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See also Nos.

44-1114

A) 44-1114 Field Reports

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D) 44-1114 Threats to Martin Luther King, Jr.

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ENTIRE FILE REVIEWED
FOR HISTORICAL
DECLASSIFICATION

C.S.

C-3

11/14/01 SP-1 CLK/tjt

The riddle of Ray —dupe, decoy or what?

By Bernard Gavzer
[AP Newsfeatures Writer]

WHEN JAMES EARL RAY broke out of the Missouri state penitentiary in 1967, the price on his head was like a supermarket clearance sale: a flat \$50. He was run-of-the-mill. No bloodhounds were out baying for him.

But today, James Earl Ray is perhaps the world's most celebrated prisoner. He is kept in a Memphis jail suite custom-designed for him. There are always two personal guards in attendance, around the clock, and the electronic eyes of two television cameras keep him in constant focus.

He is accused of assassinating the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the apostle of non-violence.

Ray's guilt or innocence, and his fate, will be considered by a jury in Shelby County Criminal court building, Memphis, in a murder trial due to start March 3.

Lawyer charges communist plot

Arthur J. Hanes Sr., Birmingham, Ala. lawyer, was picked originally by Ray to head the defense. Hanes was dropped by Ray, who then engaged Percy Foreman of Texas. But before Hanes was dropped, he described the case as a sinister international communist plot in which the slain King and the arrested Ray both were victims.

The greatest impetus to a conspiracy explanation has come from author William Bradford Huie, a writer who has had exclusive access to Ray's story.

Huie says Ray has been writing a journal which Huie says he has checked out accurate. On the basis of what he has been told or otherwise learned, Huie has concluded:

"That the plot to murder Dr. King existed eight months before the murder on April 4, 1968.

"That Ray was drawn unknowingly into this plot in Montreal on Aug. 18, 1967, and thereafter moved as directed by the plotters.

"That as late as March 23, 1968, less than two weeks before the murder, Ray did not know that the plot included murder of Dr. King."

Murdered to trigger race war?

Huie contends the grand scheme was not to remove the Negro leader but rather to use his murder to trigger lasting violence between the white and black races.

Any reconstruction of the events relating to Ray's life and times and to the assassination of Dr. King is like tracing an architect's plan and inexplicably finding a brick wall where there should be a window.

Dumaine
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It might be argued that Ray can shrug off suspicious questions. Why was he a man of the many aliases police say he took? John Willard, Eric Starvo Galt, Paul Bridgeman, Ramon George Sneyd? Why did he run to Mexico, Toronto, Lisbon, London? Answer: He was a convict on the run. How did he get the money—about \$12,000—to keep on the move? Answer: Like a thief.

So he may say. But for nearly a year after his escape, no one was hunting him. He was hardly worth the time.

There was a possibility that Ray had been spotted as a fugitive and was blackmailed into the killing or blackmailed into letting the conspirators set him up as a decoy.

June 6, 1968, Ray was confronted at Heathrow airport, London, and told he was wanted for the slaying of Dr. King. On April 23, 1967, he had escaped from the penitentiary.

But the vital day—in terms of the Tennessee case—is April 4, 1968. On that day, Martin Luther King Jr. was slain.

Let the examination of evidence begin at a point at which there were 3 hours to kill.

3:15 p. m.—South Main street in Memphis is pretty quiet as far as sidewalk traffic. A man could be noticed or missed with equal chance.

One man, dressed in a black suit and wearing a white shirt, with a narrow black tie, halted at 422½ South Main, went up the stairwell to the screened door of a roominghouse.

Mrs. Brewer had a kitchenette available, with its window onto Main street, but the man said no. A sleeping room would do. At the end of the dark hallway light came from the bathroom. They went past Room 4, where Willie Anschutz lived, to Room 5. It was empty. Room 6 was a kitchenette where Charles Quitman Stephens, 46, and his common law wife lived.

Mrs. Brewer said Room 5 was \$8.50 for a week. The man paid for one week.

She asked his name.

"John Willard," he said.

From Room 5, it was possible to look across Mulberry street to the Lorraine motel. By bending a little, one could get a very good look at the door of Room 306.

In that room, Dr. King was conferring with his staff and aids. There was the Rev. Andrew Young, executive vice president of the Southern Christian Leadership conference, and the Rev. James Bevel, one of Dr. King's closest aids, and the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, and some white newsmen and Joseph Louw from Public Broadcast laboratory, the non-profit television enterprise, which was doing a documentary on Dr. King.

Clear look at the Lorraine motel

In Room 5, "John Willard" apparently sat on the edge of the bed, looking toward the window. Between the bed and window, a mirrored dressing table backed against a door that connected to Room 6. A wooden chair was against the window, in a position that would allow someone to keep the Lorraine motel under surveillance.

Charles Stephens heard footsteps in the hall, going past his door into the bathroom. He figured it was the new lodger. Stephens usually hears anything going on in the toilet because his kitchen area is separated from it by a thin plasterboard wall.

In the bathroom, an old-fashioned tub on four legs is parallel to the north wall. The curved back end is close to the window. By standing on the tub end, it is easy to lean upon the sill and get a clear view of Room 306 at the Lorraine motel. From the bathroom sill to balcony rail it is 205 feet, 3 inches.

5:23 p. m.—Charles Hurley arrived at the South Main street block to pick up his wife, who works at a wholesale wallpaper and paint firm. He saw a white Mustang. There was a white man seated in it, he said.

At the Lorraine, it was getting on toward dinner time and the day-long planning session was about to break. Dr. King told the Rev. Samuel Kyles he was weary of restaurant fare. "I want some soul food," he said.

"You know where to get it," said Kyles, happily. "Come home and eat dinner with me."

Dr. King said fine and went out to the balcony passageway. Below, Solomon Jones Jr., Dr. King's chauffeur, waited. King turned to Ben Branch, who would also be at the rally, and asked about spirituals that would be sung, and then said:

"My man, be sure to sing, 'Precious Lord,' tonight and sing it well."

6:01 p. m.—Charles Stephens was in his kitchen working on a radio.

"I heard a shot. I could tell it came from the bathroom because it was very loud. . . ."

On the concrete balcony of the Lorraine, Dr. King lay crumpled.

"O," he said. No more. O."

Willie Anschutz, in the hallway, saw a man coming along that dark tunnel and said:

"That sounded like a shot."

"Yes, it was," the man answered, according to Willie Anschutz. The man was smiling.

Solomon Jones looked toward the rooming house. He thought he saw a man holding something white to his face duck around to the side of the building.

At 424 S. Main, Guy C. Canipe was in the front section of his office with two customers. There was a thud at his door.

"I looked out and there was this box with a rifle and a small piece of luggage," Canipe says. "When I looked up, I just saw the back of the man going away."

Patrolman N. E. Zachary saw the rifle and bag. There was a pair of 7x35 binoculars in the bag, with a sales receipt for \$41.05; some underwear; a pair of pliers. The rifle was partially wrapped in a bedspread with green threads. Zachary went next door, to 422½, and up the stairs, toward the back of the roominghouse, in the direction from which the shot came. He went into Room 5. He found two straps. They went with the binoculars.

