

Was Dr. King set up to die?

By Wayne Chastain Jr.
Pacific News Service

MEMPHIS — Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. may have been the victim of "security stripping"—a technique used by intelligence agencies to expose a victim to assassination by removing his protection—involving the Memphis police and possibly a federal intelligence agency.

This is the theory that convinced the House of Representatives to create a special 12-member committee to probe both the 1968 King murder and the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

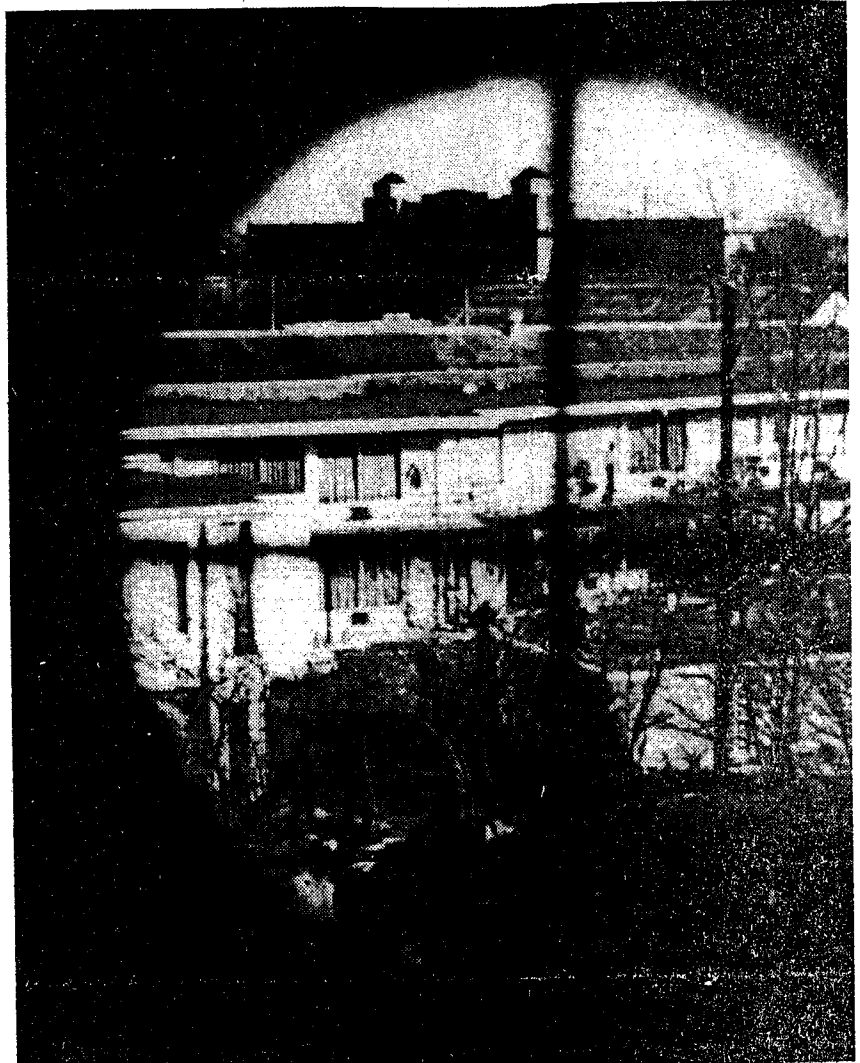
The Black Caucus in the House, acting on new information in the King case, was responsible for breaking a stalemate and pushing the investigation through, according to several appointees to the committee.

The new information was given the Black Caucus by two investigators: Mark Lane, author of the best-selling book on the JFK assassination, "Rush to Judgment," and Abby Mann, an Academy award-winning screenwriter and author of "Judgment in Nuremberg."

They and Newsday reporter Les Payne found in scores of interviews with those involved in the King investigation that:

- Ed Redditt, the black Memphis police detective in charge of protect-

Wayne Chastain is a veteran newsman who while writing for the Memphis Press-Scimitar was one of the first reporters on the scene after Dr. Martin Luther King was shot. He has investigated the King murder for over eight years.



Telescopic gunsight pinpoints where Dr. King was slain.(UPI)

ing King, was removed from his post across the street from the motel where King was shot just two hours before the slaying. Redditt told Pacific News Service he had set up a contingency plan to seal off the area in the event of violence, but it "was never implemented."

Director of the Police Department Frank Holloman—a former FBI agent of 25 years who had worked with Director J. Edgar Hoover—told him he was being removed because a murder plot against him had been discovered. After being taken home and watched by Memphis police for two days, he was put back on duty—and never heard another word about the murder plot.

