall of 1967, publicly issued to his five handpicked new anti-sniper squads as his first official act as Chief.

When ex FBI agent Donald Wilson said in 1998 that he found Ray's abandoned white Mustang in Atlanta after the assassination, he claimed he found an envelope with several notes in it, wedged between the shotgun seat and door; one note had the private phone number of one of Jack Ruby's Dallas nightclubs (a year after Ruby was supposedly dead), the second had the name "Raul" written on it, next to a column of numbers that added up to just over \$400,000. The third had the phone number of the local FBI bureau that rookie agent Wilson worked out of; that one scared him so badly he kept the notes and didn't turn them over to his superiors. Thirty years after he found them, Wilson made the notes public in The Atlanta Constitution before being forced to turn the first two notes over to the Justice Department, who after testing them announced in perfect Orwellian cadence that though they couldn't prove the notes were bogus, that didn't mean they were authentic either.

Though different photographs of Raoul have been independently identified over the years by everyone from Ray to Ambassador Andrew Young to major MLK assassination witnesses to anti-conspiracy journalist Posner, to major suspect-witness Loyd Jowers, no one's ever been able to prove without a shadow of a doubt that *the* major suspect in 30-to-35 years of investigating the assassinations

of both President Kennedy and Dr. King is actually real. Obviously it hasn't helped clarify the mystery, that the official spelling of his name has been changed from Royal (the way Ray thought it was pronounced) to Raoul to Raul either.

During the [King v Jowers](#) trial, Jack Saltzman, the British Producer of Ray's 1993 (70 hour) mock trial (cut down to three hours on HBO), testified that when he and Private Investigators Kenny Herman and John Billings staked out Raul's house, Raul's daughter came to the door, and he showed her the same photograph of Raul that Ray and others had identified. Not realizing the implications, the woman said, "Anyone can get that picture of my father. It's from Immigration & Naturalization." A Portuguese journalist was subpoenaed to testify about the existence of Raul, as well. She was angry Pepper had subpoenaed her, but reluctantly took the stand anyway, and in the course of her testimony said that Raul's wife had told her that the pressure the Investigators had put on them was a nightmare, but the government was helping the family get through it. The government had sent people to their home a number of times, and were monitoring their phone calls and providing them with guidance on how to handle the situation.



Unlike Bill Pepper, a man who without a shadow of doubt proved the assassination was a conspiracy, I'm not obsessed with proving who the shooter was. By trying to go beyond what he proved, and prove exactly who the shooter was, the only thing Pepper proved was the existence of the Peter Principal. His obsession for complete closure is understandable, but always ends up tainting everything else he's proved earlier. *Who pulled the trigger* is the biggest McGuffin in all conspiracy investigations. It's a question that's been built-in to the "conspiracy equation" in order to send the investigation off on a wild goose chase. The functionary who pulled the trigger is always irrelevant, because they never know who hired them to fill the Contract. In short, a pizza delivery boy by any other name.

In spite of the lack of Loyd Jowers and Don Wilson's testimonies, or perhaps because of them behind closed doors, the Justice Department report concluded that neither the Jowers nor the ex FBI agent's allegations were substantiated or credible. The Justice Department also said, "we have determined that the allegations relating to Raoul's participation in the assassination, which originated with James Earl Ray, have no merit. Finally, we find that there is no reliable evidence to support the allegations presented in [King v Jowers](#) of a government-directed conspiracy involving the Mafia and

Dr. King's associates. Accordingly, no further investigation is warranted."

I'm not sure if the Justice Department's limited report satisfies you out there, but I do hope my young friend Javier and all the future generations that come along who want to know who killed Dr. King, and why they did, will have the opportunity to examine the Justice Department's version against the trial transcript. I have a strange feeling that while this investigation has been publicly buried again, it's far from being over, despite the mainstream media's complicit blanket refusal to cover the case by labeling the still unresolved assassination "old news".

If you'd like to know more about what happened, and determine on your own *what's real* and *what's not*, the entire court transcript of the 1999 "unlawful death" conspiracy trial. can be found at both the Civil Rights Museum in Memphis and on the King Center's Website at:

<http://www.thekingcenter.com/News/Transcripts/transcripts.html>

<http://www.thekingcenter.org/transcripts/trial.html>

<http://www.thekingcenter.org/transcripts/pressconf.html>

<http://www.webcom.com/ctka/pr500-king.html>