

Possible Conspiracy in Dr. King Killing Investigated

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Special to The New York Times

ATLANTA, July 23—Atlanta

Public Safety Commissioner, A. Reginald Eaves, said today that four city police detectives were continuing their investigation into allegations that the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was the victim of a conspiracy rather than of the lone assassin James Earl Ray. Mr. Eaves said he expected a full report by Friday or Monday. At that time, he said, a determination would be made as to whether information developed from a written statement by a convicted drug-seller was sufficient to warrant further inquiry or possible indictments. The commissioner said he was not sure at this time whether the Atlanta authorities would attempt to move on their own, if warranted, or if they would request Federal action.

The four city detectives working on the case have con-

ducted inquiries in Atlanta, in Memphis and Knoxville, Tenn., and in Kentucky, Mr. Eaves said.

The detectives are working on leads provided by Robert Byron Watson, 21 years old, now serving a five-year Federal sentence for conspiracy to distribute cocaine.

A 42-page statement drawn up and sworn to by Mr. Watson was delivered to Mr. Eaves about a month ago.

Mr. Eaves said today that at the time the statement was given to him via a third party, "a party whom I respect," he was not aware that the same information had been given to the Federal Bureau of Investigation on April 7, 1971.

A spokesman for the F.B.I. in Washington said that interrogation of Mr. Watson at that time indicated that his account of the killing had been fabricated. Mr. Watson said that he had overheard two men in the Atlanta business where he worked discussing killing Dr. King a week before the civil rights leader was slain on April 4, 1968.

The bureau nonetheless conducted an inquiry, the F.B.I. spokesman said, and deter-

mined that there was "no substance" to the allegations.

Mr. Watson, the informant, was convicted on drug charges in 1972 and spent two years in prison. His latest conviction came in May of this year.

Commissioner Eaves said today that the fact that the informant was a convicted felon should not, by itself, discredit his allegations.

The F.B.I., after preliminary checks of information provided by Mr. Watson through Mr. Eaves, has dropped its inquiry and considers the matter closed.

Drug Traffic Emphasized

A few days ago, Mr. Eaves issued a statement indirectly critical of the F.B.I. "Our intelligence detectives, to date, have been denied access to the information the F.B.I. now has in their files," Mr. Eaves said.

He said that "local F.B.I. officials here in Atlanta who normally cooperate with us seemed unwilling to share information concerning the case."

"Without the cooperation of the F.B.I.," he said, "my investigators are presently interviewing persons who are supposed

to be knowledgeable concerning the alleged conspiracy."

In an interview today Mr. Eaves said that the information checked so far "proved to be about 95 per cent accurate."

However, he conceded that this information did not relate directly to the allegations concerning the King assassination. A source familiar with the contents of the Watson statement said that most of it dealt with drug traffic, and that the conspiracy allegations were brief, although at least two of the alleged conspirators were named.

Mr. Eaves said today that "I do not know of two, possibly three, persons" who were said to be connected with the alleged conspiracy.

According to Mr. Watson's statement, a source said, one of the men he says he overheard told another he was going to shoot Dr. King and frame someone for it. There are also suggestions in the statement that there was some connection with one of the Kennedy assassinations.

A Federal judge has ordered a psychiatric examination of Mr. Watson.