

Wife Says Husband Was Offered \$500,000 to Assassinate Dr. King

LOUISVILLE, Ky., March 23 (AP)—The wife of a retired Louisville police officer confirmed today that her husband had told Representative Gene Snyder of Kentucky that he was offered \$500,000 on two occasions to kill the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Mary Baird, 44 years old, said that her husband, Clifton, who was unavailable for comment, had told Mr. Snyder of an offer that Mr. Baird said had been made by members of the Louisville Police Department and several agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

She said that her husband, who is 50, retired from the Louisville force several years ago after 27 years' service. He is now working for a private security agency, which his wife declined to identify. She said that he was out of town on business that was unrelated to the investigation of the King assassination by the House Select Committee on Assassinations.

"He told me about this when I first married him, seven years ago," Mrs. Baird said. "I think he thought he wasn't going to be believed."

She said she believed one reason he came forward a second time with the allegation was because "he wants to know why someone asked him" to kill the civil rights leader, who was assassinated in Memphis in 1968.

"It sure has been on his mind," Mrs. Baird said. "He said it just got to bothering him and that's why he contacted Mr. Snyder."

Reportedly Told Ray's Lawyer

She said that her husband, before getting in touch with Mr. Snyder, had told one of James Earl Ray's attorneys of the alleged plot. She said that her husband was "discouraged" after he told the attorney.

Mr. Ray, who confessed that he had killed Mr. King, is serving 99 years in prison for the slaying. He did not implicate anyone else in the murder.

Mr. Snyder, who disclosed last week that he had heard from a man who said

that he had knowledge of a plot to kill Dr. King, refused to divulge the man's name.

In Washington, a committee spokesman declined comment on Mrs. Baird's statements or identification of her husband as the man who had gotten in touch with Mr. Snyder.

Mrs. Baird said that her husband had told her "he was offered \$500,000 to kill" Dr. King and that "he didn't appreciate it." She said, "I can't say any more, but he's just not that type of person."

Asked why her husband thought he was asked, Mrs. Baird responded: "That's the \$64 question; he wants to know why someone asked him."

Newspaper Disclosed Name

The Kentucky Post first named Mr. Baird as the man who reported the alleged plot to Representative Snyder, a Republican.

Mrs. Baird said that she had no idea how her husband was identified as the man who made the allegation but that she was glad it is out in the open now.

"I'm not upset," she said. "It had to come out sooner or later."

Mr. Snyder said earlier this week that he had met the man "face to face" and was convinced he was a "rational" man. Mr. Snyder said he had changed his mind and voted to extend financing for the House Select Committee on Assassinations solely because of his conversation with the man.

C. J. Hyde, a longtime Louisville police chief who is now retired, said that he remembered Mr. Baird as a "very fine police officer."

Committee Approves Reduced Budget

WASHINGTON, March 23 (UPI)—The House Select Committee on Assassinations, which is in danger of lasting only one more week, approved a sharply reduced budget today in the hope that the House will let it continue to investigate the deaths of President Kennedy and Dr. King.