

By JACK ANDERSON And LES WHITTEN

Memphis. the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., spiritual leader of the civil rights novement, was gunned down in Memphis WASHINGTON - Nine years ago,

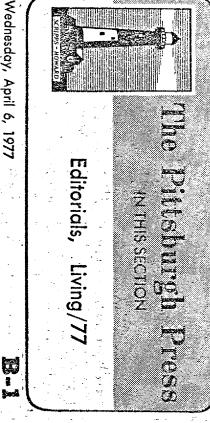
was nailed for the murder. Escaped convict James Earl Ray

assassin and that he acted alone." case. It concluded that Ray "was the he may have been hired by others. The public doubt finally forced a Justice Department task force to review the Yet nagging suspicions persisted that

analysis they point out significant challenged the Justice Department's inconsistencies and omissions in the findings. In a confidential, 16-page task force report. House, investigators, however, have

They note that the task force had a "multitude of leads" to pursue, yet

interviewed only 30 people. "Thirty interviews could hardly ysis, "A detective investigating a comscratch the surface," declares the anal-



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mon street crime may very likely conduct more interviews."

The House investigators don't pretend they have solved the case. But they have set forth their clues in a

> cal order: fascinating report stamped "Sensitive." Here are the highlights, in chronological transfer of the statement of the statement

the Missouri state penitentiary, he told ✓ While Ray was serving time in

> "businessmen's association" which allegedly had offered \$100,000 for King's murder. cellmates he would kill King "if the as saying he intended to seek out a price was right." Ray also was quoted

one aided Ray in his escape and whethbread box which was loaded on a bak-ery truck. The congressional investiga-tors are trying to learn "whether anyer this assistance was connected" to the from the prison by hiding in a large ✓ On April 23, 1967, Ray escaped

of real men, all of whom lived close to one another in suburban Toronto," say as Eric Galt, Ramon George Sneyd, Paul Bridgman and John Willard "These aliases correspond to the names to false identities. He posed alternately King assassination.
The escapee had immediate access the investigators.

Ray, the forehead and right palm."physical resemblances to Ray." Galt even had scars in the same places as "In addition, three of the four bear

✓ For the next year, Ray "traveled across the United States, lived in more." foreign countries . . . A conservative than a dozen cities and traveled in four

estimate of his total expense would be at least \$7,000. Ray himself estimates he spent at least \$9,500."

Those who did business with him recall "he often paid for items with new \$20 bills." The House Assassinations Committee "intends to investigate the sources of Ray's funds."

✓ Ray opened a safety deposit box in a Birmingham, Ala., bank in August, 1967, and closed it four months later.

Bank records show the box was closed by someone living in Baton Rouge, La. Yet Ray was living in Los Angeles at the time.

The committee, therefore, is investigating "who in Baton Rouge aided Ray by closing that safety deposit box."

✓ The committee has received unverified reports that Ray was in touch with the Beverly Hills office of Litton Industries in California. While he was posing as Eric Galt, he also listed as his previous employer a Pascagoula, Miss., shipbuilding company owned by Litton Industries.

Litton Industries.

The late William Sartor, a journalist, alleged that organized crime figures had accepted a \$300,000 contract on King's life from a right-wing racist group. According to Sartor, Ray got in touch with these men in New Orleans. The committee is seeking "all evidentiary materials that might support or refute Sartor's report."

A witness had told investigators

✓ A witness had told investigators he overheard a telephone conversation on the afternoon of the King assassination. "Frank Liberto, a person with al-

leged organized crime connections, said: 'Shoot the bastard. Do it this afternoon. Shoot him, even if you have to do it on the balcony, just do it."

✓ The committee has received "independent corroborations" of a possible Liberto link. A witness told of a Birmingham gun shop owner who, before the assassination, pointed to a rifle and said: "This is the gun that is going to kill Martin Luther King."

Later the witness saw the gun shop owner "in the company of Ray and Liberto." The secret report describes Liberto as "a target of the committee's investigation."

The Memphis police set up a surveillance post in a firehouse overlooking the motel where King spent his last hours.

Curiously, two black firemen, Norvell Wallace and Floyd Newsum, were withdrawn from the post. Then a black policeman, Edward Redditt, was called off the surveillance. The committee "has begun to investigate these incidents."

✓ Ray fled to Toronto after the assassination. He applied for Canadian birth certificates under the names of Paul Bridgman and Ramon George Sneyd. He finally obtained a birth certificate and passport in Sneyd's name.

The House investigators are check-



A KING CONSPIRACY? — James Earl Ray, being led from cellblock at Tennessee State Prison, has been pushing for a new trial in the slaying of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. A Justice Department report concludes Ray acted alone, but House investigators are continuing their probe.

ing "the procedures used by Ray in securing these documents."

The House investigators are also chasing down a number of other leads. They are undeterred by the cold water that the Justice Department tried to throw on their investigation.