

ANDERSON

CORE Director Innis Accused of Ordering Shooting of Ex-Aide

Washington—The FBI and police agencies on both coasts are investigating accusations that Roy Innis, the controversial director of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), ordered the shooting of a former colleague.

Innis vehemently denies the allegations.

We have a signed confession, however, from the trigger man who says he committed the non-fatal shooting on direct orders from Innis. His story has been corroborated by a man who claims to have been an eyewitness to the incident, which took place in Washington, D.C., in February, 1974.

According to records of Washington police, who are still investigating the incident, and statements of those involved, Howard was walking from his car to his office in Washington on the morning of Feb. 27, 1974, when he was approached by Malcolm Drummond, a member of Innis' security team.

Drummond allegedly went up to Howard and said: "Stop! Freeze, mother---! Freeze!" Drummond then fired several shots from a .25 caliber automatic. One bullet hit Howard in the shoulder.

Drummond insists that he never intended to kill Howard, and his choice of a .25 caliber pistol—not exactly a hit man's weapon—tends to bear this out. According to one account, Howard had incurred Innis' wrath by aligning himself with Waverly Yates, a former official of CORE whom Howard had been assigned to keep an eye on.

When our associate Gary Cohn first contacted Drummond, he was reluctant to answer questions. But Cohn tracked down the alleged hit man in Los Angeles and he agreed to give us a signed statement.

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He said: "Roy Innis personally ordered me to shoot Howard. Innis said, 'Drummond, I need this SOB hit, I'm depending on you.' I shot Jimmy Howard on direct orders from Innis."

Core founder James Farmer told us that Drummond had also admitted the Howard shooting to him. "But Drummond won't say anything unless he's given immunity," Farmer said. He added that Drummond's reliability might be questioned because he is "weak," as evidenced by a switch of allegiance from Innis to his rivals.

Innis, who took over the leadership of CORE in 1968, is embroiled in a bitter feud with CORE founder James Farmer and others who have been trying to oust Innis.

Another key witness in the affair is Marvin Peay, who was Innis' security chief and special assistant from 1969 to 1976. Described by Farmer as "completely reliable," Peay told us that he was there when Drummond shot Howard.

Peay said he was surprised when Drummond pulled a gun because Peay had been instructed by Innis only to rough up Howard. Peay said he later learned that Drummond had been given private orders by Innis to shoot Howard.

Peay also told us that on three separate occasions, Innis had ordered him to shoot Waverly Yates. But Peay insisted that he had made no attempt to do so and never intended to.

Peay has told his story secretly to the FBI. He informed us he is willing to repeat his testimony to the Washington, D.C., police.

The Drummond and Peay accounts of the shooting have been supported with the hearsay evidence of other former CORE associates.

In a stormy telephone interview, Innis denied any involvement in the Howard shooting and ex-coriated his accusers.

"Who the hell was Jimmy Howard that he's so important that I would need to shoot him?" Innis demanded. Of Drummond, Innis said: "If you guys want to believe a pathological liar, a sick man, (then) go ahead, embarrass yourself."

"Peay was an animal from the gutter that I rescued and tried to restructure . . . I must have been foolish enough to believe I could change man's nature. I know better now."

James Farmer, said Innis, "is a coward and a liar and a hypocrite, and you can quote me on that."

ANDERSON

Is Once-Proud CORE Destroying Itself By Vindictiveness?

Washington—It is sad to see a once-renowned organization falling apart at the seams. But that's what is happening to the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE).

When it was founded 36 years ago, CORE earned a reputation for high idealism and courageous if rambunctious leadership. It played a decisive role in the civil rights demonstrations that cracked the wall of segregation beyond repair. CORE's record was a proud one.

But now, the organization is being torn asunder by partisan bickering and charges of financial improprieties, against a backdrop of violence.

At the center of the controversy is Roy Innis, a Virgin Islands native who took over as head of CORE in 1968. He dedicated himself to improving the condition of black communities across the nation and raised millions of dollars to further this worthy goal.

But present and former CORE staff members have told us that money and power—and perhaps a short-lived friendship with Ugandan President Idi Amin—have turned Innis into a despot who considers CORE his personal property.

Law enforcement authorities have now moved into the fray. The FBI and local police are looking into allegations that Innis ordered the shooting or beating of former colleagues who displeased him in one way or another. New York State authorities are also probing charges that Innis diverted CORE funds for his personal use.

In conversations with us, Innis vehemently denied all charges and heaped scorn on his accusers.

Meanwhile, we reported allegations that Innis ordered the execution of dissident CORE

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members, the non-fatal shooting of a former staff aide and beatings of CORE members. In the context of a bitter feud between Innis, CORE founder James Farmer, and others in the organization, it is possible that some of these charges are either exaggerated or imaginary.

But we reported yesterday our strong corroboration of the charge that Innis ordered the shooting of an ex-CORE member in Washington, D.C., back in 1974. Similar corroboration has been obtained by our associates, Gary Cohn and Tony Capaccio, of the charge that Innis personally ordered the beating of Ray Cunningham, a former CORE fund-raiser, who was set upon by three CORE employees wielding rubber mallets in Los Angeles in November, 1976. The three were convicted of the assault earlier this year; only one is appealing.

Cunningham's sin was to leave CORE to work for a rival fundraising organization on the West Coast. CORE officials accused him of contacting his old CORE donors on behalf of his new employer.

Although he denied ordering Cunningham beaten up, Innis confirmed part of the story. He admitted that he had met with Cunningham. "I told him that we didn't train him to go and work for a bandit," Innis told us. "We trained him to become a salesman so he could go on the outside and find a sensible job."

Marvin Peay, one of the three men convicted in the Cunningham beating, was Innis' personal bodyguard, security chief and special assistant for seven years. After his sentencing last summer, Peay told the Los Angeles County District Attorney that Innis had ordered the beating. He told the same story to the FBI's Washington field office and later repeated it to our associate Gary Cohn.

Innis shrugged off Peay's allegations. "They've been raising that charge against me all the time," he said. He explained that Peay sees himself as another Joe Valachi, the Mafia "soldier" who ratted on the organization in Senate testimony 15 years ago.

"Every cheap hoodlum who wants to play games with the cops tries to get off for his own crimes with this cheap stunt," Innis sneered. "The Valachi syndrome, I call it."