

**INVESTIGATION OF THE ASSASSINATION
OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.**

HEARINGS
BEFORE THE
SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS
OF THE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
NINETY-FIFTH CONGRESS
SECOND SESSION

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Beverly B. Byron M.C.

Page 231

McMillan does not mention Redditt in his book.

Page 234

Lane writes that King's supporters asked for security, that they knew that Redditt was there, but were not notified when Redditt was removed.

Page 256

Lane writes that transfers of blacks (including Redditt) raised serious questions that the prosecution would have had a hard time responding to at a trial.

Page 257

Lane comments on Harold Weisberg's reference to Redditt as police spy.

Page 264

Lane makes reference to the start of his interviews with Redditt.

Page 266

Lane asks why Redditt was pulled off his assignment. Suggests that answer may have gone up in smoke with Memphis D.I.D. files.

Page 273-274

Lane speaks of his first awareness of the "strange circumstances" surrounding Redditt's removal before King's death. He says the question was not even considered by the Justice Department until July of '76.

Lane says Justice Department contemplated why Redditt was removed from post two hours before murder.

to further up.

in Mark Lane's Book

... after King's
vacateur who had been
in disguise and
working for the CIA.

requested Redditt be
on he returned to
ined to set up a

and at the Masonic
Floyd Newsum.

prior to April 4, 1968
otes Redditt as
curity because he
of the personalities
rity arrangements
made this coverage
f 10 officers

An hour and a
ed to headquarters
oman was in a
the law enforcement
here was a contract
his family to the
he was allowed to
him. Nothing over
d back to work on
- killed.

surrounding Red
the threat on his
on's answer.

*Agex
HIS*

courtyard, go up the circle of steps, go west—go east again and then to room 306. Would I be correct about that?

Mr. REDDITT. You would be correct.

Mr. JOHNSON. All right. Now I direct your attention to page 131 of Mark Lane's book, and I am directing your specific attention to the third paragraph.

Mr. REDDITT. Which book is that, counsel?

Mr. JOHNSON. That is Code Name "Zorro", The Murder of Martin Luther King, Jr., Mark Lane and Dick Gregory, which has been marked as exhibit F-185.

Now let me read to you, Mr. Redditt, from the third paragraph here. It says:

According to Redditt

I am quoting now, at least Mark Lane is quoting you, I gather *

about half an hour, no more than 2 hours before Dr. King's assassination lieutenant Arkin, who was in intelligence, came down to the station. He said, Ed, they want to see you at headquarters. Redditt was reluctant to leave his post, to abandon the entire security operation to Richmond. Redditt had difficulty leaving, since his plan to cut off a potential escape from the scene, should there be an attempt on Dr. King's life, was predicated upon a functioning team of at least two men.

Now my question to you, Mr. Redditt, does Mr. Lane in his quote here adequately set out the situation of that afternoon?

Mr. REDDITT. No. No.

Mr. JOHNSON. Then, as this appeared in Mr. Lane's book, it is absolutely erroneous; am I correct about that?

Mr. REDDITT. Correct.

Mr. JOHNSON. I have no further questions.

One additional question. You have been asked earlier about a plan. You seem to have suggested "being a policeman maybe I had some ideas in mind about doing something to protect Dr. King," but Mr. Redditt, did there ever come a time, on either the 4th or the 3d or any time before that you went to any of these buildings and checked them out to see whether or not there was anything that might give way to an assassin being in any of those buildings?

Mr. REDDITT. No.

Mr. JOHNSON. Did you ever, knowing the parking area here and the bushes on the embankment that leads directly over to Mulberry Street, did you ever go through the parking lot and maybe either on the afternoon of the 3d or the morning or afternoon of the 4th, just kind of walk through there and look around to see if anybody was sitting over there?

Mr. REDDITT. No; the only thing was by the fire station.

Mr. JOHNSON. So if there ever was a time that you had a plan, the formulation of which was merely in your mind, no more, no less?

Mr. REDDITT. Correct.

Mr. JOHNSON. Because at no time, assuming that you had a plan, did you ever undertake any kind of surveillance or security or whatever to implement. Would I be right then in assuming that even if you had a plan, you weren't sure yourself what the plan would be, assuming that something would happen to Dr. King? Am I correct about that?

