

# MLK Day January 15, 2024: Remember MLK: Memphis, Tenn. Court Decision: U.S. “Government Agencies” Found Guilty in Martin Luther King’s Assassination

Circuit Court of Shelby County, Tennessee Thirtieth Judicial District at  
Memphis, December 1999

By [Carl Herman](#)

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**Martin Luther King was assassinated more than 50 Years Ago, April 4, 1968, Memphis, Tenn.**

\* \* \*

**Very few Americans are aware of this historical 1999 civil law suit of the King Family against the US Government.** (Shelby County Court), Tennessee

**Coretta Scott King:** *“We have done what we can to reveal the truth, and we now urge you as members of the media, and we call upon elected officials, and other persons of influence to do what they can to share the revelation of this case to the widest possible audience.”*

**- King Family Press Conference, Dec. 9, 1999.**

From the King Center on the family’s civil trial that found the US government guilty in Martin’s assassination:

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THE CIRCUIT COURT OF SHELBY COUNTY, TENNESSEE

THIRTIETH JUDICIAL DISTRICT AT MEMPHIS

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CORETTA SCOTT KING, MARTIN

LUTHER KING, III, BERNICE KING,

DEXTER SCOTT KING and YOLANDA KING,

Plaintiffs,

Vs. Case No. 97242-4 T.D.

LOYD JOWERS and OTHER UNKNOWN

CO-CONSPIRATORS,

Defendants.

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BE IT REMEMBERED that the

above-captioned cause came on for Trial on

this, the 15th day of November, 1999, in the

above Court, before the Honorable James E.

Swearengen, Judge presiding, when and where

the following proceedings were had, to wit:

Screenshot of Court Document

After four weeks of testimony and over 70 witnesses in a civil trial in Memphis, Tennessee, twelve jurors reached a unanimous verdict on December 8, 1999 after about an hour of deliberations that **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated as a result of a conspiracy. In a press statement held the following day in Atlanta, Mrs. Coretta Scott King welcomed the verdict, saying ,**

“There is abundant evidence of a major high level conspiracy in the assassination of my husband, Martin Luther King, Jr. And the civil court’s unanimous verdict has validated our belief. I wholeheartedly applaud the verdict of the jury and I feel that justice has been well served in their deliberations. This verdict is not only a great victory for my family, but also a great victory for America. It is a great victory for truth itself. It is important to know that this was a SWIFT verdict, delivered after about an hour of jury

deliberation.

The jury was clearly convinced by the extensive evidence that was presented during the trial that, in addition to Mr. Jowers, the conspiracy of the Mafia, local, state and federal government agencies, were deeply involved in the assassination of my husband. The jury also affirmed overwhelming evidence that identified someone else, not James Earl Ray, as the shooter, and that Mr. Ray was set up to take the blame. I want to make it clear that my family has no interest in retribution. Instead, our sole concern has been that the full truth of the assassination has been revealed and adjudicated in a court of law... My husband once said, "The moral arc of the universe is long, but it bends toward justice." To-day, almost 32 years after my husband and the father of my four children was assassinated, I feel that the jury's verdict clearly affirms this principle. With this faith, we can begin the 21st century and the new millennium with a new spirit of hope and healing."

## **TRANSCRIPTS**

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## **KING FAMILY STATEMENT ON MEDIA REQUESTS REGARDING THE MEMPHIS VERDICT**

The King family stands firmly behind the civil trial verdict reached by twelve jurors in the Memphis, Tennessee courtroom on December 8, 1999.

An excerpt from remarks made by Mr. Dexter Scott King, Chairman, President, and CEO of The King Center, during the December 9, 1999 press conference regarding the verdict that may be used in support of this family decision:

"We can say that because of the evidence and information obtained in Memphis we believe that this case is over. This is a period in the chapter. We constantly hear reports, which trouble me, that this verdict creates more questions than answers. That is totally false. Anyone who sat in on almost four weeks of testimony, with over seventy witnesses, credible witnesses I might add, from several judges to other very credible witnesses, would know that the truth is here."

