

Stenographic Transcript Of

HEARINGS

Before The

The Martin Luther King Subcommittee

of the

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Washington, D.C.

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16 TESTIMONY OF OLIVER PATTERSON

17 Mr. Eberhardt. You were originally served with a sub-  
18 poena to appear before the subcommittee on the assassination  
19 of Dr. Martin Luther King?

20 Mr. Patterson. That is correct.

21 Mr. Eberhardt. That was adjourned until this week  
22 because of prior illness?

23 Mr. Patterson. Yes.

24 Mr. Eberhardt. At that time, you received a copy of  
25 our rules, did you not?

mr-13

1 Mr. Patterson. Right.

2 Mr. Eberhardt. I want to advise you of the procedure  
3 and find out whether or not you would be willing to undertake  
4 the procedure and it is called the "Designated Counsel's  
5 Statement". Rule 4 of our rules provides for that particular  
6 procedure and what it is, is a voluntary statement under  
7 oath by an individual from whom the committee deems it is to  
8 obtain information or evidence.

9 During the course of such proceedings a witness has the  
10 right to have counsel with him. Now, I want to stress to  
11 you that the subpoena that brought you here to testify does  
12 not compel you to undergo the designated counsel's statement.

13 You have at your complete option the ability to disregard  
14 the consideration of submitting to a designated counsel's  
15 statement and you can insist upon giving your testimony  
16 before the committee pursuant to the original subpoena.

17 Quite frankly we are faced with a time problem in as  
18 much as we were scheduled to have one witness today at 8:00  
19 this morning and that witness has not yet taken the stand  
20 and will not take the stand until 4:00 this afternoon. So  
21 that I see a very distinct possibility that we would not have  
22 the opportunity to have the committee hear completely from  
23 you in the course of full Executive Session testimony during  
24 the next two days.

25 So that the result would be to send you away without

1 having the ability to get any information from you. The  
2 eventual result of all that would be that you would again  
3 have to return to Washington at another time that we could  
4 schedule. So I want to ask you if you would be willing to  
5 undergo designated counsel's statement with the understanding  
6 it is not in lieu of your testimony, and in other words, the  
7 committee could still at its option subpoena you at a later  
8 date.

9 It would be my suggestion that if you would be willing  
10 to voluntarily submit to a designated counsel statement that  
11 this would be a good vehicle for us to get some information  
12 from you and assess whether or not it would be significant  
13 to ever call you back again.

14 Having said all of that I would like to ask you whether  
15 or not you would be willing to undergo a designated counsel's  
16 statement pursuant to Rule 4 of our proceedings?

17 Mr. Patterson. Yes.

18 Mr. Eberhardt. Can you tell us where you are employed?

19 Mr. Patterson. Blackjack Radio. Florence, Blackjack  
20 Florence, Missouri.

21 Mr. Eberhardt. And how long have you been in that busi-  
22 ness?

23 Mr. Patterson. About a year-and-a-half.

24 Mr. Eberhardt. Now do you know J.B. Stoner?

25 Mr. Patterson. Yes.

1 Mr. Eberhardt. And you know him through some association  
2 that you had with the National States Rights Party?

3 Mr. Patterson. That is right.

4 Mr. Eberhardt. And roughly what years would that have  
5 been, approximately?

6 Mr. Patterson. I think around 1970 or 1971. I think  
7 about 1970 on through until about 1973 or '74.

8 Mr. Eberhardt. Now, have you ever met Mr. Stoner  
9 personally?

10 Mr. Patterson. Yes, and let me clarify, I still know  
11 him. That did not end.

12 Mr. Eberhardt. Were you affiliated with the St. Louis  
13 chapter of the National States Rights Party?

14 Mr. Patterson. Yes.

15 Mr. Eberhardt. Who was the head of that chapter when  
16 you first joined?

17 Mr. Patterson. Richard Gebhardt and Terry Rose, and  
18 Dennis Nix came into it.

19 Mr. Eberhardt. Did you ever have an officer's position?

20 Mr. Patterson. No.

21 Mr. Eberhardt. Is it not true that Stoner was in the  
22 St. Louis area both on the St. Louis side of the river and  
23 Granite City side of the river in an attempt to organize the  
24 National States Rights Party back in the early 1970's?

25 Mr. Patterson. Yes.

1 Mr. Eberhardt. What fundamentally did you see the  
2 National States Rights Party to stand for in terms of princi-  
3 pals, how was it conveyed to you particularly in terms of  
4 Stoner's position?

5 Mr. Patterson. Basically the same position they hold  
6 today, white supremacy, which is the anti-Jewish, the same  
7 thing.

