

Money for the Death of Dr. King Is Called Goal of James Earl Ray

WASHINGTON, Nov. 9 (AP) — Shortly after he was arrested in England, James Earl Ray said in his jail cell that he hoped to make a lot of money from the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a retired London police inspector testified today.

Mr. Ray hated black people, Alexander A. Eist said, and bragged of plans "to get into Africa to kill some more."

Mr. Eist was the first witness before the House assassinations committee in a month-long series of hearings on the King assassination in Memphis, Tenn., on April 4, 1968.

The committee is attempting to pin down Mr. Ray's various confessions and denials in the assassination.

Close Contact in London

As a Scotland Yard detective, Mr. Eist was assigned to stay continuously with Mr. Ray after his arrest at Heathrow Airport in London on June 6, 1968.

Mr. Eist said that Mr. Ray had "never really told me that he pulled the trigger" in the assassination of the civil rights leader.

But Mr. Eist had previously told committee investigators, "There isn't any doubt from the conversation that he told me that he was admitting to me that he had done the murder."

Today Mr. Eist recalled Mr. Ray's description of throwing the gun away near the assassination scene in Memphis, because he had seen either a policeman or a police car.

The Only Mistake

In Mr. Ray's view, "tossing away the rifle with his fingerprints on it was the only mistake he had made," Mr. Eist said.

The rifle was later found with a spent cartridge in the firing mechanism and several unused cartridges were also discovered nearby.

Six ballistics experts testified today that despite extensive testing they were unable to make a clear connection between the bullet found in Mr. King's body and the rifle nearby.

The experts said that the Remington .30-caliber rifle had been fired so often that it fell in the minority of weapons that do not permit positive matchups with bullets fired from them.

Mr. Ray pleaded guilty to Dr. King's murder, was convicted and is now serving a 99-year prison term. He has since recanted the confession but now contends that he was set up to take the blame by a mystery man identified only as Raoul.

Mr. Ray's attorney, Mark Lane, has attacked Mr. Eist's credibility and contends he was dismissed from Scotland Yard in a bribery case.

Mr. Eist was charged in 1976 with two counts of conspiracy in connection with jewel robberies and was found not guilty of both charges. He retired in 1976 at the rank of detective chief inspector on a medical disability pension after 28 years on the Scotland Yard force.