

# Did M.L. King Cheat?

**Continued From Page 1A**  
right mind." And he said he had been working on the book since 1983, dictating some portions to his secretary and writing other portions in longhand on a legal pad.

Abernathy said the current black leadership has profited from their roles in the civil rights movement, "while the poor and deprived have sunk deeper into the pit of despair."

"I am outraged that the civil rights movement that Martin and I started has moved backward instead of forward," Abernathy said. "If this is not true, I challenge anyone who believes otherwise to go into the streets with me and survey the black community."

Abernathy also said he would have preferred not to address King's private life in his book. "Had Martin's infidelity not already been the topic of discussion in other books, in the halls of Congress, and in public forums,

my decision would have been simple: avoid the entire issue," he said.

The criticism of his book has included hate mail and death threats, Abernathy said, but he added that he does not feel hurt.

"The truth hurts," he said. "The truth will make you free. I'm not outraged at all. I'm cool, calm and collected."

Abernathy's account has been defended by a former federal prosecutor in Huntsville, Ala., who read FBI reports on King in preparing the arrest warrant for King's assassin in 1968.

"I just thought somebody ought to speak up who knows, and say that he (Abernathy) is telling the truth and that it can be verified by the reports of the FBI," former U.S. Attorney Macon Weaver told The Huntsville Times.

Abernathy's book says King spent part of the night before his assassination with a black female Kentucky legislator. Weaver said FBI files also indicated a

liaison between King and such a woman on the afternoon he was killed.

Weaver said the FBI report indicated that King "had a liaison with her in her room during the afternoon when they were having a rest period. He was in that room with her. He walked out on the balcony, according to the report, while she freshened up and

they were all going to somebody else's to eat."

But Abernathy's book says he was in King's room putting on cologne when King walked onto the balcony and was shot. Abernathy wrote that he and King had been talking in the room earlier. He did not mention a woman being present.

## Writer Defends Book Against Old Colleagues

**Continued From Page 1A**

King Jr. had sexual encounters with women on the night before he was killed.

A Memphis, Tenn., woman said in an interview published today that she was with Abernathy and King that night, and she disputed part of the account in Abernathy's autobiography, "And The Walls Came Tumbling Down."

In his book, published this month, King's onetime top aide says King spent parts of the night before his death alone with two different women and physically fought with a third.

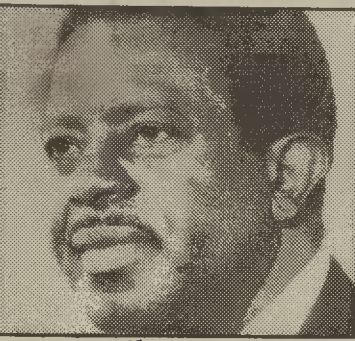
Abernathy wrote that he awoke from a nap in a woman's living room after a late-night dinner to see King and the woman emerge from a bedroom. Adjua Abi Naantaanbuu told The Commercial Appeal in Memphis that she was host of the dinner and that she and her sister talked with King and another aide in the living room while Abernathy, who "had too many" drinks, slept on her bed.

In an interview published today in The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Abernathy rejected suggestions by some of the civil rights leaders that two strokes and brain surgery might have impaired his memory. "I am most surprised anybody would think I'm mentally incompetent," Abernathy said.

Abernathy has said that he did not include passages about King's extramarital affairs out of malice, but felt he needed to address the issue since it had been discussed in previous biographies of the Nobel Peace Prize winner.

"I loved Martin Luther King more than a brother. I would never do it to injure him," Abernathy said.

A coalition of black leaders including Jesse Jackson and Andrew Young said Thursday they



Abernathy

objected to the controversial passages and doubted that Abernathy wrote them. A spokesman for the book's publisher replied that the whole book was written solely by the Atlanta minister.

The group's statement concluded that "the Memphis section" of Abernathy's book was so out of character with Abernathy's life and previous statements that it must have been "put into your mouth by others who needed a sensational story to sell books and slander the name of your martyred brother."

Steve Sorrentino, a spokesman for Harper & Row in New York, said the allegations are untrue.

"The book is entirely Abernathy's words. There was no co-writer, no ghost writer," Sorrentino said. "He stands by everything he says in the book. I wonder if all the people sitting back criticizing now have read the book."

"The book is not a sensationalized, 'put down Martin Luther King' book," Sorrentino said. "He reveres Martin Luther King and takes two pages to address what everyone has talked about before. He wanted to address it and be honest about it."

Abernathy --- appearing to promote the book Thursday in Memphis, Tenn., where King was slain April 4, 1968 --- said he was surprised by the uproar.

## Assistance Available To Low-Income

**Continued From Page 1A**

mining eligibility. Only households with heating bills or with heating included in rent are eligible for this assistance. Families living in public housing and subject to heating charges may qualify for partial payments.

Heads of eligible households should apply for this Low Income Energy Assistance Program on the local level at their county departments of social services. The departments will

take these applications beginning October 16 through November 22. A one-time payment will be made to eligible households in February.

More information may be obtained on the Low Income Energy Assistance Program by contacting any county department of social services or by calling CARELINE, toll-free from anywhere in the state at 1-800-662-7030.

## Hugo Disaster Centers To Help

Help is only a phone call away for those victims of Hurricane Hugo who have not sought assistance in one of the Federal/State Disaster Application Centers.

Even though the last Disaster Application Service Center will close Friday, victims need not feel abandoned. Help is still available through the Hotline - 1-800-458-5095 - which will continue to operate for 60 days following the date of the disaster declaration, September 25.

Those seeking assistance may telephone 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday. A verifier will be sent soon after application acceptance, and a check may be issued within days.

As of October 11, 3,262 people had contacted the hotline requesting information and assistance.

The toll-free Hotline number, 1-800-458-5095, is for anyone

who needs information or assistance regarding Hurricane Hugo.

Charlotte victims of Hurricane Hugo who plan to seek relief are advised to be prepared to provide the below list:

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