

## Ray Was a Cunning Fugitive

# FBI Probes Conspiracy

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The FBI's top assignment today was to find out whether the suspected slayer of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was part of a conspiracy — and where the suspect got the estimated \$12,000 he spent in the last nine months.

Speculation that Mr. King was killed by a hired gunman has risen since the accused assassin, James Earl Ray, was arrested Saturday in London — after flying there from Lisbon en route to Brussels.

Federal officials said they could not rule out the possibility of a conspiracy "until we find the source of his funds and establish who his associate, if any, were."

Conservative estimates are that Ray spent at least \$12,000 between August 30, 1967 — when he paid \$1195 cash in Birmingham for a white Mustang auto — and his arrest Saturday.

The FBI said he traveled 19,000 miles in the Mustang, spent \$700 for bartending and dancing lessons in California earlier this year, took trips to Mexico and Canada, where he attended a locksmith school, and later paid more than \$150 cash in Birmingham for the rifle and telescopic sight officials say were used in the King slaying.

Attorney General Ramsey Clark, appearing yesterday on a TV program, reasserted that thus far there is no evidence of a conspiracy.

"We continue to investigate every shred of evidence, every lead, and if there was a conspiracy it will be discovered," Mr. Clark said.

Mr. Clark added that Ray was a man who "lived a life of crime, who obtained funds through crime, and I think we can reason that there is a very plausible possibility as to the source of his funds."

### BANK LOOT?

Other investigators said the money Ray spent so freely for travel and to frequent rundown nightclubs and bars might have come from a bank robbery in his hometown of Alton, Ill.

Ray escaped from the Missouri State Penitentiary on April 23, 1967. Eleven weeks later, on July 13, two men robbed an Alton bank of \$27,000. They have never been found, and officials said today that a witness to the robbery believes Ray may resemble one of the robbers.

If a positive identification is made by the witness when Ray is extradited to the U.S. on a murder charge filed by Memphis authorities in the King slaying, the source of Ray's funds may be explained.

Meantime, the FBI is checking points in England, Portugal, Belgium and Canada in an attempt to find whether he had money stashed away in these countries.

Assistant Attorney General Fred M. Vinson Jr., flew to London and conferred with Scotland Yard authorities yesterday. He also saw Ray in the Cannon Row police station, but would give newsmen few new details.

Because the U.S. and Britain have an extradition treaty covering murder cases, it appeared there would be no serious difficulty getting Ray back.

But U.S. officials in London said it might take a week, and possibly much longer, to get Ray back to the U.S. because of legal technicalities.

### GAPS IN TRAIL

There still are mysterious gaps in the trail Ray followed to elude capture after Dr. King was slain.

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The Real Ramon George Sneyd.

The FBI believes he drove the 450 miles from Memphis to Atlanta in the white Mustang the night Dr. King was murdered and abandoned it in Atlanta early the next morning. On the same day, April 5, he checked out of an Atlanta boarding house where agents later found a map bearing his thumbprint.

Three days later, on April 8, Ray rented a room in Toronto and stayed in the city for a month. But investigators have not been able to learn how he got from Atlanta to Canada in the midst of one of the greatest manhunts in U.S. history.

After getting a passport in Canada using the alias Ramon George Sneyd, Ray flew on May 6 to London and left almost immediately for Lisbon.

#### WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN

Investigators say they do not now know whether he spent the entire month in Lisbon or whether he used it as a base to travel to other countries.

Ray's arrest resulted from a painstaking check of Canadian passport files by the Royal Mounted Police who spotted Ray's photo, required for passports.

Although the passport had been issued to Ray under the alias Sneyd, the Canadian authorities quickly informed the FBI. Renewed alerts to watch for Ray were sent to Scotland Yard and other foreign police agencies.

Canadian officials discovered Ray had used the alias because he had assumed the identity of a Toronto police officer, Raymond George Sneyd, and had even learned the officer's date of birth and the names of his parents. Ray used this information in applying for a birth certificate which he needed to get the passport.

#### PROBE CONTINUES

Whether Ray, now that he has been caught, will explain the source of his funds seems doubtful. But until the question is resolved the FBI, which spent about \$1.4 million tracking Ray and at times used more than 3000 of its 6600-agent force in the chase, is continuing its "intensive investigation."

The FBI announced Ray's arrest almost at the moment funeral services ended in New York for Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, also the victim of an assassin.

Dr. King's widow, Coretta, was told of the arrest as she was leaving St. Patrick's Cathedral after the service.

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