Because Holloman told him of the plot in the company of a man he

identified as a Secret Service agent, Redditt assumed "that Holloman had gotten this information from the Secret Service." But that agency denies having any record of sending an agent to the meeting.

Representatives from the FBI, military, intelligence, National Guard and other agencies were there, however.

- Redditt's assistant told investigator Mark Lane that he too had left the command post opposite King's hotel before the slaying, but refused to discuss the circumstances surrounding his removal.

- An informal security force of four members of a local black militant group, including one undercover Memphis police agent, was also relieved from duty just before the murder—by someone in the King

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- The ones assigned to the King's hotel post—were:

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Illustration by G. Moss for the Boston Globe

J. Warren Cassidy is president of the Gun Owners Action League and former mayor of Lynn.

of most law enforcement personnel that gun controls have no effect on the rate of armed crime, and that the imposition of more controls — read that, Confiscation — will do nothing to prevent the crime rate rising.

A great danger of gun confiscation lies not only in its ineffectiveness, but in its misdirecting people away from the real problem which is the increasing willingness of criminals to resort to violence by any means, while certain members of the community accept and, worse, excuse this criminal violence.

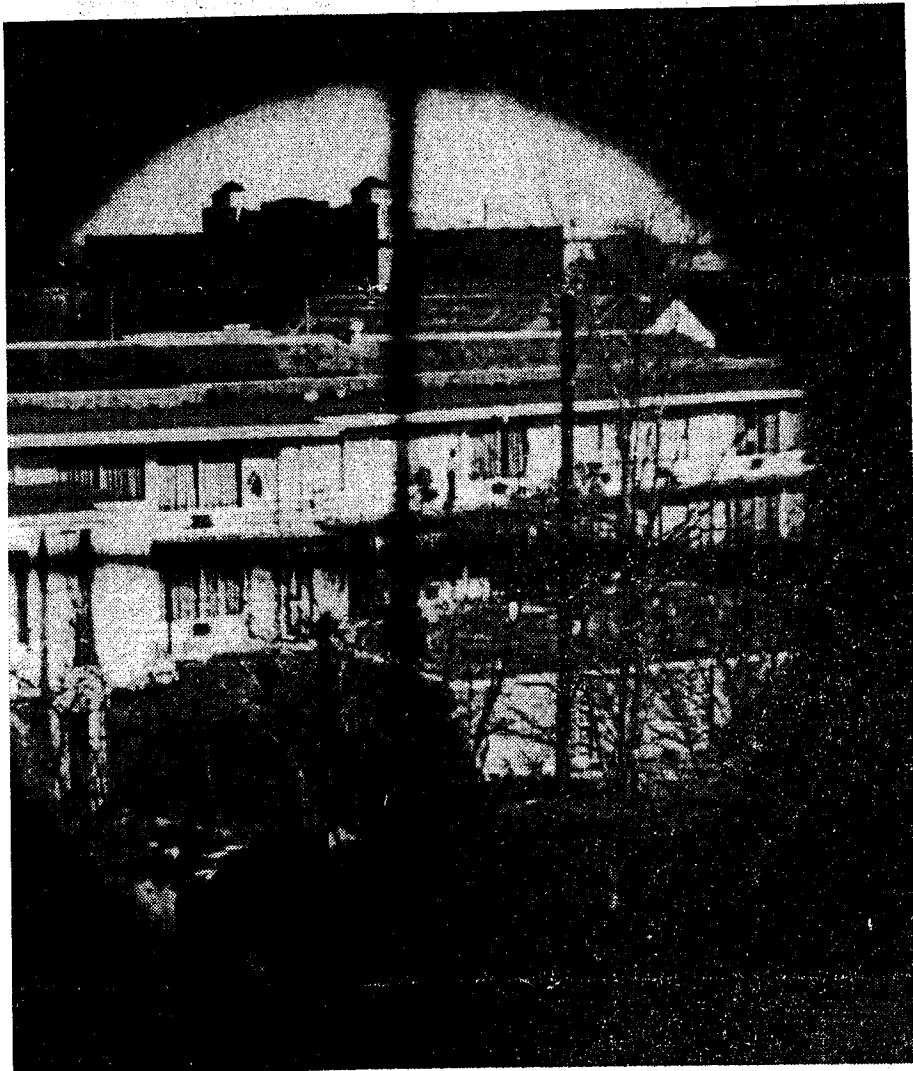
Unfortunately, our criminal justice system appears only too willing to return the convicted felon to society so that he can continue to violate the law. Furloughs, paroles, probation, suspended sentences and filed charges all greatly contribute to our rising crime rate.

