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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Louisville, Kentucky

March 30, 1977

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

ASSASSINATION OF  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

On March 20, 1977, M. G. (Gene) Snyder, United States Representative, 4th Congressional District, Kentucky, appearing on WHAS-TV "News Conference", taped March 18, 1977, at Louisville, Kentucky, revealed that he believed investigation by the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA) would be productive in light of some recent revelations even though he did not initially vote for funding of same. Snyder indicated that he had changed his mind in light of some recent information which he carefully explained so as to not "drop somebody in" or "say anything wrong about somebody, that shouldn't be said."

Snyder indicated that he had received a letter a few weeks ago from a "citizen" whom Snyder described as being retired after many years from a responsible police department and that this "citizen", not further described, claimed to have been approached by three (3) "FBI officers" and three (3) or four (4) "prominent people at that time in that police department." Snyder noted that this unnamed "citizen" received this "offer" on two (2) separate occasions in his automobile where he had a tape recorder secreted. Tapes were made of the "offer" on both occasions, however, one tape was subsequently stolen. Snyder noted that the other tape was retained by the "citizen" and has been furnished to HSCA by the unnamed "citizen" when the latter reportedly traveled to Washington, D. C., at his own expense in order to bring the above information to the attention of said committee.

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ENCLOSURE

ASSASSINATION OF  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

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Snyder has spoken with the unnamed "citizen" personally and in Snyder's opinion, the "citizen" appears to be responsible. Snyder believed that the above "lead" and other leads should be "checked out" and that because of same, United States Representative Samuel L. Devine (Ohio), Ranking Minority Member of HSCA, now intends to vote for continuation of HSCA funding.

Snyder revealed that the letter written by unnamed "citizen" was received in the "regular United States Mail" and that the basic allegation is that the unnamed "citizen", who is a retired policeman, was approached by "members of the FBI and unnamed police department" and encouraged to assassinate Martin Luther King, Jr. When asked why Snyder received the letter, Snyder replied, "Time will have to tell." Snyder added that he "didn't want to go into that."

Snyder further revealed that the unnamed "citizen" had been to Washington and that the HSCA now has possession of the above mentioned tape recording which is being "washed down" to eliminate background noises such as a running automobile engine. Snyder has listened to the tape recording himself and describes same as having "some pretty inaudible sections" which are being worked on at the present. Snyder noted that the tape purports to deal with instant subject matter. Snyder indicated that he could not attest to the authenticity of the tape recording since he did not consider himself to be an electronics expert but noted same must be determined.

Snyder declined to answer interrogatories as to whether the letter came from his Congressional District or Louisville, Kentucky, noting he did not think he ought to place the unnamed "citizen" in jeopardy in the event the allegation is true, or people mentioned therein in jeopardy if the allegation is false. Snyder believed that the HSCA will have to decide when the names of individuals allegedly involved are to be released and made public.

Snyder declined any further comment on the matter, noting that if allegations were in fact true, the unnamed

ASSASSINATION OF  
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"citizen" furnishing the basis for same would be in jeopardy from "FBI and others named" in the letter, and if allegation was not true, "responsible persons" would likewise be in jeopardy. Snyder assumed that the HSCA would give the individuals named in the letter an opportunity to express themselves at the appropriate time.

Included herein are various accounts of revelations concerning the above mentioned allegation which have appeared in sundry newspapers throughout the Commonwealth of Kentucky as indicated:

ASSASSINATION OF  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

# Snyder gives panel allegation of plot to assassinate King

By JIM ADAMS  
Courier-Journal Staff Writer

U.S. Rep. Gene Snyder, R-4th District, said yesterday that he has turned over to the House Assassinations Committee an allegation that FBI agents and police plotted to kill Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Snyder said that in late February he received a letter from "a former policeman" who claims he was twice offered \$500,000 to kill King.

Snyder made his comments yesterday while taping a WHAS-TV News Conference program, which will be broadcast at 12:30 p.m. tomorrow on WHAS television and radio.

Snyder would not reveal the name of the former policeman making the charge, or the names of three FBI agents and several policeman who allegedly were involved in the plot. Snyder also declined to name the police force that the man worked on for more than 20 years.

Snyder made no connection between the offer allegedly made to the policeman and the actual killing of King.

"I have always had confidence in the major law enforcement agencies of this country, and I had to assume that what they determined (about the slaying) was accurate," Snyder said. "Now I think this is something that needs to be investigated."

Richard A. Sprague, the Philadelphia attorney who is chief counsel for the assassinations committee, last night confirmed that Snyder had turned over material containing the allegation, but refused to answer questions about it.

"The matter you refer to has been referred to the committee and is under investigation," he said by telephone from Philadelphia.

King was slain in Memphis, Tenn., in 1968, and James Earl Ray was convicted of killing him. The House committee last fall began investigating the assassinations of King and President John Kennedy. The committee's funding expires March 31.

Snyder, who voted against the committee initially, told The Courier-Journal in an interview last night that he will vote to continue funds for its investigation solely on the basis of the allegation brought to him.

Snyder said he had no explanation for why the policeman brought the charges to him, rather than directly to the committee. The policeman asked Snyder to put him in touch with the committee, the congressman said.

He said the former policeman had attempted to turn a tape recording of the \$500,000 offer over to Ray's attorneys, but finally was asked by one of the attorneys' investigators "where he planned to hide if he tried to do anything with the tape."

Asked if he believes the man's allegation, Snyder said, "I don't know. But I think charges such as this need to be investigated."

Snyder said he has discussed the charges with U.S. Rep. Samuel L. Devine of Ohio, the ranking minority member on the committee. He said Devine, a former FBI agent, checked into the man's background and found him to be "a solid citizen." Devine could not be reached last night.

Snyder told WHAS, "I have talked to him (the policeman) personally and in my opinion he appears to be a responsible citizen. . . ."

He told the television station, "He (the former officer) was approached to assassinate Martin Luther King. He names three FBI officers, he names three or four prominent people at that time in the police department. He indicates that the offer was made on two occasions in his automobile where he had a tape recorder, that he taped those items. One of them (the tapes) was stolen, the other he still has."

