

KIN OF KLAN VICTIM SEEK MORE ANSWERS

Disclosures About F.B.I. Informer
Fail to Satisfy Family of
Woman Slain in Alabama

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DETROIT, July 11 — A member of the family of Viola Liuzzo, a Detroit-area woman slain in March 1965 while engaging in civil rights activities in Alabama, said here today that, despite recent newspaper and television disclosures on the involvement of a Government-paid informer in the shooting incident, many questions still remain.

And getting answers may be no easier for the woman's husband, Anthony, and her five surviving children now than before.

Mrs. Liuzzo was slain on March 25, 1965. The 31-year-old white woman was driving a black civil rights demonstrator from Selma to Montgomery, Ala., and was killed by shots fired from a passing car in which there were four white men. All four were members of the Ku Klux Klan in Alabama, and one was also an informer for the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

ABC-TV presented a segment on the Liuzzo case on a news program last night. The dead woman's son, Anthony Liuzzo Jr., 23 years old, spoke in a brief telephone interview of the program, which raised the possibility that the F.B.I. informer might have fired the fatal shot. "It's right on line," he said, adding, "We've still got about 40 questions though about the whole thing and what the role of the Government was." The program, he said, presented "about 30 percent to 40 percent of what we have found."

The program also pointed out that polygraph tests for two people who said Mr. Rowe's role in the killing was greater than he had admitted indicated they were not lying, while Mr. Rowe's polygraph test indicated he was holding something back.

\$2 Million in Damages Asked

The Liuzzos filed a \$2 million claim for damages against the Federal Bureau of Investigation last October but have not had any response from the agency.

An information officer for the F.B.I. said in Washington today that the agency's legal staff had indicated there would be no response until a formal suit was filed against the agency. Lawyers for the American Civil Liberties Union, which represents the Liuzzo family, said that such an action was being contemplated.

The involvement of a Government informer in the death of Mrs. Liuzzo, then a student at Wayne State University here, came to light in December 1975 during hearings by the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities.

At those hearings, Gary Thomas Rowe Jr., one of the four persons in the car from which the fatal shots were fired, testified that he was a Ku Klux Klan member then but that he was also working as an informer for the F.B.I.

In their civil claim against the F.B.I., the Liuzzo family seeks damages on grounds that an employee of the bureau, namely Mr. Rowe, negligently and/or wrongfully failed to act to prevent the murder of Mrs. Liuzzo or may have participated in the act himself.

10-Year Sentences for Three

On the basis of Mr. Rowe's testimony in a Federal case against the other three persons in the car, the three Klan members were convicted on charges of violating Mrs. Liuzzo's civil rights. They were sentenced to 10 years in prison.

Mr. Rowe's testimony and a book he subsequently wrote discussing his F.B.I. work, "My Undercover Years With the Ku Klux Klan," were also the basis for legal action against the F.B.I. by another Michigan family, Walter and Frances Bergman of Grand Rapids. The Bergmans are seeking \$1 million in damages for injuries Mr. Bergman received May 14, 1961, in Anniston, Ala., when the bus on which he and a group of "Freedom Riders" were traveling was attacked by a band of angry whites.