However, the greatest danger inherent in the confiscation of the gun of the law-abiding citizen lies in taking away his natural right of self defense. No government in a free society has this right. Protecting one's self and one's family is so basic a natural drive that it should be unquestioned.

Further, the right of private property is basic in a free society and, most certainly, its protection by its owner is just as basic. Beyond these natural rights we have the Constitutional, rights of the 2d, 4th, 5th, 9th and 14th amendments as well as the Constitutional guarantee of 36 of our states. Our opponents ignore the legal rights that enforce our side of the gun argument, and to set down the facts and the history of the Bill of Rights would require this entire edition of *The Globe*.

Concerning confiscation, we are all aware that no police organization can cope with the rising crime rate, particularly in light of present judicial permissiveness. Their response to your call cannot be quick enough to defend you against the attacker. In Lynn, for example, we usually have one officer on duty in the early morning hours for every 4300 inhabitants. These same officers, by the way, are being harassed by our mutual opponents when they are forced to act in society's defense.

Such a group as the Civil Liberties Union, while defending the criminal, is attempting to disarm the policeman. You are familiar with the outcry that arises whenever police ask for hollow point bullets, shotguns and other means of equalizing their chances in battle with crime. It is sad but true that many political leaders and police commissioners would rather see the police officer murdered by the killer than the killer stopped by the policemen.



Sight pinpoints where Dr. King was slain. (UPI)

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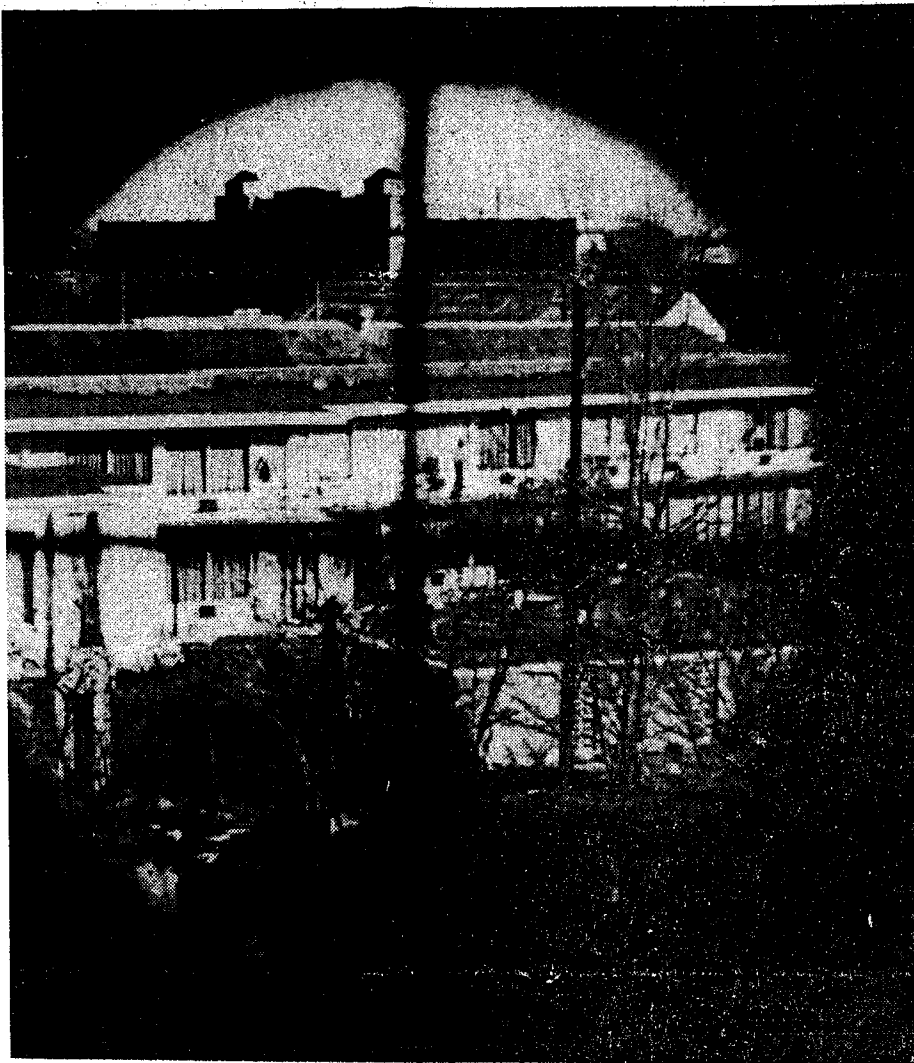
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entourage. Stationed with arms on the same floor as King, they were already downstairs when the shooting took place.

