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Mrs. King Challenges Groups To Further Probe Husband's Slaying

BY LILYANN J. MITCHELL

Apparently disillusioned and still firmly convinced that her late husband's brutal murder on April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tenn. was the plot of a well planned conspiracy, Mrs. Coretta Scott King said of the recent committee's report that James Earl Ray acted alone:

"I have no knowledge as to how comprehensive this report was. Therefore, I can draw no firm conclusion. I would still like for some agency, group or organization to research and disclose what the task force was doing and how it was conducting this investigation, so that others may judge for themselves how the Justice Department conducted their investigation - and in what manner they drew up their conclusions," Mrs. King stated from a prepared press statement to the ARGUS from her office in Atlanta.

Meanwhile the new Attorney General Griffin E. Bell has told the press he is curious about the "gaps" in the Martin Luther King Jr. slaying case, and said he would like to conduct a "personal" probe into the assassination of the late civil rights leader.

James Earl Ray is presently serving a 99-year state prison term in Tennessee for King's murder, but the convicted inmate claims he is taking the full rap in a conspiracy to murder Dr. King. His appeals for a hearing to re-open the case have been denied.

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MRS. CORETTA KING

A special report from the Department of Justice to the media this week reads in part:

The purpose of the study was to examine FBI activities involving Dr. King and to evaluate the effectiveness of the assassination investigation. "The report concluded that the FBI had conducted a painstaking and successful investigation of the 1968 assassination in Memphis, Tenn. The task force also found no evidence of FBI complicity in the murder," the statement to the ARGUS said.

However, the report further stated, "The FBI's COINTELPRO - type harassment of Dr. King and efforts to drive him out of the civil rights movement were found to have been clearly improper. The task force recommended no disciplinary action because the chief FBI

officials responsible for the harassment are dead or retired, but proposed outright prohibition of COINTELPRO-type activities against domestic intelligence subject."

Dr. King's widow, his father, the Rev. Martin Luther King Sr., other family members and civil rights leaders have called the latest report from the house committee "unacceptable" to them.

Shortly after this re-investigation into the King slaying officially opened, it was reported by the media that numerous documents pertinent to the King slaying case were missing from the government's file.

Last week human rights activist Dick Gregory, announced that he will resume his hunger fast until a "thorough and true" investigation into Dr. King's slaying is initiated - which should include the necessary FBI and other legal government and official documents on the King case.

In addition to this, the U.S. District Judge John Lewis has ordered the FBI to file with the National Archives all of its tapes and documents growing out of buggings and wiretaps of Dr. King. According to the judge's previous records, these materials could not be made available to the public for at least 50 years, except by court order.

A couple of months ago, Ed Redditt, an ex-police detective in Memphis told the National Inquirer Magazine in

an interview that he and another Black officer, W.B. Richmond, were the only detectives assigned to police detail on April 4, 1968. He stated that when police officials in Memphis learned of the many threats against Dr. King's life they "slashed security from 10 men to two men, instead of beefing it up.

"When Dr. King was murdered I was miles away - and another officer on duty with me that day (W.B. Richmond) was missing from the scene," Redditt said.

Redditt said despite his protests that he had a job to do, he was ordered home and Holloman (then the director of the Memphis Police and Fire Department) called in two burly police officers to escort him there and stand guard over him.

Redditt further stated that it appeared, "as if the guards were trying to keep me in the house, rather than protect me."

Attorney General Bell said at a recent news conference, although the report found no evidence of FBI involvement in the 1968 murder case of Dr. King, the case was not closed for the Justice Department.

He said a final decision will be made when the House Select Committee completes its investigation of the killings of both Dr. King and President John F. Kennedy.

Of a possible meeting with Ray, Bell stated: "I'd either go or send someone in whom I have absolute confidence."