Snyder said the man went to Washington and either appeared before the committee or was interviewed by its staff. Snyder said the committee has the tape. Asked if he has a copy of the tape,

"Courier-Journal",  
daily newspaper  
of general  
circulation,  
Louisville, Kentucky  
March 19, 1977

ASSASSINATION OF  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

# Snyder Contacted By Man Who Claims Police And FBI Plotted To Kill King

By BILL HENDRICK  
Associated Press Writer

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Rep. Gene Snyder, R-Ky., said Saturday the House Assassinations Committee is investigating an allegation from a "logical, rational" man who claims several members of a police department and FBI agents plotted to kill Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Snyder said he met the man "face to face" and that "he appeared to be rational, a logical kind of man."

Snyder said he received a letter from the man and listened to a tape

recording the man said he made of the alleged assassination plot. He refused to say whether the man or the police department involved were in Kentucky.

Asked why the man contacted him and let him listen to a copy of the tape recording, Snyder said "he may have just been looking for someone with nerve, a fighter."

Snyder read part of the letter and used the word "blank" where the man had used names.

"I retired from (blank) police department in (blank) after serving (blank) years," the letter said. "While I was in the police department I was innocently involved in a conspiracy to assassinate Dr. Martin Luther King."

"Involved in this conspiracy were agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, agents (blank), (blank) and (blank) and others that I did not know," Snyder said, continuing to read the letter. "Members of the (blank) police department, chief of detectives, captain (blank), lieutenant (blank), officer (blank), lieutenant (blank) of the homicide bureau and president of the FOP sergeant (blank)."

"State Journal",  
daily newspaper  
of general  
circulation,  
Frankfort,  
Kentucky,  
March 20, 1977

ASSASSINATION OF  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

# Alleged Police Plot To Kill Dr. King Now Being Probed, Rep. Snyder Says

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP)—Rep. M. Gene Snyder (R-Ky.) said Saturday the House Assassinations Committee is investigating an allegation from a "logical, rational" man who claims several members of a police department and FBI agents plotted to kill Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Snyder said he met the man "face to face" and that "he appeared to be rational, a logical kind of man."

Snyder said he received a letter from the man and listened to a tape recording the man said he made of the alleged assassination plot. He refused to say whether the man or the police department involved were in Kentucky.

"I RETIRED from (blank) police department in (blank) after serving (blank) years," the letter said. "While I was in the police department I was innocently involved in a conspiracy to assassinate Dr. Martin Luther King.

"Involved in this conspiracy were agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, agents (blank), (blank) and (blank) and others that I did not know," the letter said, as Snyder read it, citing but not naming several other officers.

Snyder said he could not divulge the names or the identity of the man who contacted him.

"What I'm saying," Snyder said, "is, those blanks need to be protected if there's nothing to this. And if it is an accurate allegation that he's made, then the author of the letter needs to be protected. The committee is investigating it."

SNYDER SAID the man "indicates further in the letter that after he retired he contacted (a man) who, he says, is James Earl Ray's attorney . . ."

Ray is serving a life term in prison in connection with the assassination of the late civil rights worker who was slain in Memphis, Tenn., in 1968.

Snyder said the former policeman claimed he was offered \$500,000 on two occasions to kill King.

Richard A. Sprague, the Philadelphia lawyer who is chief counsel for the assassinations committee, confirmed Snyder had turned over material containing the allegation, and that it "is under investigation."

The former policeman, Snyder said, tried to turn over a tape recording of the alleged \$500,000 offer to Ray's lawyers, but one of their investigators finally asked "where he planned to hide if he tried to do anything with the tape."

SNYDER SAID he has discussed the allegation with Rep. Samuel L. Devine of Ohio, the ranking minority member of the committee. Devine, a former FBI agent, checked into the man's background and found him to be a "solid citizen," Snyder said.

Snyder said the man told him the offers for him to kill King were made in his automobile, where he had a tape recorder. Snyder quoted the man as saying he had two tapes, one of which was either stolen or lost. The other tape has been turned over to the committee, Snyder said.

"Most of it was inaudible to me," he said. "I could make out a little. I made out enough to believe and ascertain that a discussion was being had about King and money, but I didn't even listen to all of it."

SNYDER SAID he wants the allegation to be thoroughly investigated "and this guy ought to be protected from any problems. If it is inaccurate, then those people who he names need to be protected. He names three alleged FBI agents, four or five members, prominent members at the time, of a police department."

The man has been interviewed by the committee's investigative staff, Snyder said.

Snyder said he received the letter from the man on Feb. 28.

"I don't know if it is valid," he said. "It is up to the committee to investigate it."

"Kentucky Enquirer",  
daily newspaper of  
general circulation,  
Covington, Kentucky,  
March 20, 1977

ASSASSINATION OF  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

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## Assassination proposal told

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — U.S. Rep. Gene Snyder, R-Ky., says he has referred to the House Assassination Committee a retired police officer who claims FBI agents propositioned him to kill Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

In statements broadcast Friday on WHAS-TV, Snyder said the former officer, whom he declined to name, has a tape recording of a purported conversation between himself and FBI agents in which an alleged suggestion was made to murder King.

According to Snyder, the former policeman "names three FBI officers (and) three or four prominent people at that time in the police department (and) indicates that the offer was made on two occasions in his automobile where he had a tape recorder."

Snyder, who represents Kentucky's 4th District, declined to name dates and the city where the purported offers were

made.

Snyder also declined to specify whether the former officer was from Kentucky. He said the man contacted him by letter recently and that he later met the man and listened to one tape recording.

Part of the tape was inaudible, Snyder said, but he was able to discern that the subject was King's assassination.

"I have talked to him and in my opinion he appears to be a responsible citizen and I think these kinds of leads need to be checked out," Snyder said.

Snyder said Assassinations Committee now has the tape recording and is investigating the matter.

King was assassinated in Memphis, Tenn., in 1968. The Assassinations Committee recently said it had new information on King's murder, but has not produced any evidence of involvement by anyone other than the convicted killer, James Earl Ray.

