

HOW IRONIC THAT THE HOUSE
FROM STOLEN DATA; H.W. TO P

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by Wayne Chastain, Jr.

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 protecting King, was removed from his post across the street from the motel where King was shot just two hours before the slaying. Redditt said 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 Memphis Police Department Frank Holloman -- a former FBI agent of 25 years who had worked with Director J. Edgar Hoover -- told Redditt 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

House Murder Probe

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

*The only two black firemen assigned to the fire station across from King's hotel -- Redditt's command post -- were also "stripped away."

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 listen." Newsum says he has never been questioned by a law enforcement agency about his removal either.

*Arthur Murtagh, a former FBI agent in Atlanta, has stated that agents in the Atlanta office "literally jumped for joy" when they learned King had been assassinated. He said the FBI intelligence squad in Atlanta -- King's home town -- was assigned "to somehow or other get King, to bring him down, break him or destroy him."

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 said, "washed out

INVESTIGATION CAME ABOUT
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Berkeley Barb, October 15 - 21, 1976

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leads suggesting a right-wing conspiracy."

"Had a more thorough investigation been conducted by the FBI, I believe links would have been established between the King assassination and the Kennedy murders -- both those of JFK and RFK," he added.

In an interview with Pacific News Service, 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.

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

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 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.

In 1975, Ray said, "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 MacDonell, professor of criminology at Elmira College in New York, testified that Ray's rifle could not have been used to fire the fatal shot.

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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Who killed Dr. King?

Americans were shocked last winter when evidence surfaced that the FBI under J. Edgar Hoover persistently harassed Martin Luther King, even to the extent of sending him an unsigned letter urging him to kill himself because "your end is approaching . . . you are finished." The suspicion immediately arose that the FBI might have been less than zealous in investigating King's murder—and even that FBI officials might have had a hand in the assassination.

Writing in Washington's *Newsworks*, investigator Mark Lane has now charged that a one-time high-level FBI agent was instrumental in removing potential black witnesses from the scene of the murder before the shooting.

The director of Memphis' Police and Fire Departments was then Frank C. Holloman, former FBI agent in charge of the office in Atlanta, where King lived, and for eight years the FBI inspector in charge of Hoover's personal office in Washington. Despite the volatile situation in Memphis, Holloman reduced King's police stationary security from ten men (on a previous visit) to two, based at a firehouse near King's motel. Then, hours before the murder, he summoned from the firehouse Detective Ed Redditt, a black officer who headed King's stationary security at the request of city civil rights leaders. Holloman announced to an incredulous Redditt that a Secret Service man had flown to Memphis to relay reports of a conspiracy to murder Redditt, and ordered him home in the company of other officers. Upon arriving, Redditt heard the bulletin: the man he was assigned to protect had been shot. Two days later, Redditt was allowed to return to work. He told Lane: "What about the contract on my life? . . . I never heard another word about that during the last eight years."

The night before the murder, the only two black firemen at the firehouse had been transferred inexplicably to another post, leaving the station understaffed, *Newsworks* said.

Holloman told Lane he was innocent of any wrongdoing. But these and other better known but similarly bizarre events—plus James Earl Ray's insistent post-trial claims that he did not kill King—are likely to lead to a reopening of the investigation into the murder. After all, it was the FBI that conducted the original investigation. Members of Congress' Black Caucus are privately pressing for a new investigation while publicly claiming they're still making up their minds. Why the low-key stance? Members are said to fear the power of the FBI to block the inquiry unless it is launched properly,

TED ROZUMALSKI/BLACK STAR



King: investigate the investigators

and to fear that, if the case is publicized, potential witnesses might start to disappear—forever.

Seventies

No smoke

The drought in Europe may be getting more press attention, but in this country, at least, the drying up of marijuana supplies is creating greater anxiety.

"Promises! Promises! All I get are promises," moans Stuart, a 30-year-old Boston dealer who only last May was moving more than 150 pounds a week. "I talk to people and they claim to have grass, but when I try to buy more than an ounce it's all gone." Grass supplies usually sputter in July and August, but this summer has been the worst in memory.

In Washington Keith Stroup, director of NORML, a group that lobbies for the legalization of pot, laments that he must now pay \$50 an ounce for the ordinary Mexican grass that used to cost \$25. The best Colombian and Asian varieties now

bring as much as \$100 an ounce.

The dope dearth is confirmed by the other side of the law. Sergeant Detective George Peters of the Boston Police Department narcotics unit says there haven't been any marijuana arrests in his city for more than two months. "We haven't been receiving any information," he says, "so we're assuming there's nothing around."

Don't need a weatherman

Elliott Bayly's radio station may have a limited audience, but its power source is nonetheless a unique bridge between alternate energy and modern technology.

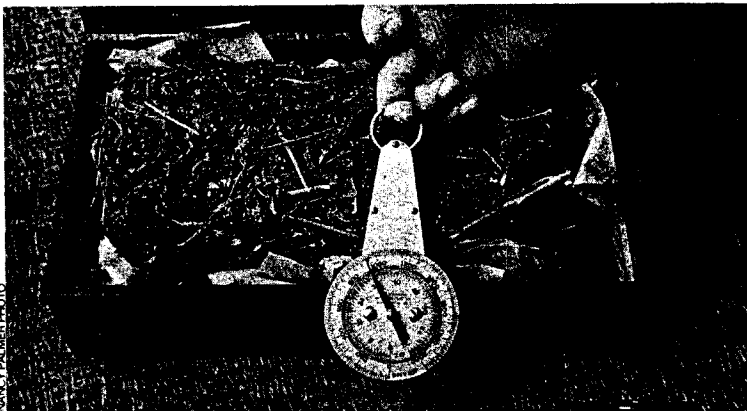
KFMU in Oak Creek, Colorado, uses the slogan "Sound of the Wind" for good reason. The FM station is powered by an aging 2,700-watt Jacobs windcharger. Typical of the type used extensively on early American farms, the windcharger provides the sole power to run the transmitter and microwave antenna for the station.

The unique setup is made possible by strong mountain winds and the fact that KFMU's listening area is so concentrated. When the wind dies or mechanical foul-ups occur, the station has periodically gone off the air, Bayly says. But generally the 500 residents of the local mountain valley get FM stereo music in all styles, from 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. each day.

The 36-year-old Bayly, a former Northwestern University electrical engineering teacher, takes it all in diffident stride. "I figured that the wind was there," he says, "and we might as well use it."

Daddy longlegs

What's this? A crafty alien with a mesmerizing voice plans to lure the nation's teenagers into wanton sexual activities—without the protection of birth control? Galloping guacamole! He's going to take the babies to toil as



Weighing weed: the dry season