

MARK LANE CHARGES PANEL CONSPIRACY

Ray's Lawyer Says Committee Violated Law in Inquiry Into Dr. King Assassination

By ANTHONY MARRO

Special to The New York Times

ST. LOUIS, Aug. 7 — An attorney for James Earl Ray, the convicted killer of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., said today that the House Select Committee on Assassinations had violated the law and its own rules as a part of a "conspiracy" to prevent a fair investigation of the assassination, which took place in Memphis 10 years ago.

The lawyer, Mark Lane, said in a statement issued here that the committee's investigators and their agents had suborned perjury, criminally received stolen property and monitored and tape-recorded telephone conversations.

In addition, Mr. Lane said that the committee had "violated their own rules by secretly establishing a conference between one of their agents and a reporter for The New York Times" in an attempt to plant false information about the investigation.

A spokesman for the committee said, "The allegations are serious and they will be examined carefully and completely." He said the committee would have no other comment now.

Tells of Tape-Recordings

At a news conference here, Mr. Lane distributed a statement by Oliver Patterson, who identified himself as a former informant for the Federal Bureau of Investigation who most recently had been working as an undercover agent for the House committee.

Mr. Patterson, 34 years old, said both in a written statement and later in an interview that while working for the committee he had tape-recorded interstate telephone calls he had made to Jerry Ray, the brother of the assassin, and also had secretly made copies of letters from James Earl Ray to Jerry Ray and mailed them to a committee investigator.

Mr. Patterson said that he could not recall whether the investigator, whom he identified as Conrad Baetz, had told him specifically to steal the letters and copy them, but that after he told Mr. Baetz that he had them, Mr. Baetz told him to mail them to his post office box in Wood River, Ill.

Mr. Baetz, a staff investigator for the committee, could not be reached for comment.

Both Mr. Lane and Mr. Patterson also alleged that Mr. Baetz had told Mr. Pat-

erson that committee officials wanted to arrange a meeting between him and a reporter for The New York Times so that, in Mr. Patterson's words, "I could give false information."

Reports Getting Instructions

Mr. Patterson, who had never been reached by The Times and had never provided the paper with any information concerning the King assassination prior to today, said that he had been told to try to persuade the newspaper that Mr. Lane was a homosexual, that the committee had received no new information in the case, and that he, Mr. Patterson, had been threatened with harm by Jerry Ray because of his undercover work.

Mr. Lane, who has been a persistent critic of Federal investigations of both the King assassination and the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963, said

today that the alleged actions by the committee and its staff were designed to prevent Mr. Ray from receiving a new trial.

Mr. Ray, who is now in a state prison in Tennessee, originally pleaded guilty to the murder of Dr. King, but more recently has denied any guilt and has declared that he was an innocent victim of a larger conspiracy.

Mr. Patterson said that he decided to make public an account of his work for the committee after Mr. Lane learned about it and persuaded him that it was the best way to insure that the Federal Government would not seek retribution against him.

Webster Reports 'Inadvertence'

By The Associated Press

A 1974 report by the Federal Bureau of Investigation alleging a conspiracy in the murder of Dr. King was filed away for four years instead of being turned over to Federal investigators because of "simple inadvertence," William H. Webster, director of the F. B. I., said yesterday.

However, Mr. Webster depreciated the significance of the slip-up, saying the report contained "hearsay three times removed," and that it was written long after the original investigation was concluded anyway.

The recently released document quotes an informant as saying he had been told that a Missouri businessman was "the individual who made the payoff to James Earl Ray after the killing."

The report "would normally have been filed with the King investigative file. This was not done," Mr. Webster said in an interview.

He said he first learned of the report last March and that it was turned over to the House assassinations committee at that time.

Fund Request Under Fire

WASHINGTON Aug. 7 (UPI) — The House assassinations committee got a cool reception today when it asked a House administration subcommittee to approve an extra \$790,000 above the \$4 million it has already spent investigating the killings of President Kennedy and Dr. King.

The assassinations panel chairman, Representative Louis Stokes, Democrat of Ohio, drew subcommittee fire when he told an open session that he had only enough money from this year's appropriation of \$2.5 million to last through next month. Otherwise, he said, the panel would have to go out of business.

Representative Joseph G. Minish, Democrat of New Jersey, asked, "Will this investigation change the course of history in your opinion?"

Mr. Stokes replied, "I'd be pleased to try to answer but would like to do so in executive session."

The subcommittee then met behind closed doors for two and a half hours.

None of the members disclosed Mr. Stokes's evidence.