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Both were temporarily transferred to other stations the night before the murder. One, Floyd Newsum, told Lane that the deputy chief of the fire department told him the transfer order had come from the police department.

According to Redditt, "The FBI never talked to me about this, even though I told my story to anyone willing to answer." Newsum says he has never been questioned by a law enforcement agency about his removal either.

DR. KING, Page A2

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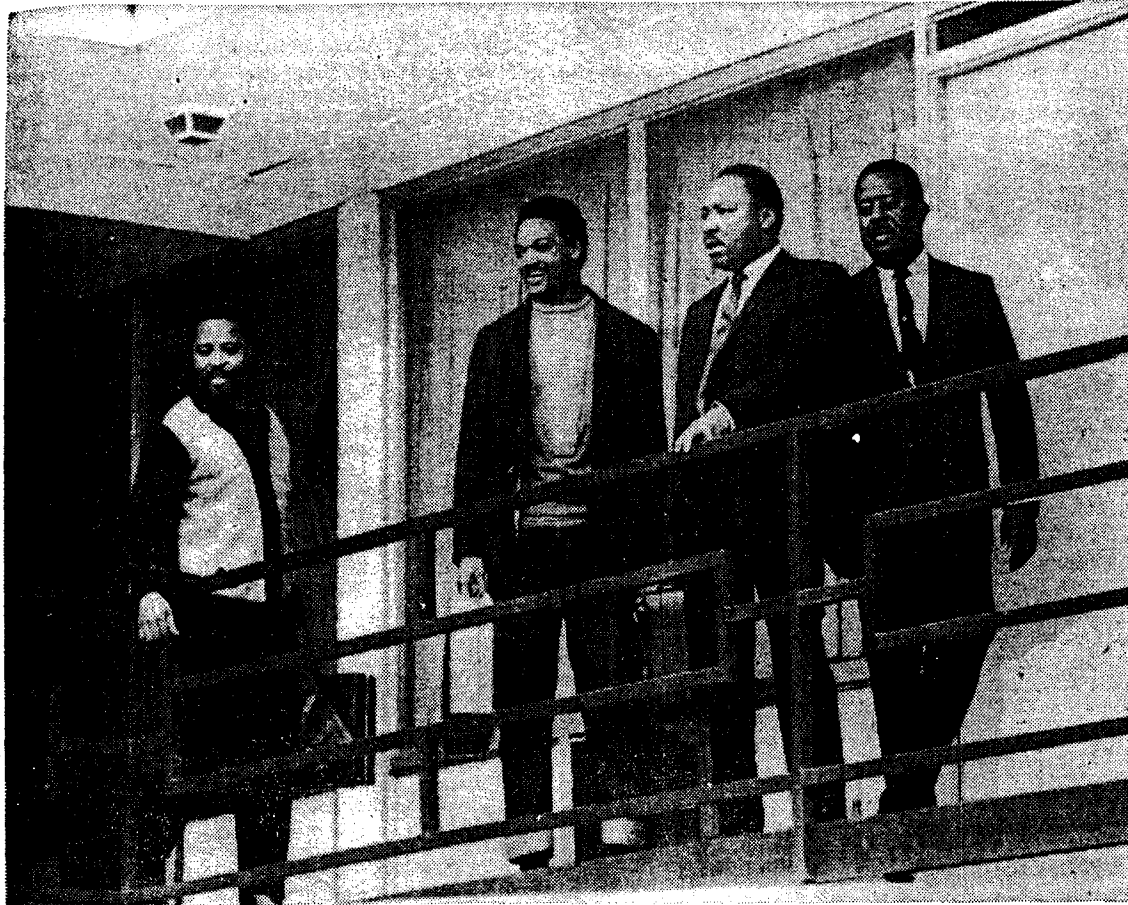
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The reason, of course, is the outcry raised by certain elements whenever a killer must be violently stopped. When the police officer dies, only his widow and fellow officers appear concerned. No more than a sympathetic editorial will reach the mayor or police commissioner.

