

Phil Inquirer?

Conspiracy Theory Ruled Out

King Slayer Alone, Author Says

By AL DONALSON

The day after Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, Doubleday & Co., the publishing firm, asked Gerold Frank to investigate the possibility the slaying was part of a conspiracy.

Everything pointed toward the likelihood that more than a single person was involved in the shooting of the civil rights leader at a black-owned motel in Memphis, Tenn.

Conspiracy Studied

Law enforcement officials and the American public were asking how could James Earl Ray, a bungling, two-bit hold-up man, conceive and execute the daring act.

Specifically, everyone was wondering:

✓ Could a single assassin gun down a well-known public figure who was always surrounded by dozens of aides?

✓ How could the killer dodge the entire U. S. intelligence apparatus — including the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and 2,000 FBI agents — for 65 days on several continents without being involved in a conspiracy?

Frank's account of the assassination and the hunt for James Earl Ray was released several weeks ago after more than three years of exhaustive research termed by the author



GEROLD FRANK

Ray acted alone.

as "blood, sweat and tears."

His book, titled "An American Death," concludes that Ray was not hired by the Communists, the CIA, a group of black nationalists or a combine of wealthy Southern businessmen to kill Dr. King.

Ray Acted Alone

He insists Ray acted alone and was able to elude law enforcement agencies because of "luck and stupidity."

To reach his conclusions, Frank interviewed media rep-

resentatives, lawyers, judges, investigators and consulted police reports, diaries, letters and other confidential material.

Frank, who also wrote "The Boston Strangler," "I'll Cry Tomorrow," "Too Much, Too Soon" and the "Beloved Infidel," arrived here last night to promote his new book.

"Dr. King's assassination looked like a conspiracy, but you discover it wasn't when you take the entire thing apart step by step," said Frank.

"I got disgusted several times and wanted to quit because I wasn't finding any evidence of a conspiracy.

"There is nothing about Ray that suggests he was a hired gun. All his actions in the assassination indicate it was a case of luck and stupidity."

King Humor

"What must be understood about James Earl Ray is that he is a man utterly alone who made up for his isolation from others by living in a private world of fantasies and, sadly, enacted one of them when he assassinated Dr. King," writes Frank.

Frank said he tried to present Dr. King as a human being.

"Everyone deified him because he was a great man, but I tried to show that he had

humor, that he could get angry and that he knew how to relax.

"If his father reads the book, he will be shocked to find out, for instance, that his son drank," said Frank. "My book shows a side of Dr. King that very few people knew."