

King assassination

Ray, 22 Jul 68, pleads not guilty to charge of first-degree murder.

Shaw trial

20 Feb 69 - State rests case.

- 21 Feb 69 - " ... the agreement [that Ray change his plea to guilty] had been in the works since Feb. 21*... " (No documentation. NYTimes 11 Mar.) (WALDRON)
- 10 Mar - At court hearing requested by defense (before trial, scheduled for 7 Apr) Ray changes his plea to guilty, interrupting proceedings to stipulate that he does not agree that there was no conspiracy. At this point Foreman stops him, reminding him that he is pleading guilty to first-degree murder, "not to anything about a conspiracy."
- Martin Waldron, Memphis, says that Ray and Foreman, "who had continued to argue through last night over whether Ray should .. plead guilty, did not talk to each other," although seated together waiting for hearing to begin. (NYTimes 11 Mar.)
- John Herbers, Washington, says of the arrangement for guilty pleas in exchange for 99-year sentence, "The Justice Department was notified in advance of what was taking place." Justice Department says it was not consulted but was informed, because FBI testimony was needed. "Under the separation of powers between the state and Federal governments, the Justice Department refrained from exercising any judgment in the matter, it was explained." (NYTimes 11 Mar.)

*Nashville Tennessean (no date; AP/SF Examiner 13 Mar 69) says "a prison source" at Tennessee State Prison quoted Ray as saying, "My attorney and my brother told me about six weeks ago that the best thing I could do was to work out a deal to keep me out of the chair." Ray was transferred to prison 11 Mar.

It was during the fifth week before this date that Garrison made opening statement in Shaw trial, omitting one of the six overt acts Alcock had said the state would try to prove: Shaw and Oswald meeting with Ruby in Baton Rouge.