Again, to the matter of self-defense, remember that your attacker

VOTE 'NO,' Page A4



Dr. King on balcony of motel the day before he was shot.(AP)

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After the murder, Lane says, the same Atlanta intelligence squad was assigned by Hoover to head the investigation. "My superiors, both in the Atlanta bureau and Washington," Murtagh told PNS, "washed out leads suggesting a right-wing conspiracy."

In an interview, Redditt pointed to another area he thought should be investigated. He says he learned after the assassination that the Memphis police had heavily infiltrated a black militant organization called the Invaders that was directly responsible for King's return to Memphis. Newsday's Les Payne has reported that police and FBI informants may have played a part in the violence.

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Newsday has reported that, according to a former leader of the Invaders, a Memphis policeman who had infiltrated the group "was one of the most provocative members of the Invaders," very active in planning confrontations.

That undercover agent, according to both Newsday and Redditt, was one of the four Invaders in the informal security force for King, created by an agreement between King's staff and the Invaders on his return trip to Memphis.

"He left the police department shortly after that," Redditt said, "and the word was that he went to Washington, D.C. Then a couple of years after the King slaying I ran face to face with him in downtown Memphis. He was wearing a disguise."

Redditt says he stopped him. At first, the man pretended he was some-

how he was killed. Just a day after pleading guilty, the alleged assassin James Earl Ray tried to reverse his plea to not guilty, arguing that he had been tricked into pleading guilty by his lawyer to escape the death penalty.

In 1975, Ray told Pacific News Service, "I was set up and sucked in." He charged that his orders to drive to Memphis—because they came three days before King publicly announced he would return there—"could only have come from either someone in King's own camp or some high Justice Department official having access to information gained from wiretaps on King's telephones in Atlanta."

Testimony in Federal court in a hearing on Ray's motion for a new trial also raised questions about the official version of events. Ballistics expert Dr. Herbert Lynn MacDonnell, professor of criminology at Elmira College in New York, testified that Ray's rifle could not have been used to fire the fatal shot.

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The Invaders had organized the disruption of a massive Memphis march led by King a week earlier, launching a riot that killed one, injured scores and led to 238 arrests. After the violence, apparently intended by the militant group to discredit King, the non-violent leader vowed to return to prove he could still lead a peaceful demonstration.

"Dr. King would never have re-

turned to Memphis if the violence had not happened," according to the Rev. Jesse Jackson, a key King aide. "We never intended to get bogged down in Memphis."

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Redditt says he stopped him. At first, the man pretended he was someone else, but finally acknowledged he was the man Redditt thought he was.

"He acted very mysterious, saying that he was now with the Central Intelligence Agency, and begged me not to blow his cover," according to Redditt.

The congressional decision to probe the King murder follows years of efforts to puncture the official version of

how he was killed. Just a day after pleading guilty, the alleged assassin James Earl Ray tried to reverse his plea to not guilty, arguing that he had been tricked into pleading guilty by his lawyer to escape the death penalty.

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And Ted Ghormley, who was deputy sheriff of the county when King was killed, gave testimony indicating that the key piece of evidence against Ray—a bundle of his belongings the state said was left by Ray at the rooming house as he fled the scene—was actually placed where it was found before the assassination.

The State of Tennessee has in fact never produced an eyewitness linking Ray with the rooming house from which they contend the shot was fired, according to his former lawyers.

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The other side of the Redwood controversy

It is time to inject some logic and
balance in to the continuing debate
concerning protection for Redwood
National Park. In our view sound tim-
ber management practices are fully
compatible with park protection and
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Congress established Redwood Na-
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size and configuration of the park
represented, at best, a political com-
promise. In addressing the issue of
park creation, Congress had before it
numerous proposals ranging from an
outright rejection of the park concept
to a request that there be established a
park of more than 100,000 acres.

As finally fixed, the Park consisted
of 58,000 acres of which 28,000 acres
were acquired from private landown-
ers; 11,000 acres of this from Arcata
Redwood, one of the three firms
involved.

For the most part, the park configu-
ration has not caused any controversy
or problem. There is, however, a small
finger-like corridor — only 880 yards
in width and containing less than 2000
acres — which extends from the main
body of the park upstream along the
channel of Redwood Creek. This eight-
mile-long corridor, known as the
"worm," was designed to include with-
in the park a grove containing some of
the world's tallest trees.

In establishing the shape of the
park, Congress sought to achieve bal-
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tion groups, who had argued for a larger
park, became immediately apparent.
These groups continued to press with
every means available for park expan-
sion.

