

Panel Rejects Claim FBI Killed Dr. King

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House Assassinations Committee reported today that it had found no evidence to support a charge that a squad of off-duty FBI agents assassinated the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King

And Walter Fauntroy, the delegate in the House from the District of Columbia, and a member of the committee, denounced lawyer Mark Lane as a spiteful "consummate pitchman."

Fauntroy denied Lane's allegation that Fauntroy had said the panel had evidence that King had been murdered by an FBI assassination squad. U.N. Ambassador Andrew Young was called before the committee as a surprise witness to testify that Fauntroy had not told him of an alleged FBI assassination squad as Lane charges.

As the panel today began a four-day public inquiry on allegations against the FBI, chief counsel G. Robert Blakey said, "The committee found no evidence of direct FBI involvement" in King's murder.

But Blakey said the hearings would deal with questions of "possible indirect involvement." He said these included questions of whether the FBI's admitted campaign to harass and discredit King as a civil rights leader resulted in King's presence in Memphis, where he was assassinated on April 4, 1968.

Fauntroy in his remarks denounced Lane as "a man who thrives on publicity — good or bad."

"Mr. Lane's repeated attempts to spitefully use the death of Dr. King and to spitefully use those who were associated with him in life for his own purposes require that I remain silent no more," Fauntroy said.

Lane has written books on the murders of both Dr. King and President John F. Kennedy. And Lane has appeared before the House committee on behalf of James Earl Ray, who pleaded guilty to King's murder but subsequently recanted the confession.

Fauntroy said Lane had turned over to the committee an affidavit by Daniel Ellsberg, the man who made the Pentagon Papers public, quoting an aide to Ambassador Young as saying Fauntroy had told the ambassador of the FBI assassination squad. The committee then called Young, who denied the report.

The committee called also Brady Tyson, the aide to Young, and Tyson testified that he had told Ellsberg only that the FBI assassination squad was his own "pet theory."

The House committee has investigated at least three allegations that the FBI itself was involved in conspiracies to assassinate King. One that Lane included in his book "Code Name Zorro" is that the FBI maneuvered King into the Lorraine Motel so he could be assassinated there.

Lane's theory rests on the FBI's admission that it tried to plant a false news story accusing King of staying in the white-owned Holiday Inn in Memphis and avoiding the black-owned Lorraine Motel.

However, there is no proof the false news story was published, and former associates of King say he always stayed at the Lorraine Motel when he was in Memphis, so he could not have been maneuvered there by any such report.

The committee has investigated also allegations by a Louisville, Ky., man that FBI agents tried to hire him to kill King and by a New York man that he overheard a conversation about an FBI plot to kill King.

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