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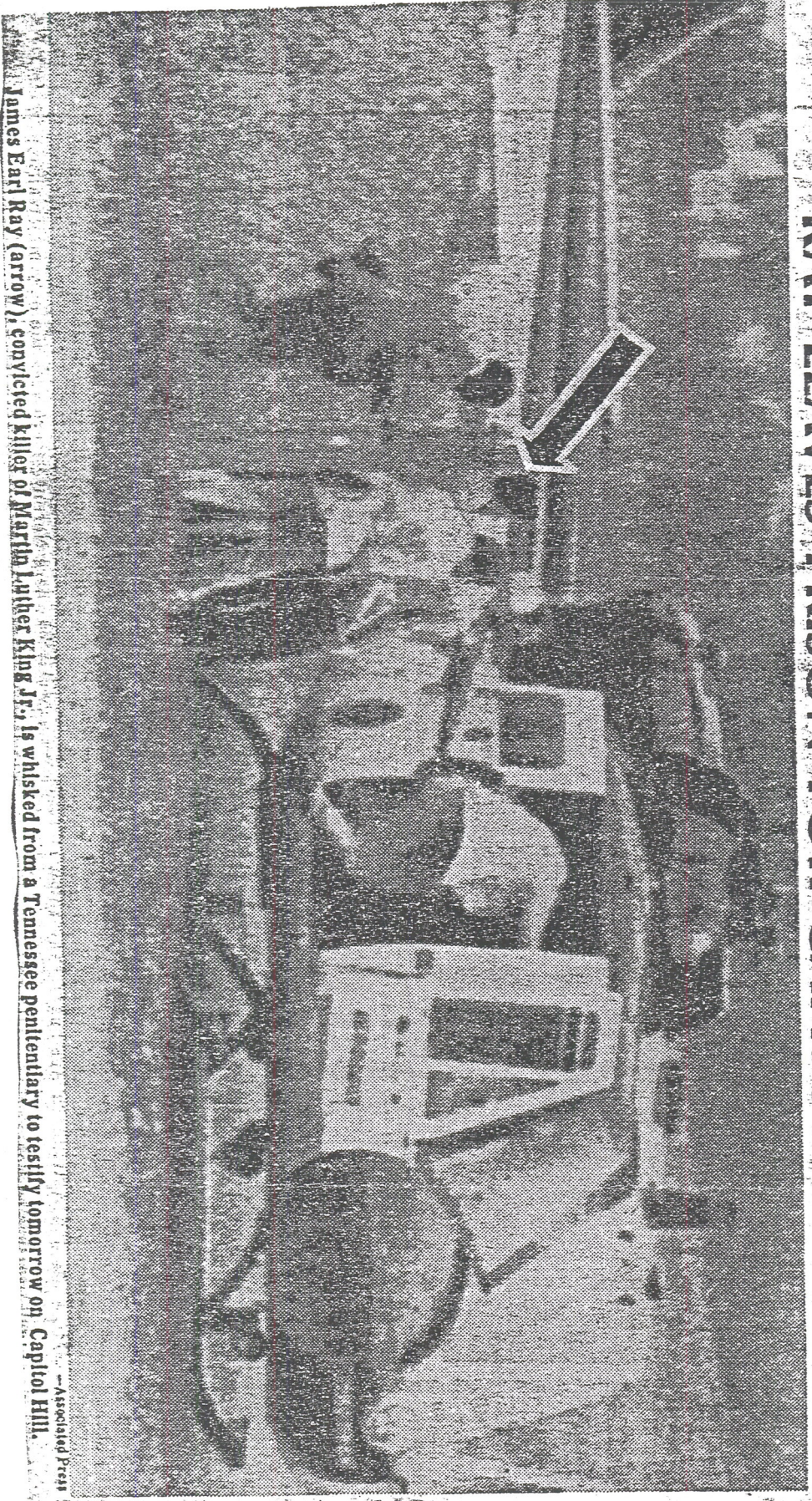
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## RAY LEAVES PRISON FOR CAPITOL HILL



James Earl Ray (arrow), convicted killer of Martin Luther King Jr., is whisked from a Tennessee penitentiary to testify tomorrow on Capitol Hill.

—Associated Press

# Path of Bullet That Killed King Battles Experts

By Jeremiah O'Leary  
and Ron Sarro

Washington Star Staff Writers

The House Assassinations Committee was told today that a panel of medical examiners and engineers was not able to pinpoint the precise trajectory of the bullet that killed Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis, Tenn., 10 years ago.

Dr. Michael Baden, chief medical examiner of New York City, today's first witness in the King assassination hearings, said, "An autopsy is limited. It cannot distinguish between a trajectory flight of from two to five degrees. Our panel went to Memphis and studied the distance from the Lorraine Motel, where King was shot to death to various sites on the Main Avenue area.

