

KING

HOUSE AIDE CALLS ACTION IN DR. KING CASE 'UNUSUAL'

NY Times NOV 25 1976

WASHINGTON, Nov. 23 (AP) — The fact that the prosecution did not obtain a full confession from James Earl Ray in return for accepting his guilty plea in the murder of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was "most unusual," Richard A. Sprague, chief counsel of the House Committee on Assassinations, said Tuesday.

The action is "one thing that does stand out," Mr. Sprague told reporters after reviewing details surrounding Mr. Ray's confession to the April 1968 slaying.

"When arrangements were made for Ray to plead guilty, the law enforcement agencies never made as part of their plea bargain that there be a full interrogation or full confession by Ray," Mr. Sprague said.

This "is most unusual where somebody is pleading guilty to the murder of an individual and questions have arisen as to whether others were behind it," he added.

In Memphis, Judge Robert K. Dwyer, who was one of two assistant district attorneys general assigned to prosecute Mr. Ray, questioned Mr. Sprague's statements. "I wonder if he knows what the 'usual' thing is," Judge Dwyer commented.

Judge Dwyer, now serving on the Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals, added: "We were going to prosecute Ray and prove beyond a reasonable doubt to a moral certainty that he was guilty of killing Martin Luther King."