6:16 p. m.—Dr. King was wheeled into St. Joseph hospital. No sound came from him. But the resuscitator could be heard pumping oxygen. That, and the sobs of humans.

6:25 p. m.—The police radio dispatcher reports that a white Mustang was proceeding north on Danny Thomas boulevard toward U. S. 51 north at "a high rate of speed."

By 6:25 p. m., assuming that the white Mustang didn't get moving until as late as 6:15 p. m., it could easily have reached and even passed the area described in the broadcast.

6:27 p. m.—A white Mustang is reported stopped at Watkins and Chelsea avenue, which is nearly 2 miles east of

Danny Thomas boulevard and a different direction from that described in the 6:25 p. m. report.

6:31 p. m.—An aid of Dr. King emerged haggard from the emergency operating room, tears coursing down his cheeks. He said: "They have killed Dr. King."

6:35 p. m.—A white Mustang is reported chased by Police Car 421 north on Danny Thomas boulevard from Firestone avenue, again in a direction away from any short escape route to Arkansas or Mississippi.

At almost the same moment, a report came from Police Car 160 that he was informed by a "complainant" that a white man was driving a Mustang east on Summer avenue, from Highland avenue.

The police dispatcher then broadcast this alarm:

"White male east on Summer from Highland, in a white Mustang, responsible for this shooting. Cars 36 and 42 pull down. Subject is exceeding the speed limit east on Summer from Highland."

This would be a point 5½ miles east of where Police Car 421 was chasing a white Mustang. Police Car 421 caught up with it a minute later, at 6:36 p. m., and reported it "checks okay."

Police are satisfied that the "chase" was non-existent and that it was a hoax.

No explanation has been made yet as to why the hoaxers picked that very moment to describe such a fake incident and send police on a wild goose chase. Nor has it been explained why they settled on a white Mustang, which would seem to be a remarkable coincidence, altho by this time—6:36 p. m.—there had reportedly been an alert for a vehicle, believed to be a white Mustang.

The dossier on "Galt" was getting fat and would get fatter the further back he could be traced. Investigators knew where he had been. The pieces were coming together. As far as could be figured, he was still in Los Angeles March 16.

So was the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who was at Anaheim addressing the California Democratic council.

The next day, March 17, "Galt" left the St. Francis. He left a forwarding address: General Delivery, Atlanta.

He headed east in the Mustang, going thru New Orleans to Selma, Ala., where records of the Flamingo motel, on highway 80, show he spent the night of March 22. He was in the rooming house in Atlanta on March 23. According to Huie, the departure from Los Angeles was signaled by the mystery man, Raoul.

The pursuit of James Earl Ray's life and times comes to the crucial moment of 6:01 p. m., plus, April 4, 1968.

What happened to him from that time on? How did he manage to vanish?



JAMES EARL RAY
Celebrity of sorts.



MARTIN LUTHER KING
He just said 'O'.

DID DRAGNET GET RIGHT MAN?

The James Earl Ray Mystery

BY BERNARD GAVZER

[AP Newsfeatures Writer]

THE SHOT that mortally wounded the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. was fired at 6:01 p. m., April 4, 1968, so far as the most careful checking can determine.

Within minutes, police combed the immediate area, going towards probable vantage points, especially toward a rooming house less than 100 yards away. Witnesses thought the shot came from there, and two occupants of the rooming house soon told of hearing the sound of a rifle shot coming from the hallway bathroom.

The man who they said had apparently emerged from the bathroom—which had a window affording a direct line of fire to the motel balcony where the Rev. Mr. King stood—went down the hall and out of the building, carrying some sort of package.

THAT WAS the last anyone remembers seeing him in the vicinity of 422½ S. Main st., Memphis. How did he manage to vanish so quickly and completely?

Investigators, once they found the abandoned white Mustang in Atlanta, were able to go back bit by bit, finding who had owned it, who bought it where it had been serviced, and so on. But now the chore was to discover what it could tell about where its driver had gone.

The owner of the Atlanta rooming house could not say whether the man, using the name of "Galt," had returned to the room before 10:30 a. m. Friday, April 5. That was when he found the room empty and a note regarding the TV set.

ANYONE heading for Canada would have a choice of three Greyhound buses to Toronto.

By taking the 10:30 p. m. bus, a traveler would arrive in Toronto at 9:30 a. m., April 7.

It is known that on April 8, 1968, James Earl Ray certainly was embarked on his final Canadian odyssey.

It was on this day that a man wearing dark-rimmed glasses, a burgundy sports jacket, and tan raincoat came to 102 Ossington av., in a working class section of Toronto, largely inhabited by Italians, Hungarians, Poles, Lithuanians, and Chinese.

Mrs. Leda Szpakowsky, the landlady, showed him a room on the second floor.

THE MAN said he was a real estate salesman. He paid the rent of \$10 in advance, left, and returned in the early evening with a small overnight bag.

His name?

"Paul Bridgman," said the man.

He was a quiet, mannerly lodger, said Mrs. Szpakowsky. He would go out a little before 9 a. m., return before noon, leave in the early afternoon, and return after dinner time.

His movements during these hours and days is not clear.

He may have been in the public library on College street looking thru bound volumes of back-dated newspapers, such as the Toronto Telegram of Nov. 11, 1932,

and the Toronto Daily Star of Oct. 8, 1932. The Toronto Telegram of that date carries the birth announcement of one Paul Edward Bridgman, who now is a consultant in the Toronto school system. The Daily Star of that date carries the birth announcement of Raymond George Sneyd, a constable in the Toronto police department.

THE BIRTH announcements carry some essential information, such as the maiden name of the mother as well as the name of the father. This is the sort of information needed when one applies for a passport.

And "Paul Bridgman" clearly had a passport on his mind on April 11. On that day, he came to Mrs. Mabel Agnew's Arcade Photo studio on Yonge st. She personally took passport photos of "Paul Bridgman."

She would not say when he picked them up, but did say, "Our pictures are always ready in 20 minutes to a half hour."

Five days later, Mrs. Yee Sun Loo, Landlady of a rooming house at 962 Dundas st., which is one of the main thoroughfares which cross Ossington avenue, received a call from a "Ramon George Sneyd" who phoned to inquire about a room.

THE SAME DAY, April 16, "Raymon George Sneyd" walked into the Kennedy travel bureau on Bloor st. He asked Lillian Spencer, the office manager, about travel to London and also completed a passport application. As one of his next-of-kin, he listed "Paul Bridgman."

He presented a duplicate birth certificate in the name of Sneyd, three passport photos, and \$8 fee. Normally, such an application requires the name of another Canadian citizen who has known the applicant at least 2 years, but in Canada this can be satisfied by the applicant swearing on oath that the information is true.

"Sneyd" ordered a round trip 11-day excursion ticket from Toronto to London, at a charge of \$345 Canadian or \$319.50 United States currency.

The next day, Henry Moos

of the travel bureau notarized the passport declaration that the applicant was a Canadian citizen. It was sent off to the department of external affairs in Ottawa with the request that the application be expedited because "Sneyd" was anxious to make a trip.

IN WASHINGTON, the FBI issued a fugitive warrant for the arrest of one Eric Starvo Galt. He was described as a man with a "rural" way of speaking, a taste for vodka and beer, and a preference for country and western music. He was said to "have a nervous habit of occasionally pulling at an ear lobe with his hand. His left ear protrudes farther from his head than his right ear."

