

James Earl Ray Is Visited in Prison In House Inquiry on Assassinations

PETRO, Tenn., March 22 (UPI)—Staff members of the House Assassinations Committee visited a Tennessee prison today to question James Earl Ray about the 1968 assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Mr. Ray's latest attorney, Jack Kershaw of Nashville, said that Mr. Ray would tell the group all he knew about the assassination.

"He will tell the the complete story to the best of his knowledge," Mr. Kershaw said.

Richard Sprague, chief counsel for the committee, and four other staff members drove up to the gates of Brushy Mountain State Prison this afternoon and were taken behind the walls to meet with Mr. Ray in a small office used by the captain of the prison guards.

Mr. Ray is serving a 99-year prison term for the 1968 sniper slaying of Dr. King, the civil rights leader who was felled by a bullet from a high-powered rifle as he stood on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, where he had gone to help settle a violence-ridden sanitation workers strike.

Weather Forces Delay

The interview with Mr. Ray was to have taken place this morning but it was delayed after bad weather forced committee staff members to switch from a private to a commercial plane for their flight from Washington.

Mr. Kershaw discounted a recent report that Mr. Ray's younger brother, Jerry, was actually the mysterious "Raoul" whom Mr. Ray has blamed for the King murder.

"No. That is not true," Mr. Kershaw said. But he said he did not know the identity of "Raoul."

"I wish I did," Mr. Kershaw said. "We have two or three leads we are checking out. We are looking for him in Florida, Alabama, Kentucky and Canada."

David S. Lifton and Jeff Cohen intend in an article in the April edition of New Times magazine that in his testimony Mr. Ray substituted a nonexistent "Raoul" for his brother, Jerry.

Mr. Kershaw said that Mr. Ray would tell investigators that he had no idea that Dr. King was to be assassinated and that Mr. Ray was fixing a flat tire when the shot that killed Dr. King was fired from a rundown boarding house across the street from the motel.



Associated Press

Robert Sprague, chief counsel for the House Committee on Assassinations, arriving at the State prison, in Petros, Tenn., to interview James Earl Ray.

Mr. Kershaw said the key to the investigation was learning the identity of "Raoul" and who "Raoul" worked for.

The attorney said that if Mr. Ray testified before Congressional investigators it must be in an open hearing.

"I insist that he appear in an open hearing," Mr. Kershaw said. "I doubt if the commission would come here, but under proper guard he might go to Washington."

Asked if Mr. Ray would submit to a polygraph test, Mr. Kershaw said, "We have considered that and we have discussed that and I'll have an announcement to make on that later."