Mr. REDDITT. Correct.

Mr. JOHNSON. I have no further questions, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman STOKES. The gentleman is recognized for 1 minute, the

Mr. FAUNTROY. Thank you, Mr. Redditt, two quick questions.

One, in response to Mr. Pre Mr. Newsom in fact perform respect to the actual event would have performed had you

Mr. REDDITT. I missed that. I

Mr. FAUNTROY. Yes. I mean please forgive me. Mr. Richmond

Mr. REDDITT. Would you remember?

Mr. FAUNTROY. You indicate you would have contacted security you seen it from that window Richmond?

Mr. REDDITT. I am not aware

Mr. FAUNTROY. You don't know

Second, I have just this question perhaps an extended answer but a notion of conspiracy that has come in Memphis and in the fire station is that you were stripped police chief who, prior to becoming for 25 years employed by period very close to J. Edgar Hoover your stripping had to do with chief felt merited his removing

I wonder if you would just, in to the committee how you think of conspiracy.

Mr. REDDITT. Quite a task.

Mr. FAUNTROY. Yes, it is.

Mr. SMOTHERS. Congressman completely clear to the witness own testimony or with respect been considered by this committee

Mr. FAUNTROY. I am asking own knowledge of his own reasons for his removal.

Chairman STOKES. The time Chair will permit the witness

Mr. REDDITT. I think, again received or know of or have involvement within the total of my function in the police department not add anything, was not a part of a scheme or a plan or a conspiracy

Mr. FAUNTROY. Thank you, the question, and just to be clear a conspiracy, you do not believe

Mr. REDDITT. Correct.

HSCA
JL

CIVIL DISORDERSMEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

(February 12, through April 16, 1968)

A Report submitted to Mr. Frank Holloman, Director
of Fire and Police,

by

L. E. B. Arizin, of the Intelligence Section of the Inspectional
Bureau of the Memphis Police Department.

March 20, 1968 (continued)

On 3/20/68 two instances of Stru
and threats were made to burn down both I
day, March 22, 1968, the date of the propos
Luther King Jr. And an obscene telephone
Councilman, Jerved Blanchard

On 3/20/68 Black Power Groups i
South Memphis intimidating teachers and s
holding classes on 3/22/68. The rumor su
Minister, Rev. Ezekiel Bell had made arra
come to Memphis and speak at his church.

On 3/20/68 Local Black Power m
other Black Power advocates went to the p
demanded that he be allowed to speak to the
He was however told to leave.

Intelligence sources revealed the
planned march on March 22, 1968 was in the
S. C. L. C., and C. O. M. E. member, and th
icipation in the march was in the hands of
James Morris Lawson Jr., pastor of Centa
Gerald Fanton, another Negro leader was o
the parking lot at Club Paradise on the nigh
cast over WLOK. Furthermore on 3/20/68
Luther King, SCLC leader with leftist lean
to the students at LeMoyn College' referri
ler, and denouncing the Viet Nam war, stat
for their own rights here. Bevel had been b
drama Department instructor named Lee, a
Cabbage, local Black Power activist, and h
observed in the audience.

Police assignments remained
ing of garbage trucks throughout the City, a
situations, as well as the regular neighborh

March 21, 1968

On 3/21/68 City Council member
J. O. Patterson's proposal allowing a dues
passed instead a resolution calling for med
down with Frank B. Miles, a former Federa

On 3/21/68 Dr. Martin Luther King
organizing his Poor People's Campaign, us
symbol of the campaign. In Memphis hoo ev
tion received a telephoned threat on the Life
a man with what was described as having an

ASCA
JTB

April 1, 1968 (continued)

Threats against the Memphis Police came in from a number of sources between 3:30/68 and 4/1/68. And on one occasion, U.S. Civil Rights Commission worker, Rosetta Miller, who had been participating in the Demonstrations since the start of the Sanitation Strike, told Det. Redditt, that they were going to get him, and if she had a gun herself, she would shoot him herself. This remark was made no doubt because it was known that Det. E. B. Redditt was returning information from the meetings he attended to the Memphis Police Department.

