

# Hill Unit Finds No Link Between FBI, King Death

Associated Press

The House Assassinations Committee said yesterday it has found no evidence that the FBI was involved in the murder of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.

But a former Atlanta FBI agent said the bureau conducted "a 10-year vendetta" against King and then botched its investigation of his assassination by ignoring the possibility of conspiracy.

Arthur Murtaugh, now a college professor, testified that the FBI investigation was put back on routine status as soon as James Earl Ray was identified as the assassin and as a fugitive to be caught.

"It just defies reason to say that the same people who have engaged in a 10-year vendetta against Dr. King should investigate his murder," Murtaugh said.

He said he made that statement because the investigation was conducted by the FBI's intelligence division. He said he could only speculate that the probe might have been handled better if it had been conducted by some other FBI division, such as the criminal division.

Murtaugh said the Atlanta FBI effort against King included an electronic eavesdropping operation by 15 agents that produced 40 to 50 cabinets of files on King's telephone conversations.

In an opening statement, Delegate Walter Fauntroy (D-D.C.), denounced Ray's lawyer, Mark Lane, as a spiteful "consummate pitchman" and denied Lane's allegation that Fauntroy had said the panel had evidence that King

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By James K. W. Atherton—The Washington Post

Del Fauntroy attacks Mark Lane as "a man who thrives on publicity."

## King Inquiry Finds No Evidence Linking FBI to Assassination

KING, From A1

was murdered by an FBI assassination squad.

U.N. Ambassador Andrew Young was called before the committee as a surprise witness to testify that Fauntroy did not tell him of an alleged FBI assassination squad, as Lane charges.

As the panel began a four-day public inquiry on allegations against the FBI, chief counsel G. Robert Blakey said "the committee found no evidence of direct FBI involvement" in King's murder.

But Blakey said the public hearings will deal with questions of "possible indirect involvement." He said these included whether the FBI's campaign to harass and discredit King resulted in King's presence in Memphis, where he was assassinated on April 4, 1968.

Young was an aide to King and was on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis when King was shot to death there.

He testified that he knows of no evidence that the FBI was involved in the assassination, although he said "that was one of the conspiracy notions in that region."

"In the paranoia of those times," Young said, "it is no secret the civil rights movement was continually harassed."

In his opening statement, Fauntroy, who is chairman of the subcommittee conducting the investigation of King's

assassination, denounced Lane as "a man who thrives on publicity—good or bad."

"Mr. Lane's repeated attempts to spitefully use the death of Dr. King and to spitefully use those who were associated with him in life for his own purposes requires that I remain silent no more," Fauntroy said.

Lane is an assassination buff who has written books on the murders of King and President Kennedy. He has appeared before the House committee on behalf of Ray, who pleaded guilty to King's murder but subsequently recanted the confession.

Committee officials refused to comment on a New York Times report yesterday that their staff investigations has concluded that Ray assassinated King for \$50,000 from a St. Louis businessman but never got the money.

The panel has been investigating the allegation of a former St. Louis auto parts dealer, Russell G. Byers, that the businessman, who is now dead, told him in late 1967 of the \$50,000 offer for King's murder.

But Chairman Louis Stokes (D-Ohio) said the committee itself has made no such conclusion and "the staff has no authority to make any conclusion for this committee."

"However, Stokes refused to confirm or deny that staff investigators have already found that Ray killed King for the \$50,000 but never got it.