

KING

Inquiry on Dr. King Death Ends; Conspiracy 'Not Substantiated'

NYTimes

Special to The New York Times

JUL 31 1975

ATLANTA, July 30 — The city's Public Safety Commissioner, A. Reginald Eaves, said today that a report that his department received concerning a conspiracy to assassinate the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. "could not be substantiated" during a department inquiry.

"Unless new information becomes available, I consider the subject closed," Mr. Eaves told a news conference.

Mr. Eaves said that his investigation had been based on a statement by a Federal inmate. The statement was passed on to him by Dick Gregory, the comedian, Mr. Eaves said.

The inmate, Robert Byron Watson, alleged that he had heard several men in Atlanta discussing an attempt on Dr. King's life a week before the civil rights leader was shot to death April 4, 1968, on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis.

"I can now state categorically that many of the names, places and dates concerning the alleged conspiracy have been corroborated," the commissioner said. "However, equally as important, Watson's claims of involvement by individuals he named as conspiring to kill Dr. King could not be substantiated."

Reliability in Question

In the investigation, Mr. Eaves said his department did receive information that there was a conspiracy to kill Dr.

King. He added, however, "We are unable to attest to the reliability of persons who claim knowledge of a conspiracy."

Mr. Eaves said he would call upon the Justice Department the authorities in Memphis and Atlanta's United States Representative, Andrew Young, a Democrat, to investigate the alleged conspiracy "to insure that an injustice has not been perpetrated."

Mr. Watson, 21 years old, is serving a five-year sentence at Ashland, Ky., for narcotics trafficking. He provided his information to several law enforcement agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, in 1971. A bureau spokesman said earlier that the report had been investigated and "dismissed."

During his investigation, Mr. Eaves accused the F.B.I. of being uncooperative. Today he conceded that the bureau had already dismissed his informant's statement, but added, "it was still new to us."

Mr. Eaves said that his investigators had talked with 11 law enforcement agencies and 35 witnesses. James Earl Ray, the man who received a 99-year sentence for the King death, refused to meet with his detectives, the commissioner said.

United States District Judge Newell Edenfield, who originally sentenced Mr. Watson, has since ordered that he undergo psychiatric examination.