8 Mr. Eberhardt. Does that entail also an anti-Communist  
9 position?

10 Mr. Patterson. Yes.

11 Mr. Eberhardt. Now, have you ever heard Mr. Stoner dis-  
12 cuss his emotions or feelings towards the integration move-  
13 ment?

14 Mr. Patterson. There is no love.

15 Mr. Eberhardt. Has Stoner ever talked about Martin  
16 Luther King?

17 Mr. Patterson. Yes.

18 Mr. Eberhardt. Is it a fair statement that J.B. Stoner  
19 is diametrically opposed from a principal standpoint to all  
20 of the principals that Martin Luther King stood for?

21 Mr. Patterson. Yes.

22 Mr. Eberhardt. Now, in terms of the organization of  
23 the National States Rights Party, did you understand it to  
24 be a national organization or one that may have had some  
25 international implications?

1 Mr. Patterson. Nationally, yes, the members were basic-  
2 ally nationwide and the impression I was given -- but then  
3 names were named of other places.

4 Mr. Eberhardt. Have you ever travelled to Canada, for  
5 example, in connection with National States Rights Party  
6 activities?

7 Mr. Patterson. No.

8 Mr. Eberhardt. Have you ever travelled to Europe in  
9 connection with National States Rights Party activities?

10 Mr. Patterson. No.

11 Mr. Eberhardt. During the course of your relationship  
12 with Stoner and the National States Rights Party, did you  
13 come to know one Jerry Ray?

14 Mr. Patterson. Right.

15 Mr. Eberhardt. Have you ever come to know his brother  
16 John Ray?

17 Mr. Patterson. I have known of him, and I met him  
18 today for the first time.

19 Mr. Eberhardt. And what about the sister, Carol Pepper,  
20 the sister of James Earl Ray?

21 Mr. Patterson. I have never met her and I have talked  
22 to her on the phone, I guess, starting about six years ago  
23 or seven years ago or six years ago.

24 Mr. Eberhardt. Did you meet Stoner first or did you  
25 meet Jerry Ray first?

1 Mr. Patterson. Stoner and then Jerry through Stoner,  
2 at that time in Savanna.

3 Mr. Eberhardt. How would you characterize the relation-  
4 ship between J.B. Stoner and Jerry Ray? What does Jerry  
5 do for Mr. Stoner?

6 Mr. Patterson. Basically limousine service and along  
7 those lines.

8 Mr. Eberhardt. Has Jerry ever indicated to you that  
9 he is a firm believer of the principals for which J.B. Stoner  
10 stands? Is he, in other words, a dedicated follower of  
11 Stoner from a white supremacy standpoint?

12 Mr. Patterson. As dedicated, no.

13 Mr. Eberhardt. Did you know Jerry at all at any other  
14 time when he was not working for Mr. Stoner?

15 Mr. Patterson. No, there was a period of four years  
16 that I had not seen Jerry, from approximately '74 up until  
17 recently when he got in touch with Jerry concerning the sub-  
18 poena, and I had no contact with him whatsoever, but basically  
19 he was involved with Stoner at the time I knew him, and  
20 again this time.

21 Mr. Eberhardt. Martin Luther King was assassinated on  
22 April 4, 1968. I take it from your testimony that you did  
23 not come to know Stoner until well after that?

24 Mr. Patterson. That is right.

25 Mr. Eberhardt. I take it also from your testimony that



1 you did not come to know Jerry Ray until well after the assas-  
2 sination of Dr. Martin Luther King?

3 Mr. Patterson. That is right.

4 Mr. Eberhardt. Am I correct in assuming that you never  
5 had the occasion to meet with James Earl Ray?

6 Mr. Patterson. I never have, no.

7 Mr. Eberhardt. Now, do you also know Dr. Edward Fields  
8 who is also affiliated with the National States Rights Party?

9 Mr. Patterson. Yes.

10 Mr. Eberhardt. And do you know when you first came to  
11 be acquainted with him?

12 Mr. Patterson. I met him about, I would say, three  
13 days after I actually met Stoner, and that was in Savanna,  
14 back I think around 1970.

15 Mr. Eberhardt. What was the purpose of that Savanna  
16 meeting?

17 Mr. Patterson. We were on vacation and had been to  
18 Florida and stopped in Savanna just to meet Stoner.

19 Mr. Eberhardt. Had you ever been through any type of  
20 indoctrination exercise or training with respect to National  
21 States Rights Party?