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Photos of the wanted man showed a man with his eyes closed. He was wearing a dark or black suit jacket that was cut so much that a white shirt could be seen. It was the sort of jacket that might go with a tuxedo.

A second version of the same photo was distributed, this time with eyes painted in by an FBI artist.

[Three is a real Eric S. Galt. The full name is Eric St. Vincent Galt. He is 54 and was found to be a law-abiding, responsible citizen.

He did do something unusual, however, in signing his name. He abbreviated his middle name, St. Vincent, as St. V., making little circles for the periods. One reading the signature could interpret it as saying "Starvo."]

THE NEXT DAY, April 18, at Mrs. Szpakowsky's rooming house, her young daughter answered the phone and a man asked for "Paul Bridgman." He was not home, she said. No message was left.

Over on Dundas st., "Ramon George Sneyd" saw Mrs. Yee Sun Loo and gave her \$9, a week's rent, in advance, and said he'd be moving in later. He did, on April 19.

And now, the alias "Eric Starvo Galt" is officially discovered. In Washington, the fingerprints are matched and there is no mistake about it. The wanted man is James Earl Ray, an escaped convict from the Missouri State penitentiary. He had been serving 20 years for armed robbery and as an habitual criminal. He had already served 7 years when he escaped April 23, 1967.

In St. Louis, at "The Grapevine" tavern, John Larry Ray heard the news stoically. It was on the radio. His brother was wanted for one of the sensational killings of our time. He went on serving his customers.

"BUT I WAS kind of sur-

prised," John Larry says. "Personally, I had doubts myself that Jimmy did the actual killing. He wasn't the kind of guy who broods a lot, and he wasn't a political guy.

"If I had to see a reason, and there was no money involved, then I can't see Jimmy doing it. He was no racist. My brother, Jerry, will tell you the same thing.

Jerry, who was working as a maintenance man at Sportsman Country club near Northbrook, Ill., said James "was never a man of violence."

"Look at all the money he came into all of a sudden. Buying Mustangs, taking dancing lessons, taking trips to Mexico," Jerry said.

AT THE Missouri State penitentiary in Jefferson City, it was about 3:25 p. m. on Sunday, April 23, 1967, when Lt. William R. Turner, control center desk officer, was told there had been an escape from the institution.

The normal count at 5 p. m. showed that inmate James E. Ray, No. 00416, assigned to the main kitchen on the 11 a. m. - 7 p. m. shift, had not reported for work at 11 a. m. He was missing from the 5 p. m. count. A search was made of the grounds and walls, inside and out, without result.

Ray, according to one report, claims to have got out at about 8:30 a. m. when a guard nodded and he sprinted 75 feet from the kitchen loading dock to the 23-foot wall, at a point where there is a tunnel thru it. Ray supposedly hoisted himself atop a pipeline and, from this starting point of about 6 feet up the wall, managed to get sufficient hold in crevices by using a 4 foot rod to hoist himself in stages over the wall.

James Earl was the first of nine children. One was to die in a fire, another in a car which plunged into a river. James Earl and his two closest brothers, John Larry and Jerry, were eventually

to know lives behind the walls of penitentiaries.

James Earl, disgruntled at being shifted out of the military police when in the army in the late 1940s, opted for a bad discharge and was released for "ineptness" for military service.

The caper that put him into Missouri State penitentiary for a 20-year stretch was the Oct. 10, 1959, armed robbery of a Kroger supermarket in St. Louis.

He drew 20 years for armed robbery under the Habitual Criminal act. On March 17, 1960, he entered the big pen at Jefferson City.

THE SUNDAY morning Ray vanished was the start of his new and unusual luck in keeping out of trouble. He went on foot for the first 4 or 5 days and finally got to the St. Louis area where a friend—so far, not publicly identified—took him to Edwardsville, Ill., where he got a bus for Chicago.

In Chicago, he got a room at 2731 Sheffield av.

He got a dishwasher's job. Records of the Indian Trail restaurant in suburban Winnetka show he worked there from May 7 to June 25. The operators knew him as John Rayns.

Ray next returned to the St. Louis area and spent almost a week with two friends in Quincy, Ill. He again went to Chicago to pick up his last check from the Indian Trail, and then returned to East St. Louis, where he was to get a .38 caliber pistol from a friend. From there,

he set out for Canada, driving a 1962 red Plymouth which he reportedly bought in East St. Louis.

RAY ARRIVED in Montreal on July 18 and got a room for \$75 a month at Har-K apartments, 2589 E. Notre Dame av. So far as is known, he remained in Montreal until Aug. 21, 1967. During that time, he enrolled in a correspondence course in locksmithing from a New

Jersey school.

Ray headed south from Montreal—where he purportedly met the mysterious "Raoul"—and arrived in Birmingham, Ala., on Aug. 25.

ON THE VERY day the FBI was publicly identifying Eric Starvo Galt as the fugitive James Earl Ray—it was April 19, 1968—Ray was shifting lodgings in Toronto. He moved into the rooming house run by Mrs. Yee.

The passport application had been processed and, on April 25, the department of external affairs, Ottawa, sent passport DJ909324, in the name of "Ramon George Sneyd," to Sneyd, in care of the Kennedy travel agency.

IN TORONTO, meanwhile, Ray apparently drew as little attention to himself as possible.

Four days later, "Sneyd" journeyed 18 miles northwest to Malton airport and boarded a British Overseas Airways flight for London.

IN LONDON, "Sneyd" apparently spent the day in the vicinity of Heathrow airport because that evening, so far as can be determined, he boarded a British European Airways flight for Lisbon. Its scheduled arrival in Lisbon was 1:20 a. m. May 8.

On that day, he took a room in the Hotel Portugal, a third-grade hostelry.

Meanwhile, in Ottawa, on the evening of May 13, a dozen young Mounties trooped into the passport office after normal hours and began a search of 250,000 passport applications. They were trying to determine whether the American, James Earl Ray, had come to Canada and obtained a passport with a new identity.

In the 11-day period until May 28 Ray seemed to have disappeared completely.

Ray did surface on May 28, when he obtained a room in

New Earl's Court hotel on Penywern road as "Ramon George Sneyd."

THE SEARCH shifted into high gear as authorities moved to track Ray's further movements.

Interest in contacting white mercenary forces in Africa apparently brought Ray, presenting himself as "Sneyd," to telephone Ian Colvin, London Daily Telegraph writer, seeking information. Colvin said it was something he would not discuss on the phone.

