



Is Atlanta the Black mecca? You tell us.
We're asking the question, but answers from natives and
transplants alike are more complicated than a simple "yes" or "no."
IN METRO, B1

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AJC EXCLUSIVE

We combed through the FBI's King files.

HERE'S WHAT WE KNOW.



ILLUSTRATION BY PHILIP ROBIBERO/AJC; SOURCE IMAGES: GETTY

Scholars and historians say the trove of 240,000 pages offers insight into how the Federal Bureau of Investigation worked to undermine the Civil Rights leader's impact.

By Ernie Suggs and Charles Minshew
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The FBI had long been watching the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. They bugged his hotel rooms, tracked his movements and scrutinized his relationships — all in the name of what some in the bureau considered national security. To them, King was more than the leader of the Civil Rights Movement. He was, in the words of one top official, “the most dangerous Negro of the future in this nation.” In a 1963 memo, Assistant FBI Director W.C. Sullivan laid bare the bureau's suspicions. “King,” he wrote, “stands head

and shoulders over all other Negro leaders put together. ... We must mark him now.” That memo is one of nearly 240,000 pages released this past week by the Justice Department, following a January executive order from President Donald Trump to declassify records related to the assassinations of King, President John F. Kennedy and Sen. Robert F. Kennedy. For many civil rights historians, the massive trove — organized into more than 6,000 PDFs and posted on the National Archives website Monday — was neither shocking nor revelatory. Pulitzer Prize-winning historian David Garrow called it “nothing earth-shattering.”

King files continued on A9



Clayborne Carson, Stanford University professor and director of the Martin Luther King Jr. Research and Education Institute, said the files show how the FBI invaded King's privacy. AJC FILE



J. Edgar Hoover
THE NEW YORK TIMES 1968
‘The FBI was taking sides in the Civil Rights Movement and doing everything possible to undermine King. (FBI Director) J. Edgar Hoover made no bones about that.’
Clayborne Carson, author and historian

Slow response to escalator injuries raises new questions

Can city handle a mass casualty event downtown? ‘If this was any worse, we’d all be dead,’ says injured man.

By Taylor Croft and Sara Gregory
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Sprawled on the hot brick platform were hurt concertgoers clutching injuries in pain. At least two had broken bones, and others were bleeding. They waited like that for 34 minutes, until the first emergency medical personnel arrived to treat injured riders after an escalator malfunctioned at the Vine City MARTA station in the heart of Atlanta’s downtown sports and entertainment district, surveillance footage shows. It took 11 more minutes before the first ambulance arrived. Scores of people were on their way home from a Beyoncé concert when the escalator sped up and

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The lobby of Richard Kessler's JW Marriott Plant Riverside hotel in Savannah features a model of a pterodactyl. SARAH PEACOCK FOR THE AJC

Hotelier builds on his boutique lodging legacy

Richard Kessler, a Georgia hospitality legend, still has plans for expansion.

By Adam Van Brimmer
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SAVANNAH — No splurging, Richard Kessler was told. Go build a motel at the McDonough exit along I-75, and remember the rooms rent for \$8 a night. Use solid panel doors instead of sliding glass entryways. Install 18-inch TVs, not 24- or 28-inch. Make the lobby a cubby and don't bother with meeting rooms. This is a Days Inn, not a Holiday Inn, his new boss reminded him. Kessler smiles at the memory, one still fresh 55 years later. Kessler would go on to build hundreds more Days Inns under the mentorship of fellow Savannahian and family friend Cecil Day. He later ran the company for nearly a decade, making the no-frills chain's properties ubiquitous along East Coast interstates. Yet the grin he flashes in recounting the story has more to do with the landmark hotel he's sitting

Kessler continued on A16

AJC STORYTELLERS

At a food mart that never closes, an armed comedian keeps the overnight watch

If you misbehave at this store, Junior might put you on his Instagram.

By Thomas Lake
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At a dangerous hour in a dangerous part of town, Connell Daniels Jr. stands at a cash register behind a wall of bulletproof glass. Within his reach is a semiautomatic rifle. The gun is visible through the glass, a silent warning to anyone with a bad idea. “No,” he says, “I don't feel in



Overnight store clerk Connell Daniels Jr. interacts with a customer from behind bulletproof glass at JJ Food Mart on Atlanta's west side. MIGUEL MARTINEZ/AJC

danger workin' here.” “They should be worried about me.” But on the graveyard shift at JJ Food Mart, a small neighborhood grocery on Joseph E. Lowery Boulevard between Hollowell and Boone, Daniels feels more than just grim determination. He actually has fun. His side-hustles include work as a stand-up comedian, and the strange things he sees here in the dead of night give him some pretty good material. Or, as he calls it, content.

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METRO, B1 Kindness saves coyote who played with dogs



Capturing Carmine definitely saved his life. But is he happy?

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