

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# Chief Thinks Ray Was Not Alone

By JERRY GRAY

MEMPHIS (AP) — Memphis Police Director E. Winslow Chapman says he is personally convinced that James Earl Ray did not act alone in the slaying of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

"That's based on nothing other than personal opinion," Chapman said. "Nothing I have found in the files or in my briefing by people who were privy to these files has particularly enforced or changed this opinion."

Chapman's comments came during the taping of Memphis radio station WREC's Sunday public affairs program, "Rostrum."

He was asked about his personal beliefs involving the 1968 King slaying in Memphis.

"We had a man who supposedly committed this crime and then later wound up in London and eluded all the police of the United States," Chapman said. "If you want a personal opinion, I don't think for one moment that he was alone. And that's just a personal opinion."

Ray was returned from England in 1969 to face prosecution for the King slaying. He admitted to the killing on March 10, 1969, as part of a bargain in which prosecutors agreed not to seek the death penalty if he would plead guilty.

Ray, now serving a 99-year prison sentence at Brushy Mountain State Prison at Petros, Tenn., has since requested a full trial. The courts have repeatedly rejected his attempts to withdraw his guilty plea.

In an interview following the taping of the radio program, Chapman repeated that his statement carried no official weight.

"Personally, I don't think James Earl Ray operated by himself," Chapman said, however. He would not elaborate when asked if he thought King's death was part of a conspiracy.

Chapman added that his comments at this time have nothing to do with the current probe by the U.S. House of Representatives Select Committee on Assassinations. Committee staff members, who are investigating King's death and the 1963 slaying of President John F. Kennedy, have made several trips to Memphis.

"It has nothing to do relative to that," Chapman said. "It's something I have felt personally every since the perpetration of the crime. I've expressed it personally to friends and family — not officially — and I'm not expressing it officially now."

Chapman, 36, is a 1961 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and served three years in the Army before becoming a construction engineer in 1964.

He later served as Mayor Wyeth Chandler's administrative assistant for four years, giving up the post to become police director Sept. 23.

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