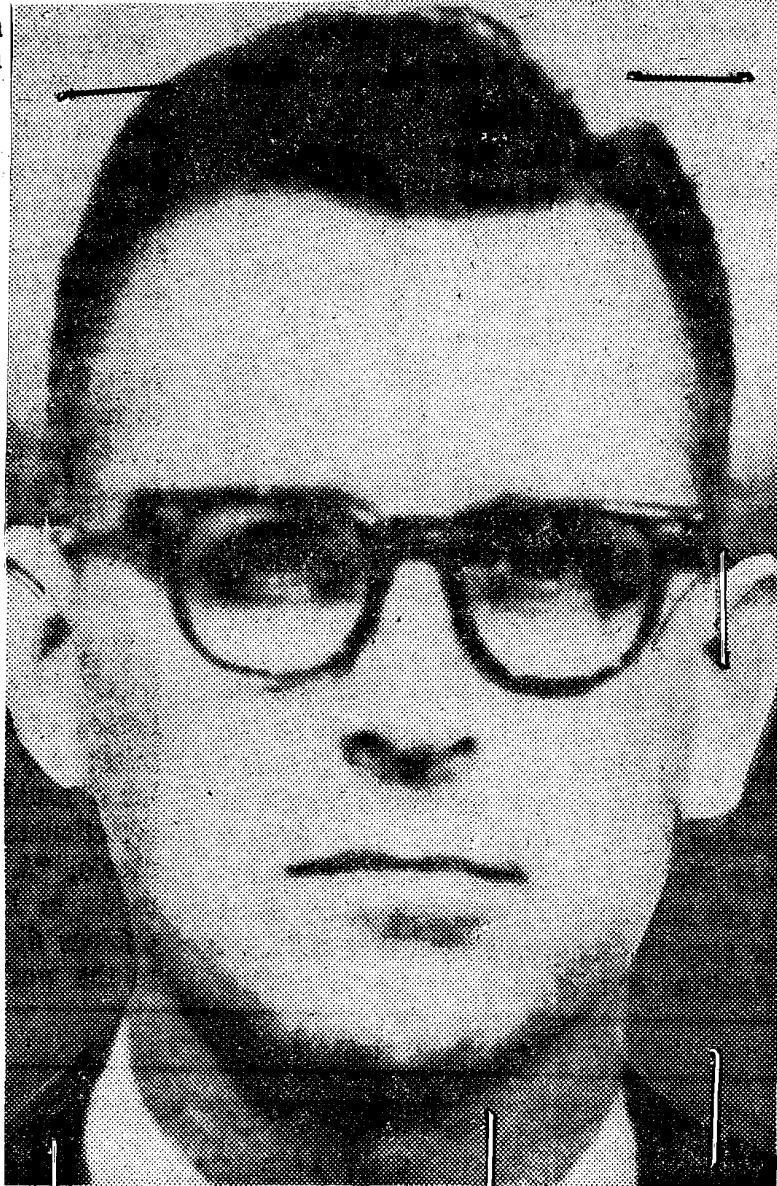
The same day, June 5, Ray checked out of New Earl's Court and went to an out-of-the-way spot, the Pax hotel, in Warwick Way, in the Pimlico section of London.

He made at least one known phone call. It was to Ian Colvin again. Colvin said that if "Sneyd" wrote him a note he would send him the ad-gium for possible recruitment as a mercenary. That was on June 6.

The morning of June 8, Ray checked out of the Pax hotel and headed for Heathrow airport. He had a ticket for BEA flight 466, departing at 11:50 a. m. for Brussels.

At about 11:15 a. m., presenting his passport before boarding the plane, an immigration official examined it and detained him for a moment, then asked that he come to the office for "further inquiries." An "All Ports Warning" had been widely broadcast for Ray.

RAY INSISTED he was Ramon George Sneyd. But he was held because he had a .38 caliber Liberty Chief revolver with five rounds of ammunition—a violation of the Firearms Act of 1933. The two passports put him in violation of the Aliens Order of 1953.



JAMES EARL RAY

Inside story of his 2 months as fugitive

Misquoted: Bevel SCLC denies it has data to clear Ray

ATLANTA (UPI) — The Southern Christian Leadership Conference insisted Friday that it holds no inside information nor hard evidence to clear James Earl Ray in the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Nonetheless, the SCLC aide who offered to defend Ray last Saturday and said he was convinced of Ray's innocence, talked with Percy Foreman, Ray's attorney, in Memphis, Thursday night.

The Rev. James Bevel met for an hour at the Shelby County Jail Thursday with Foreman and Ray and he later said, "Brother Ray asked me to defend him and I intend to do that."

Foreman was not available for comment.

"We will defend Ray, but will not try to find the guilty party," Mr. Bevel said. He described Ray as "sick, pitiful . . . a deranged man in need of psychiatric treatment."

A SPOKESMAN for SCLC, Thomas Offenburger, said in an interview that Mr. Bevel feels he has been misquoted about evidence that would prove Ray's innocence.

In a telegram to Ray Saturday, sent from the SCLC office in Philadelphia, Mr. Bevel offered to join in the defense. The telegram said in full:

"I would like to inform you that I would be very happy to take your case without fee. I was present on April 4 at the Lorraine Motel when Dr. King

died. You have been accused of murdering him. Of course, I know you are not guilty."

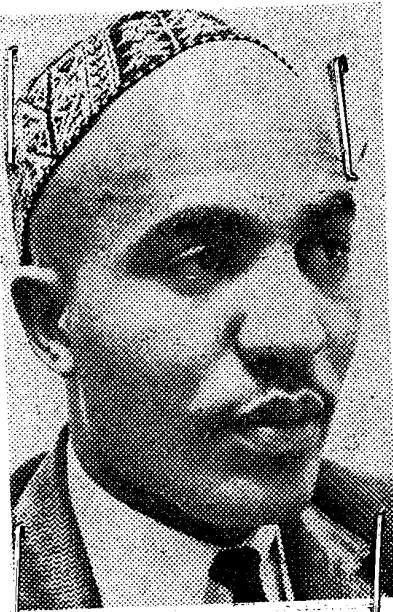
The Rev. Ralph David Abernathy, Dr. King's successor as head of SCLC, said Thursday that, "I have absolute confidence in his (Mr. Bevel's) judgment and integrity," and that he and SCLC "support" Mr. Bevel in his efforts.

OFFENBURGER said, however, that although statements by Mr. Bevel and Mr. Abernathy may indicate that legal proof of Ray's innocence is in Mr. Bevel's hands, no such claim was meant.

"Bevel told us that his statement made no mention of evidence, or anything about who pulled the trigger," Offenburger said. "Bevel feels he has been misquoted."

However, in Philadelphia, UPI correspondent Helene A. Spicer said she talked to Mr. Bevel last Sunday and twice he used the word "evidence."

In answer to a question why he offered to defend Ray, Mr. Bevel replied: "Because of the evidence I have of his innocence," Miss Spicer said. Asked why he had chosen that moment to speak of his belief that Ray was innocent, Mr. Bevel responded: "I just felt there was enough evidence, enough understanding to come to the conclusion," she said.



Rev. James Bevel
In talks at jail

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BELIEVES RAY INNOCENT

King Aid to Assist Suspect's Defense

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — A top aid to slain civil rights leader the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. has paid a jail cell visit to James Earl Ray, King's accused killer, and says he will aid in Ray's defense.

The move was backed by the Rev. Ralph David Abernathy, King's successor as head of the Southern Christian Leadership conference.

"Brother Ray has asked me to defend him and I intend to do it," the Rev. James Bevel told a meeting of about 50 ministers last night after his jail visit. Bevel said last week he was convinced Ray was innocent in the slaying of King here last April 4.

