

Chapter One

The Assignment

Friday, September 5, 1997

It was about 7:30 am when I (Sgt Tim Cook) arrived at the Criminal Justice Complex located at 201 Poplar Avenue in Memphis, TN I went to my office, the Homicide Office which is located on the 11th floor of the CJC. It was Friday around 10:30 am and was at my desk working on a Homicide Supplement concerning Sgt Allen Simon's Homicide Case. All my cases were caught up and I was finishing up my State Report on my last Homicide so I could turn it in for prosecution this afternoon. Suddenly my phone rang and it was Investigator Frank K. Lanker from the Shelby County Attorney General's (AG) Office Investigation Bureau. Special Agent Frank Lankler wanted me to meet him in the stairwell on the 4th floor of the Criminal Justice Building. I told S/A Lankler it would be a while due to the Supplement I was trying to finish for Sgt Simon. S/A Lankler's voice changed to a strict sense of urgency, he said it was something urgent and he needed to see me immediately. I caved and told him I would come down the back stairs. My desk just happened to be next to our backdoor which leads to the hall and the stairs on the south east corner of the building

Frank was waiting in the stairway next to the elevators. He was sitting on the steps smoking a cigarette. He asked if I had any open Homicide Cases or just assisting on one. I told him mine was solved and I was working on the State Report to send it to the AGs' Office so it could be sent to the Grand Jury. Frank asked how long that was going to take me and I said not long, why? He said my name came up today for working with the AGs' Office in the New Martin Luther King Investigation. There will be four investigators and a prosecutor working the investigation. Frank stated the AG was going to talk to the Director of the Memphis Police Department (MPD) today and request I be assigned to the AGs' Office for the duration on the investigation. There will be one investigator from the Shelby County Sheriffs' Department (SCSD), one investigator from the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI), one investigator from the MPD Homicide Bureau and one investigator from the AGs' Office. Frank said he would be representing the AGs' Office.

At this time Frank wanted to know if I would accept the assignment if it was offered to me. I told him yes, but really it is up to the Commander of the Homicide Bureau who get these Special Assignments. I reminded him that I had just returned from working on the FBI Gang Task Force and they might not give me up again so soon. Frank said not to worry the Police Director will be requesting you by name because the AG will be requesting you by name. I said I will accept it if it is offered but for him not to hold his breathe. I told him I really didn't think it would happen.

I returned upstairs to my desk in Homicide and continued to work on and finish Sgt Simon's Supplement. After lunch I finished putting together the State Report on my Homicide and turned it in around 3:00 pm. I had not been told anything about the Special Assignment to the AGs' Office like Frank said would happen today.

4:00 pm rolled around and everyone was heading out the door for the weekend. I noticed the Chief of Investigative Services go into the Homicide Office with the Lieutenants about 5 minutes earlier. As I made it to the front door, and I was passing the Lieutenants' office door; my Lieutenant (Lt Herb A. Brewer) hollered and told me to come into his office. Lt Brewer wanted

to know if I had talked to the AG today and I said no. He stated the AG met with the Director today and the AG asked for me by name to work a special investigation in the AGs' Office. The Director said it wouldn't be a problem and called the Chief in and they talked some more. At this time the Chief said "I didn't have to go if I didn't want to since I had been gone for a long time with the FBI Gang Task Force". Before I could answer Herb asked if my cases and supplements were finished. I told him Sgt Simon's supplement was finished and, in the basket. And I had finished my State Arrest Report and it too was in the basket.

I turned to the Chief and asked what the investigation was about. He said it was a new investigation on the Martin Luther King Homicide. He said there would be investigators from TBI, the SCSD and the AGs' Office. I told both of them yes, I would like to be on that investigation. The Chief said to report to the AGs' Office Monday morning and after I checked in with the Office, I needed to go over to the Organized Crime Squad Office and check out an unmarked car for the duration of the assignment.

It was around 5:00 pm when I got home and started putting things together to go to the boat. My pager went off and I recognized the number immediately to be Frank's office desk phone. I called Frank right then and he asked if I had been assigned to the investigation. I said yes, I had and was to report Monday Morning to his Office. He said great and that he would see me Monday and hung up.

