

Inmate Claims CIA, King Slaying Linked

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By WILLIAM A. PILLAR
Scripps-Howard Staff Writer

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Ohio Penitentiary inmate Myron Billett claims one of two Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) agents he met with nine years ago to discuss the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a figure in the Watergate scandal.

Billett, 52, alias Paul Buccilli, says he will divulge the names of CIA and FBI agents who he claims offered the Mafia \$1 million to kill Dr. King, but only to the House Committee on Assassinations.

The convict, who claims he was an undercover spy for the FBI while working for the Mafia, says he has information linking both the CIA and FBI with a conspiracy to kill Dr. King.

Ed Evan, chief investigator for the assassinations committee, said he has been ordered to interview Billett by Rep. Louis Stokes, D-Ohio, committee chairman.

The order came after Scripps-Howard's Ohio Bureau revealed Billett's intention to testify despite his fears that by doing so he would place his life in jeopardy.

Billett, who has served nearly four years of a sentence for armed robbery, said he decided to tell his story after recent published reports told of alleged conspiracies in the assassinations of both President John F. Kennedy and Dr. King.

Billett said he and a woman with Mafia ties set up the meeting early in January 1968 between the CIA and FBI agents and Carlo Gambino, who headed one of New York's Mafia families.

He said it was at a hideaway motel in Apalachin, N.Y. Billett said the woman would corroborate his story.

Billett said he was accompanied to the motel meeting by a close associate and that Gambino was there with his bodyguard.

Two CIA men and one FBI agent attended the hour-long meeting that ended, he said, when the federal agents said they would "have to make other arrangements."

Billett said it was a culmination of a series of late summer and fall meetings he had in 1967 with four federal agents. It was at this meeting, Billett said, that Gambino rejected the offer to kill Dr.

King. He quoted Gambino as saying: "We wouldn't touch the King deal for any amount of money."

He said Gambino told the agents the FBI and CIA "made a mess of the (President) Kennedy assassination and that we'll leave the assassination (of King) up to you people."

Evans said Billett's stature as a witness was heightened by the fact that Billett, in letters to the Scripps-Howard Ohio Bureau last year, told of meetings between Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby two weeks before President Kennedy was assassinated.

A former striptease dancer now married to a Texas evangelist told assassinations committee investigators earlier this month that Ruby introduced her to Oswald at Ruby's Dallas, Tex., night club.

Billett's August 1976 letter told of his fears for his life after the killings of Sam Giancana, Chicago Mafia leader, and John Roselli, who told government investigators of the CIA-Mafia plans to kill Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro.

Billett said his role as a go-between for the Mafia and the government enabled him to gain knowledge of what both sides were planning. He said with the deaths of Roselli and Giancana, "there is only one of us left who could connect the CIA and the Mafia."