Abernathy Approves Move

In Atlanta, Abernathy said he viewed Bevel's action as a way of moving "nonviolence into a new dimension in American life." The S. C. L. C. head added, "Rev. Bevel is speaking to the real issue — namely that it is not who killed Dr. King, but what killed him."

Bevel visited Ray in the top-security cell on the third floor of the Shelby County jail, accompanied by Ray's attorney Percy Foreman of Houston.

Sheriff William N. Morris Jr. said Bevel and Foreman were

with Ray for one hour. Later, Bevel discussed the case in general terms with the ministers who had been attending the general board meeting here of the National Council of Churches.

Convinced Ray Innocent

Bevel said he was convinced of Ray's innocence before he met with him "and I am now even more convinced that Ray was about as capable of killing King as I am of flying to the moon."

In answer to a question, the bearded, balding Bevel said he had been accepted by Ray to assist in the case and that Foreman would remain as chief counsel. Bevel, 32, is not a member of the bar but says he is a lawyer "by circumstances."

Foreman was not available for comment on what part Bevel would play in the case.

Bevel, Lawyer Confer

Asked about the arrangements for his visit with Ray, Bevel said, "I sent his [Ray's] attorney a telegram he phoned me, and we went to see him tonight."

Abernathy, in his comments, said that "America's oppressed and victimized" should come "to the aid and defense" of Ray.

He said, "If a conspiracy exists, and I believe it does, it must be fully exposed. Going beyond conspiracy, Americans must understand the broader guilt of a society which has been killing off its best young leaders."

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Date Of Ray's Trial Is Delayed

MEMPHIS (AP)—The James Earl Ray trial, scheduled to begin March 3, was continued Friday until April 7. Ray is charged with slaying Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Judge W. Preston Battle granted the continuance after Ray's attorneys said they could not be ready by the scheduled trial date.

Dist. Atty. Gen. Phil M. Canale said the state has been ready since Nov. 12, the date Ray originally was scheduled to stand trial.

James Earl Ray file

Stratton
CHICAGO SUN TIMES

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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COL. 7

FOUR STAR FINAL

EDITOR: JAMES E. HOGE, JR.

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230

Ray Denies Car, Rifle Are His

MEMPHIS (UPI) — James Earl Ray denied Friday that he owned the rifle and the car police said were used in the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. last April 4.

Ray made the denial in a written answer to a Chancery Court suit filed by private detective Renfro T. Hays, who is seeking \$11,046 from Ray for investigative work Hays said he did under Ray's former attorney, Arthur J. Hane, Sr.

In his suit, Hays asked that the items be assigned to him as payment of the debt.

Handwritten signature/initials inside a circle, possibly "Ray" or "C-4".

Handwritten initials "SS".

CHICAGO SUN TIMES

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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Mock Trial Eyed in King Murder Case

Atlanta, Feb. 28 (UPI)—Aids of the late Dr. Martin Luther King plan to stage a mock trial in Memphis during the trial of James Earl Ray to "convict" the nation at large of King's assassination.

The Rev. James Bevel would be chief prosecutor in the trial, which would be conducted in the manner of British Philosopher Bertrand Russell's Swedish tribunal trials of the United States for Viet Nam war policies.

Final Approval Expected

King's Southern Christian Leadership conference [S. C. L. C.] has not officially approved the mock trial. However, it was expected to do so next week, S. C. L. C. sources said.

Bevel has maintained for several months that Ray, 41, an ex-convict from Illinois, is "innocent" of the slaying last April 4. However, he has said in recent interviews that he has no evidence or inside information to offer in Ray's trial.

Consider Downtown March

Bevel and other S. C. L. C. staffers hope to hold a large march thru downtown Memphis during the mock trial with King's widow, Mrs. Coretta King, and his successor in S. C. L. C., the Rev. Ralph D. Abernathy, leading the marchers.

Ray's trial on murder charges is scheduled to begin April 7. It has been postponed twice — from Nov. 12, and from March 3.

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Lawyer to appear

Ray guilty plea hint in King death

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — James Earl Ray's lawyer was granted a Monday appearance in Criminal Court as an Alabama newspaper reported Friday that Ray plans to plead guilty in the death of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and will receive a 99-year sentence.

A spokesman for Judge Preston Battle, who is scheduled to preside at Ray's trial next month, said Ray's lawyer had sought and been granted

the hearing. There was no indication here what the hearing would concern.

In Huntsville, Ala., however, the Huntsville Times reported Ray will plead guilty to the assassination of King last April 4 and receive a 99-year sentence.

The Times wrote that it learned the State of Tennessee would recommend the 99-year sentence "when Ray pleads guilty."

Maximum penalty in Tennessee is death by electrocution.

[Signature]
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[Signature]

REPORT GUILTY PLEA DEAL IN KING SLAYING

Would Save Ray from Death Penalty

Memphis, March 7 [Special]
—James Earl Ray, charged with the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., will appear in Circuit court here Monday morning amid indications today that he will plead guilty in return for a 99-year sentence.

"Ray will be tried, convicted, sentenced and in the penitentiary at Nashville on Monday evening," said a source close to behind-the-scenes negotiations and bargaining that has been under way in this city for more than two weeks.

Judge Tells Request

At least partial confirmation of this surprising and somewhat inconclusive turn of events has been a public announcement by Judge Preston Battle who was to preside at the Ray trial beginning April 7, that Ray and his attorney, Percy Foreman of Houston, will appear in the courthouse Monday.

"Foreman has said that he is prepared to enter a series of motions at that time and has requested that Ray be brought into court for the hearing," Judge Battle announced.

Disclosure of the probable plea of guilty with the "deal" involving avoidance of a death sentence, came in a nationally exclusive story in this morning's Huntsville [Ala.] Times.

Requires Jury Action

Legal experts here said that if Foreman enters a plea of guilty for Ray it will be necessary for Judge Battle to impanel a jury of 12, and for

the state prosecutors to summon witnesses to establish a prima facie case against Ray. Then the jury must be polled and must unanimously accept both the guilty plea and the recommendation for sentence.

With these conditions met, Judge Battle could immediately pronounce sentence. Under Tennessee law Ray would be eligible for parole after serving one-third of his sentence or 33 years.

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Memphis cops on alert for Ray's last day

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP)—All Memphis city police and county sheriff's deputies were put on 12-hour shifts and their days off were canceled yesterday as another hearing, perhaps his final one, neared tomorrow for James Earl Ray.

Ray, charged with murdering the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., has been under heavy security ever since his extradition from London to the United States last summer.

Police Chief Henry Lux described intensification of police activities in view of the Monday hearing as precautionary . . . "so we can be ready for any eventuality."

The Memphis Commercial Appeal reported today that Texas Atty. Percy Foreman, Ray's counsel, met in St. Louis with two of Ray's brothers and a sister and described it as an apparent move to clear the way for the guilty plea.

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Rumors Surround Ray's Hearing

BY BILL JOHNSON

MEMPHIS (P) — James Earl Ray has a date in court today amid speculation that he would plead guilty to murdering the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., and take a 99-year prison sentence.

The hearing was called by Circuit Judge W. Preston Battle.

Some observers thought the hearing might bring nothing more dramatic than a motion for a change of venue or some other legal maneuver by Ray's lawyer, Percy Foreman of Houston.