Chapter Two

The Special Master

Monday, September 8, 1997

I arrived at the AGs' Office on the third floor at 8:00 am and, was advised by the Deputy Director of the West Tennessee Violent Crime and Drug Task Force, Frank K. Lankler, to find out everything I could about subject Lloyd Jowers, AKA "Lloyd Jowers", AKA "Doc Lloyd Jowers", M/W, age 70, last home address of 3258 Boone, Martin, Tennessee (TN). Frank advised Mr. Jowers had been on nationwide television whereas, Mr. Jowers made the statement that he was part of a conspiracy to kill Dr Martin Luther King, Jr. I was advised to find this subject so he could be interviewed by investigators concerning the statements he made on Nationwide Television.

I was also advised Lloyd Jowers was married to a Dorothy Jowers who is now deceased. They lived in Martin, TN. After Dorothy Jowers' death, Lloyd Jowers married a Shirley Manseill Jowers, F/W, of 528 Magnolia, McKenzie, TN. Shirley Jowers works at the General Store. According to Frank, Lloyd Jowers and Shirley Jowers were divorced at the Henry County Chancery Court in Paris, TN. Frank advised me to obtain a copy of these divorce papers for our file.

Frank advised a full background was needed on Mr. Jowers in an attempt to ascertain if Mr. Jowers did really come into \$100,000 as he stated on television for his part in the assassination of King. He advised Lloyd Jowers possibly worked at the MPD in 1947, and was possibly associated with Frank LaBerto and Frank Holt. Also, Mr. Jowers worked at Jim's Café and Yellow Cab. While at Yellow Cab Mr. Jowers was supposed to have had words with Danny Mowens, but Frank did not go into detail. I was advised SCSD Deputy Jerry Ranion will not be in today, but is expected to start work on this assignment tomorrow. I was advised by Frank that Deputy Ranion will assist me and on most occasions be my partner during this investigation.

At 10:00 am I ran a TN Drivers' License check on "Lloyd Jowers", TN DL #31666666. Mr. Jowers last listed home address on his Tennessee Drivers' License is Route 4, Post Office Box 385, Martin, TN, 38237. His last DL was issued on October 10, 1994 and expires on November 20, 2001. He does not have a gun permit according to the record and his license is valid at this time. Mr. Jowers is described as a M/W, 5'9", 145 lbs., blue eyes, and brown hair. There is nothing unusual about Mr. Jowers driving record, he has no citations, or arrests listed.

I attempted to contact my Confidential Informant #TEC010 for information on Lloyd Jowers. The telephone line was busy for over an hour; however, I did finally get through and was advised the CI was not in at this time. I did not leave any message for the CI at this time for obvious reasons.

Next, I ran a TN DL check on Shirley Jowers. I located two (2) subjects: Shirley A. Jowers, F/W, age 52, home address 301 Memorial Drive, Paris, TN. This person's license has a notation "has license in another state" under a 5/01/94 traffic citation in AR (Arkansas). There are no other traffic violations since that date and no arrests listed. The description is a F/W, 5'4", 140 lbs., brown hair, and brown eyes. This license was issued 1/04/96 and expires 6/20/2000. This subject does not have a gun permit.

Shirley M. Jowers, F/W, age 63, home address 1307 Victor Drive, Memphis, TN. There are no traffic violations or arrests listed. This subject does not have a gun permit however; she does have to wear corrective lenses. She is described as a F/W, 5'2", 112 lbs., blue eyes, and brown hair. The license was issued on 8/31/93 and expires on 10/15/98.

Next, I ran a blanket Tennessee Driver's License check on all "Jowers". I found there to be 337 "Jowers" with listed Tennessee Drivers License in the State.

I contacted CI# TEC010 and advised the CI that I needed to locate the subject Lloyd Jowers as soon as possible. I did not tell the CI why I wanted to find the subject. I did advise the CI not to call me at any telephones, but to page me and I would return the call from a secure telephone.

Frank advised me to read a letter which had been delivered to the Attorney General's Office today from Attorney Michael J. Jelly. The letter advised Mr. Michael J. Jelly would be going before the Shelby County Grand Jury on September 25, 1997 and presenting information, affidavits, and evidence to indict Lloyd Jowers as to the Martin Luther King Jr. Homicide of April 4, 1968. Mr. Jelly stated in the letter that anyone having any information concerning this matter should present such evidence to the Grand Jury on that date. He advised he had talked with the Grand Jury Foreman in March 1997 and he did advise the Grand Jury Foreman that he would return on a certain date and bring any and all information to the Grand Jury for their consideration in his request for indictment of "Lloyd Jowers".