"Sun-Democrat",  
daily newspaper of general circulation,  
Paducah, Kentucky, March 20, 1977

ASSASSINATION OF  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

## Snyder says man revealed police plots to kill King

By BILL HENDRICK

Associated Press Writer

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) —

Rep. Gene Snyder, R-Ky., said Saturday the House Assassinations Committee is investigating an allegation from a "logical, rational" man who claims several members of a police department and FBI agents plotted to kill Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Snyder said he met the man "face to face" and that "he appeared to be rational, a logical kind of man."

Snyder said he received a letter from the man and listened to a tape recording the man said he made of the alleged assassination plot. He refused to say whether the man or the police department involved were in Kentucky.

Asked why the man contacted him and let him listen to a copy of the tape recording, Snyder said "he may have just been looking for someone with nerve, a fighter."

Snyder read part of the letter and used the word "blank" where the man had used names.

"I retired from (blank) police department in (blank) after serving (blank) years," the letter said. "While I was in the police department I was innocently involved in a conspiracy to assassinate Dr. Martin Luther King.

"Involved in this conspiracy were agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, agents (blank), (blank) and (blank) and others that I did not know," Snyder said, continuing to read the letter. "Members of the (blank) police department, chief of detectives, captain

(blank), lieutenant (blank), officer (blank), lieutenant (blank) of the homicide bureau and president of the FOP sergeant (blank)."

FOB stands for Fraternal Order of Police, a collective bargaining organization for police officers.

Snyder said he could not divulge the names listed in the letter or the identity of the man who contacted him.

"What I'm saying," Snyder said, "is those blanks need to be protected if there's nothing to this. And if it is an accurate allegation that he's made, then the author of the letter needs to be protected. The committee is investigating it."

Snyder said the man "indicates further in the letter that after he retired he contacted who he says is James Earl Ray's attorney..."

Ray is serving a life term in prison in connection with the assassination of the late civil rights worker who was slain in Memphis, Tenn., in 1968.

Snyder said the former policeman claimed he was offered \$500,000 on two occasions to kill King.

Richard A. Sprague, the Philadelphia attorney who is chief counsel for the assassinations committee, confirmed Snyder had turned over material containing the allegation.

"The matter you refer to has been referred to the committee and is under investigation," Sprague said.

Snyder said he would vote to continue funds for the committee's continued existence solely on the basis of the allegation brought to him.

"Sun-Democrat",  
daily newspaper of  
general circulation,  
Paducah, Kentucky  
March 20, 1977

ASSASSINATION OF  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

## Rep. Snyder Claims Letter Ties FBI To King Assassination Try

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — U.S. Rep. Gene Snyder, R-Ky., says he has referred to the House Assassination Committee a retired police officer who claims FBI agents propositioned him to kill Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. In statements broadcast Friday on WHAS-TV,

Snyder said the former officer, who he declined to name, has a tape recording of a purported conversation between himself and FBI agents in which an alleged suggestion was made to murder King.

According to Snyder, the former policeman "names three FBI officers (and

three or four prominent people at that time in the police department (and) indicates that the offer was made on two occasions in his automobile where he had a tape recorder."

Snyder, who represents Kentucky's 4th District, declined to name dates and the city where the purported offers were made.

Snyder also declined to specify whether the former officer was from Kentucky. He said the man contacted him by letter recently and that he later met the man and listened to one tape recording.

Part of the tape was inaudible, Snyder said, but he was able to discern that the subject was King's assassination.

"I have talked to him and in my opinion he appears to be a responsible citizen and I think these kinds of leads need to be checked out," Snyder said.

Snyder said Assassinations Committee now has the tape recording and is investigating the matter.

King was assassinated in Memphis, Tenn., in 1968. The Assassinations Committee recently said it had new information on King's murder, but has not produced any evidence of involvement by anyone other than the convicted killer, James Earl Ray.

"Messenger",  
daily newspaper of  
general circulation,  
Mayfield, Kentucky,  
March 21, 1977

ASSASSINATION OF  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

# FBI-Police Plot To Kill Martin Luther King Is Revealed by Kentucky Congressman

By RICHARD L. WALKER

United Press International

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Rep. Gene Snyder, R-Ky., says he understands the House Assassinations Committee has "some right substantial leads" in regard to the Martin Luther King Jr. murder case, besides the information he relayed to them on an alleged assassination plot among FBI agents and police.

Snyder disclosed during the weekend that a retired police officer wrote him last month outlining an alleged conspiracy involving three FBI agents and "three or four police officers" to kill the civil rights leader. Snyder said the retired policeman claimed he was offered \$500,000 to commit the murder.

The Kentucky congressman declined to name the officer or his city police force. But United Press International learned from a reliable source yesterday that the alleged plot involved some high-ranking policemen and FBI agents from Louisville during the mid-1960s.

Snyder, who originally opposed creation of the House Assassinations Committee, now says he intends to vote for the panel's continuation.

Snyder said his informant had turned over a tape recording of a conversation which he says contains details of the half-million dollar offer to kill King. He said the ex-officer, now involved in private security work, had been to Washington to tell his story to investigators for the assassinations committee, but had not formally testified.

"I did think that I was sitting on something that was explosive whether accurate or not accurate," Snyder said. "That's the reason why I think I must be very careful not to reveal either who the writer was or who he named in his allegations."

Richard Sprague, chief counsel for the assassinations committee, has confirmed that the alleged plot to which Snyder referred was under investigation and refused further comment.



GENE SNYDER  
Discloses Plot

"Lexington Herald",  
daily newspaper of general circulation,  
Lexington, Kentucky, March 21, 1977

ASSASSINATION OF  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

# Ex-Louisville cop bares King plot

BY JIM EBERLE

Kentucky Post Washington Bureau

**W**ASHINGTON—A retired Louisville policeman described by knowledgeable congressional sources as highly respected and reliable claims he was offered \$500,000 to assassinate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The man contacted U.S. Rep. Gene Snyder, R-Ky., with the information and a tape recording to back up his claim.

Snyder says he turned over to the House Assassination Committee early this month a letter he received from the informant. Snyder describes the man as a 27-year veteran of the Louisville force, now in the private security business, but would not reveal his identity.

