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While David J. Garrow is correct in criticizing Andrew Young's statement that "there was a degree of involvement by some segment of the U.S. government" in the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. for its "lack of any factual foundation," Garrow could not be any more incorrect than in saying that the King assassination was "heavily investigated."

Garrow is also incorrect in saying at the same point that the "historical record concerning King's death (sic)" is "widely available."

I speak of personal knowledge, as ~~was~~ James Earl Ray's investigator for his successful habeas corpus petition and the unsuccessful two weeks of evidentiary hearing in his effort to get the trial ^{he has} never had and as the one-and the only one-

who filed ^{suit} under FOIA to make the FBI's records available. *It lasted a decade and yielded about 80,000 previously secret pages (CF 75-1996.5)*
There is from the official records no question about it: the FBI never investigated the King assassination. All those records quite openly reflect the FBI's assumption of Ray's guilt and its avoidance of any other real investigation.

The fact is that the FBI's ^{own} "evidence" is in some ways exculpatory of Ray.

On his part, for all his writing about it, when Garrow was here and saw the vast amount of official information I obtained about our ^{magic} assassinations ~~from~~ ^{a dozen or so} by FOIA suits against the government he took no time to look at any of the many file cabinets of the FBI's "MURKIN" and related records that, as with the greater volume of JFK assassination records, I make freely available to all writing in those fields. (He was interested when I showed him how from those records he could get what had not been sequestered by court order of the FBI's wiretapping of King and his closer friends and he made good use of that information in "Bearing The Cross".)

As have most ^{what} writing about the King assassination and relates to it, Garrow took the safe course and assumed Ray's guilt. The record, which is not at all or in any way "widely available" proves the opposite.

I conducted the investigation for those two weeks of evidentiary hearing in Memphis. Paul Valentine covered that for the Post. I located and produced most of the witnesses Ray's counsel used. I have the transcripts of those two weeks of evidentiary hearing at which some of the claimed official evidence was examined and cross-examined for the first ^{in open court,} and only time. Garrow did not take a look at them. Nor did Young or anyone else at ~~the~~ SCIC or for the SCIC.

What we did with that official "evidence" led the judge to hold that guilt or innocence were immaterial to what was before him. ^{Robert Mac Rae,} He used those words, literally. In contradiction to the ^{overwhelming} evidence he denied Ray his trial on the false claim that Ray had had the "effective assistance of counsel" and that although the pressure applied to Ray to get him to agree to a guilty plea was entirely unrefuted, ⁴ the judge held that Ray made his ^{coerced} ~~reluctant~~ plea "knowingly and voluntarily." ^{Judge Preston Battle}

The ~~judge~~ had already ruled that Ray could not change lawyers. So, as soon as Ray was out of Memphis he filed notice with that judge, ^{convinced} of his appeal. Under Tennessee law that was granted automatically for the first 30 days. The judge was on vacation. The day he returned, with Ray's letters in front of him and when he was ~~was~~ writing out, in longhand, what appears to have been the granting of Ray's motion, the judge died of a heart attack.

It is unfortunate that people from the Young extreme to Garrow's write about the King assassination with comforting ignorance of the official fact.

Harold Weisberg

Please excuse my typing. I'm past 83 and in precarious health that ^{limits} ~~limits~~ what I can do.