I asked what this was all about and who was conducting this investigation? Frank advised he did not know what was going on with regards to Mr. Michael J. Jelly and the other private investigators. The Attorney General had just received this letter. He advised that Mr. Jelly was within his rights to go before the Grand Jury by law, however, he had to have the permission of the Grand Jury Foreman; and at this time no one has been advised that Mr. Michael J. Jelly has gained that permission. I advised Frank that I did not have any information involving the current investigation and I wished to review the original case file from the Police Department. I also requested a copy of James Earl Ray's Guilty Plea. Frank advised the MPD File was in shambles from everyone going through it and making copies, however, it was in the A.G. Office and I could review it. He advised that parts of the file were missing, and they did not know who had taken those parts of the file. Parts of the file became missing once the different attorneys and private investigators began to look at the case file and make necessary copies.

I was given Assistant A.G. J. Henry Jones's copy of the MPD Homicide File for me to make a copy which I did so. The Guilty Plea Section was 86 pages long. I was also given a copy of two articles: "Who Killed Martin Luther King Jr.?" written by Jesse Jackson, and "Double Exposure" written by John Branston. I returned Mr. Jones's file to him.

At 11:50 am Frank Lankler and I were discussing things that needed to be done in this investigation when Attorney F. Jack Franklin called Frank Lankler concerning a letter he had received. Frank was having trouble hearing Mr. Franklin on that particular telephone line so he asked Mr. Franklin to call him back on another line. At this time Frank placed a new cassette tape into the tape recorder to tape the conversation with Mr. Franklin. I began looking through

the documents I had just copied and listening to Frank tell Mr. Franklin over and over that he did not know anything about a letter being sent to him. Frank advised Mr. Franklin several times that he did not know about the letter he was referencing, that he did not have a copy of the letter, and asked Mr. Franklin to fax him a copy so he would have copy of the letter to look at while they talked. I could tell from the conversation that the subjects were discussing the Martin Luther King Jr Case. Frank told Mr. Franklin that he had been working on the case for several years. Then he told Mr. Franklin that Judge Bolton knew him very well and Mr. Franklin could ask Judge Bolton about him. He was sure Judge Bolton would vouch for him (Lankler). All during the conversation Frank continuously said fine, evidently concurring with whatever Mr. Franklin was saying. Frank explained to Mr. Franklin that there had always been an open-door policy and never a closed-door policy at the Attorney General's Office. Frank went on to explain that some people involved in this case for their own reasons have tried to benefit themselves, but it could cost them later. He explained to Mr. Franklin that they would be serving notice that anyone supplying false information intentionally, and the investigators could prove it was done intentionally, then the proper remedies would be taken against those parties. He was not directing this statement at Mr. Franklin, but explaining to Mr. Franklin those persons had provided false information in the past. He also stated to Mr. Franklin that all information submitted would be checked out by investigators that is whatever is supplied to their office.

At one-point Frank did get a little excited and started talking or saying something to the effect that 'that makes the hair on the back of my neck stand up' and he 'wouldn't be involved in anything like that', or he would 'pack up and leave'. Frank continued to agree and say fine to Mr. Franklin. Then Frank began to speak about the House Assassination Committee having more people to work on the investigation than they had and he had done the best he could with the manpower they had. The subject seemed to change back to information given to them (Attorney General's Office) by citizens and private investigators that has been incorrect and the investigators checking out information. And some people who have information, but will not come to the Attorney General's Office and give them the information. The people would give it to other people, but not to the investigators. About this time, I leaned over and looked at the tape recorder to see if it was working okay and to see how much tape was left. I could not tell if it was working or not. Frank observed me looking at the tape recorder and he glanced over at the recorder. I observed Frank to react to a malfunction with the recorder and start grabbing at the recorder.

As Frank opened the recorder and attempted to take the tape out; I could see the tape going everywhere. I opened a fresh cassette tape and handed it to Frank who promptly placed the tape into the recorder and pressed record. At this time, I attempted to fix the cassette tape taken from the recorder. Frank continued to talk with Mr. Franklin agreeing to meet with Mr. Franklin in Judge Bolton's Chambers tomorrow morning at 9:30 am to talk with the Judge about Mr. Franklin talking to Frank about information he had received while being involved in this investigation. Frank stated over and over to Mr. Franklin that he did not feel anything in the letter Mr. Franklin read to him was directed personally at Mr. Franklin or was accusing Mr. Franklin of anything. Frank continued over and over to down play the letter and saying he would meet with him in the morning at Judge Bolton's Chambers. He also advised Mr. Franklin that he was going down the hall and get a copy of the letter for himself and find out from the Attorney General Mr. Gibbons exactly what was going on and why he did not know anything about the

letter to Mr. Franklin. It appeared that Mr. Franklin and Frank had come to a mutual understanding for the moment and Frank would talk with the Attorney General and meet with Mr. Franklin tomorrow morning in the Judge's Chambers.