*"The question now is, "What will you do with that?" We as a family have done our part. We have carried this mantle for as long as we can carry it. We know what happened. It is on public record. The transcripts will be available; we will make them available on the Web at some point. Any serious researcher who wants to know what happened can find out."*

The King family feels that the jury's verdict, the transcripts of the conspiracy trial, and the transcripts of the King family's press conference following the trial — all of which can be found on The King Center's website — include everything that that family members have to say about the assassination.

Therefore, the King family shares the conviction that there is nothing more to add to their

comments on record and will respectfully decline all further requests for comment.

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### **(Verdict form passed to the Court.)**

THE COURT: I have authorized this gentleman here to take one picture of you which I'm going to have developed and make copies and send to you as I promised. Okay. All right, ladies and gentlemen. Let me ask you, do all of you agree with this verdict?

THE JURY: Yes (In unison).

THE COURT: In answer to the question did Loyd Jowers participate in a conspiracy to do harm to Dr. Martin Luther King, your answer is yes. **Do you also find that others, including governmental agencies, were parties to this conspiracy as alleged by the defendant? Your answer to that one is also yes.** And the total amount of damages you find for the plaintiffs entitled to is one hundred dollars. Is that your verdict?

THE JURY: Yes (In unison).

THE COURT: All right. I want to thank you ladies and gentlemen for your participation. It lasted a lot longer than we had originally predicted. In spite of that, you hung in there and you took your notes and you were alert all during the trial. And we appreciate it. We want you to note that our courts cannot function if we don't have jurors who accept their responsibility such as you have. I hope it has been a pleasant experience for you and that when you go back home you'll tend tell your friends and neighbors when they get that letter saying they've been summoned for jury duty, don't try to think of up those little old lies, just come on down and it is not so bad after all.

I know how much you regret the fact that you won't be able to come back for the next ten years. I don't know, I may or may not recognize you if I see you on the street

some day, but if you would see me and recognize me, I sure would appreciate you coming up and reminding me of your service here.

To remind you of your service, we have some certificates that we have prepared for you. They look real good in a frame.

Not only will they remind you of your service here, but they will remind you also of that wonderful judge who presided over this. We do thank you very much on behalf of everyone who has participated in this trial.

You were directed not to discuss the case when you were first sworn. Now that your verdict has been reached, I'm going to relieve you of that oath, meaning that you may or may not discuss it. It is up to you.

No one can force you to. And if you discuss it, it will only be because you decide that you wanted to.

I guess that's about all except that I want to come around there and personally shake your hand. You are what I would call Trojans.

Having said that, as soon as I get around there and get a chance to shake your hands, you'll be dismissed.

(Judge Swaengen left the bench to shake the jurors hands.)

THE COURT: Those of you who would like to retain your notes, you may do so if you want to.

I guess that's about it. So consider yourselves dismissed and we thank you again.

Ladies and gentlemen, Court is adjourned.

(The proceedings were concluded at 3:10 p.m. on December 8th, 1999.)

DANIEL, DILLINGER, DOMINSKI, RICHBERGER, WEATHERFORD  
(901) 529-1999

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COURT REPORTERS' CERTIFICATE

STATE OF TENNESSEE:

COUNTY OF SHELBY:

We, BRIAN F. DOMINSKI, MARGIE

DAUSTER, SARA ROGAN, KRISTEN PETERSON and  
SHERYL WEATHERFORD, Reporters and Notaries

Public, Shelby County, Tennessee, CERTIFY:

1. The foregoing proceedings were taken before us at the time and place stated in the foregoing styled cause with the appearances as noted;
2. Being Court Reporters, we then reported the proceedings in Stenotype to the best of our skill and ability, and the foregoing pages contain a full, true and correct transcript of our said Stenotype notes then and there taken;
3. We am not in the employ of and are not related to any of the parties or their counsel, and we have no interest in the matter involved.

WITNESS OUR SIGNATURES, this, the \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2000.

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BRIAN F. DOMINSKI  
Certificate of Merit  
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Notary Public for  
the State of Tennessee at  
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