

Kowalski's Thuggery

Another method used to discredit key witnesses, particularly Jowers and Wilson, is that they would not cooperate with the Justice Department investigation; this is used to conclude that they were unreliable and that they had something to hide.

EIR interviewed Wilson shortly after he was contacted by Kowalski in 1998. When he met Kowalski, intending to give him the documents found in Ray's abandoned car, Kowalski was abusive and threatening, and mostly questioned Wilson about his relationship with the King family and Pepper. Wilson said he felt that he was now a target of Kowalski's investigation—a belief that was reinforced when Kowalski threatened to indict Wilson for obstruction of justice and when Kowalski called Wilson's home to scream at Wilson's wife that her husband was a liar.

The Verdict of History

Following the release of the Kowalski report, Martin Luther King III issued a statement on behalf of his family (see box), noting that they stand by the verdict in the civil trial, and that they regard that trial as having revealed the truth about the assassination of Dr. King. And as Dr. Pepper told *EIR* in the accompanying interview, he expects that more and more information will continue to come out over the years, confirming the accuracy of the findings of the Memphis trial. Following that trial, Pepper told *EIR* that the verdict would "cause history to be rewritten"—and no cover-up by the Justice Department's permanent bureaucracy can alter that judgment.

Interview: William Pepper

Government Ignored Evidence in MLK Death

William Pepper is the attorney for the King family. He was interviewed on July 4 by Edward Spannaus.

EIR: What are your comments on the latest Department of Justice report on the King assassination?

Pepper: My overall comments are that they really just skewed it to their desired results, they chose whom to believe and whom not to believe, and they did it with the full intention—it seems pretty clear—of just sustaining the official line.

And I don't know what more one can say about it. It's not unexpected, I thought they were terribly harsh with respect to [former FBI agent Donald] Wilson, unfair, and we now know they used storm-trooper tactics against that family in order to get those documents. . . .

They seem to have buried their own scientific report. They supposedly did a scientific analysis of the documents, but they really didn't deal with the results in any detail at all.

King Family Pans U.S. Government Probe

Here is the statement of the family of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., issued following the U.S. Justice Department's release of its report on its "limited investigation" of recent evidence regarding the assassination of Dr. King:

1. We initially requested that a comprehensive investigation be conducted by a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, independent of the government, because we do not believe that, in such a politically sensitive matter, the government is capable of investigating itself.

2. The type of independent investigation we sought was denied by the Federal government. But in our view, it was carried out, in a Memphis courtroom, during a month-long trial by a jury of 12 American citizens who had no interest other than ascertaining the truth. (*Kings v. Jowers*)

3. After hearing and reviewing the extensive testimony

and evidence, which had never before been tested under oath in a court of law, it took the Memphis jury only 1.5 hours to find that a conspiracy to kill Dr. King did exist. Most significantly, this conspiracy involved agents of the governments of the City of Memphis, the state of Tennessee, and the United States of America. The overwhelming weight of the evidence also indicated that James Earl Ray was not the triggerman and, in fact, was an unknowing patsy.

4. We stand by that verdict and have no doubt that the truth about this terrible event has finally been revealed.

5. We urge all interested Americans to read the transcript of the trial on the King Center website at <http://www.thekingcenter.com>, and consider the evidence, so they can form their own unbiased conclusions.

Although we cooperated fully with this limited investigation, we never really expected that the government report would be any more objective than that which has resulted from any previous official investigation. In a reasonable period of time, when we have had an opportunity to study the report, we will provide a detailed analysis of it to the media and on the aforementioned website.

EIR: What's your frank assessment of those notes, the Wilson documents?

Pepper: I believe the documents are genuine; I believe Donald [Wilson] found them the way he said, and I believe that someone left them inadvertently — perhaps in that car — and I would tend to think it might well have been Raoul, but, goodness knows who. James [Earl Ray] was always tight-mouthed about any other people whom he'd picked up, or whom he came to know, because he didn't want to put them through the type of harassment he knew they'd get, if he did name them. So, he just never named a lot of people, and that's unfortunate, because it always was a handicap that we had, trying to defend him.

