

STATES-ITEM

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NINETEEN

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Arrest of Ray Deals Blow to Cabal Rumor

A TWO-MONTH SEARCH, worldwide, for James Earl Ray, was brought to a close over the weekend with his arrest at London Airport where he was seeking to secure passage to Brussels. Ray, long-sought suspect in the murder of Martin Luther King, was taken into custody as the climax of a cooperative drive by the Canadian Northwest Mounted Police, the FBI, Scotland Yard, and Interpol, all working together to trace Ray, who seemed to have been dematerialized so that he vanished into thin air.

Major credit must go to the Canadian Mounties, who set about the Herculean task of going over thousands of "mug-shot" pictures which included every felon arrested in Canada over the last 10 years, to see if one of them might be identified as Ray. About midway through the long quest it was rewarded by success.

Hundreds—perhaps thousands—of copies of the thus discovered picture of Ray were made and distributed to every major municipal, state and national police organization throughout the free world, and a Scotland Yard detective (who arrested him on charges of traveling on two fraudulent Canadian passports and having an unregistered hand gun in his possession) made a routine check of recent "wanted" photographs and immediately spotted him as the subject of the Ray photo.

An assistant U.S. attorney-general is now in London, checking over the routine legal steps that must be taken to bring about Ray's extradition from Britain to this country. The FBI has its agents in London too, to return him in custody once he has been duly extradited. He will then be tried before either a federal or a state court in Memphis.

THIS SUMS UP THE basic developments of the case to date. What has not been brought out is that this punctures a toy balloon of myth and rumor to the effect that some sort of cabal, possibly organized by the LBJ establishment, wanted Ray to escape lest he reveal who his backers were: either the U.S. federal apparatus, or some sort of Communist cell, whose exposure would so irk the Russians that the newly evident but still tenuous lessening of the strain on relations between USA and USSR might be threatened.

I have heard rumor mongers cite in proof of this flimsy



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theory the assertion that not one of the three actual assassins involved in the two Kennedy and the King killings has either been brought to book or permitted to testify about the circumstances of his involvement in a grisly plot.

Lee Harvey Oswald, they point out, was actually held by the Dallas police, who had advertised that the suspect would be transferred from the police station to a county prison at a given hour. Jack Ruby, a night club operator, walked up and shot him so that he died within the hour, without ever testifying to anything. Even Ruby died before he was put on trial, in spite of the fact that some 20 million viewers saw him as eyewitnesses, presential or via television, from beginning to end of his commission of a premeditated murder.

Sirhan Sirhan, who is charged with shooting Robert Kennedy on California primary election night, was interrogated amid a chorus of warnings which might just as well have been threats, that he need not answer any question without his attorney present, or any he did not want to answer, and that every word he uttered might be used against him at the trial. He would have been a Mongoloid idiot to have disregarded such good advice. James Earl Ray had apparently dissolved back into the original ectoplasm after assassinating Martin Luther King in Memphis during this year's early April.

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THE ARREST OF RAY in London over the weekend certainly puts the quietus on the theory that he had been killed to assure his permanent silence, for he was found and his physical detention in a London pokey directly behind Scotland Yard's GHQ is proof of the fact that he is—at least for the moment—not dead.

Setting Sirhan free on a technicality either before or after he has been tried, convicted and sentenced will present something of a problem, however embarrassing any evidentiary revelations brought out before a jury might be to whomever they might involve. Football giant Roosevelt Grier, the mammoth defensive back of the Los Angeles Rams, and Rafer Johnson, the one time decathlon champ of the Olympic games, are very hale and even more hearty. Since they were the stalwarts who overpowered him and kept him from flight, and later set the seal of good sense on their courage and brawn by holding him safe from a throng which surged forward as if to tear him to shreds, there should be no problem about identifying Sirhan as being or not being the Robert Kennedy killer, in any case.

By and large, it was a weekend blight for rumors old and rumors new.