To Be Young, Gifted And Black

AN EASY BURDEN
**The Civil Rights Movement and
The Transformation of America**

By Andrew Young
HarperCollins. 550 pp. \$27.50

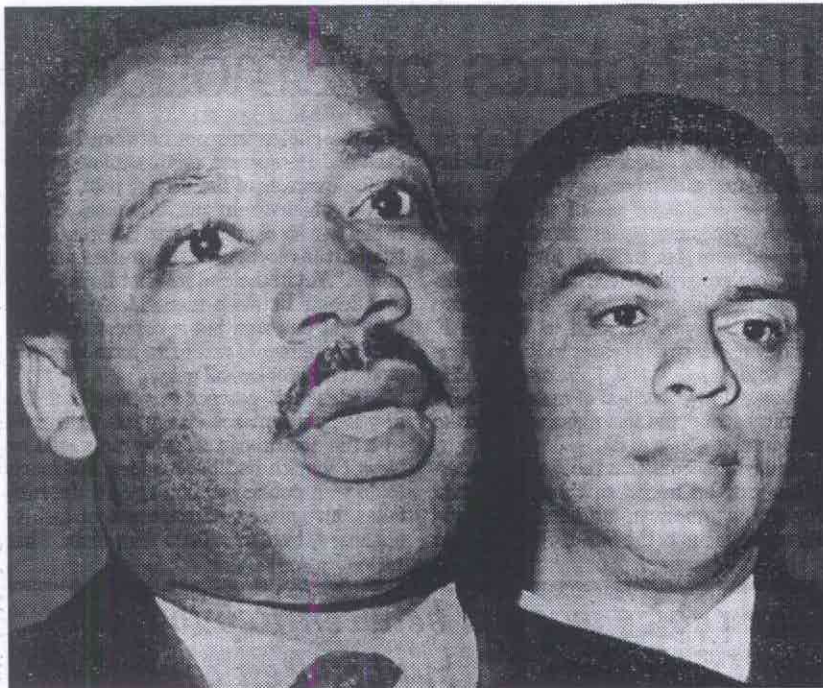
By David J. Garrow

ANDREW YOUNG was one of Martin Luther King Jr.'s closest colleagues between 1961 and 1968. Initially a junior aide responsible for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's citizenship education program, by 1963 Young had become King's de facto chief of staff and one of the three or four people who knew King best. Expected by King to play the role of house conservative in an organization of unpredictable free spirits, Young left the SCLC two years after King's death and in 1972 won election to an Atlanta-area seat in the U.S. Congress.

This autobiographical memoir ends with that 1972 victory and does not address Young's subsequent public service as U.N. ambassador and mayor of Atlanta, but *An Easy Burden* offers a poignant personal account of the challenges and obstacles that King and Young confronted during the peak years of the civil rights struggle.

Perhaps the most winsome parts of the book are the pre-King chapters where Young recounts his New Orleans upbringing and almost happenstance decision to become a Congregational minister. A New York job with the National Council of

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Martin Luther King Jr. with Andrew Young (right)

Churches led to Young's initial affiliation with the SCLC, but his citizenship education responsibilities were quickly supplanted by King's pressing need for a dependably calm deputy who could keep the organization afloat during difficult and dangerous protest campaigns in cities like Birmingham and Selma, Ala.

Young's portrait of King is straightforward and honest. King "wasn't the easiest person to get to know intimately," and never sought either the leadership responsibilities or the celebrity that came his way. King did not like riding herd on wild yet productive SCLC organizers like James Bevel and Hosea Williams but fully accepted—as did those around him—how his public role undeniably guaranteed his eventual assassination.

An Easy Burden breaks little if any new ground with regard to the basic history of the movement, but it is especially valuable on the personal dynamics among those closest to King, particularly concerning the complex relationship be-

tween King and his dearest friend, the late Ralph D. Abernathy. Young never makes reference to Abernathy's own 1989 memoir, *And the Walls Came Tumbling Down*, but he frankly recounts how "resentful" and "jealous" Abernathy became over King's media coverage and honors. When Abernathy's anger peaked over King's Nobel Peace Prize, which also stimulated a further intensification of FBI animus toward King, "Ralph's estrangement was much more worrisome to Martin than anything he thought J. Edgar Hoover might do."

Young avows that "Martin's private sexual behavior was not relevant to the movement" and acknowledges "the raucous laughter and raunchy humor present in our meetings," but his comments on the FBI's campaign against King are less than comprehensive. He never even mentions the FBI's principal informant within the SCLC, comptroller James A. Harrison.

An Easy Burden features relatively little personal score-settling (one former col-

league was "authoritarian" while another was "not too dependable"), and Young does not hesitate to dispense credit for the SCLC's accomplishments: "The ideas and strategies came up to Martin from his staff, rather than from Martin down." *An Easy Burden* nonetheless consistently misspells the names of three of Young's friends (Fred Bennette, Robert L. Green and Stuart Eizenstat), and likewise garbles the names of the seminary King attended as well as several movement opponents, but readers interested in Young's personal story rather than historical detail will come away with a warm regard for Young's humanity and frankness. He accords his wife, Jean, now deceased, and their four children far more attention than is common in political memoirs, and he is sometimes extremely candid: Following Robert Kennedy's 1968 assassination just two months after King's, "I sank into a depression so deep it was impossible for me to go on."

YOUNG'S ONLY serious misstep comes in his seemingly careless and unconsidered comments about King's assassination. Saying he believes "there was an element of conspiracy and a degree of involvement by some segment of the U.S. government," Young then goes on to opine that President Lyndon Johnson's well-known anger over King's criticisms of the war in Vietnam "could have given some elements within his government a sense that the death of Martin Luther King would not be unacceptable to the president."

These statements lack any factual foundation in the heavily investigated and widely available historical record concerning King's death and are dismayingly irresponsible. What the FBI and other police intelligence agencies did do to King and other proponents of social change is already damningly well-known; Young's apparent willingness to provide careless fodder for conspiracy theorists (choose your own favorite federal "segment" or "elements"—FBI, CIA, ATF, etc.) with loose moorings on both ends of the ideological spectrum is both disappointing and embarrassing.

But *An Easy Burden* is otherwise a generally warm and impressive book, one that will offer readers an instructive and sometimes moving account of what life inside the movement actually was like. ■