## ■ In danger?

Snyder said he was not identifying the man for several reasons: "If he's accurate and really interpreted everything properly that there was something going on then I don't think I ought to put him in jeopardy, people trying to get to him for one reason or another.

"I think they could even try to get him to keep him from talking any further.

"Or if he's not accurate I don't think the people he mentioned ought to have their good names smeared."

Snyder also declined to name the three FBI agents and four or five police officers the information said were involved in the alleged plot or to identify the police department they were connected with.

However, Rep. Samuel Devine, R-Ohio, the ranking minority member of the assassination panel and the colleague to whom Snyder first took the letter, said Sunday the man was a former Louisville policeman, although he said he was not sure what the man's status was at the time of the alleged offer.

"Kentucky Post",  
daily newspaper of  
general circulation,  
Covington, Kentucky  
March 21, 1977

## ASSASSINATION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

It remains unclear whether the other men named in the letter were also Louisville policemen because none of the congressmen would say. Snyder, whose congressional district includes suburban Louisville, said only, "It wasn't too hard for me to check and find out if in fact they had been officers, and they were."

The offer about which the informant says he has personal knowledge allegedly took place two or three years before Dr. King was shot to death in Memphis in 1968, an informed source said.

"He said in his letter that he was offered \$500,000 and the offer was made in his car equipped with a tape recorder and he has a recording of the conversation," said Snyder.

"And then when I talked with him," the congressman continued, "he told me that actually there were two conversations but the one tape has been either misplaced or stolen."

"He has one tape and he's turned it over to the committee."

Snyder believes he never met the man before the letter arrived in his office on Feb. 28. He said Devine, a former FBI agent, had the man investigated and reported back to him "that the guy checked out good."

In a meeting with the man after he flew to Washington to be interviewed by the committee staff, Snyder said "he did not impress me as anybody who had any kind of mental problems."

Devine said he hadn't met the man, and he knows of no information "he was a psycho."

And Rep. Louis Stokes, D-Ohio, who is chairing the subcommittee dealing specifically with the King assassination, said he was told by Devine the man checked out as a "highly respected police officer reputed to be a reliable individual."

Stokes said he's taking the man's allegation "seriously."

Coming to Snyder was a last resort for the former policeman.

"In his letter he indicated that after he retired from the police department he made an attempt to get this to James Earl Ray's attorneys," said Snyder. Ray pleaded guilty to killing Dr. King in 1968 and is serving a 99-year prison sentence.

The man was referred by one of Ray's attorneys to a Frederick, Md., investigator, said Snyder, and called him.

Snyder said he'll now vote to keep the panel going because "I think the police man's story needs to be investigated...to find out what there is to it."

ASSASSINATION OF  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

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*Ray's Attorney Says He  
Checked Kentucky Leads*

WASHINGTON (AP) — One of James Earl Ray's lawyers says that more than a year ago he looked into an allegation that Louisville police and FBI agents plotted to kill Dr. Martin Luther King and concluded "there wasn't much to it."

The lawyer, James H. Lesar, said yesterday that even if the allegation of a retired Louisville policeman is true, "it was remote from the assassination" because the man alleges there was only talk and not an attempt to kill the civil rights leader.

A House assassinations committee aide said investigators have talked to the retired policeman, who was not identified publicly, and are checking his story without presuming how much substance there is to it.

"Lexington Herald",  
daily newspaper of  
general circulation,  
Lexington, Kentucky,  
March 22, 1977

ASSASSINATION OF  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

# Identify ex-cop in King plot

BY TOM SCHEFFEY

Kentucky Post Frankfort Bureau

LOUISVILLE—Clifton E. Baird, 50, is the ex-patrolman who has just revealed to the House Assassination Committee in Washington that other Louisville policemen and three FBI men offered him \$500,000 in 1966 to kill Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Four or five Louisville police officers and three Louisville FBI agents plotted to kill the civil rights leader two years before he was actually assassinated in Memphis, Tenn., in 1968, the committee has been told.

Baird, now an undercover private investigator, was not at his small brick home at 7813 Edsel Ln., in suburban Fern Creek Monday night.

His wife Mary, 44, told The Kentucky Post in an exclusive interview why their secret is coming out now, and what it has been like living with it.

## ■ The secret.

Anonymous phone calls—some in the dead of the night—have plagued the Bairds through the seven years they have been married. "It frightens you to death, even if nobody says anything," said Mary Baird. The last call came a month ago.

"It didn't seem like it was ever going to stop," she said.

"I'm sure our phone has been tapped hundreds of times. It has an off sound, clicking little sounds while you're talking. "My husband has spent many a sleepless night—he'll lie there and toss and turn, then get up and read the paper. "He kept up with every report (of the assassination's aftermath) and he always reads all the articles on these deals," she said.

"Having peace of mind would mean a whole lot to everybody."

Clifton Baird didn't tell his wife the secret until after their marriage, the second for both of them.

## ■ Rigs up recorder.

"We haven't even told our children

about this, and he's kept a lot of it to himself, and hasn't even told me," she said.

But she knows the general story. "He had been driving this fellow (another Louisville policeman) home from work—the man's car had broken down or something. And he started asking a lot of strange questions, then he asked whether he'd kill King for half a million dollars. "I think this got him pretty upset, and puzzled, so he rigged up the tape recorder (under the front car seat). The guy made the same offer to him the next time they drove home," she said.

"He told him he didn't want any part of it. He didn't have anything against black people. That's why it was so hard for him to understand. 'Why me?' you know?"

## ■ Feared for job.

Baird was not known among police as a marksman. "I guess he is a good enough shot, but he doesn't do target practice or anything," Mrs. Baird said.

After high school in Bowling Green, Baird enlisted in the Marines, and served in Korea, she said. "I think he was a sergeant."

One reason Baird did not speak up earlier was fear for his police job, from which he retired after 27 years in November, 1975. "Before now, he was so close to retiring, he was afraid they might kick him out," Mrs. Baird said.

Baird has felt victimized since he left the force.

"Somebody's got to have something (negative) in his records—why hasn't he been able to get a decent job since?" his wife wondered.

