

T1

INQUIRY ON F.B.I. IN A DEATH URGED

Rights Units Ask Nixon for Study of Alleged Ambush

By JAMES T. WOOTEN
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 7— Two organizations long active in Southern civil rights activities asked President Nixon today to investigate the actions of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the death of a woman member of the Ku Klux Klan and the wounding of her male companion, also a Klansman, nearly two years ago.

At a joint news conference, the American Civil Liberties Union and the American Friends Service Committee accused the F.B.I. and the Police Department of Meridian, Miss., of having used questionable techniques to lure the two Klan members into an ambush on June 30, 1968.

Their charges and their request were based on a news story that appeared in February in the Los Angeles Times. The writer, Jack Nelson, a Pulitzer Prize-Winner, said the F.B.I. the Meridian police and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith had paid \$36,500 to two Klan informants for setting up a confrontation between the police and Mrs. Kathy Ainsworth, 26 years old, and Thomas Tarrants, 21, at the home of a Jewish businessman in Meridian.

Mrs. Ainsworth, a school teacher in Jackson, Miss., was killed by police gunfire outside the home. Tarrants was severely wounded. A policeman and a bystander were wounded in an exchange of fire.

Bomb Attempt Alleged

Tarrants was later sentenced to 30 years in prison on a charge of having attempted to bomb the home.

At his trial, Tarrants said the police had opened fire on him without warning. The police said Tarrants had approached the home with a pistol in one hand and dynamite in the other and began shooting at them when they told him to halt. Tarrants was severely wounded but made his way to a car where Mrs. Ainsworth was waiting. As she opened the door for him, she was shot and killed.

Speaking for the American

Civil Liberties Union today, Charles Morgan Jr., director of its Southeastern regional office, said the Los Angeles newspaper article provided a "prima facie case against the F.B.I. as involving itself in the deprivation of victims' rights."

Bronson Clark, executive director of the American Friends Service Committee, read a prepared statement in which he said there was evidence of "a clear misuse of police power and an erosion of the rights guaranteed every American under the Constitution."

Mr. Clark urged President Nixon to initiate an investigation and asked that if such an inquiry did not take place an investigation be undertaken by Congress.

According to the newspaper account, two Klan members, Alton Wayne Roberts and his brother, Raymond, had persuaded Tarrants that violence against members of Meridian's Jewish community was in the best interests of the Klan.

In preceding months, there had been several explosives and other attacks on Jews in the city, including the bombing of a synagogue.

A Switch in the Plan

Originally, the informants' plan, according to the article, was to aid the police and the F.B.I. in capturing Tarrants and another Klan member who were suspected of having been involved in the previous violence. Mrs. Ainsworth's presence at the home reportedly surprised the informants and the police,

who had been told that two men would arrive there to plant a bomb.

It was also disclosed at the news conference that Kenneth Dean, director of the Mississippi Council on Human Relations and one of the sources for the news article, had formally complained to the F.B.I. that he was being harassed by agents investigating his background even though he had worked for the F.B.I. in the past.

Mr. Dean was visited this afternoon by Roy Moore, special agent in charge of the Jackson, Miss., office of the F.B.I. and another agent, and told by them that the investigation into his background was not related to his involvement in the newspaper account.

The F.B.I. had no comment on the charges made at the news conference.