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Area officers testify in assassination probe

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WASHINGTON — In an all-day closed hearing, a House assassinations subcommittee yesterday questioned a former Louisville police officer and a Louisville-area FBI agent about an alleged plot to kill the late Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

Among those waiting to testify today are:

Erent Hardin, who has just been promoted to lieutenant colonel in the Louisville Police Department by new Mayor William Stansbury; former Louisville alderman and police Lt. William Bibb; retired Lt. Col. Priest Fry, chief of detectives in the Louisville Department from 1958 to 1970; and retired Capt. Robert Gregory, also once chief of detectives.

Virtually no one, from subcommittee Chairman Walter E. Fauntroy of the District of Columbia to those subpoenaed, would comment on the hearing yesterday.

Testifying were former Louisville policeman Clifton E. Baird of Fern Creek and FBI agent William Duncan.

Baird apparently was the man who

wrote a letter to Rep. Gene Snyder, R-4th District, alleging that FBI agents and local policemen plotted to kill King before the civil rights leader was shot to death in Memphis, Tenn., in 1968.

The letter that Snyder sent to the full assassinations committee said that a Louisville policeman was twice offered \$500,000 to kill King.

Baird, interviewed outside the hearing room yesterday, said he had been instructed by the subcommittee not to discuss his testimony. Duncan, the FBI agent, flatly refused to answer any questions, including whether he was William Duncan.

Waiting in another room to testify were Hardin (who said he is in charge of security at Stansbury's inauguration today), Bibb, Fry and Gregory.

Bibb, in a brief hallway interview, said he had no idea why he had been subpoenaed to testify. He said there were "about eight" former law officers summoned by the subcommittee.

He said that the former Louisville policemen called all appeared to be former commanding officers over Baird.