"We examined buildings and the yards of 418 and 424 Main St. and with the engineers, developed trajectory patterns to the balcony of the Lorraine Motel balcony," Baden testified.

"The two engineers, after taking measurements, said that the trajectory from the second-floor bathroom, where the FBI contends James Earl Ray fired the fatal shot, was one possible site."

**HE SAID A BUSHY area outside the building was one to five degrees divergent from the bathroom-window trajectory.** He gave the impression that the panel of experts hired by the committee was unable to say with precision exactly from where the fatal bullet was fired.

At the outset of the second day of the hearings, committee counsel G. Robert Blakey said, "From eyewitness accounts, there was disagreement over the point of origin of the

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fatal shot and an analysis of Dr. Francisco seemed to confirm the ambiguites."

Dr. Jerry T. Francisco is the medical examiner of Shelby County, Tenn., who performed the autopsy on King on April 4, 1968.

"The angle of trajectory and bullet track through the body, for example, were not clearly delineated," Blakey told the committee chairman, Louis Stokes, D-Ohio, and the panel.

He added that questions also arose over the pathological findings. For that reason the committee assembled the medical experts to study the medical treatment, the autopsy and reports, the trajectory of the bullet and if the damage to the civil rights leader was what would normally be expected from a bullet of the type recovered from his body.

**BLAKEY SAID THE panel was asked to discover what can be said about the possibility that the origin of the fatal gunshot was the second-floor bathroom window in the rooming house opposite the balcony where King was standing or whether it could have been somewhere else.**

Baden said the medical panel agreed that King died of a single high-velocity bullet wound, apparently eliminating the possibility of rumors that King may have been shot twice from two separate locations. He said the wounds were consistent with the impact that would be created by a .30-06 rifle, as was used in the assassination, and a soft-nosed bullet.

Rep. Stewart D. McKinney, R-Conn., asked the witness, "Can we rule out that King was shot from closer up?"

"It had to be a rifle bullet and it had to be from a distance of more than two or three feet," Baden replied. He added that the bullet

could not have been fired from the courtyard of the Lorraine Motel below the balcony where King was standing.

**HE ALSO SAID the fatal shot could not have been fired from anywhere to King's left or from the Memphis firehouse across the street if King, as the panel believes, was standing upright and facing the courtyard looking slightly to his right.**

But Baden said the panel could not determine whether the bullet was fired from the second or the first floor of the Main Street boarding house or from what he called the brushy knoll between the two buildings. The evidence, he said, is consistent with a one-bullet concept.

The witness said that discussions with the attending physicians at St. Joseph's Hospital indicated that King had only a faint pulse and electrocardiogram activity when he was brought to the hospital. The civil rights leader, he added, was totally paralyzed, was unconscious, did not say anything and was virtually dead when doctors made their efforts to treat him.

Baden said, "In no way could he have been saved then or now with the wounds he had received."

**YESTERDAY THE REV. Ralph David Abernathy, long a top lieutenant to King in the civil rights movement, testified for more than an hour about the assassination, then went before television cameras and leveled a charge he didn't make before the committee.**

"I'm not saying James Earl Ray pulled the trigger," Abernathy told reporters after the hearing. "Whoever did, I contend, had aid and assistance to get out of Memphis and that could only be from the Memphis police, Shelby County (sheriffs) and the FBI.

"I have no proof of this except that no one could have made the trip to Birmingham (Ray actually went to Atlanta), Canada and England without some aid," said Abernathy.

"If it was a plot it would have started with economic powers because King was for the redistribution of wealth, but they never would have stooped to pull the trigger themselves, they would have used a racist for that."

Abernathy's statement provided no dramatic new evidence in the case. At best, he acknowledged, it was just his opinion.

**IN THE HEARING he had made clear that both he and King shared a deep distrust for police and particularly the FBI.**

Among points Abernathy made: Although he was with King when he was murdered, he has never been asked by either the Memphis police or the FBI to provide any first-hand details of the slaying. "I don't think I have ever been questioned by the police," Abernathy said.

King and Abernathy shared a deep distrust of Southern policemen, white policemen, the FBI and the CIA.

Abernathy said that in the days before he was killed King was nervous and depressed. Abernathy attributed this in part to violence that broke out in a march King had led a week before his death in support of striking Memphis sanitation workers.

Abernathy said the violence in the march was caused by a group of black youths known as the Invaders, that one of them was the youth killed in the march, and that they came to King both to apologize and offer him their protection.

**ABERNATHY SAID someone wanted to put three or four of the Invaders on King's staff in body-guard roles, but King said he wanted no one near him who was committed to violence.**

"We discovered later that some of these young Invaders were being paid by the FBI to discredit the Southern Christian Leadership Conference," Abernathy said.

