

King Assassination Questioning

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WASHINGTON — Did James Earl Ray have a motive to kill Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at Memphis on the evening of April 4, 1968?

Was there a conspiracy involved in King's assassination?

Did the Memphis Police Department provide adequate protection for King during his stay in Memphis?

Was a "conspiracy" involved in the removal of a black policeman as King's bodyguard before King was killed on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel?

These are only a few of the questions the House Assassinations Committee is expected to touch upon when it resumes hearings today into King's death.

Committee members today will review admissions by Ray concerning the King case.

By Friday, the emphasis will shift to possible motives Ray, King's confessed killer, would have had to assassinate King in Memphis on April 4, 1968.

The hearings, which recessed in August, will conclude on Dec. 1 after a probe of witnesses, which likely will include a second appearance by Ray himself, and a probe of whether the Memphis Police De-

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partment and the FBI performed their jobs adequately in the investigation of King's death.

A committee staff spokesman said Wednesday that past admissions by Ray will bear heavily on the ultimate questions of "Did he do it?" and "Did he have help?"

After examining Ray's past admissions in the morning, the committee Thursday afternoon will explore what part science has played in the investigation.

On Friday, the focus will be on Ray's possible motive to kill King. A second "theme" will be whether Ray had help from conspirators.

A black police officer was assigned to guard King, but he was not present when King was killed.

"Why was he withdrawn?" the spokesman asked at a briefing Wednesday. "Was there a conspiracy to leave King unprotected?"

Committee members Friday are expected to examine the security for King in Memphis the day he was shot.

"What was the performance of the Memphis Police Department?" a staff member asked.

When hearings end Dec. 15, findings will be published and ready for public review within about 90 days.