

Foreman Holds Firm That Ray Killed King

By JOHN BENNETT

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WASHINGTON — Percy Foreman, once the defense lawyer for convicted assassin James Earl Ray, said here Sunday he has never doubted Ray killed Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. or that he did it alone.

Foreman, scheduled to be the first witness before the House Assassinations Committee this morning, also said Ray's present lawyer, Mark Lane of Memphis, is nothing more than a "sensation monger" misleading the public in his claim that the FBI and Memphis police plotted King's assassination.

The 78-year-old Foreman met with committee investigators briefly Sunday but later said he has no idea what he will be asked today.

"I've never had any doubt he (Ray) killed Martin Luther King," Foreman said in an interview Sunday. "Furthermore, I've never felt anyone was acting with him."

He said the only person close to Ray was Jerry Ray, the convicted assassin's brother.

"I think Jerry helped him escape (from the Missouri state prison in 1967)," Foreman said. "Ray, when at large, was a loner. He didn't trust anybody."

Foreman was Ray's lawyer when he pleaded guilty to killing King in Memphis. Ray renounced Foreman after Ray was sentenced to 99 years in prison.

Foreman, a Houston lawyer, said he has

no use for Lane, who recently moved to Memphis.

"I don't know why they (members of Congress) would get him before a committee of Congress for any consideration at all," he said of Lane. "Every time I pick up a paper I figure he's going to try to prove someone else killed Lincoln besides John Wilkes Booth.

"I know that he's a sensation monger, a headline monger, and I don't consider him a lawyer at all," Foreman said.

Lane devotes nearly all his time to the defense of Ray and theories that King was the victim of a conspiracy by law officers.

Said Foreman, "I wouldn't read one paragraph of whatever Mark Lane wrote and I can't conceive of why anybody else would.

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either. If he could get his name in the paper he would probably claim they released Ray from Brushy Mountain prison to shoot Larry Flynt."

Flynt, the publisher of Hustler magazine, was shot and critically wounded this year by unknown assailants. Ray also made a dramatic escape from Brushy Mountain prison this year.

Lane claimed in a weekend interview that the 1968 assassination of King was planned and carried out by undercover and off-duty FBI agents reporting to the late FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover.

He said he has learned that Rep. Walter Fauntroy, chairman of the assassinations subcommittee, privately told Andrew Young, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, and two of Young's aides, Brady Tyson and Stoney Cook, of the alleged plot.

"Walter Fauntroy... has stated that they have uncovered evidence to prove that a group of undercover and off-duty FBI agents, reporting directly to J. Edgar Hoover, planned and carried out the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King," Lane said in a telephone interview. The Associated Press reported. "He has indicated he is afraid to release this information."

"He's also made that statement and additional collaborating statements to the Rev. Joseph Lowery, who is the president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference."

Lane said he did not know how many people were involved in the alleged plot or whether anyone of government rank higher than Hoover was involved.

"He'll get a chance to make that denial under oath, but I don't think he will," Lane said.

"The information that I have comes from several sources. I have an affidavit from the Rev. James Lawson. He has interviewed Rev. Lowery and he has also talked to Stoney Cook and Brady Tyson."

Lawson, a former Memphis minister, asked King to visit the city in 1968 to help striking sanitation workers. On Oct. 13, Lawson officiated at Ray's prison wedding.

The California attorney said he also had a 44-page affidavit signed by Daniel Ellsberg "after an extensive interview with Lawson."

"I've had it for several weeks," Lane said. "In addition to this we have a great deal of collaborating information, not relying solely upon the statements made by Fauntroy, but evidence we have uncovered ourselves..."

Lane said Ellsberg was briefing the U.S. delegation to the UN about the problems of the neutron bomb and the proliferation of nuclear weapons when King's name came up during a conversation with Tyson.

The House Assassinations Committee resumed hearings last week into King's murder after a week of testimony last August. The hearings are scheduled to run until Dec. 1.

Michael Eberhardt, assistant chief investigating counsel for the committee, resigned Friday following a committee decision not to recall Ray to testify this month.

Eberhardt, who is as knowledgeable as anyone on the committee about conspiracy allegations, said he could not comment on reasons for his resignation because of a cooperative agreement he signed with the committee.

The committee last week said a return of Ray would not justify the expense.

Rep. Harold Ford of Memphis, a member of the investigating committee, was not present Thursday or Friday when former Memphis police officials were called to testify. Ford said Sunday it was because he was tired from the recent election campaign. Ford easily won re-election.

Ford, who is expected to attend today's hearing, said he has no reaction at all to Lane's charges that Memphis police and the FBI conspired to kill King.

Ford also said he won't know enough until today to comment on the committee decision not to recall Ray as a witness.

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