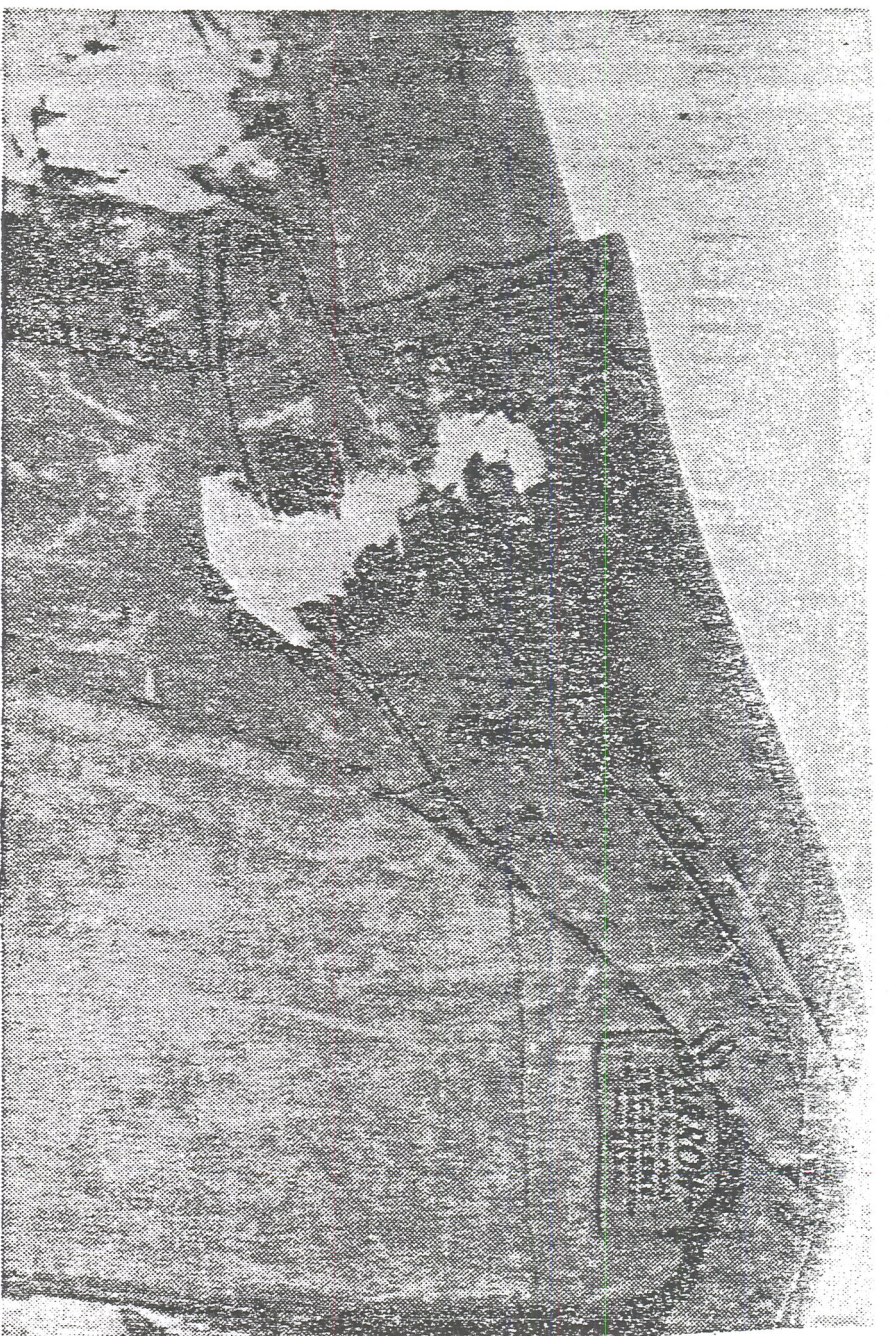
Abernathy said it was not known at the time that the Invaders had taken rooms at the Lorraine Motel, where King spent the last hours of his life.

"We insisted that Dr. King not see the Invaders because they were violent with Ambassador (Andrew) Young and he had to be rescued when they tried to get money from him," Abernathy said.

Underscoring his contempt for the FBI, Abernathy recalled that FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover had called King "a most notorious liar," that the FBI had bugged his hotel rooms and allegedly sent a tape to his wife, Coretta Scott King, indicating extramarital sexual activities.

"Let's not turn this into a trial of the FBI," interjected Rep. Samuel L. Devine, R-Ohio, a former FBI agent who is top-ranking Republican on the committee.

Ray, who is serving 99 years as the confessed killer of King, is scheduled to testify tomorrow.



This is a photograph of the jacket worn by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., when he was shot to death in Memphis

10 years ago. Released today by the House Assassinations Committee, it shows the lapel-area bullet hole.

—United Press International