

FBI Ex-Informant Tells Actions of Klan

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By Jack Nelson
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The FBI had advance knowledge of— but took no action to prevent — instances of Ku Klux Klan violence and other civil liberties violations in the 1960s, a onetime FBI undercover operative has told Senate investigators.

Gary Thomas Rowe Jr., who also said he can testify to details of the FBI's campaign to defame and discredit Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. before the civil rights leader's assassination in 1968, is scheduled to appear before the Senate intelligence committee this week.

Rowe said he joined the Klan at the FBI's request and worked closely with the FBI on major cases of racial violence during six years as an undercover agent. He participated in violence, he said, with the FBI's approval.

He was the government's star witness in a trial at which three Klansmen were convicted of civil rights violations in the March 25, 1965, murder of a white civil rights worker,

Viola Liuzzo of Detroit, in Lowndes County, Alabama.

Since the trial, Rowe, now a private detective, has been living under an assumed name in Southern California.

Interviewed in the presence of his attorney, Rowe recounted details of a deposition he gave Senate investigators.

He said some FBI agents who participated in civil liberties violations not only are alive, but are still with the FBI.

Rowe said he decided to tell his story to the Senate committee because the FBI failed to give him a lifetime government job and fulfill other promises he said the bureau made to him in return for his undercover work.

Rowe said FBI agents told him they had bugged King's motel room and had damaging information about him, including photographs showing him in "compromising situations."

For clippings on Rowe's appearance as a government witness at the trial of KKK members for the murder of Mrs. Liuzzo, see this file 22 Oct 65.

Arthur Hanes, "a former F.B.I. agent and one-time Mayor of Birmingham," was one of the defense lawyers.

"Mr. Hanes asked Mr. Rowe about a conversation with Ralph Roton, the head of the Klan Bureau of Investigation.

"You told Roton that the F.B.I. promised you a 500-acre farm in Minnesota and enough money to run it on the rest of your life if you would cooperate, isn't that right?"

"Mr. Rowe said, 'That, sir, is a bare-faced lie.'"

Much longer story filed CIA (d).