

# King Slaying Witness Freed

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MEMPHIS — (AP) — Charles Stephens, 57, has been freed after being held in jail for 30 days as a material witness in the slaying of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Judge William O'Hearn ruled yesterday Stephens was being held illegally and ordered his immediate release.

Assistant District Attorney General James Beasley told the judge Stephens was placed in jail "to keep him from being disposed of — to speak plainly."

Beasley said the prosecution has no other witness who

"can testify to the same material facts" as Stephens can when trial opens Nov. 12 for James Earl Ray, the man charged with murder in King's death.

Stephens told police after King was shot April 4 he saw

a man run from a rooming house bathroom. Police said the fatal shot was fired from the room.