At the conclusion of the telephone call Frank advised me he could not believe that a letter had been sent to Mr. Franklin without at least telling him about it. He was also upset that the tape had messed up during the telephone conversation. I advised Frank that I wished to be present tomorrow morning during the meeting with Judge Bolton and Mr. Franklin. I advised Frank that I felt one of the other investigators now assigned to this case should be present to hear what information Mr. Franklin might or might not have in connection to this case. Frank advised he wanted to get a copy of the letter and talk to Attorney General William "Bill" Gibbons before doing anything further. Frank was very upset that this letter had been sent without his knowledge and Mr. Franklin had been told to contact him, however no one had even told him about the letter or contents of the letter. I gave Frank the first tape that had messed up during the phone call. He placed the tape on his desk and proceeded down the hall to the Attorney General's Office.

Now I began reading the articles from Jesse Jackson and John Branston on the Martin Luther King Jr. Case. After finishing I logged onto the Internet to try and locate the Martin Luther King Web Site referred to by Dexter King. I did locate several sites concerning Dr King, but none appeared to be specific to Dexter King's comments.

Frank Lankler contacted Attorney F. Jack Franklin to advise him that he could not meet with him and Judge John Bolton in the morning as planned. It appeared by Frank's response that Mr. Franklin became upset because Frank began to explain to Mr. Franklin that since the Tennessee Criminal Court of Appeals had ruled on Judge Bolton's appointment of F. Jack Franklin as Special Master as improper, that he should not meet with him and Judge Bolton. People might take that act as the Attorney General's Office was acknowledging that Judge Bolton had a right to do what he did, even though the Court of Appeals said he didn't. Assistant A.G. Henry Williams was present for most of this second telephone conversation between F. Jack Franklin and Frank Lankler. Again, Frank was saying fine and appeared to be agreeing with what Mr. Franklin was saying. The second telephone conversation was being taped with a different tape recorder this time. Frank was saying he agreed with Mr. Franklin and did not hold Mr. Franklin liable for the content and truthfulness of the information that had been told to Mr. Franklin. Frank advised him that investigators would take the information he had received and check it out and it would be no reflection on him. That Mr. Franklin did not know and probably doesn't know to this day if the information given to him was true or not. That the information would have to be checked and that is what the investigation is all about. Trying to get to the truth.

Mr. Franklin must have said something about ethics or ethical issues, because Frank began to try and explain that the information was given to Mr. Franklin to be checked out and the Attorney General was asking for that information so it could be checked out. Frank said something to the effect that, the Court of Appeals had already ruled on that and he (Franklin) could give them the information. Frank even advised Mr. Franklin to go ahead and talk with Judge Bolton in the morning and then let him know what he was going to do; that they had

plenty of time to get together. Mr. Franklin must have said something about a date or deadline, because Frank Lankler advised Mr. Franklin not to worry about that 'date', you have already talked with me and as far as I'm concerned, we are trying to work this out together, you were supposed to contact me and you did. I'll tell them we have discussed it and are trying to get together. Then something was said by Mr. Franklin concerning the Board of Professional Responsibility, because Frank asked him when he would be sending his letter to the Board for their opinion. Frank asked Mr. Franklin to call him tomorrow after he talked with Judge Bolton and let him know when they could get together.

After the telephone call Frank stated he could not believe that this was being blown this far out of proportion. I suggested, Deputy Ranion and I go and speak to F. Jack Franklin. Explain to him that investigators were assigned to conduct an investigation and investigators need his help concerning the information he has been supplied. Then conduct an interview with Mr. Franklin to see if he even has any information. I advised Frank that all of this is uncalled for; especially if Mr. Franklin doesn't have any information in the first place. Frank advised this is how they want to handle this at this time because of the Appeal to the Court. I advised him that this was a waste of time and investigators needed to be gathering information not playing lawyer games. At this time Frank rewind, the cassette tape. It was learned at this time that this tape recorder did not record anything at all. The only sound on the tape was that of static. I was instructed by Frank to write down as much as possible about what I had heard concerning the two telephone calls with Mr. Franklin since the tape recorder had malfunctioned.