

# Ray back in prison after Stokes grilling

James Earl Ray was back behind bars this week and, barring a miracle when his congressional "trial" resumes in November, appears destined to serve his full 99-year sentence for the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The House Assassinations Committee — headed by a black chairman — took Ray out of his Tennessee prison and gave him the

public forum he has sought for years to plead his innocence despite a formal confession of guilt. But it also revealed new evidence that Ray and his lawyer, Mark Lane, found "most damaging."

Two surprise developments last Friday dealt severe blows to Ray's claim — a retired British policeman's statement that Ray boasted of murdering Dr. King shortly after his arrest in London in 1968, and another witness

admission that his support of Ray's alibi was fabricated.

Lane responded angrily to the written statement from the policeman, saying he understood the officer had been charged with corruption and fired in disgrace. That forced an abrupt delay until November in further questioning of Ray.

Scotland Yard later said the officer — Alexander Anthony Fist,

(Continued from Page 1)

now a pub owner — was found innocent of corruption in a trial earlier this year.

The presentation of the "most damaging" evidence against the stony-faced Ray came the day after Louis Stokes, D-Ohio, committee chairman, charged that Ray stalked Dr. King across the country for 12 days preceding Dr. King's murder on April 4, 1968 in Memphis.

Ray instantly denied he tried to hunt down Dr. King — although evidence showed his movements followed Dr. King.

When Ray reappears before the committee in November, questioning is expected to focus on whether he was part of a conspiracy rather than a lone killer. The committee holds hearings in September on conspiracy theories about the killing of President John F. Kennedy.

Ray will have much to ponder after three days of hearings that produced:

- Testimony that he left Los Angeles in 1968 and, paralleling Dr. King's movements, went to Selma, Ala., Atlanta, and finally to Memphis, Tenn., where the Nobel Peace prize winner was killed by a bullet from the rifle Ray admits he bought.

- Evidence that Ray was in Atlanta on April 1, 1968.

- In an outburst that made his lawyer wince, Ray told the committee — in what sounded like a sarcastic quip — if anyone could show he was in Atlanta April 1, "I'll just take responsibility for the King case right here on TV."

- The committee produced a woman, now 75, who said from a wheelchair that she had made out laundry and dry-



CONGRESSIONAL HUDDLE — Rep. Louis Stokes, D-Ohio, chairman of the House Assassinations Committee, considers an objection by James Earl Ray's attorney, Mark Lane. Behind Stokes is Del. Walter Fauntroy, D-D.C. and another member of the assassinations panel.

(Continued on Page 2)

cleaning receipts to a man calling himself Eric Galt, an alias used by Ray, in Atlanta on that day.

The committee also put before Ray a big blowup of a photograph of a laundry slip placing him in Atlanta, headquarters of Dr. King's Southern Christian Leader Conference, just three days before the Memphis slaying.

— A surprise admission of lying from the only living supporter of Ray's alibi that was at a Memphis service station when Dr. King was killed.

"This story is completely false," said Dean Cowden, who had first corroborated Ray's alibi. Cowden, a commodity dealer, said he was more than 400 miles away at his Port Neches, Texas, home at the time and had given false information to help a friend who was an investigator for one of Ray's earlier lawyers.

— Fingerprints connecting Ray to a \$600 bank robbery in London June 4, 1968, shortly before his arrest and committee indications that there is evidence linking Ray to a still - unsolved \$27,000 bank robbery at Alton, Ill.

That would conflict with Ray's claim he was financed by a mysterious crony named "Raoul" and possible explained how he got the money to buy a car and travel extensively.

— Agreement by Ray that he had been offered a deal for a lighter sentence by a member of the committee if he could name anyone involved in a conspiracy to kill Dr. King. No names came either from Ray or Rep.

Harold Sawyer, R - Mich., who said he made the offer.

— Finally, Fridays blockbuster from Eist, a sergeant on the famed Flying Squad who guarded Ray while the prisoner was awaiting extradition to the United States.

Rep. Samuel Devine, R - Ohio, read aloud the transcript of an interview with Eist that he said the committee obtained just two weeks ago.

Of Ray's role in the King killing, Eist said: "During the course of conversation, he definitely — he didn't actually come out with it — but it was there in the conversation that he done it. He was quite proud of it."

"If False," said Ray. Both he and Lane said the statement was the "most damaging" evidence yet presented.

Stokes presented his stalking accusation Thursday in making a summary of issues on which he had questioned Ray and chided Ray for providing so little help to locate the mysterious "Raoul."

As Stokes retracing Ray's movements in 1968, Ray's lawyer broke in: "No. I don't think that's what the record shows. I don't think that's what the record shows. That's what you tried to show."

Rep. Richardson Preyer, D - N.C., presiding over the committee during Stokes' questioning, intervened: "Let Mr. Stokes complete his question." To which Lane replied: "It's not a question. It's a summation of the

prosecution's case in this investigation." But Preyer prevailed.

"Then you rent a room in Atlanta," Stokes continued. "You buy a rifle in Birmingham. And then by every other piece of available evidence, other than parts of your story, you return to Atlanta, where you remain until at least April 1, by the documents we've produced here this afternoon."

"Following the announcement in Atlanta of Dr. King's return to Memphis, you drive to

that city and you rent a room from which Dr. King's movements can be easily watched."

Lane interjected again, angrily; "That is not true. You know you cannot see the movements from the room, Room 5. That's a false statement, Mr. Stokes."

Preyer ordered Lane to hold his objections and told Stokes to continue.

"Mr. Ray," Stokes asked, "Isn't it true that the time you left Los Angeles until the time you left Memphis (after Dr. King was killed) on April 4, 1968, that you were in the process of following the movements of Dr. King?"

Without hesitation, Ray replied: "No, that isn't correct."

"You have maintained all along you did not fire that shot, haven't you?" Stokes asked.

"Yes sir," Ray answered.