

# Probe Statements Derail Funding

By JOHN BENNETT

From The Commercial Appeal  
Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Published statements by Mark Lane, the lawyer for James Earl Ray, derailed attempts Tuesday to get additional funding to investigate the murders of President John F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Lane's comments in The New York Times Tuesday said the House Committee on Assassinations had violated the law and its own rules as a part of a "conspiracy" to prevent a fair investigation of the assassination of King, which occurred in Memphis 10 years ago.

Public hearings are scheduled to open Monday into King's death, with Ray to testify.

The New York Times story raised enough doubt to cause members of a House Administration subcommittee to reject a request for \$790,000 to complete the investigations.

Rep. Louis Stokes (D-Ohio), chairman of the assassinations committee, warned Monday his panel would run out of funds by the end of September without a fresh transfusion.

Rep. Mendel J. Davis (D-S.C.), used Lane's published remarks to object to the funding on Tuesday. The effect was to re-

quire the assassinations committee to return in late September or in October if it needs more money.

Rep. Frank Thompson Jr. (D-N.J.), chairman of the administration committee, said the Times story was serious enough to have the funding request deferred.

At the same time, Thompson said he is convinced investigators are doing what they were supposed to do.

"In sum, there has been no attack, or nothing derogatory, of the assassinations subcommittee," Thompson said. "I for one would support the full sum of \$790,000."

Thompson noted Ray's attorney had made "really startling" statements, but he didn't think the investigations "are in any danger of being shut off."

Lane said at St. Louis that the assassinations committee investigators and their agents had suborned perjury, criminally received stolen property and monitored and tape-recorded telephone conversations.

In addition, Lane said the committee had "violated their own rules by secretly establishing a conference between one of their agents and a reporter for The New York Times" in an attempt to plant false information about the investigation.

Rep. Robert E. Badham (R-Calif.) said after a closed door session on Monday that

he is impressed that the assassinations committee may be about to produce more evidence.

On Tuesday, after the decision not to recommend the additional funding, Badham said he has become "reasonably convinced" investigators are doing their job.

Badham said closed-door sessions with those charged with the investigation convinced him the greater focus is now on the King assassination.

Badham also said he is convinced the FBI and other law enforcement agencies are cooperating in the investigation. It has been suggested by some critics that federal agencies have not been cooperating.

Most of the criticism of the \$790,000 request on Monday focused on how investigators have spent their budget in past months.

Davis and other members were annoyed at salary costs. Of 90 remaining investigating staffers (of 115), 23 are paid at least \$30,000 a year.

Davis objected loudly that the committee had made no effort to live within the current \$2.5 million budget that the House gave it earlier this year.

Meanwhile Tuesday in Petros, Tenn., the warden of Brushy Mountain State Prison said Ray will meet Thursday, with civil rights leader Jesse Jackson.