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Preyer: Evidence May Point to King Plot

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A key member of the House Assassinations Committee said yesterday there is evidence that, if it checks out, would show there was a conspiracy to kill the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

Rep. Richardson Preyer (D-N.C.), chairman of the panel's subcommittee on the President Kennedy's assassination, made the statement in an interview on "Face the Nation" (CBS, WDVM).

Much of the interview was devoted to the Kennedy hearings, but at one point Preyer was asked if it would be possible to prove a King conspiracy without the cooperation of James Earl Ray, who pleaded guilty to murdering the civil rights leader in 1968.

Preyer, citing the deaths of witnesses over the years, replied: "It's going to be

difficult to prove. It may be that we can only prove an association rather than a convictable conspiracy without Mr. Ray's help."

"I have to say, Judge Preyer," responded one questioner, "that your choice of words in that answer makes me think that you believe there was a conspiracy."

"Well," said Preyer, a former judge, "I'll have to take refuge behind our committee's rules and say that I don't want to make a statement on that. I think it's fair to say this: there is evidence which, if it checks out to be credible, would show a conspiracy in that case."

Earlier, Preyer had said Ray's finances were a key point in determining if a conspiracy existed. Ray, just out of prison, traveled extensively before the assassination. He remained at-large for a year after

the killing, traveling to three foreign countries.

Ray confessed to killing King, but has since recanted and maintained that he was framed by a mysterious figure he calls "Raoul."

Preyer said committee questioning had virtually demolished Ray's alibi, but said the panel can expect little help from Ray in establishing if he was part of a conspiracy.

On the Kennedy assassination, Preyer conceded that many questions will remain unanswered when the committee's work is through. Some questions will never be answered, he said. But he maintained that the committee's investigation will at least put to rest the complaint that the 1963 assassination was never thoroughly explored.