Kin Are Consulted

The Memphis Commercial Appeal reported that Foreman had conferred with two of Ray's brothers and a sister last week, apparently to clear the way for a guilty plea.

Doubters pointed out that with a 99-year sentence, Ray would not be eligible for parole for at least 33 years.

The state had said previously it would demand death in the electric chair, but no one has been executed in Tennessee since 1961.

Should a jury sentence Ray to life imprisonment, parole could be possible in 13½ years.

Neither Foreman nor the prosecuting staff would comment on the reports that a deal for a 99-year term had been made.

Activity at Night

The New York Times reported that Judge Battle went to the courthouse last night after Ray had met for more than an hour with Foreman, amid reports that Ray had had second thoughts about pleading guilty to King's murder.

The judge stayed about 30

minutes and would not comment when he left, the Times said. In the courthouse at the same time were Foreman and a prosecutor, P. M. Canale. Foreman and Canale were reported by court officials to have met together for 50 minutes, according to the Times dispatch.

Ray, an escapee from the Missouri state penitentiary, was arrested in London last June 8, 2 months and 4 days after King was killed by a single shot as he stood on the balcony of the Lorraine motel.

Returned to Memphis

Ray was returned to Memphis in July after long extradition proceedings. Since then he has been held under extraordinary security precautions in an air conditioned and TV-monitored cell block of the Shelby county jail.

He has made fewer than half a dozen court appearances since his return, the first for his arraignment and the remainder as procedural defense motions were argued.

Tennessee law in first-degree murder cases requires a jury to set a sentence regardless of the plea entered, but a provision of the statute allows jurors who say they cannot agree with a recommended sentence to be disqualified.

Must Prove Death

The law further requires that the prosecution must then prove that King was killed.

Under the rules governing a guilty plea, the attorneys then stipulate that if the case had gone to trial evidence would have been presented to show that Ray was the man who shot King.

King was slain April 4 while in Memphis to help about 1,300 sanitation workers, most of them Negroes, in a strike against the city government.

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Ray Gets 99 Years

in King Killing

Pleads Guilty to End Trial

MEMPHIS (AP)—James Earl Ray pleaded guilty today to murdering Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and was sentenced to 99 years in the Tennessee State penitentiary.

Ray, in admitting his guilt, had told the court he wanted to add a statement that he did not agree with "the theory there was no conspiracy" in the killing of Dr. King. Should any such evidence arise, the judge made it clear, the state will prosecute.

But Criminal court Judge Preston Battle intoned:

"You have pleaded guilty to first degree murder and it is the judgment of the court that you be confined for 99 years in the state penitentiary."

Lasts Only 3 Hours

The entire proceeding lasted less than three and a half hours.

A minute before the judge passed sentence, Ray sat quietly in a checked blue sport coat and dark pants as the judge asked the jurors if they still agreed to a state-defense arrangement that Ray plead guilty and accept the sentence.

All 12 raised their right hands in assent.

The judge then thanked the jurors and all others who had helped in the case. He repeated defense and prosecution contentions that there was no evidence of a conspiracy in King's slaying.

State Would Prosecute

Ray said he did not agree with the theory that there was no conspiracy to assassinate King. He did not elaborate. He said, however, "I agree with the stipulation" to plead guilty.

"I've never had hopes of anything except to save this man's life," said Ray's lawyer, Percy Foreman of Houston. "It took me months to prove to myself that it was not a conspiracy."

5 Witnesses Testify

Five witnesses then testified to the actual fact of King's slaying, at the Lorraine motel here April 4, 1968. This is necessary under Tennessee law in a case where the death penalty could be involved.

Then, the jury had to go thru the formality of setting the 99-year sentence.

The jury was chosen from a venire picked two weeks ago, but the jurors themselves had no idea, a court spokesman said, that they would be assigned to the Ray case until the court session began this

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morning.

Questioned by Judge

Judge Battle asked Ray, who was called to the stand, whether he understood that his guilty plea meant he waived all rights to appeal. Battle also asked Ray if the decision to plead guilty was his own and of his own free will.

"I agree with the stipulation," Ray said, and then told the judge he wanted to add something.

Asked what it was, Ray said he wanted to go on record as saying he did not agree with "the theory that there was no conspiracy."

Killing Established

At that point, testimony began simply to establish the fact that King was killed. Five witnesses were called, in this order:

The Rev. Samuel B. Kyles, a Memphis Baptist minister with whom King was to have had supper on the eve of his death.

Chauncey Eskridge of Chicago, a lawyer and close friend of the civil rights leader.

Dr. Jerry Francisco, the Shelby county coroner, who discussed the fatal rifle wound which King received.

Inspector N. E. Zachary, chief Memphis homicide officer.

Robert Jensen, in charge of the Memphis FBI office.

Parole in 33 Years

The 99-year sentence means Ray could be eligible for parole in 33 years.

The state previously said it would demand the death penalty, but the state's electric chair has not been used since 1961.

Kin Are Consulted

The Memphis Commercial Appeal reported that Foreman had conferred with two of Ray's

brothers and a sister last week, apparently to clear the way for a guilty plea.

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Activity at Night

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The judge stayed about 30 minutes and would not comment when he left, the Times said. In the courthouse at the same time were Foreman and a prosecutor, P. M. Canale. Foreman and Canale were reported by court officials to have met together for 50 minutes, according to the Times dispatch.

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Returned to Memphis

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He has made fewer than half a dozen court appearances since his return, the first for his arraignment and the remainder as procedural defense motions were argued.



JAMES EARL RAY

**Gets 99 years in
prison**

I killed Dr.

King: Ray

Stanton
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Jury OKs deal to avoid chair

By Jerry Lipson
Staff Writer

MEMPHIS — James Earl Ray pleaded guilty Monday to murdering the Rev. Dr. Luther King Jr. and was sentenced to 99 years in prison.

Ray entered the plea as part of a deal with the prosecution in which he agreed to the prison sentence. He could be eligible for parole from the Tennessee State Prison at Nashville in 33 years.

Monday was Ray's 41st birthday.

Had he stayed with his earlier plea of innocent, he could have been sentenced to death in the electric chair for the April 4, 1968, assassination of the Nobel Peace Prize winner.

The two-hour trial was only a formality. The jury agreed in advance to sentence Ray to 99 years.

After five prosecution witnesses were heard, the judge asked the jury to do its duty.

By a show of hands, and without leaving the jury box, the 12 jurors, 2 of them Negro, agreed to the 99-year prison term.

PERCY FOREMAN, Ray's attorney, told the court: "It took me five months to prove to myself that there was no conspiracy.

"I've never had any hopes of anything except to save this man's life."

Prosecutor Phil M. Canale also told the jury that he had no evidence of a conspiracy.

At that point Ray stood up and said:

"Your Honor, I'd like to say

something. I agree with all these stipulations, but I don't agree with these theories of conspiracy."

Battle then asked Ray if he wished to change the plea of guilty.

"No, sir," Ray replied.

THE TRIAL had been scheduled to begin April 7. However, a jury was selected Monday from the first 12 names on the venire and the trial started.

All jurors agreed to the deal for the 99-year sentence, but in Tennessee a jury must try murder cases involving guilty pleas. This is because the jury actually sets the penalty in murder cases.

