

SF Chronicle NOV 27 1975

# King Slaying Probe To Be Re-examined

Washington

Attorney General Edward H. Levi, citing the FBI's harassment campaign against Dr. Martin Luther King, has ordered two Justice Department divisions to recheck the investigation of the King slaying to see if it should be reopened.

Levi said yesterday in an interview he wanted to know whether the results of the FBI program "might have had any influence or effect on the assassination — and I thought that ought to be looked at."

"I have asked not only the civil rights division, which originally investigated the King assassination, but also as a double check I've asked the Criminal division to reinvestigate," Levi said.

The attorney general's comment came in response to a question about the revelation that shortly before King's death FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover approved a secret FBI attempt to discredit the civil rights leader by pointing out that he stayed at a white-owned motel while leading a predominantly black garbage strike in Memphis.

King subsequently moved to the black-owned Lorraine Motel in Memphis, where he was shot to death on a balcony outside his room.

Levi said disclosure of the FBI discrediting attempt, at a Senate Intelligence Committee hearing last week, was not the sole factor that prompted him to ask the two divisions to take another look at the case.

It was learned from other sources yesterday that the department's civil rights division has been investigating for several months whether the FBI attempt to discredit King actually resulted in his decision to move to the Lorraine Motel.

The division learned of the attempt from FBI files which were being examined for another

Back Page Col. 1

From Page 1 KINS 27

purpose, according to J. Stanley Pottinger, assistant attorney general for civil rights.

Neither the civil rights division nor investigators for the Senate committee have been able to determine that Hoover's approval of the plan to disseminate to the press information about King's staying at the white-owned motel actually led to such an effort.

James B. Adams, deputy associate director of the FBI, has testified that the agent who worked on the request, Harold (Bud) Leinbaugh, simply marked the request "handled." Leinbaugh, who has retired from the bureau where he served in the agency's old crime records division, the FBI's public relations branch, is understood to have told investigators he cannot remember what he did on the request.

A former aide to King, Tom Offenburger, now on the staff of Representative Andrew Young (Dem-Ga.), said yesterday that he recalled King staying at a Holiday Inn in Memphis for only one night, but that he did not move because of any press report.

Offenburger said King was taking part in a march that was disrupted and that aides then hustled him to the Holiday Inn. The next day, Offenburger said, King returned to Atlanta. He stayed at the Lorraine when he came back to Memphis a few days later.

James Earl Ray, an escaped fellow who pleaded guilty to killing King, tried unsuccessfully in February to withdraw his plea and stand trial for murder. U.S. District Judge Robert M. McRae Jr. in Memphis ruled that Ray, who is serving a 99-year prison sentence, had "coolly and deliberately" submitted his guilty plea on the advice of competent counsel.

Levi, in the interview, expressed his outrage over some of the FBI's former counter-intelligence tactics, but said he was opposed to removing Hoover's name from the recently dedicated FBI building.

Los Angeles Times