

RAY DENIES OWNING GUN OR CAR IN TRIAL

MEMPHIS, Feb. 21 (AP) — James Earl Ray denied today that he owned a high-powered rifle of the type that the authorities say was used to murder the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Ray also denied ownership of a 1966 two-door Mustang that the state says was used by the killer to make his getaway after the slaying.

Ray is scheduled to go on trial April 7 on a charge of murdering the civil rights leader.

The statements concerning the gun and car were made in a written answer filed to a civil lawsuit pending against Ray in Chancery Court.

The suit was brought by Renfro Hays, a private detective who contends Ray owes him more than \$11,000 for investigative work in the case. Mr. Hays was hired by Ray's former attorney, Arthur J. Hanes of Birmingham, Ala., and seeks to attach the car and gun, then have them sold to satisfy his claim.

Chancellor Charles Near granted injunctions earlier prohibiting Ray from transferring ownership of the disputed items.

Ray denied owing Mr. Hays anything. He said he had never met the investigator and had never authorized him to work on his defense or asked Mr. Hanes to hire him.