

Who really killed Dr. Martin Luther King?

By Steve Menzel

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"We know who it wasn't, but we don't know who it was," said Harold

Wiesberg, the foremost authority on the Martin Luther King assassination. Wiesberg was referring to the new developments in identifying King's assassin, at the opening session of the UWSP National Symposium on the deaths of King and John F. Kennedy.

Symposium Director David R. Wrone, professor of history at UWSP, was the featured speaker at the session Tuesday night. Wiesberg and James Lesar assisted in a question and answer period following Wrone's lecture.

According to Wiesberg, convicted assassin James Earl Ray did not kill

King. No one knows who killed King, Wiesberg said.

Lesar, who is James Earl Ray's attorney, gave several reasons why Ray's involvement has been questioned in recent years: his client's word—Ray said he did not kill King; The alleged murder weapon, a rifle, was left outside a store in the vicinity of the crime (Lesar said the gun had been planted there to frame Ray); the shot, which was supposedly fired from a bathroom window, could not have been aimed with any precision because of the height of the window and the interior arrangement of the bathroom; the bullet which entered King's body could not be identified as having been fired from the

alleged murder weapon; and the only direct witness was a "blind drunk" named Charles Stevenson.

Wrone's lecture dealt mainly with the history of King's involvement in civil rights. King was greatly influenced by the philosophies of Tolstoy, Thoreau and Gandhi, Wrone said. He believed that there is a basic goodness in man, but occasionally that goodness is twisted to form evil. Wrone said that King believed in peacefully taking the blows inflicted by evil. Victory would arrive if one's aim was good and decent.

Wrone said King began to have doubts about his non-violent crusade. "America lacked a moral conscience," Wrone said in explaining the crusade's failure.

Wrone said King then addressed himself to operations within the institutional system. In 1968, he launched the Poor People's Campaign which brought an awareness of economic ills which plagued the nation's poor. Shortly after this new approach had been taken, King was assassinated in Memphis, Wrone said.

After Wrone's introductory lecture, Wiesberg and Lesar answered questions about details of the shooting and possible neglect of duty on the part of the FBI.

Tuesday night's session was the first of a four day symposium. The last session will be Saturday, Nov. 13 in the Quandt Gym.