22 Mr. Patterson. In regard -- what do you mean by indoc-  
23 trination?

24 Mr. Eberhardt. A period when they put you through some  
25 type of training or orientation to how the organization ran?

1 Mr. Patterson. No, not really.

2 Mr. Eberhardt. Has Dr. Fields ever indicated to you  
3 the membership number which is of the National States Rights  
4 Party?

5 Mr. Patterson. If he has it has been so long ago that  
6 I would not remember how many, but you know I would guess  
7 that it was probably about overestimated if he did.

8 Mr. Eberhardt. Roughly how many members were there in  
9 the St. Louis, the St. Louis-Granite City area?

10 Mr. Patterson. There are only about six of really  
11 hard-core Granite City members and the rest would come and  
12 go, and I would say there were only about six more than that,  
13 and never was there hardly more than ten at a meeting.

14 Mr. Eberhardt. Are you aware of any Klan affiliation  
15 with National States Rights Party in the St. Louis area?

16 Mr. Patterson. No, Stoner is very -- the Klan is very  
17 much separate and so is Nazi party very much separate, and  
18 they did not really get along and Stoner has said that  
19 repeatedly.

20 Mr. Eberhardt. Have you ever heard Richard Gephardt or  
21 Terry Rose speak about Martin Luther King?

22 Mr. Patterson. Everybody spoke about him. In what  
23 manner?

24 Mr. Eberhardt. Any derogatory remarks to the extent  
25 that violence was or violence which ended in Martin Luther

1 King's death, is something that either one of them took  
2 credit for as members of the National States Rights Party,  
3 or personally, for that matter?

4 Mr. Patterson. No, there was never any -- the blame, I  
5 never remember anyone putting the blame onto anybody within  
6 the three groups that I mentioned, and most of them pinned  
7 it onto the CIA or the FBI. But as far as other statements  
8 go, it could just be said in statements like, "Well, it is  
9 just another nigger", and things like this rather than "We  
10 were behind this" or that the Klu Klux Klan was behind this  
11 or anything like that.

12 Mr. Eberhardt. What types of activities was the National  
13 States Rights Party involved in, at least to the extent that  
14 you were familiar with them in the Granite City area, and  
15 what types of things would they do?

16 Mr. Patterson. That is why I asked earlier about a defi-  
17 nition, the Granite City branch or the city chapter was more  
18 violent than other chapters, but I would not say that violent,  
19 whatever that means, but what I mean is there were times when  
20 you were not told, or it was not the National States Rights  
21 Party that was doing it, really.

22 I felt it was like Richard Gephardt and Terry Rose who  
23 were very much to the left and I am not saying that the  
24 higher-ups would not have wanted it done, but things like  
25 Jewish or Black breaking windows and the suggestion would be

1 put to our mind very obviously, but do not say we did not  
2 tell you to do it.

3 Mr. Eberhardt. Did Stoner, what role did Stoner play  
4 in organizing the National States Rights Party in Granite  
5 City? It was something that he was primarily responsible  
6 for or someone else had the idea that this would be a good  
7 chance to have a chapter?

8 Mr. Patterson. It was Richard Gephardt and Terry Rose  
9 and they are the ones who got it going and have been in  
10 touch with Fields and we all met.

11 At the time I was married and our vacation coincided  
12 so we all met in Savanna and it was basically them that got  
13 it going in Granite City, and then Stoner came up and basic-  
14 ally Stoner's job was to raise money and run for political  
15 office.

16 Mr. Eberhardt. Did Jerry Ray play a prominent role in  
17 the organization of the chapters in the St. Louis, East St.  
18 Louis area?

19 Mr. Patterson. No, I would say that Jerry was more  
20 around as it was more interesting to have Jerry Ray around  
21 because of political beliefs of the National States Rights  
22 Party than it was to have Don Rickles around.

23 Mr. Eberhardt. Do you think that Stoner tried to use  
24 Jerry Ray's position as the brother of James Earl Ray to pro-  
25 mote the public acceptance or visibility of the National States

1 Rights Party?

2 Mr. Patterson. And financial, yes.

3 Mr. Eberhardt. Are you familiar with any other chapters  
4 of the National States Rights Party other than St. Louis and  
5 Granite City?

6 Mr. Patterson. Would you repeat that, I am sorry.

7 Mr. Eberhardt. Are you familiar with the organization  
8 of any other chapter, other than St. Louis and Granite City?

9 Mr. Patterson. They tried to get an organization going  
10 on the St. Louis side of the river, and it did not work  
11 out and as it was losing ground, that is about the time that  
12 I dropped out around 1974.

