

CW-PG  
NY ONLY

PITTSBURGH (AP)--THE REV. RALPH DAVID ABERNATHY SAYS HE BELIEVES, BUT HAS NO PROOF, THAT THERE IS A CONTINUING CONSPIRACY TO KILL OFF KEY FIGURES IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT.

"IT BEGAN WITH MEDGAR EVERS," HE SAID, AND CONTINUED WITH MALCOLM X, JOHN F. KENNEDY, MARTIN LUTHER KING AND ROBERT F. KENNEDY.

"AND THERE WERE MANY OTHERS WHOSE NAMES DID NOT MAKE THE HEADLINES," HE TOLD A MEETING OF THE SIGMA DELTA CHI JOURNALISM FRATERNITY THURSDAY NIGHT.

"I HAVE NO PROOF," HE SAID, "I'M NOT A LAWYER AND MY TESTIMONY WOULD NOT STAND UP IN A COURT OF LAW."

BUT, HE WENT ON, "I BELIEVE JAMES EARL RAY WAS PAID." RAY PLEADED GUILTY TO KILLING THE REV. MARTIN LUTHER KING, THE MAN THE REV. MR. ABERNATHY FOLLOWED AS PRESIDENT OF THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE.

"I BELIEVE JAMES EARL RAY WHEN HE SAYS, 'THERE IS A CONSPIRACY,'" HE SAID.

"I AGREE WITH THE STATEMENT THAT THERE WERE MANY FINGERS ON THE TRIGGER THAT KILLED MARTIN LUTHER KING, THE REV. MR. ABERNATHY SAID. "WE ARE ALL CONSPIRATORS. THEY (ASSASSINS) BELIEVE THEY ARE CARRYING OUT THE WILL OF THE COUNTRY."

"I THINK THERE IS ALSO ANOTHER KIND OF CONSPIRACY," HE SAID. "I BELIEVE THERE IS A REAL CONSPIRACY IN THIS COUNTRY TO KILL OFF ALL THE BRAVE YOUNG PROPHETS WHO WOULD STAND UP AGAINST OPPRESSORS."

THE CIVIL RIGHTS LEADER MENTIONED THAT HE WAS TALKING ON THE THURSDAY BEFORE PALM SUNDAY AND THAT KING WAS ASSASSINATED ON THE THURSDAY BEFORE PALM SUNDAY. THE DATE WAS APRIL 4.

A BLACK MILITANT IN A PURPLE ROBE STOOD BEHIND HIM AND WATCHED THE AUDIENCE DURING THE SPEECH IN THE SAME WAY FBI AGENTS WATCH THE PRESIDENT.

THE REV. MR. ABERNATHY SAID HE WOULD OPEN THE SECOND PHASE OF THE POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN WITH A SPEECH IN MEMPHIS APRIL 4.

IN THE SPEECH, HE SAID, HE WOULD SET OUT THE GOALS OF THE CAMPAIGN. ALTHOUGH HE WOULDN'T GO INTO DETAIL, HE SAID THE GOALS WOULD BE MUCH SIMPLER THAN THOSE HE PRESENTED IN WASHINGTON LAST YEAR.

"I AM MOST OPTIMISTIC ABOUT ACHIEVING THOSE GOALS," HE SAID. "THEY WILL BE GOALS THAT EVEN THIS CONSERVATIVE CONGRESS CAN PASS."

PG

MARCH 28 R208AESNMCW