

MARTIN LUTHER KING ASSASSINATION

King's widow meets Reno, asks for probe

WASHINGTON (AP) — The widow of Martin Luther King Jr. presented "new evidence" to Attorney General Janet Reno in an appeal for another investigation of her husband's assassination.

After yesterday's two-hour private meeting in her Justice Department conference room, Reno said: "We will carefully review the questions and information they presented, and I will be in touch with them as soon as the review is complete."

"We presented new evidence that has come to our attention about the assassination of my husband," Coretta Scott King told reporters afterward. "She listened very sympathetically."

The evidence included "new witnesses coming forth that had never been investigated," King said, but she would not elaborate.

She said she proposed a national commission with the power to subpoena evidence, to grant immunity and to prosecute "because all this evidence needs to be presented to an official body."

She was accompanied by her son Dexter; Andrew Young, former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations; and Walter Fauntroy, former District of Columbia congressional delegate. Reno brought Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder, Associate Attorney General Raymond Fisher and other aides to the meeting.

"The attorney general did not want to commit to anything specific, but we didn't expect an answer today," Dexter King said.

"The fact that we were here today speaks volumes about the fact that it was not immediately written off or discredited."

Dexter King said polls show a large majority of Americans doubt the official story that James Earl Ray, acting alone, shot his father. He said a new inquiry is necessary "so once and for all this can be put to rest."

The King family has said in recent months that Ray was a scapegoat who did not act alone.

Ray, 70 and dying of liver disease, pleaded guilty 11 months after the April 4, 1968, assassination but immediately recanted and has maintained his innocence since. He has sought a trial.



Coretta King

"Ray neither had the motive, the money nor the mobility to have done it by himself," the Rev. Jesse Jackson, who was with King when he was shot in Memphis, Tenn., said Sunday.

The FBI undertook a campaign in the 1960s, under then-Director J. Edgar Hoover, to harass and spy on King and other civil rights leaders. The campaign, not disclosed until years later, included sending letters and tapes to Mrs. King in attempts to discredit her husband.