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Ex-Officer Quoted on King Plot

Louisville Police, FBI Agents Accused

From Herald Wire Services

WASHINGTON — An ex-police-man claims that police and federal law officers tried to implicate him in an assassination plot against Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1965.

Clifton Baird, 50, a former member of the Louisville Police Department told the House Assassination Committee that fellow police officers and FBI agents offered him \$500,000 to kill King, Scripps-Howard investigative reporters Carl West and Tim Wyngaard said.

They said sources close to the assassination committee reported Baird believed his police superiors at the time of the alleged conspiracy thought he was involved in a dynamite ring operation in western Kentucky and hence could be pressured into taking part in the alleged plot to kill King.

HE LATER WAS cleared of any

connection with the dynamite conspiracy and House sources concede there is no apparent connection between the alleged 1965 plot and the 1968 Memphis murder.

Scripps-Howard said Baird had a 2½-hour session with House investigators and turned over a tape from a recorder allegedly hidden beneath the front seat of his car in which a Louisville lawman discussed the assassination offer.

"Veteran Louisville policemen say they are 'stunned and puzzled' by Baird's charges and categorically deny them. Similar denials have been made by FBI agents assigned to Louisville in the mid-1960s," the report said.

Baird, who retired in 1975 from the Louisville police force after 27 years, now is employed as a private security guard there.

Meanwhile, assassinations committee investigators aren't talking about their latest interview in Petros, Tenn., with convicted murderer James Earl Ray.

RAY'S ATTORNEY, Jack Kershaw of Nashville, said a decision will be made April 11 on whether to allow Ray to take a polygraph test on his role in the King slaying.

Ray, interviewed at Brushy Mountain State Prison, is serving a 99-year sentence for King's murder.

Ray pleaded guilty to the crime in 1969, but has since attempted to retract the plea, contending he was misled by his first attorney, Percy Foreman.

The investigators questioned Ray for more than six hours.