

Pgh-Post GAZETTE 4-15-77

House Probers Grill Ray Third Time in King Case

PETROS, Tenn. (AP) — James Earl Ray, serving a 99-year sentence at Brushy Mountain State Prison for killing the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., was questioned for a third time here yesterday by U.S. House Assassinations Committee investigators.

Robert Lehner, head of the committee's probe of the civil rights leader's slaying, refused to talk with reporters after yesterday's session with Ray, who was questioned by Lehner and other committee investigators twice last month at the prison.

Richard Sprague, who resigned two weeks ago as the committee's chief counsel, said earlier this week that Ray told investigators three persons helped him before and after the assassination.

Sprague quoted Ray as saying one person helped him get a weapon and money to escape from the Missouri

state prison before the slaying; another helped him flee to Canada, and a third was to be contacted after the killing in Memphis on April 4, 1968.

Ray's attorney, Jack Kershaw of Nashville, said yesterday that Ray did not contact the third person. He said Ray escaped from the Missouri prison on his own and was later picked up outside by a person he has not identified.

Sprague also said Ray made it clear he made up the name "Raoul" for the person who he repeatedly has said drew him to Memphis at the time the Rev. Dr. King was killed. But Kershaw said that was "a misstatement of phrasing by Sprague.

"Ray says Raoul told him his name was Raoul, but that he, Ray, believes it was an alias. There is no indication that Ray is trying to deceive the world about Raoul."