

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

JOYCE HABER

Mann May Do King Film Biography

At the instant that dreadful rifle was fired in Memphis, felling the man, finding the martyr, spouting death, pronouncing history, the immortalization of Dr. Martin Luther King was assured.



Martin Luther King

The gentle, giant-sized, youngest man ever to win the Nobel Peace Prize would be the cause for mourning and prayer and rallies, but beyond that, he and his cause would be elucidated in sermons and sociology and history, in posters and paintings and sculpture, in biographies—in print and on celluloid.

Barring acts of God, the authorized movie biography will be executed by Abby Mann. His personal involvement with Dr. King gives Mann an inside track on the film rights to

his life story, and no more dedicated social-political commentator looms on the Hollywood horizon.

Writer Abby Mann's own account of his dealings with Dr. King will appear in Sunday's Calendar magazine.

"I was with him all during the time he was considered passe," Mann told me the other night over dinner. "I never considered him passe. I thought he was the answer then, and I do now."

The author of that other tract of our times, the brutal "Judgment at Nuremberg," met Dr. King two years ago on an introduction arranged by Harry Belafonte and Sidney Poitier. He followed King for two weeks in Miami, and came away with his blessings on a filmed biography at the time.

But Mann was unable to get financing from the studios, several of which are currently in fierce competition to bring the life of that other contemporary Negro martyr, Malcolm X, to the screen. Yet, "It was not until after King had asserted the rights of all Negroes," as Life wrote in an editorial, "that Malcolm X found his own strange but self-reliant following."

The remarkable story of Martin Luther King may be the big picture for Mann, and Hollywood, once he completes his producing-clipping chores on Arthur Miller's "After the Fall." Should Mann get the rights, he may author the screenplay, as well as produce.

Hopefully, Sidney Poitier would play King, with Harry Belafonte as a supporting role.

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