"He went to meatcutters school in Toledo, and tested out 98 per cent. And he went to three or four places that were desperate for a meatcutter and couldn't get a job.

"It's been like that all the time—and his only job reference is the police force. Things like that just don't add up," Mrs. Baird said.

"You can live with something like

"Kentucky Post",  
daily newspaper of  
general circulation,  
Covington, Kentucky,  
March 22, 1977

## ASSASSINATION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

the. You can live with it, but you're not peaceful."

Mrs. Baird was not sure whether the alleged offer came in 1966 or 1967. Race riots gripped Louisville in 1967, sparked by an open housing drive led by Rev. A. D. King, brother of Martin.

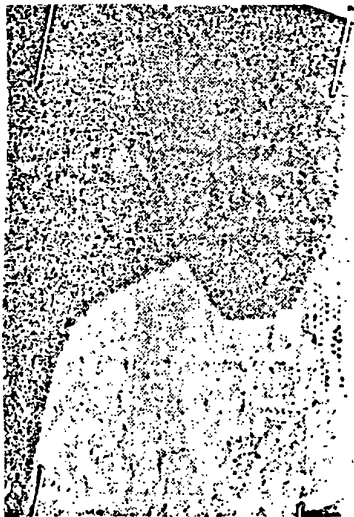
A. D. King was pastor of Louisville's Mt. Zion Baptist Church from 1965-69, and after moving to Atlanta, drowned in his home pool in 1970.

Baird is working on an undercover investigative job, and could not be reached for several days, his wife said.

As for the identities of alleged conspirators, "I've heard names, but I could not tell you—if my life depended on it I couldn't tell you," said Mary Baird.

Sources involved in the House committee probe of the assassinations of King and President John F. Kennedy said Baird is expected to testify under oath to the identities of the FBI agents and Louisville policemen in the alleged conspiracy.

Committee sources told Scripps-Howard reporters the Louisville allegation are considered "hot." One commented "They are placing it at the top."



**CLIFTON E. BAIRD**

... key figure in King probe.



Mary Baird, 44, has known for seven years the secret her husband Clifton is sharing with the House Assassinations Committee.

ASSASSINATION OF  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

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## Ray lawyer dismisses story of plot in Louisville to kill King

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — One of James Earl Ray's lawyers says that more than a year ago he looked into an allegation that Louisville police and FBI agents plotted to kill Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He said he concluded "there wasn't much to it."

The lawyer, James H. Lesar, said yesterday that even if the allegation by a retired Louisville policeman is true, "it was remote from the assassination" because the man says there was only talk and not an attempt to kill the civil rights leader.

A House assassinations committee aide said investigators have talked to the retired policeman, who was not identified publicly, and are checking his story.

Lesar said the retired policeman told him in a letter that other Louisville policemen and FBI agents tried to hire him to kill King.

Rep. Gene Snyder, R-Ky., disclosed last week that the policeman also wrote him a letter containing the allegation. Snyder said he turned it over to the assassinations committee.

(Snyder refused last night to confirm or deny that the policeman was retired from the Louisville department. "I think I've said enough," he said. "I just don't think I ought to nail it down.")

On a related matter, the House aide said two committee members will interview Ray today.

"Courier-Journal",  
daily newspaper of general circulation,  
Louisville, Kentucky, March 22, 1977

ASSASSINATION OF  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

## Assassination clue identified

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — The wife of a former Louisville policeman has told newsmen her husband, Clifton Baird, is the source of the allegation that FBI agents and some members of the Louisville police department plotted to kill Dr. Martin Luther King.

But Baird, 50, now employed by a private security agency, was out of town and unavailable for comment.

He is reported to have been a patrolman on the Louisville police force from 1949 to 1975.

Baird's wife, Mary, 44, was quoted by WHAS-TV and The Courier Journal as confirming her husband was the source of allegations that he was offered \$500,000 to kill the civil rights leader, who was assassinated in 1968. James Earl Ray was imprisoned in Tennessee on a murder charge stemming from the assassination.

WHAS also quoted a spokesman for the House Select Committee on Assassinations as confirming Baird was the source of the allegations.

Attempts Tuesday night to reach Mrs. Baird about the media reports were unsuccessful.

Rep. Gene Snyder, R-Ky., disclosed last week that he talked with a retired police officer who claimed he was offered money to kill King. Snyder did not name the officer or the city

in which the alleged plot occurred, but said he referred the man to the House assassinations committee.

Contacted at home Tuesday night about whether Baird was the man, Snyder refused to comment.

Earlier, Snyder quoted from a letter he said the man had written which said, "While I was in the police department I was innocently involved in a conspiracy to assassinate Dr. Martin Luther King."

The congressman said of the man making the allegation: "I don't think that he's a kook. I'm not in a position to say whether he's telling the truth or not, but he does not appear to me to be a person other than totally rational."

Snyder said he listened to a tape recording, now in the hands of House investigators, which purports to contain conversations relating to the alleged conspiracy.

A committee spokesman said the allegations are being investigated. If the House votes next week to extend the committee's charter, committee investigators may meet with the man in Louisville next month, the spokesman said.

Louisville Police Chief John Nevin said the department has not received any official communications from the assassinations committee.

"Sun-Democrat",  
daily newspaper of  
general circulation,  
Paducah, Kentucky,  
March 23, 1977

ASSASSINATION OF  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

## Man who gave information on plot against King is ex-Louisville officer

By JOHN FILIATREAU  
Courier-Journal Staff Writer

The ex-policeman who recently told U.S. Rep. M. Gene Snyder about an abortive conspiracy to murder Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. has been identified as Clifton E. Baird, 50, who retired as a patrolman from the Louisville Police Department in 1975 and now lives in Fern Creek.

Baird was identified as Snyder's informant in yesterday's edition of The Kentucky Post, which called him "a 27-year veteran of the Louisville force, now in the private security business."

In a brief interview at her home last night, Baird's wife Mary, 44, confirmed that it was her husband who told Snyder, R-4th District, about the alleged plot to kill King, the civil rights activist shot to death in Memphis, Tenn., in 1968.

