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Newspaper: U.S. businessman claims to have hired Ki...

Newspaper: U.S. businessman claims to have hired King's assassin

NEW YORK (UPI) -- A retired U.S. businessman says he will tell the name of the real assassin of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. if granted immunity from prosecution, an English newspaper reported Sunday.

The Observer of London reported on its front page that James Earl Ray, imprisoned since 1969 for King's slaying, had nothing to do with the assassination of the civil rights leader.

The U.S. businessman, who is not named in the article, said he hired another man for the April 4, 1968, murder. The Observer said the man will share his information with a Memphis, Tenn., grand jury if it grants him immunity from prosecution.

Four others are seeking immunity as well in return for telling their part of the story, the newspaper said.

King was assassinated by a sniper while standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis. Ray was convicted of the killing but has maintained his innocence.

According to the newspaper report, the businessman received \$100,000 for organizing the conspiracy to kill King and paid \$10,000 of that to the actual man who pulled the trigger.

Nothing is said of the assassin other than that he was a local man with a reputation as a sharpshooter.

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