

Dallas Morning **Ex-informant alleges**

From Wire Reports

A man who says he is a former FBI informant claimed Monday in St. Louis he had been hired by the House Assassinations Committee in an attempt to discredit James Earl Ray's claims that he did not assassinate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Ray's attorney, Mark Lane, joined in criticizing the committee.

Lane said committee members had "violated their own rules" by secretly seeking to set up a conference between one of their agents and a reporter for the New York Times in an attempt to

plant false information about the investigation.

Oliver Patterson, 34, said at a news conference that he made illegal tapes of telephone conversations and stole letters from Ray's brother, Jerry, and gave the tapes and letters to a committee investigator, whom he identified as Conrad Baetz.

Both Lane and Patterson also said Baetz had told Patterson committee officials wanted to arrange a meeting between him and a reporter for the Times so that, in Patterson's words, "I could give false information."

Patterson, who had never been reached by the Times and had never provided the paper with any information concerning the King assassination before Monday, said he had been told to try to persuade the newspaper that Lane is a homosexual, that the committee had received no new information in the case and that he, Patterson, had been threatened with harm by Jerry Ray because of his undercover work.

Baetz, who lives in Wood River, Ill., could not be reached for comment.

A spokesman for the Assassinations Committee said, "The allegations are

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serious and they will be examined carefully and completely." He said the committee would have no other comment.

Lane, who was also at the news conference, accused Baetz and two committee counselors of "a number of unethical, improper and illegal acts." He did not elaborate.

The House panel is investigating the King assassination, and has received testimony from Jerry Ray.

James Earl Ray pleaded guilty to the assassination and is serving a 99-year term in Tennessee, but now claims he

was tricked into taking the blame for the murder.

Patterson also said Baetz wanted him to discredit Lane at a news conference that was scheduled for Sunday, but that Baetz said Patterson's comments on Lane would get greater exposure if they were revealed Monday, and the news conference was postponed.

In the meantime, Patterson said, he decided he would reveal his undercover work for the committee.

Lane called for an independent investigation of the select committee

and called for the disbarment of the two committee counselors.

Meanwhile in New York, FBI Director William Webster said a 1974 FBI report alleging a conspiracy in the murder of King was filed away for four years instead of being turned over to federal investigators because of "simple inadvertence."

The FBI director downplayed the significance of the slip-up, however, saying it contains "hearsay three times removed" and that it was written long after the original investigation was concluded.