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Authorities Doubt Rap Brown Report

The FBI, an attorney for missing black militant H. Rap Brown and a Maryland prosecutor said yesterday that they found no substance to published reports that the 28-year-old fugitive wants to surrender and stand trial on arson and riot charges.

A Baltimore newspaper said in its Saturday editions that the Federal Bureau of Investigation was investigating a report carried in Match, a small-circulation, black-owned newspaper in Washington, that quoted Brown as saying he would like to come out of hiding and begin raising money for his defense.

Earlier in the week, the publisher of Match, Eugene N. Garner, had visited newsrooms of major Washington dailies distributing copies of his alleged conversation with the man he identified as

Brown. None of the Washington dailies carried the story, which could not be corroborated.

An FBI spokesman denied yesterday that the federal agency had informed the Baltimore paper that it was investigating the Match story. "There never was—nor will there be—any comment about any investigation," the spokesman said.

A Maryland state police official termed the reports "ridiculous."

Brown, who is charged with arson, rioting and inciting to riot in connection with civil disorders in Cambridge, Md., in July, 1967, has not been seen publicly since March of last year and is on the FBI's "Ten Most Wanted" List.

The FBI has maintained that the black power advocate was last reported to have fled

the county after failing to appear for his trial in Howard County, Md.

According to the story in Match, Brown was riding in a car in front of the one that was demolished by a bomb blast last March 9 near Bel Air, Md., killing Ralph Featherstone, 30, of Washington and Henry Payne, 26, of Covington, Ky. Both men were longtime associates of Brown.

When the car exploded, the Match story said, Brown abandoned the vehicle he was riding in and later caught a taxicab out of town.

Garner said he printed the story, and a purported transcript of his conversation with Brown, after a man named "Smith" arranged the conversation.

Garner said Brown told him that he would come out of hiding if a meeting could be ar-

ranged with three black congressmen, a lawyer and newsmen.

Garner also said that he had asked Assistant U.S. Attorney Harold J. Sullivan to handle the arrangements. Sullivan refused to confirm or deny that statement.

According to Garner, he was put in touch with Brown just after his paper reprinted an article from a Howard County weekly in which Howard County State's Attorney Richard J. Kinlein stated that the arson charge against Brown had been "fabricated" to get the FBI involved in the case.

Kinlein's comments were printed in many large-circulation newspapers, none of which claims to have been contacted by Brown.

William Kunstler, Brown's attorney, said in a telephone interview yesterday that he doubts the Match report that his client wants to surrender. "My own feeling is that those reports are untrue," Kunstler said.

Kinlein, the Howard County prosecutor, said he also doubted the Match story.