

on June 8, 1968. the case, even if successful col- trust and orga- adite Ray from the proceedings. ment to handle ise there was an ederal crime (18 and Missouri—

e Department of

to power. While ttorney General pte actively in i the FBI's lone on.

the Civil Rights onnection with a d his office was eonard that Ray harge was never

responsibility as

orney General in epartment. Even edney administra- th.

ral in 1965 and p position in the ation in January ty.

man, to calls Mr.

k.

orn?

I give before this ing but the truth.

EMER ATTORNEY ES

d.

eson.

he record, please?

ark.

brief rundown on when you left the

Mr. CLARK. Well, I finished law school at the University of Chicago, December 1950; returned to Texas, took the bar and began practicing in 1951; remained in general practice in Texas until 1961 when I joined the Kennedy administration as Assistant Attorney General. I remained Assistant Attorney General until February of 1965 when I became Deputy Attorney General. I remained Deputy Attorney General until September, roughly, of 1966. I became Acting Attorney General. I was nominated to be Attorney General in February of 1967.

Mr. BEESON. From that time until the change of administrations in January of 1969 you were Attorney General of the United States, right? As Deputy Attorney General from February of 1965 until September of 1966, who was the Attorney General at that time?

Mr. CLARK. Nicholas Katzenbach.

Mr. BEESON. Mr. Clark, I would like to direct your attention to the time of the assassination of Dr. King in April of 1968. I wonder if you would give the committee a brief description of your initial official reaction as Attorney General of the United States on hearing the news of Dr. King's assassination in Memphis?

Mr. CLARK. Well, it is hard to have an official reaction to such a tragedy. My recollection is that we were having a staff meeting in my office discussing the usual miscellany. A phone call came in which is fairly rare. You know, when I have all these people in there they don't interrupt these meetings all the time.

I was told that Dr. King had been shot and seriously wounded. I think that call was from Jim Lowry who was a young man working in the Community Relations Service.

We stayed in the office for what seemed an awfully long time and received numerous calls, including a number of calls from the hospital in Memphis, if not directly or indirectly they were being communicated to us contemporaneously and we finally were told that Dr. King had died.

Mr. BEESON. What action, if any, did you take to investigate the matter, Mr. Clark?

Mr. CLARK. I authorized an immediate Federal investigation under the then Section 241, Title XVIII, which was we believed a rather inadequate statutory provision. We had congressional recommendations to enlarge it at the time.

We sent a formal letter that evening, I believe, to the Director of the FBI to make an exhaustive investigation and during the course of the evening which I spent in my office at the Department I decided to go to Memphis personally. I flew down early the next morning.

Mr. BEESON. You mentioned that the statutory provision, 18 U.S.C. 241, you described it as somewhat inadequate. Do you recall any significant concern on your part or the FBI's part that there was not a clear statutory jurisdictional basis for Federal investigation?

Mr. CLARK. We had an obligation to proceed by law. I think throughout the investigation the lawyers particularly were concerned about the factual adequacy of our investigation under the laws that existed; 241 required evidence of conspiracy among other things, but it seemed so inherently a civil rights matter in a

HSCA VII