Canale told the jury:

"We have no evidence that there was any conspiracy involved. If at any time there is evidence that such a conspiracy is involved, we will take prompt action."

CANALE THEN called the first witness, the Rev. Samuel B. Kyles, a Negro minister who was with Dr. King the evening of April 4.

Mr. Kyles described Dr. King's death.

He said they were standing on the second-floor balcony of the Lorraine Motel, outside Dr. King's room, when "I turned to walk away.

"I got about five or six steps away from him and I heard now what I know to be a shot.

"I looked down in the parking lot because I thought it was a car. Then I looked at Dr. King and he was lying thusly (Mr. Kyles held his hands over James Earl Ray's head)."

"They had shot his necktie right off," he said.

OTHER WITNESSES called were:

Chauncey Eskridge, Chicago attorney and a close friend of the slain civil rights leader; Dr. Jerry Francisco, Shelby County Coroner, who discussed the single rifle wound that Dr.

King received; N. E. Zachary, chief Memphis homicide officer, and Rogert Jensen, special agent in charge of the Memphis FBI office.

IF RAY HAD NOT changed his plea, the prosecution had planned to seek the death penalty.

Earlier, Ray's brother, John, said he doubted his brother would plead guilty.

But John said his brother may have been tired of being under constant observation in his cell by guards and closed-circuit television.

"All the time he has spent up there (in his cell) may have affected his mind," John Ray said. "He can't even to go the bathroom in private."

John Ray said he saw his brother for an hour Saturday and nothing was said about a guilty plea.



James Earl Ray

Ray to Appear In Court; Plea Rumors Heard

Memphis, March 9 (AP)—Percy Foreman, Houston lawyer, met with his client, James Earl Ray, at the county jail here tonight, as last minute preparations continued for an appearance tomorrow by Ray in criminal court.

There was speculation Ray might plead guilty to killing Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in return for a 99-year prison sentence.

Some observers said the hearing might only involve motions for a change of venue or a continuance, but there were reports Ray had at one time agreed to the guilty plea but had since changed his mind and decided to cling to his earlier claim of innocence.

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99 YRS. FOR KING SLAYER

RAY PLEADS GUILTY, HINTS AT CONSPIRACY

BY WAYNE THOMIS
[Chicago Tribune Press Service]

Memphis, March 10—Within 2½ hours today, James Earl Ray pleaded guilty to the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., was tried before a jury, and sentenced to 99 years in the Tennessee state penitentiary in Nashville in the Criminal court of Judge W. Preston Battle.

The action leaves many questions unanswered. Thruout the hearing, officials repeatedly said that none of the law enforcement agencies involved in the investigation of the murder of Dr. King, which Ray now has admitted, had produced evidence justifying any

indictment of any other individuals in a conspiracy to commit this act.

Ray was 41 today. He will be eligible for parole on his 71st birthday, or earlier if time already served in jail is taken into account.

Reject No-Plot Theory

Ray himself injected an element of conspiracy doubt in the proceedings. Shortly after the jury had been addressed by various state's attorneys, he jumped to his feet and in the loudest tones he had used during the day told Judge Battle, "I disagree with all the theories of former Atty. Gen. Ramsey Clark, the FBI's J. Edgar Hoover, and the people here that there is no evidence of a conspiracy."

Standard
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When Judge Battle turned to him, Ray then hastily added: "I don't want to change my plea of guilty. I don't want to upset anything, but also I don't want anything added to what has been agreed."

Question of Plot Remains

Judge Battle said in open court that failure to produce evidence justifying indictment of any other persons "is not conclusive proof that no conspiracy existed" and added:

"Moreover, if a conspiracy existed, no member of such a plot can ever live in peace and security or lie down to pleasant dreams because in this state there is no statute of limitations on a capital crime."

Today's hearing in Shelby county court opened with a rather matter-of-fact announcement by Ray's counsel, Percy Foreman of Houston, a renowned defender of criminals, that his client has signed and was offering a waiver of trial and offer of a plea of guilty for "a compromise settlement within an agreed 99 years in the penitentiary."

Judge Battle directed Ray to stand up. The defendant—a gangling figure who lurched into court in an almost shambling lope, his face waxened and his sharp nose appearing pinched and blue—rose quietly.

"Your counsel has explained your rights to you and you understand them?" demanded the judge. Ray replied quietly, "Yes, sir."

Waives Right of Appeal

The judge then told Ray that he had full rights to a trial in the courts and if an adverse verdict were returned he could appeal thru Tennessee courts to the United States Supreme court. The judge added that by pleading guilty he was waiving these rights and the defendant nodded in the affirmative.

"You are willing to make this compromise and settle for a 99-year sentence?" asked

Judge Battle. "This is what you want to do?" Again Ray said, "Yes, sir."

At this point the judge reiterated Ray's waiver of all rights to appeal the sentence and from prior rulings of court in the trial. Again Ray nodded his understanding.

No Further Promises

"Has anything else been promised you by anyone?" demanded the judge. "Has any pressure been used against you by anyone?" To both questions Ray answered, "No, sir."

"You are pleading guilty because you killed Dr. King?" insisted the judge. "This is done freely, voluntarily, and understandingly, an act of free will with understanding of the consequences?" Ray answered, "Yes, sir."

At this point, Jim Beasley, an assistant attorney general, spent one hour reading to the jury details of a stipulation agreed to by both state and defense, which outlined the national and international track-down of Ray after Dr. King was shot to death in Memphis April 4, 1968.

At the end of this reading Judge Battle ordered Ray to stand once more, and immediately pronounced sentence. The jury had agreed in advance to the state-defense arrangement.

Denies Memphis Is To Blame

"Memphis has been blamed for the death of Dr. King, wrongfully and illogically," Battle said. "Neither Dr. King nor the man convicted here had lived in Memphis. It was a coincidence that their orbits merely intersected here."

The judge said that the evidence against Ray had been very strong, but that he had not insisted on trying the case because, altho he himself had inflicted death sentences following several trials and his colleagues in court also had sentenced executions, there has been no such penalty meted in Tennessee since 1959, and "all trends in this state and throughout the United States are for doing away with capital punishment."

In an interview outside the courtroom, Judge Battle said

that despite Ray's waiver of all appeal rights his case could go into a federal court on habeas corpus proceedings "at any time." The judge said that he is in no position to talk about the evidence or the trial because of the possibility of such a review.

Conspiracy Leads Failed

Atty. Gen. Phil Canale, in charge of the murder case for Shelby county, said that hundreds of leads had been investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Britain's Scotland Yard, and Canadian authorities in an effort to establish a conspiracy in which Ray acted in behalf of others. All of them had led to "naught," he said.

As for motive, Canale said, he felt this was "largely racist." He refused to enlarge on this statement.

Technically, Ray is in custody of state penitentiary authorities who must arrange for his transfer to Nashville. The time and means for his transfer to Nashville are secret. It could come tonight.



Judge W. Preston Battle



James Earl Ray

Lack of Trial for Ray Leaves Key Questions Unanswered

[By the Associated Press]

James Earl Ray's plea of guilty to the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. put the lid on a court trial which might have aired puzzling questions about his escape from prison, his motive in killing King, and his flight from justice.