Mrs. Baird declined to comment further, except to say that her husband is out of town and unavailable to newsmen.

Baird reportedly claimed he was offered \$500,000 to kill King, and said the conspiracy involved FBI agents and other Louisville policemen. According to Snyder, the offer to Baird was made in Baird's car, which was equipped with a

tape recorder, and Baird is in possession of a tape that supports his allegations.

According to Snyder, Baird wrote, "While I was in the Louisville Police Department I was innocently involved in a conspiracy to assassinate Martin Luther King."

Baird reportedly identified several members of the alleged conspiracy, including at least three FBI agents, the city's chief of detectives, a captain, two lieutenants, a patrolman and a sergeant who was president of the local lodge of the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP).

The last reference apparently is to Tom Denton, who retired earlier this year as president of FOP Lodge 6. Denton, who has said he is considering running for Jefferson County sheriff, said yesterday, "I swear I don't know anything about it . . . I was quite surprised that it was in Louisville."

Former Chief of Detectives Priest Fry, another of those apparently referred to in Baird's letter, said last night that he "knew of" Baird, but never heard anything about the alleged plot to assassinate King.

Current Louisville Police Chief John Nevin said the department has not received any official communications from the congressional committee investigating King's assassination.

Nevin said he may have known Baird, but he "didn't know him very well. Of course we were from different generations. . . . My first reaction to the thing was that it was preposterous."

C. J. Hyde, a longtime Louisville policeman who became chief in 1968, said he remembers Baird as "a very fine police officer. . . . He was a tall, heavyset fellow who wasn't afraid of man or beast. If I was going on a job and expected trouble, I'd want him with me . . ."

"Courier-Journal",  
daily newspaper  
of general  
circulation,  
Louisville,  
Kentucky,  
March 23, 1977

ASSASSINATION OF  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

## Retired Policeman's Wife Says Husband Told Of King Plot

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP)—The wife of a retired policeman confirmed Wednesday it was her husband who told Rep. Gene Snyder (R-Ky.) of an alleged plot by Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents and Louisville police officers to assassinate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Mary Baird, 44, said her husband, Clifton E. Baird, a former Louisville police officer, told Snyder of the alleged plot.

SNYDER QUOTED Baird as saying the offer was made in a car by members of several members of the Louisville Police Department and several FBI agents.

Mrs. Baird said her husband retired from the Louisville Police Department several years ago after 27 years service.

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

Snyder said the man told him he was offered \$500,000 on two occasions to kill King.

Mrs. Baird said she believes one reason her husband came forward with the allegation was because "he wants to know why someone asked him" to kill King, who was assassinated in Memphis, Tenn., 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."

Her husband, before contacting Snyder, told one of James Earl Ray's attorneys of the alleged plot, she said. Mrs. Baird said her husband was "discouraged" after talking with the attorney. Ray is serving 99 years in prison for the slaying of King.

SNYDER, WHO disclosed last week that he had heard from a man who claimed knowledge of a plot to kill King, refused to divulge the man's name.

Baird told his wife "he was offered \$500,000 to kill King and "he didn't appreciate it," Mrs. Baird said.

"Kentucky Enquirer",  
daily newspaper of  
general circulation,  
Covington, Kentucky,  
March 24, 1977

## ASSASSINATION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

FOB stands for Fraternal Order of Police, a collective bargaining organization for police officers.

Snyder said he could not divulge the names listed in the letter or the identity of the man who contacted him.

"What I'm saying," Snyder said, "is those blanks need to be protected if there's nothing to this. And if it is an accurate allegation that he's made, then the author of the letter needs to be protected. The committee is investigating it."

Snyder said the man "indicates further in the letter that after he retired he contacted who he says is James Earl Ray's attorney...."

Ray is serving a life term in prison in connection with the assassination of the late civil rights worker who was slain in Memphis, Tenn., in 1968.

Snyder said the former policeman claimed he was offered \$500,000 on two occasions to kill King.

Richard A. Sprague, the Philadelphia attorney who is chief counsel for the assassinations committee, confirmed Snyder had turned over material containing the allegation.

"The matter you refer to has been referred to the committee and is under investigation," Sprague said.

Snyder said he would vote to continue funds for the committee's continued existence solely on the basis of the allegation brought to him.

The former policeman, Snyder said, tried to turn over a tape recording of the alleged \$500,000 offer to Ray's attorneys but finally was asked by one of the attorneys' investigators "where he planned to hide if he tried to do anything with the tape."

Snyder said he has discussed the allegation with Rep. Samuel L. Devine of Ohio, the ranking minority member

of the committee. Devine, a former FBI agent, checked into the man's background and found him to be a "solid citizen," Snyder said.

Snyder said the man told him the offers for him to kill King were made in his automobile, where he had a tape recorder. Snyder quoted the man as saying he had two tapes, one of which was either stolen or lost.

ASSASSINATION OF  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

# Government told of King murder story

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — U. S. Atty. George Long says he has told the Justice Department about an allegation that Louisville police and FBI agents conspired to assassinate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Long said Friday that the Justice Department hasn't decided yet whether it will investigate the allegations disclosed last week by Rep. Gene Snyder, R-Ky.

Snyder said he was contacted by a man who told him of a conspiracy to kill the late civil rights leader. The man alleged, Snyder said, that six members of the Louisville Police Department and several FBI agents were involved.

Snyder has refused to divulge the man's name. However, The Kentucky Post reported that Clinton Baird, 50, a retired Louisville policeman, made the allegations, and his wife Mary, 44, confirmed it.

Baird has not been available for comment since his wife confirmed he told Snyder of the alleged plot.

Snyder, who still refuses to identify the person who contacted him, said he talked with the man "face to face." The congressman quoted the man as saying he was offered \$500,000 to kill King, assassinated in Memphis, Tenn., in 1968. James Earl Ray is serving 99 years in prison for the murder of King.

Mrs. Baird said her husband is a security guard, that he retired from the police department after 27 years service and that he is out of town on an assignment. She has refused to elaborate.

She said her husband told her of the alleged plot seven years ago, when they were married. He told Snyder, she said, because he wanted "to know why someone asked him" to kill King. It had been "bothering him," she said.

