



Gregory, Abernathy and Brown picketing the White House: A case for a new inquiry?

ASSASSINATIONS: Who Killed the Dream?

Of all the assassination inquests of the turbulent 1960s, none left more unraveled ends—or more enduring doubts—than the FBI's judgment that a hard-case ex-con named James Earl Ray, acting alone, murdered Martin Luther King. That verdict has endured on the record, despite widespread public skepticism and Ray's own insistence that others were involved in the crime. But Senate investigators have lately unearthed evidence that the FBI had itself subjected King to harassment verging on blackmail almost to the time of his death. And the scandal in turn led to a new wave of demands for a reopened inquiry—this time with the government itself at least speculatively among the suspects.

The demand came most poignantly from King's widow, Coretta, to whom the bureau—at the height of its anti-King campaign—had addressed a sampling from its collection of bugged and tapped indelicacies from his private life. Mrs. King, on tour in Africa when the revelations broke, guessed at a government-sponsored meeting in Nairobi that there had been a conspiracy against her husband after all—and that it "would have to have been attached to the forces of our government that felt he was a threat to the system." She called for a reopened inquiry into the King assassination; so did a little band of pickets outside the

gates of the White House, among them show-biz activist Dick Gregory and old civil-rights soldiers Ralph David Abernathy and Marion Brown. CIA, FBI, said Gregory's placard, . . . WHO TRIED TO KILL THE DREAM?

The issue did reach Ford, not over the fence but at a televised news conference; he pronounced the FBI's treatment of King "abhorrent to all Americans including myself" and promised to consult with Attorney General Edward Levi on what should be done to those involved. Levi, as it happened, had anticipated the demands and had already ordered his top deputies to look into whether the King murder file should be reopened as a result of the FBI disclosures. But whether that inquiry or any other would upset the one-man, one-gun verdict was problematical, for all the cloud of doubt around it. The Justice Department has been running down purported new leads for months without significant result; however badly the FBI may have abused Martin Luther King in life, said a department spokesman, there remains "no indication that the original investigation was anything less than thorough."