

4 area men subpoenaed by House committee in King assassination probe

A congressional committee studying an alleged plot in the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. has subpoenaed at least three retired Louisville policemen and one active-duty officer to testify next Wednesday.

The men, three of whom confirmed this morning that they have been subpoenaed by the House Select Committee on Assassinations, are:

✓ Lt. Col. Priest Fry, who was chief of detectives of the Louisville Police Department from 1958 until he retired in 1970.

✓ Capt. Robert Gregory Jr., also a former chief of detectives, who headed the department's Traffic Bureau when he retired in 1971.

✓ Lt. James Bibb, who served two terms as an alderman after retiring from the force.

✓ Lt. Brent Hardin, assigned to a police tow-in lot. Hardin, an active member of the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), has been mentioned as a candidate for police chief in the administration of Mayor-elect William Stansbury. He could not be reached for comment this morning.

Committee investigators have been looking into possible Louisville-area links to the King assassination since March, when Rep. Gene Snyder, Republican whose 4th District includes part of Jefferson County, gave the committee information he said he received from a police informant.

Snyder said he told the committee of

an allegation that FBI agents and local policemen conspired to kill King before the civil-rights leader was shot to death in Memphis, Tenn., in 1968.

Snyder said he had received a letter from a former policeman who named three FBI agents and several policemen allegedly involved in the plot.

It was later reported that Snyder's informant was retired city police officer Clifton E. Baird, 50, of Fern Creek. Baird said he had been offered \$500,000 on two occasions to kill King.

In April, congressional investigators were in Louisville for a week, interviewing 21 people about the alleged plot.

Today, Gregory and Bibb told The Times they were among the people interviewed by the committee. Fry declined to comment.

Gregory said: "They came around this spring and spent one whole afternoon. They asked questions and took statements. They asked me things about the assassination of Martin Luther King, and about associations, meetings and things like that."

Gregory said he didn't believe he had any useful information to give the investigators and that he doesn't know anything about a plot. He said he believes the subpoena is simply a request for him to verify in person the taped statements he gave the investigators last spring.

Bibb said he doesn't know anything to tell the committee, either, and had nothing to tell the investigators last spring. "All I could tell 'em was that I was at work," he said.