Snyder said the man told him he had contacted one of Ray's attorneys, who dismissed the allegation as untrue. Snyder, however, said his impression of the man led him to believe the charge at least should be investigated. Snyder said the man was "rational" and that the FBI considered him a "solid citizen type."

The man told Snyder that he tape-recorded the alleged offer which he said was made in a car, the congressman said. Snyder also said the tape has been turned over to the House Select Committee on Assassinations, along with a letter from the man in which names of policemen and FBI agents allegedly involved were listed.

Snyder said he listened to a copy of the tape but that most of it was inaudible. However, he said he heard enough to establish it had something to do with King and money.

Snyder said, additionally, that he changed his mind about extending funding for the committee on the basis of his conversation with the man.

Louisville Police Chief John Nevin said his department would not know where to begin an investigation but that he would like to be supplied with any information the House committee has on the alleged involvement by Louisville police.

"I would very much like to have the information furnished to us so we can ask some serious questions," Nevin said. "Right now, it is really most difficult to deal with the situation, but I certainly think before it's over we're going to have to look into it, no question about it."

"Sun-Democrat",  
daily newspaper of  
general circulation,  
Paducah, Kentucky,  
March 27, 1977

ASSASSINATION OF  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

## Deny they were part of King plot

By TIM WYNGAARD and CARL  
WEST

Scripps-Howard Staff Writers

LOUISVILLE, KY.—They are almost all in their 60s now, graying and potbellied, leisurely working part-time retirement jobs after lifelong police careers.

And until last week, they must have felt that their glory days, and the excitement of police work, were behind them.

Now they have been named as part of a 1965 plot to kill the late Martin Luther King Jr.

They maintain they know nothing of the charges leveled against them by another former Louisville cop. They wonder why a man they recall fondly would secretly accuse them to investigators for the House Assassinations Committee.

But slowly they are finding out that the charges of retired Louisville patrolman Clifton E. Baird—that they offered him \$500,000 to kill King—have caught them in the rapidly closing vise of congressional politics.

BAIRD'S ACCUSATIONS, contained in a still-secret letter to the House committee, are being used by members of the beleaguered panel as a lever to pry approval for another year's continuation from a reluctant House.

Approval of a new budget of \$2.7 million is expected tomorrow, following committee leaks outlining Baird's charges and a 14-page preliminary committee report claiming new leads in the murders of King in 1968 and President Kennedy in 1963.

Scripps-Howard News Service has identified and interviewed four of the six Louisville policemen named in Baird's letter—and they categorically deny his charges.

One of Baird's former commanding officers recalled Baird warmly, and then exploded when a reporter told him the contents of the secret letter.

"IT'S PREPOSTEROUS," he said of Baird's claim that six local lawmen and three FBI agents planned to kill King during a period of open-housing tension here.

"It's so preposterous that it's ridiculous. I just can't believe it... He's wrong," he said.

A second called Baird's charges "silly and stupid," and offered to take a lie detector test.

He added, "If he's accusing me, he's an out-and-out liar."

A third, the only one of the four still on the Louisville police force, also offered to take a lie test and said he intends to deny the charges under oath to the House committee.

Another retired lawman—a ranking officer attached to the same district as Baird and the rest of the policemen named in the letter—took a more soft-spoken approach to his denials.

"It's kind of weird to me," he said. "But I really can't help you. All I know about it is what I have read in the newspapers."

Individually, they all raised the same private questions about Baird's charges.

WHY, THEY ASK, did Baird remain silent about the alleged murder plan for almost 12 years—and for two years following his retirement after an unblemished 27-year career as a policeman?

Where would they—even with the connivance of the FBI—have come up with \$500,000 to pay a gunman?

And, they ask, if the FBI was involved—with all the sophisticated equipment at its disposal—why would they have settled on an insignificant patrolman, not highly regarded as a marksman, as the triggerman?

Baird, now a Pinkerton's security guard here, has disappeared since making the charges. Reporters have been unable to find him and committee sources refuse to say whether he is being held under protective custody.

Roy cooperating—James Earl Ray gave staff members of the House

Assassinations Committee information yesterday which his lawyer said could identify the shadowy "Raoul" in the Martin Luther King Jr. assassination.

Chief counsel Richard Sprague and three other committee investigators spent six hours with Ray, King's convicted assassin, at Brushy Mountain State Prison in Tennessee.

Sprague refused comment on what Ray told the investigators.

Among the information Ray provided the committee or made available through his previous lawyers, his attorney said, were travel dates and motel lodging records documenting his own movements as well as telephone numbers Ray claimed to have used to contact Raoul, a mysterious figure Ray has blamed for the King murder.

Ray, serving a 99-year prison sentence for the King assassination, is hoping to gain a new trial by cooperating with the committee.

"Kentucky Post",  
daily newspaper of  
general circulation,  
Covington, Kentucky  
March 29, 1977

ASSASSINATION OF  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

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On March 25, 1977, Robert L. Keuch, Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division, United States Department of Justice, Washington, D. C., who has been appointed Special Counsel for the Department of Justice in matters concerning the HSCA, advised that the Attorney General had authorized Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) interview of Clifton E. Baird, previously identified in newspaper articles contained herein, in the presence of an Assistant United States Attorney (AUSA), Louisville, Kentucky, concerning all details of Baird's recent reported allegation that he had received an offer from FBI Agents and police officers to assassinate Martin Luther King, Jr. for \$500,000.00.

On March 26, 1977, an attempt was made to interview Clifton E. Baird, 7813 Edsel Lane, Louisville, Kentucky, concerning all details of recent reported allegation. Inquiry at the Baird residence by Special Agents of the FBI, accompanied by AUSA Alexander T. Taft, Jr., on March 26, 1977, revealed that Clifton E. Baird was out of town at an undisclosed location in Kentucky where, according to Baird's wife, Mary Baird, the former was on special assignment in connection with his employment with Pinkerton, Inc. Detective Agency, 510 West Broadway, Louisville, Kentucky. Mary Baird declined to furnish information concerning Baird's specific location since Baird was working on special assignment involving twelve hour shifts and interview of Baird while so employed could possibly jeopardize his job and cause him embarrassment inasmuch as his co-worker on that assignment had no knowledge of Baird's recent allegation. Mary Baird indicated that her husband would not return to Louisville, Kentucky, until the morning of March 29, 1977, at which time she would ask Baird to contact the FBI Louisville Office or United States Attorney's Office, Louisville, Kentucky.