But I believe they [the documents] are viable. I think that there's no question that that [phone] number was a [Jack] Ruby number. There also seemed to be a Raoul number, in Dallas, but that was cut off, as I recall. And the other sheet seemed to be pay orders of some kind. And, as I recall, the reports seem to indicate that that was written by a different hand. What I found as interesting in the first writing, is that the way the seven was made, is a European way, not an American way. The seven was crossed, and only Europeans cross their sevens; Americans don't, as a rule. And, of course, we believe that Raoul was Portuguese, and that would have been the way they would write their sevens.

EIR: What's your assessment of Raoul at this point? They go to great lengths, with a huge number of witnesses, to say he never left the plant [a General Motors assembly plant in New York State], was there every day working, etc.

Pepper: I don't know who they talked to. We sent investigators up there, and he turned out to be a kind of a piece-worker, who was paid as he worked, and he could take off, and the Kowalski group said they got his employment records, going back to '68. Well, the guy who gave them the records, gave *me* the records, after he gave them to them, and he said he gave me everything he gave them, and the records he gave me only went back to 1975. So, I'm just wondering how they got records that went back beyond 1975; maybe they got them from another source — I don't know. But the man who is in charge of the archives out in Southfield, Michigan (I think it is), said that this is all they had. And he was very cooperative, very decent guy — I sent him a subpoena by fax; he was that cooperative — he honored a fax subpoena.

He said that's all they got. So I don't know where they got this other information.

We've had enough witnesses, as you know, over the years, identifying him [Raoul]. And I have the transcript of the [Gloria] Grabow conversation with him. And she spoke to him for, like, eight minutes — and you don't speak to someone you don't know for eight minutes — and she asked him if he was still involved with guns, gun-running, and he said, "Oh yeah, lots of guns." This was early on, before he knew we were looking at him.

EIR: I don't think that's mentioned at all in the report.

Pepper: Oh, of course not. . . . Jack Saltman showed Raoul's daughter the photograph that we had in the spread, he showed her that at the door, and she said: "Anybody can get that picture of my father." So she identified him. *She* identified him. Forget Grabow, and all the others, *she* identified him. And that was evidence at the trial, that they ignored.

EIR: Where had you gotten that photo?

Pepper: That photograph was part of a spread of six, and it originally came from an INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service] file; that was his INS naturalization photograph, when he came over from Portugal. So, she put him right in the frame; that was testimony at the trial, and they ignored that. They also ignored the testimony of the Portuguese reporter who said how happy they [Raoul's family] were that the government was giving them such help, such assistance, in dealing with this issue. That the government helps private citizens that way!

They've just brushed the Raoul thing aside, but I think the evidence is very strong the other way.

The evidence is also very strong that there were two Army photographers on the roof, and that Carthel Weeden [the fire station captain] put them up there on the day of the killing. And they started to say that Weeden may have been mistaken; he indicates that maybe he put them up there the day before. Well, Weeden indicated nothing of the sort — because he wasn't even working the day before.

And I asked him, "Did you tell these guys that you might have put them up the day before?" And he said: "Hell, no, I wasn't even *working* that day." When he was interviewed by them [DOJ investigators], he told them that he put them [the photographers] up there on the day of the shooting. . . .

EIR: The King family has made the point that they originally wanted an independent commission.

Pepper: That's right. And that's really what is required: an independent commission that would hear all the evidence. That's what they wanted. And the closest we got to that, was with the civil trial, because all of that evidence was heard.

One of the points in the report, is that the civil trial was — the evidence was unreliable, because it was filled with hearsay, and unsubstantiated, uncorroborated allegations. Well, what they don't say, is that hearsay is perfectly admissible, if it's subject to one of the exceptions, and there are a number of exceptions to the hearsay rule, and so, hearsay evidence is put into evidence all the time, and is allowed. They try to sort of blacklist the evidence by saying, "Oh, it's all hearsay."

EIR: I would have thought, given that this was initiated by President Clinton and Attorney General Janet Reno, that there would have been some pretense to neutrality or objectivity, but there wasn't at all.

Pepper: No, it got out of their hands. I think the forces who run that Department, who aren't Clinton or Reno, but are the people you know and you've identified, and they just were determined that they were going to go to the wall on this one, and not give any change, or any break at all.