On April 1, 1968 Larry Payne, a Male Negro teenager, who had been shot during the riots, after he had been found looting, and pulled a knife on a Police Officer, was laying in state in Clayborn Temple. The ultimatum being that his actions were sanctioned by C. O. M. E. and the negro ministers who divided on the issue of non-violence seemed to be wavering at this point in the direction of violence.

April 2, 1968

The Press Scimitar on 4/2/68 under a story captioned, MEMPHIS HAS QUIET NIGHT, quotes Asst. Chief Bill Price as reporting that activity during the night of 4/1/68 had been no greater than usual.

The Commercial Appeal carried a story under the caption: KUYKENDALL ACCUSES KING OF SPARKING MEMPHIS CLASH in which Tennessee Congressman Dan Kuykendall on the House floor accused Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. of agitating destruction and hatred in Memphis.

In another story in the Commercial Appeal under the caption: CITY STUBBORNLY COUNTERS STEPS TO THREAT OF MASS MARCH, it was reported that Mayor Henry Loeb was studying what legal steps could be taken to prevent another mass march, and among the remedies considered were: Court Injunctions against Leaders; Resumption of the Curfew; and the Placing of Leaders under Peace and Financial Responsibility.

In a story in the Press Scimitar of 4/2/68 under the caption: COUNCIL TAKES NEW STRIKE ROLE, it was reported that the City Council was calling for resumption of mediation talks with the Garbage Strikers.

C. O. M. E. held a strategy meeting at Clayborn Temple at 10AM on 4/2/68 in which the ministers associated explored the possibility of securing O. E. O. and W. P. C. money to pay for an office for them, and their operations. At another meeting of C. O. M. E. leaders at the Lorraine Motel 6PM 4/2/68, some of the Members asked for the removal of James Morris Lawson as leader of COME.

The body of Larry Payne who had been shot during the rioting 3/28/68 and who had been laying in state at Clayborn Temple since 4/1/68 was viewed by thousands of strikers and Strike Sympathizers. The Funeral was held in the Temple in the afternoon with the Rev. B. T. Dumas officiating. Interment was in the New Park Cemetery on Lake Road. No incidents were reported during the Funeral.

Bayard Rustin of the A. Phillip Randolph Inst., and Victor Gotbaum, Executive Director of the District Council #27 of the A. F. L. C. U. M. W. announced that 5000 people

April 2, 1968 (continued)

from all over the U. S. would converge on Memphis at 30,000 people would be in Memphis for the Martin Luther King Jr.

Intelligence sources revealed that Char B. Smith and other hoodlumper leaders were meeting with other Black activists and King aides, and that the Martin Luther King was being planned for 4/3/68 and 9PM in re; the funding of the hoodlumpers by NAACP.

April 2, 1968 a Mr. Robert Campbell of 5 that he had received a telephone call from Columbus associated who was a reliable man, who stated that if he went to the Airport for his March, he would be killed by a Memphis Policeman would be blamed for it. Mr. Campbell where he had received this information.

4/2/68 at a Press Conference at Clayborn Temple, Rev. Jesse Jackson, an S. C. L. C. member announced 4/3/68. Rev. Kyles also announced that he had filed 1000 Complaints. Rev. Jesse Jackson called for boycotts, Coca Cola Bottling Co.; Harts Bread Co.; and Dairy Products. He accused white racism for

In an interview with Inspector Tinsley on 4/2/68 a local Negro Minister accused Rev. James Morris Lawson for the riot on 3/28/68. He also accused Lawson as being a lackey of the white establishment and indicated that he felt that Vasco and Maxine Smith, who had been in charge of the riot, could no longer maintain effective leadership of the

Spokesmen for the Negro Ministers in violation of the law would ignore any injunction against holding a Mass March on 4/7 reported instances of strike oriented harassment.

April 3, 1968.

Under the caption of DAY OF DECISIONS, the Commercial Appeal carried a picture of Mayor Henry Loeb, and Director of the Memphis Police Department, S. Holloman, entering the Federal Building seeking an injunction to prevent the National March to be led in Memphis by Dr. King. The picture shows a picture of Dr. Martin Luther King arriving in Memphis.

