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Undated Ray-King Conspiracy-What They Said 520  
By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Debate over whether the Martin Luther King assassination was the work of James Earl Ray alone or the result of a conspiracy is widespread and growing.

Those who say Ray conspired with others include King's widow and close associates, an attorney Ray fired, a brother of the assassin and, more or less indirectly, Ray himself.

Those who say only that there is no evidence to indicate a conspiracy include the judge and prosecutor in the case, Ray's official biographer and former U.S. Atty. Gen. Ramsey Clark.

The only principal in the debate who has stated flatly that no conspiracy existed has been Percy Foreman, Ray's lawyer when the case ended. He put it this way in court in Memphis last Monday:

"It took me months to prove to myself...that it was not a conspiracy."

But Ray then stood up in court and said, without elaboration, that he personally did not agree with the theory that there was no conspiracy.

John Larry Ray, a brother of the killer, lined up on the side of the believers in a conspiracy in an interview printed in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch Thursday.

Ray quoted brother James as having told him:

"I am not the only one in on this."

"My brother," John Ray was quoted as telling an interviewer, "said there was someone else in on this 'deal' but it had been hushed up by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. I didn't press him on what he meant."

Coretta King, widow of the slain Negro leader, said after the trial the "search for the many fingers which pulled the trigger" should continue.

The Rev. Ralph David Abernathy, who succeeded King as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, pledged the organization's vigilance "until justice is meted out to all of the perpetrators."

The Rev. Andrew Young, SCLC executive vice president, said he thought Ray "was at most merely a tool or a pawn."

Ray was called "a dupe" by Arthur Hanes, Jr., his original attorney, a former mayor of Birmingham, Ala. Hanes said there was no question in his mind that "there was a plot involved."

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involved."

Meanwhile, Russell X. Thompson, a Memphis lawyer, said Friday he plans a trip to New York Sunday to present what he said is possible evidence of a conspiracy to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Thompson had conferred with Hanes before Ray fired him but was never actually associated in Ray's defense.

He declined to disclose the nature of the evidence he says he has. And, he said, he does not know whether the NAACP plans to follow through with an investigation of its own, possibly through the NAACP Legal Defense Fund.

The New York meeting, Thompson said, is designed merely to sift the evidence he has gathered to determine how much, if any, appears valid.

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In New York, Jack Greenberg, director counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, said Thompson was coming to see his organization "on his own initiative and at his own expense."

"We have no information," Greenberg said, "upon which to base judgment as to whether he has any evidence at all of conspiracy and if he has alleged evidence of it, whether that evidence is credible."

Because the Legal Defense Fund represented King and still represents the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Greenberg said, and because of the doubts surrounding the case, "it would have been irresponsible to refuse to listen."

The Legal Defense Fund, although founded by the NAACP, is a separate entity from the NAACP, it said.

Greenberg said a report in the New York Daily News Friday morning, saying that Thompson would present to the NAACP "evidence strongly supporting the conspiracy theory," was inaccurate. Judge W. 18th graf which 14th in original.

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Judge W. Preston Battle, who presided over the final hearing, told newsmen that the prosecution "at this time is not in possession of enough evidence to indict anyone as a co-conspirator in this case. Of course, this is not conclusive evidence that there was no conspiracy."

Shelby County Prosecutor Phil M. Canale said in court there was no evidence of a conspiracy.

William Bradford Huie, who wrote several magazine articles

about Ray based on interviews before the trial, said he doubted whether there was a conspiracy. "But I do not know this and Ray insists otherwise," he added.

U.S. Sen. James O. Eastland, D-Miss., said Wednesday his internal security subcommittee would gather facts in the case. "It's obvious to me that Ray had some kind of help," Eastland said.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Justice Department was continuing its own investigation.

A warrant filed by the FBI in Birmingham, Ala. on April 17, less than two weeks after King's death, alleged that Eric Starvo Galt—an alias used by Ray—and an individual whom he alleged to be his brother entered into a conspiracy to violate King's civil rights.

When Ray was arrested, U.S. Atty. Gen. Ramsey Clark said "We have to go on evidence and facts. At this time we have no evidence of a conspiracy."

If any evidence has turned up since, federal officials are keeping mum. The FBI said Thursday night it would have no comment.

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