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Tests on Ray's Rifle Done

Firearms experts completed extensive ballistics tests in the James Earl Ray case yesterday at a laboratory in Cranberry Township, Pa. They said they had reached a conclusion as to whether a rifle owned by Ray fired the bullet that killed the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968.

The conclusion will be revealed at a court hearing expected early next month in Memphis, Tenn., where King was assassinated. The final ballistics tests were carried out at the CamScan USA laboratory. Eighteen test bullets fired in a crime lab at the University of Rhode Island last week, then compared with the fatal bullet, were taken to CamScan and tested to determine whether the .30-06 rifle owned by Ray, bearing his fingerprint and discovered near the assassination scene, actually was the murder weapon.

The final examinations were made with a scanning electron microscope capable of magnifying images 300 to 500 times actual size. — Michael Dorman