

Now that James Earl Ray has testified publicly and under oath before the House Special Committee on Assassinations, where do we stand? 1) We now *know* some things about Ray; and 2) there is the outer shape of a conspiracy developing.

We now know that Ray is a pathological liar. He lied to his lawyers, to journalists, to me when I visited him, and under oath to the special House committee.

He said he wasn't in Atlanta on April 1, 1968. A laundry slip and witnesses prove that he was. He said he didn't rob a London bank. The committee produced the robber's note with his fingerprints on it. He said witnesses at a gas station in Memphis would place him away from the murder scene, but when produced, they denied it.

The committee didn't quite put Ray's finger on the trigger, but they did carve away his alibis, refute his lies and circumstantially build a virtually airtight case establishing him as the actual assassin.

Does Ray deserve a trial? Only incidentally. The truth, not Ray, is the critical issue. The Assassinations Committee, under the outstanding leadership of Chairman Louis Stokes, has interviewed more than 2,000 people, gathered hundreds of hours of testimony and conducted a credible hearing. Congress should give the committee the \$790,000 it needs to complete its investigation. If the committee is allowed to complete its work, there may be no need for a special prosecutor or a trial.

The committee, through the questioning of a congressman and former aide to King, Walter Faun-

troy, will consider 21 different conspiracy theories when it returns in November to public hearings on the assassination. What is publicly known, and the direction the committee now seems to be headed, points to a conspiracy involving a Southeast right-wing political connection, possibly centered in Alabama.

Ray's first attorney, whom he called to represent him from London, was Arthur Hanes, of Birmingham, Ala. Hanes is the lawyer who successfully represented the three Ku Klux Klan members accused of killing civil rights worker Viola Liuzzo. He is also the same attorney who worked closely with "Bull" Connor during the 1963 Birmingham demonstrations.

The mysterious "Raoul" (who Ray can't identify very clearly) may actually be Jerry Ray, James Earl's closest brother. Jerry Ray, an outspoken racist, is a bodyguard and errand boy for J.B. Stoner, head of the National States' Rights Party, an extreme right-wing political group.

Some people have said that Ray becomes "tense" and "devious" when pressed for information about Raoul. James Earl Ray seems to be protecting someone, either someone he loves (possibly his brother) or someone he fears. The theory that Raoul may actually be his brother Jerry is given further credence by the fact that much of what James Earl Ray has said about his contact with his brother Jerry prior to the assassination parallels much of what he has told of his contacts with Raoul.

It is important that the issue of King's murder be kept visible and alive, for only when the truth is known can we go about the business of healing ourselves as a nation.