Having badly underestimated the
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clination to expend more funds for
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Several weeks ago the Focus sec-
tion carried an article by Robert and
Leona Rienow entitled "The Redwood
— going, going ...". The article
charged that timber operations on pri-
vate lands adjacent to Redwood Na-
tional Park in California were damag-
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very existence of the redwoods.

The three forest products compa-
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timber companies — Arcata Redwood,
Louisiana-Pacific Corp. and Simpson
Timber Co. — operating on private
land adjacent to the "worm" are damag-
ing the resources of the park. They
argue that Congress must acquire
more lands (74,000 acres under one
current proposal) or prohibit, nearby
timber harvesting (without compensa-
tion to the owners) in order to protect
the "worm" from "threatened
damage."

The "damage" that park protection-
ists allege is soil erosion and sediment
in the Redwood Creek drainage. They
claim this is caused by current timber
harvesting operations.

The truth is that the significant
source of sediment in Redwood Creek
is located upstream from present tim-
ber harvesting operations, that this is
primarily due to streamside slides and
mass movement, and that natural
causes — not timber harvesting or
man's activities — are the prime cause
of sediment.

The truth is that Redwood National
Park is already well protected:

- All timber operations in Califor-
nia must be conducted in strict confor-
mance with the Forest Practice Act,
which is recognized by protectionists
and the industry alike as the most
stringent timber practices legislation
found anywhere in the United States.

- Timber operations must also
comply with a number of other state
environmental control laws, such as
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It is time to inject some logic and balance in to the continuing debate concerning protection for Redwood National Park. In our view sound timber management practices are fully compatible with park protection and the world's largest trees are not being threatened by today's harvesting practices.

Congress established Redwood National Park in October 1968. The final size and configuration of the park represented, at best, a political compromise. In addressing the issue of park creation, Congress had before it numerous proposals ranging from an outright rejection of the park concept to a request that there be established a park of more than 100,000 acres.

As finally fixed, the Park consisted of 58,000 acres of which 28,000 acres were acquired from private landowners; 11,000 acres of this from Arcata Redwood, one of the three firms involved.

For the most part, the park configuration has not caused any controversy or problem. There is, however, a small finger-like corridor — only 880 yards in width and containing less than 2000 acres — which extends from the main body of the park upstream along the channel of Redwood Creek. This eight-mile-long corridor, known as the "worm," was designed to include within the park a grove containing some of the world's tallest trees.

In establishing the shape of the park, Congress sought to achieve balance between the demands for the park and competing realities such as acquisition costs and the negative impact on employment and the local economy.

The balance that was finally struck recognized that timber operations would be continued in the area near the park. As is true with most compromises, the desires of all concerned parties were not totally satisfied. Dissatisfaction on the part of conservation groups, who had argued for a larger park, became immediately apparent. These groups continued to press with every means available for park expansion.

Having badly underestimated the costs of the original land acquisition, Congress has shown absolutely no inclination to expend more funds for more park lands. Acquisition costs to date exceed \$160,000,000 while the original appropriation provided for \$92,000,000. This park, by itself, has already cost more than all of the other parks in the National Park System combined.

Defeated in their efforts to have Congress acquire additional lands, these groups, now calling themselves park protectionists, have sought to force park expansion by creating a controversy. They charge that three

Several weeks ago the Focus section carried an article by Robert and Leona Rienow entitled "The Redwood — going, going ...". The article charged that timber operations on private lands adjacent to Redwood National Park in California were damaging the park itself and threatening the very existence of the redwoods.

The three forest products companies involved take serious objection to that view and present the other side of the controversy in the following article.

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The "damage" that park protectionists allege is soil erosion and sediment in the Redwood Creek drainage. They claim this is caused by current timber harvesting operations.

The truth is that the significant source of sediment in Redwood Creek is located upstream from present timber harvesting operations, that this is primarily due to streamside slides and mass movement, and that natural causes — not timber harvesting or man's activities — are the prime cause of sediment.

The truth is that Redwood National Park is already well protected:

- All timber operations in California must be conducted in strict conformance with the Forest Practice Act, which is recognized by protectionists and the industry alike as the most stringent timber practices legislation found anywhere in the United States.

- Timber operations must also comply with a number of other state environmental control laws, such as those pertaining to water quality, fish and game. Multi-disciplinary government teams review each harvesting plan before, during and after a logging operation.

- Because of their proximity to the park, timber operations in the Redwood Creek watershed are also scrutinized by the National Park Service and other federal agencies. The timber companies have been working on a cooperative basis with these agencies over the past several years to ensure that every feasible measure is taken to protect the park.

- In March, 1976, the three timber companies announced the voluntary