Mary Baird advised that she had no personal knowledge of the reported offer which apparently occurred sometime in 1966 and that her husband had not revealed any pertinent facts of the allegation to her. Identities of the FBI Agents and Louisville Police Department officers reportedly named in her husband's letter to Representative M. G. (Gene) Snyder were unknown to Mary Baird.

ASSASSINATION OF  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

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According to Mary Baird, her husband, Clifton E. Baird, was interviewed by the HSCA in Washington, D. C. "several weeks ago", at which time a tape recording of the alleged offer to kill Martin Luther King, Jr. and all other pertinent data were provided committee members. Mary Baird did not believe that a copy of the tape recording existed and had no knowledge of any copy of the letter written by her husband to Snyder which may have been retained by the former.

Mary Baird was of the opinion that Snyder publicized receipt of the allegation in order to insure continued funding of HSCA scheduled to expire March 31, 1977. Mary Baird had no knowledge of how her husband's identity was "leaked" to the news media, noting that she has been harassed by the news media both at home and her employment, Stockyards Bank, Louisville, Kentucky, in an apparent effort to obtain additional information regarding the allegation and arrange an interview of her husband. As of March 26, 1977, no known interview of Baird had been conducted by the news media.

Mary Baird assured Special Agents of the FBI and AUSA Alexander T. Taft, Jr. that she would have her husband, Clifton E. Baird, contact the FBI or the United States Attorney's Office immediately upon his return to Louisville, Kentucky. The necessity for immediate interview of Clifton E. Baird was reiterated to Mary Baird and suitable arrangements for same on or about March 29, 1977, were made.

On March 26, 1977, the above information was furnished to United States Attorney George J. Long, Jr., Western District of Kentucky, Louisville, Kentucky.

On March 29, 1977, the second attempt was made to contact Clifton E. Baird, 7813 Edsel Lane, Louisville, Kentucky, for the purpose of arranging a suitable interview with Special Agents of the FBI in the presence of AUSA Alexander T. Taft, Jr. Included herein as follows is a summary of that contact:

## FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

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Date of transcription 3/30/77

On March 29, 1977, at approximately 7:28 PM, Special Agents EDMUND V. ARMENTO and CHRIS R. HOEHLE arrived at the residence of CLIFTON E. BAIRD, 7813 Edsel Lane, Louisville, Kentucky, for the specific purpose of contacting BAIRD in an effort to arrange a suitable interview of BAIRD with Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the presence of Assistant United States Attorney (AUSA) ALEXANDER T. TAFT, JR. in connection with an allegation of an offer reportedly made to BAIRD by unnamed FBI Agents during 1966 to assassinate MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. Contact was made inasmuch as BAIRD had failed to initiate contact with the FBI or the United States Attorney's Office on March 29, 1977, as had been requested of his wife, MARY BAIRD, during previous contact on March 26, 1977.

Upon arrival at the BAIRD residence, MARY BAIRD answered the doorbell, at which time Special Agents immediately identified themselves and displayed their credentials. MARY BAIRD acknowledged that she recognized both Special Agents from previous contact with same on March 26, 1977, however, requested that Special Agents speak with her outside her residence. Interviewing Agents requested entrance into her residence for privacy reasons inasmuch as neighbors were sitting on front porches in close proximity to BAIRD residence and would be able to overhear all conversation. Entrance into residence was granted by MARY BAIRD following the above request. Upon entering the residence, MARY BAIRD was asked if she had been in contact with her husband, CLIFTON E. BAIRD, to which she replied that her husband was in fact present at the residence.

CLIFTON E. BAIRD entered the living room of the BAIRD residence, at which time Special Agents attempted to identify themselves with credentials in the presence of BAIRD's wife and explain the purpose of the contact. CLIFTON E. BAIRD exclaimed that he knew who the Special Agents were, refused to shake hands or look at the credentials. BAIRD stated, "I know who you are.", not giving the interviewing Agents opportunity to explain the reason for instant contact. BAIRD was immediately advised that the Attorney General of the United States had specifically requested he be interviewed

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Interviewed on 3/29/77 at Louisville, Kentucky File # LS 44-947

by SA CHRIS R. HOEHLE  
SA EDMUND V. ARMENTO/EVA/scs Date dictated 3/30/77

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This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

LS 44-947

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concerning allegations recently revealed by BAIRD to United States Representative M. G. (GENE) SNYDER. BAIRD blurted, "I have no statement to make. Just leave.", not allowing interviewing Agents to complete statement.

BAIRD became visibly upset and his eyes appeared glassy and moist, speaking abruptly and not allowing interviewing Agents to express themselves fully. While leaving residence at the specific direction of BAIRD, Special Agents again advised BAIRD that the sole purpose of the contact was to arrange an interview of BAIRD with Special Agents of the FBI in the presence of a representative of the United States Attorney. BAIRD immediately inquired as to the identity of the United States Attorney and when informed that the local United States Attorney was GEORGE J. LONG, JR., BAIRD exclaimed, "Don't bring that man out here, I have no use for him." BAIRD further exclaimed, "I have received numerous threats from the FBI over the last ten years." and "I have nothing to say." BAIRD terminated the contact by stating, "I'll say it all to the House Committee." Immediately prior to termination of contact, BAIRD was advised that if he possessed any evidence of misconduct on the part of any FBI Agent, he should immediately bring same to the attention of the Attorney General of the United States. Contact was terminated at 7:32 PM and Special Agents immediately departed the area of the residence.

ASSASSINATION OF  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

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On March 29, 1977, AUSA Alexander T. Taft, Jr. was advised of the results of the contact with Clifton E. Baird by Special Agents of the FBI on the evening of March 29, 1977.