

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)



James Earl Ray

# Veil On Ray Case Is Lifting Slightly

By JAMES CHISUM

Where did James Earl Ray get his money? Why did he expose himself in so many places before shooting Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis on April 4, 1968?

Police officials, who once held answers to such questions in official files or behind locked lips, are opening up, and John L. Carlisle, an investigator with the attorney general's office, talked freely about evidence and theories in the case at yesterday's Memphis Sertoma Club luncheon at the Sheraton-Peabody.

Although Ray asked for a new trial, he pleaded guilty to murdering Dr. King in 1968 and was sentenced to 99 years in prison. But questions from Sertoma Club members showed that intense curiosity still surrounds the case.

Why did Ray, if he was planning a murder, show himself in so many places — buying a rifle and a car which could be traced to him, for instance?

"My personal idea is that he had no one else to do it for him," said Mr. Carlisle.

Where did Ray's money come from if not from conspirators?

Mr. Carlisle said Ray was a trusty in prison and had a chance to sell magazines and earn money in other ways, and he sent money orders out of prison. Furthermore, he bought a pistol in Birmingham in August, 1967, and could have kept himself going with robberies, he said.

"James Earl Ray was a man who lived very cheaply," he said, recalling that food had been found in his car to indicate that Ray practically lived in the vehicle. He said a needle and thread also found indicated that Ray mended his own clothes.

With slides, Mr. Carlisle showed the direct line of fire from a boarding house window to the balcony of the Lorraine Motel where Dr. King was shot. Another slide showed the contents of a bundle dropped by a man who hurried out of the building a few minutes after the shooting and fled in a white Mustang.

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Fingerprints on the contents of the bundle — a rifle, a pair of binoculars, a shaving kit and other items — identified Ray, Mr. Carlisle said. Laundry marks in an undershirt and a pair of shorts were traced to a laundry in Los Angeles, and employees there would have identified Ray at a jury trial, he said.

One slide showed the shattered rifle bullet that killed Dr. King. Mr. Carlisle said it was damaged beyond being definitely traced to the rifle that Ray dropped, but that experts would have testified that it was similar to one fired from it.

The investigator said hair with the same characteristics as Ray's were found in a brush and in the bed at the boarding house. And a bedspread in which the objects were wrapped contained fibers from Ray's car trunk and the boarding house bed.

He showed a picture of the more than 400 pieces of evidence, and said: "I've touched on things here in a few minutes that we lived with for over a year."

But when he had finished, there was still doubt, reflected in the questions from the civic club audience.

Was anyone else involved?

"We are of the opinion it was his sole idea and we have no evidence whatsoever that any other person was involved," said Mr. Carlisle, a note of finality in his voice.