The Sprague probes

Bulletin 11/30/76

This is in reply to the statement of Richard A. Sprague, chief counsel of the House Select Committee on Assassinations, that it was "most unusual that authorities did not get a full confession from James Earl Ray in return for accepting his guilty plea in the slaying of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr."(Bulletin Nov. 23).

To most people this was very unusual. But those who have been investigating the assassination of Dr. King since 1968, like Dick Gregory and myself working through the Coalition Investigation Committee, can understand the reason.

In 1968 when Ray was arrested in England and hired a lawyer back in the United States, this lawyer decided that Ray would not reach the witness stand or make a complete statement or a confession on the assassination of Dr. King.

Arthur Hanes, Ray's lawyer, and Bradford Huie, a book writer, had made a deal that the book, "He Slew The Dreamer," would be released on March 15, 1969, five days after Ray's guilty plea. This was to preserve the freshness of the book.

Secondly, Charles Stephens was the only witness the state had who identified Ray and Strephens's liquor bill was paid by a law enforcement officer. All of Stephens's statements were refuted by his wife and by a cab driver, James McGraw.

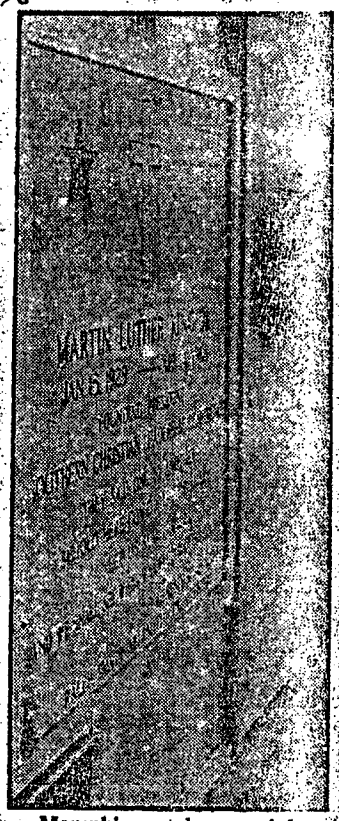
Thirdly, James Lesar, now Ray's lawyer, says he has been unable to acquire files of the investigation made by the F.B.I. Some papers were blotted out and unreadable or were not of the complete investigation.

Last but not least, at the time Dr. King was assassinated the F.B.I. agents who were assigned to protect him were the ones assigned to discredit him; these same F.B.I. agents were then assigned to investigate Dr. King's death.

The City of Memphis wanted quickly to charge anyone with Dr. King's death in order to keep black folks from burning Memphis to the ground. Because of these findings, they could not afford to let Ray give a full confession.

Mercel Randolph
Voorhees Township, N.J.

The new investigation of the assassination of President Kennedy has subpenaed certain records of the Dallas Police Department as one of its first steps in gathering information that will be necessary to answer all the questions the Warren Commission should have answered but didn't.



Memphis motel memorial
... where Dr. King was shot

It now appears that the limited investigation by Senator Richard Schweiker (R-Pa) paved the way for this all-out inquiry. Senator Schweiker uncovered important facts about the Warren Commission's methods of research, which he asserts were defective; he uncovered information about how the F.B.I. and the C.I.A. withheld important evidence. But I think that his most important contribution was to show that responsible and basic dissent from the 'lone-assassin-no-conspiracy conclusion was possible — and indeed necessary.

Adam Schneider
Philadelphia

OVER

HR*Mercel Randolph's letter:

He phoned Jim excitedly from Phila. during the Ray evidentiary hearing 10/74, representing that he had the most sensational evidence to give. He then flew down and hung around for two days, wasting much of our time and taxing our capabilities for diplomacy. He knows nothing. It was at least sick to represent that he had anything to say. If he is not sick his purposes included getting the cheapest kind of publicity for himself. HW 12/21/76