The Commercial Appeal of 3/3/68 under the caption: HOW TO IGNORE ANY COURT BANS, carried a story stating, "such things as injunctions or peace marches."

The headlines of the Press Scimitar of 4/3/68 under the caption: MARCH PLANNED LED BY KING, UNION MEN., as

that I was an active participant in the assassination of Dr. King. I had not a scintilla of a doubt that the death of Dr. King and the events in my life has been that he was assassinated in his death give unequivocal evidence to reasonable and prudent officers of fire and police would have been in this city knowing full well that he was assassinated immediately.

As evidenced by the fact that he was in the airport when he arrived on the day of the assassination, police protection to him. My efforts to even learn his name did not learn of his plans to arrive at that location. We could not under the circumstances be practically impossible to have been proven in other cases where measures we should have taken and didn't, as viewed by the public we did not have extreme measures. We thought at the time we were doing our best to provide the best protection soever as to our handling of any quarter.

As for Detective E. E. Redditt from the fire station, which has been the case as well as the principal offender and an assassination and it has not been disputable that Redditt's life. In view of the fact that both Black officers, had no information as to the threats during the sanitation strike regarding any threats against the personal and logical course of action. I believe Detective Redditt and I could have been a callous

years is that the threat to the life of the Revolutionary African American was advised of it by a Federal agent from the U.S. Secret Service. It was two separate threats other than those sifted through my memory that I have not been able to further

As for, the stark fact remains, that Dr. King's life was threatened as a result of that action be taken to prevent it was not taken solely by myself and other fire department officers at the time.

Detective Redditt did not at that time, nor has he since, questioned the legitimacy of the threat. His only reaction at the time was that he was not personally afraid. And his courage has never been questioned especially as evidenced by his service to the department during the sanitation strike. Detective Redditt has never since that time raised any question with me in any way concerning the action which was taken. I have seen him on numerous occasions during the past 10 years, including a meeting on the street in the spring of 1976 when he advised me of his then intentions to run for Congress as a Republican against the incumbent congressman, Harold Ford. He did not at that time or at any other time raise the question of any doubt as to my actions on April 4, 1968.

In view of the physical location of the fire station, it would have been impossible for Detective Redditt or a score or more officers at that location to have prevented the assassination. It would not have been physically possible from that location to have even seen from where the shot was fired. Patrolman Richmond, as dedicated a professional officer as any I've known, was at the fire station and observed Dr. King when he was shot and he was in no position to prevent the assassination and could not do so. Detective Redditt could not have either and I believe he has so testified in executive sessions before this committee. Memoranda prepared contemporaneously with the events by Redditt and Richmond, and especially by Patrolman Richmond, and contained in the homicide files of the department should dispel all doubts as to the nature of the assignment (it being one of surveillance and not of security) and the effectiveness of these men at the fire station. I believe the committee has interviewed Detective Redditt and Patrolman Richmond and that they will testify before this committee. I respectfully request that the statements of Redditt and Richmond as contained in the homicide files and which I have furnished this committee be made a part of the record of these hearings.

The records will reflect Detective Redditt was removed from his post at approximately 4 p.m. on April 4, 1968. Since I was in Federal court all day that day and considering the time when Dr. King was shot, I do not believe Detective Redditt was removed after I returned from court but that he was at the department and had already been removed.

There apparently has been a persistent effort to prove a theory or allegation that the FBI engaged in a conspiracy to assassinate Dr. King and that I, because of my past association with the FBI, was a party to that conspiracy. It is unbelievable to me that the FBI would even entertain such an idea. It is ludicrous and preposterous that I would be a party to such a thing either directly or indirectly. And now lately, as reported in the news media, the ridiculous charge has been made that former and off-duty FBI agents assassinated Dr. Martin Luther King. Anyone, for whatever evil or ulterior purposes, can dream up preposterous theories and charges. Proving those theories or charges with truth and facts is another matter and has not been accomplished.

I have been deeply disturbed that in view of my public service and reputation in the community, I have been viciously and deliberately maligned and slandered—apparently without recourse.

WJL
III