EIR: And any contrary evidence, they simply ignored. There's an enormous amount of material, and anything that didn't fit their predetermined conclusion, they just ignore.

Pepper: That's right, they just ignore. They ignore Nathan Whitlock and his mother; they try to discredit Johnny McFerrer; and of course Jowers, they try and discredit him. They say, "Well, he's changed his story."

Of course he's changed his story. He never wanted to get involved in this in the first place. For a long time, he just told one story; of course he changed it.

It [the DOJ report] is very one-sided, and one has to take it apart piece by piece, and I will try to do that.

EIR: I'm looking forward to that; I'm sure a lot of people are.

They also made a big point about, that there's no link between the Kennedy assassination and this.

Pepper: That was the real hidden danger of the Wilson documents. That was a real danger, wasn't it, because of Raoul, and Ruby, and that whole connection there. I know, they make a big point of that.

EIR: It's so self-serving: They go in threatening, intimidating, and so forth, and then they say, "Well, they didn't cooperate with us, therefore they're not reliable."

Pepper: Right, right. "They didn't want to speak to us. They didn't cooperate. They're not reliable." Right.

It had its purpose, and that's really what they did, and that's why Mrs. King was right when she decided not to go on down and sit with them, and let them explain the reason behind their report; she said she knew what they were going to do, and she didn't want to give the DOJ a photo opportunity. . . . Smart decision. . . .

That family feels that they know now much more, and generally quite accurately, what happened, and more details will seep out over the years. People come forward with information. I get calls from people all the time, and there's new leads here and there. It will come out little by little. I had a woman who called me, and she had a friend who was in charge of Army logistics, and on the morning of April 4, he was told to be ready, because they were going to be moving large numbers of troops into the nation's capital the afternoon of the 4th. And sure enough, of course, that's what happened. And then, the killing took place. And this guy said: "Wow, they knew about it all the time."

You get pieces of information like that. And after a while, there's a cumulative buildup of this stuff, and you know that basically you're right. . . .

Senate GOP Leaders Back HMOs Over Patients—Again

by Linda Everett

For four years, the Congressional contingent of the Conservative Revolution has worked non-stop to block any and all legislation that would provide even minimal protections for patients in managed-care plans, and make health maintenance organizations (HMOs) legally liable for policies that harm, disable, or kill their patients. On June 29, the Republican-dominated U.S. Senate outdid itself, by passing a "Patient Protection" bill that would actually *reverse* laws passed by the states to protect people from the ravages of the HMOs.

Public pressure has been building for Congress to finally act, to curb the outrageous violations of human health and dignity by the HMOs. Much of the debate has centered on giving senior citizens insurance coverage for prescription drugs. Meanwhile, the Norwood-Dingell Bill, sponsored by Reps. Charles Norwood (R-Ga.) and John Dingell (D-Mich.), the version of the Patients' Bill of Rights which passed in 1999, has been languishing in a Republican-dominated conference committee, unable to reach the President's desk.

In early June, after months of inaction by the conference committee, Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) attached the original Norwood-Dingell bill to other legislation to force a vote on the issue. The bill failed to pass by just one vote—indicating growing Republican support for real patient protections. Then, on June 29, Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.) proposed an amendment to an Appropriations bill that addressed the issue of how many patients would be covered in any final bill. Sen. Don Nickles (R-Okla.) countered with his sham GOP "patients' rights" bill that narrowly passed by a vote of 51-47. In a confusion of details that even some Senate offices cannot untangle, the Nickles bill amends the Senate GOP bill, but Norwood's office says that it actually makes it worse, by reversing laws that states have enacted to protect patients from HMOs' rapacity.

Clearly, unless the GOP majority which carried this out, is removed from office in the fall elections, there is no hope of protection from the HMOs. More fundamentally, given the rulings from the U.S. Supreme Court upholding the cost-cutting intent of the 1973 law establishing HMOs, the only effective action that can be taken to stop the medical murder, is to *ban* HMOs altogether, and return to the philosophy of the Hill-Burton legislation of the late 1940s.

The original Patients' Bill of Rights, or the Norwood-Dingell bill, albeit with unfortunate "poison pill" attachments