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# RAY STALKED KING 2 WEEKS

By JOSEPH VOLZ  
(Special Correspondent)

WASHINGTON — James Earl Ray Jr. apparently stalked Dr. Martin Luther King for two weeks before killing him in April 1968.

The House Assassinations Committee and television viewers across the nation heard the second day of televised testimony from King's convicted assassin yesterday.

In his horrid southern slur, Ray told of his travels from New Orleans to Selma, Alabama, to Atlanta, and finally Memphis in the spring of 1968.

Ray admitted that he was in Selma, which was way out of the route of his proposed journey from New Orleans to Birmingham, the night after King visited there. At the time, Ray had not yet bought the rifle —

which was later called the murder weapon — but admitted that he was carrying a pistol.

#### Visited 2 Cities

Ray also said that he visited Atlanta and Memphis at about the time that King was shutting between those two cities in late March.

One vital question which still has to be determined: Did Ray return to Atlanta after he left for Memphis the week before King was gunned down?

King himself had gone to Memphis but suddenly returned to Atlanta when the violence broke out in the Tennessee city. King went back to Memphis, despite admonitions from his staff about his safety, and was shot down as he stood on a motel balcony on April 4, 1968.

Although Ray argued yesterday that he did not shuttle between Atlanta and Memphis, a laundry slip uncovered by the

committee indicated that he had gone back to Atlanta at about the same time King did. "I didn't go back to Atlanta. If I did, I'll just take responsibility for the King case right here on TV," he testified.

But the committee investigators did not follow up on that statement, and it was not clear if Ray was planning to change his testimony in light of the committee's new evidence.

Chairman Louis Stokes (D-Ohio), in three hours of questioning, virtually demolished Ray's contention that he was just a pawn of a mysterious gun-runner named "Raoul."

For 10 years, Ray, who originally pleaded guilty to killing King but changed his plea to not guilty a few days later, has contended that he was just following "Raoul's" orders when he purchased the murder rifle and when he traveled from city to city in the south.

#### **Never Found**

But Stokes indicated that perhaps there was no "Raoul" because the committee had found no one in three countries — the United States, Canada and Mexico — who could identify the mysterious criminal who Ray says traveled with him in 1967 and 1968.

Ray's memory, so accurate with the minute details of where he stayed, what he drank and whom he met, flagged when he was asked about Raoul. Ray has given at least three different descriptions of Raoul, whom he says he first met in Canada after fleeing a Missouri prison in 1967.

Ray, speaking in a soft, at times hardly audible voice, could not name anyone who saw him with Raoul in various public places before the murder. Ray said that he and Raoul rented a motel room in Atlanta, but the committee interviewed the motel keeper who said that he did not recall Raoul.

#### **No Identification**

Ray also insisted that he and Raoul visited bars in Birmingham and Memphis. But one of the taverns no longer exists, and no one at the second bar could identify Raoul.

Ray also admitted that published statements he made to author William Bradford Huie and other newsmen 10 years ago have been false. "I've misled Mr. Huie several times," Ray said.