13 Mr. Eberhardt. You said something about Stoner or  
14 maybe you said the higher-ups in the National States Rights  
15 Party not perhaps explicitly suggesting acts of violence,  
16 but giving you the impression that that was certainly okay  
17 with them or at least tactically they acknowledged that that  
18 type of thing was okay.

19 If I am wrong in that statement, correct me, but if I  
20 am right, would you characterize Stoner as someone who was  
21 capable of violence himself or would you characterize Stoner  
22 as somebody who might be primarily characterized as one who  
23 had the psychological or emotional capabilities of instigating  
24 other people to respond to critical situations where violence  
25 might be something that would be implemented to achieve the

1 ends of the National States Rights Party?

2 Mr. Patterson. Stoner would be the one who would like  
3 to see America taken over and given to him as the leader. I  
4 do not think he is capable of it.

5 As far as inciting it, I think you will find a handful  
6 of people that would be incited but most of it is too radical  
7 and Jerry Ray, for example, even says it is too radical and  
8 that there is just everything that happens in the paper.

9 If somebody gets killed, J.B. automatically says that  
10 it is a Black that did it, and later on they see a picture  
11 in the paper and it is a white that did it and Jerry points  
12 it out to J.B. and J.B. just mumbles about it. That was  
13 Jerry's example to me.

14 But I do not think as far as I know it is almost too  
15 far right-wing and J.B. is a very nice person and everybody,  
16 I guess, is entitled to their own opinions and I think that  
17 Jerry is even less, really when you get down to it, is even  
18 less aggressive when it comes to that.

19 I have noticed, for example, when I was in Georgia then,  
20 I think Jerry had off and on, in his part-time job as guard  
21 which gave him a basic right to carry a gun, and I do not  
22 know if it was in the state of Georgia or not, but Stoner  
23 and most of the rest do carry guns, and Jerry does not.

24 Mr. Eberhardt. Have you ever seen Jerry fire a rifle?

25 Mr. Patterson. No, I have never seen him hold a gun.

1 Mr. Eberhardt. Has he ever talked about firing a rifle?

2 Mr. Patterson. Kiddingly about cracking off a few  
3 shots, and kiddingly, but ---

4 Mr. Eberhardt. You never saw him fire a rifle?

5 Mr. Patterson. No.

6 Mr. Eberhardt. Did you ever see J.B. Stoner hold a rifle?

7 Mr. Patterson. No, I looked at his gun last week, and  
8 that is the first time I have ever seen his gun, you know,  
9 close up. But I have never seen him fire it.

10 Mr. Eberhardt. What is Stoner's opinion in terms of  
11 him being a viable or the National States Rights Party being  
12 a viable political entity, and does he sometimes -- in 1968  
13 and 1969 and on, whenever it was when you first joined, as  
14 an organization that could bring about a national change or  
15 a swing towards the white supremacy position he was taking or  
16 did he say that merely as a personal opinion that he really  
17 is just trying to vent through the political party that he  
18 is structured through, in the National States Rights Party?

19 Mr. Patterson. I think the major reason for Stoner's  
20 alignment with the NSRP is that, number one, as an executive  
21 with it and he is in the hierarchy with it and, number two,  
22 the financial end of it, and what would he do if he did not  
23 have it, and number three, I think Jerry summed it up on the  
24 way here to Washington, was if Stoner was elected as governor  
25 or anything else that he runs for, he would not know what to

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do.

Mr. Eberhardt. I take it from your response that you travelled here to Washington with Mr. Jerry Ray?

Mr. Patterson. That is right.

Mr. Eberhardt. Would you care to characterize your relationship with Jerry Ray as still a fairly close one?

Mr. Patterson. Oh, yes.

Mr. Eberhardt. Do you still actively participate in the National States Rights Party matters?

Mr. Patterson. No, I have not seen Jerry for about four years.

Mr. Eberhardt. During the last couple of days that you have been with Jerry Ray, has he expressly admitted to you any personal role on his part in the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King?

Mr. Patterson. None.

Mr. Eberhardt. Has he indicated that John Ray had any personal involvement in the shooting of Dr. King?

Mr. Patterson. No, the statements are there has been no involvement whatsoever.

Mr. Eberhardt. I think I have no further questions at this point, Mr. Patterson, and consistent with what I told you before, I will advise you that the subpoena that was previously imposed upon you or served on you, I should say, is one that will be continued without a new date which means



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if and when it is necessary to have you reappear before the committee you will be notified by a formal letter as to the appearance time and date.

Thank you.

(Whereupon, the committee recessed at 12:55; the formal hearing of the subcommittee to reconvene at 4:00 p.m.)