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Coby Smith:
Article on Invaders
and King not accurate

Coby Smith, former member of the Invaders and now assistant to the vice president of State Technical Institute, told the Tri-State Defender that a recent report on the now defunct militant organization by a New York newspaper is not completely accurate.

Smith, who served on the executive board of the Invaders said he, and other members of the organization were aware of infiltrators long before the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. Smith said those sources used in the article appearing in the Garden City Newday was misleading. He said "people, when asked to speak on aspects of a subject they are familiar with, have a tendency to talk about that aspect which they know least about.

"This was obviously the case," he continued, "with those friends of Dr. King who the writer used as sources. The story said "according to some witnesses, the 100-member group called the Invaders led the March 28 riots which attempted to discredit King's efforts.

"Following the riot, in which one youth was killed, scores injured, and 238 arrested, King vowed that he would return to prove that he still could lead a non-violent demonstration."

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

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Smith ~~said~~ since the organization felt that a small nucleus of the black community was leading King in the wrong direction as far as strategy was concerned, the Invaders decided they would not take part in the march. He said at the time many people were donning Invader jackets because "they were very easy to make."

Smith said it wasn't that people were interested in what happened to Dr. King at the time, rather it was what would happen to the other black ministers such as Rev. James Lawson and Rev. Ralph H. ~~Jackson~~. A letter sent to the black leadership

with a bullet attached to it, caused the concern. Some people tried to blame the Invaders.

The article written by Les Payne stated, "several FBI informants and at least one undercover agent from the Memphis Police Department were among the most active members of a young, violence prone black group which openly opposed King's peaceful march, supporting the city's sanitation workers."

Smith said the organization had many people associated with it directly and indirectly who were on the payrolls of the FBI, CIA and Memphis Police Department. As for the members of the Invaders that infiltrated our group, some of our members had seen him in Indiana and were aware of the fact that he was an infiltrator.

The Newday Article stated, "On April 4, the day King was

killed, the groups met with him and his staff and threatened renewed violence unless they were given \$750,000 to redevelop their community. 'They just got louder and louder,' one aide who was at the meeting recalled. "We told them we didn't have access to that kind of money. We had to put them out."

Smith stated, "There were no shouting matches. We attempted to show Dr. King that the time had come for community organizing at a grass roots level. Smith stated, "King allowed himself to be led by a small segment of the Memphis black leadership. We got the impression that, during the meeting, he understood what we were saying and that is that the younger element of the Memphis community had been ignored by the so called established black leadership."