His imprisonment without the searching inquiry of a trial leaves these key questions unanswered:

How did he pay his way? From the time of his escape from Missouri state penitentiary at Jefferson City, April 23, 1967, until his capture in London, June 8, 1968, he spent an estimated \$10,000.

Fake Police Report

He had traveled to Toronto, Montreal, Atlanta, Birmingham, New Orleans, Puerto Vallarta in Mexico, Los Angeles, Memphis, Portugal, and London. He reportedly robbed a Montreal house of prostitution of \$800 and a London bank of about \$400.

Minutes after Dr. King was shot in Memphis, one police radio channel was occupied with details of a fake pursuit of a white Mustang, which apparently concentrated police attention away from the more logical and immediate routes of flight to adjoining Arkansas or Mississippi. There has been no public explanation of the coincidence that the white Mustang of the hoax was the same kind of car Ray used.

Dr. King had previously stayed in the white operated Rivermont hotel, but he moved into the Negro-operated Lorraine motel on April 4, 1968, the day he was slain. How did Ray know for certain that King had a room on a balcony exposed to a number of positions across a street?

Had Best Vantage Point

How did Ray pick the rooming house on Main street and how did he know that the best vantage point would be from the hallway bathroom, from which the fatal shot was fired? He had been offered a kitchenette in another part of the establishment, but this would have looked out to Main street, away from the Lorraine site.

Of Ray's aliases, three were of men living in the Toronto area: Paul Bridgman, Ramon Sneyd, and Eric Starvo Galt. Galt's actual middle name is St. Vincent. Did someone select the names? What were the odds that he could randomly select such names and then find sufficient information to use them, as he did in seeking passports and other official documents in the names of Bridgman and Sneyd?

Two Unexplained Events

While in Birmingham before the assassination, Ray bought a white Mustang for \$1,995 cash. Later, when he was in Los Angeles on Feb. 28-29, 1968, the Alabama highway patrol received a telephone request for a duplicate license for "Galt," as Ray was known. It was sent to a Birmingham rooming house on March 1, with a request for 25 cents fee. The quarter was received by the highway department on March 6. Who placed the call? Who sent the quarter?

In an Atlanta rooming house before the slaying, Ray had departed, leaving a map which bore his finger prints and had four places circled on it: King's home, the headquarters of the Southern Christian Leadership conference, King's church, and a project housing area where the white Mustang was abandoned after the slaying. Did

Ray figure out the information on his own, or were others involved?

Returned 1st Gun

Before the slaying, Ray went to the Aero Marine Supply company, near the Birmingham airport, where he first bought a .243 Remington rifle. He returned the next day, to get a more powerful Remington Gamemaster. Why would he have risked making an exchange? Why would he have decided on a more powerful weapon? The .243 would have been just as deadly, say some hunters.

After the slaying, Ray obtained a passport in Toronto under the name of Sneyd. The bureau of vital statistics in

Toronto has no record of sending a duplicate "Sneyd" birth certificate to him. One was sent to Ray, as "Paul Bridgman," but it was returned, unreceived. Without any document to show his identity, how was Ray able to get the passport in the name of Sneyd?

Once he went abroad and arrived in Portugal, Ray was safe from American law since the United States has no extradition agreement with Portugal involving capital cases. He went to London. Why?

The answers to these key questions might have emerged if witnesses had been called, evidence had been presented, and Ray had been on the stand for cross-examination.

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Find Conspirators, King Widow Pleads

Atlanta, March 10 (AP)—Mrs. Martin Luther King Jr. said today that James Earl Ray's plea of guilty in the slaying of her husband "cannot be allowed to close the case, to end the search for the many fingers which helped pull the trigger."

In Washington, a spokesman for the department of justice said the investigation into the original allegations of a conspiracy is still open.

Emotional Relief for Family

Mrs. King said, however, that for her family, "there is a sense of emotional relief" in the sentencing of Ray.

"For the moment, we have been spared a trial which would compel us to relive the fearfully tragic events of his death," she said in a statement. "But we realize that this is but a respite."

Mrs. King said that "all concerned people must press the state of Tennessee and the United States government to continue until all who are responsible for this crime have been apprehended."

"Not until then," she said, "can the conscience of the nation rest."

Convinced of Plot

Earlier, the Rev. Ralph David Abernathy, who succeeded King as head of the Southern Christian Leadership conference, said that Ray's admission of guilt strengthened his belief that there was a conspiracy in King's slaying.

Abernathy and Mrs. King re-

iterated their stand that the death penalty for Ray would be contrary to the moral and religious convictions of King.

LEADERS AMAZED

Chicago civil rights leaders yesterday expressed amazement over James Earl Ray's confession to the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

"I had hoped fervently that it would come out in the trial whether he [Ray] had done it on his own or whether there was a conspiracy," Edwin C. Berry, Chicago Urban league executive director, said. "I feel that if there were any possibility of the court uncovering any other conspirators, then it is a dereliction of duty not to do so."

"It would appear that a lot of people did not want him in circulation," Edward McClellan, Chicago director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said. He was commenting on a statement by Ray that he did not agree with the theory that there was no evidence of a conspiracy to assassinate King.

The Rev. Jesse Jackson, director of Operation Breadbasket, said he was "disturbed" and "a bit shaken" by Ray's sentencing to 99 years in prison. "I saw America today exchange a \$2 white boy for a billion dollar black man."

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Dubious U. S. Agency Probing King 'Plot'

BY JOHN HERBERS

[A NEW YORK TIMES SPECIAL]

WASHINGTON — The justice department said it is continuing its investigation into a possible conspiracy in the assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Even so, high officials close to the case believe James Earl Ray acted alone and there was no conspiracy.

After Ray pleaded guilty to a state charge of murder in Memphis yesterday and was sentenced to 99 years in prison, the justice department said thru a spokesman:

"The investigation into the conspiracy allegation is still open."

It was learned thru other sources, however, that altho the

investigation will continue, federal officials do not have evidence to show that Ray was hired to kill King or that he plotted the assassination with anyone.

To the contrary, some sources say, there is reason to believe Ray characteristically acted alone. Nor is there skepticism about the court procedures that were followed in Memphis in which Ray's guilty plea and the sentence were arranged in advance. The justice department was notified in advance to what was taking place.

"We never gave up looking for a conspiracy," said one official source, "but we did not find any evidence."

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'I Killed Dr. King' -Ray Gets 99 Yrs. And Hints At Plot

MEMPHIS (UPI)—James Earl Ray pleaded guilty to the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in return for his life Monday, but he indicated he was not alone in the slaying of the civil rights leader.

After an hour and 55 minutes of testimony a jury of 12 men, by prearrangement, convicted Ray and sentenced him to 99 years in prison.

But Ray himself announced he disagreed with the theory that there was no conspiracy to kill Dr. King. Judge W. Preston Battle warned that any conspirators could never rest easy, and the Justice Department took virtually its first notice of theories that Dr. King's assassination last April 4 was a conspiracy.

"The investigation into the original allegations of a conspiracy is still open," said a spokesman in Washington.

Immediate Trial

Ray changed his plea to guilty in return for the 99-year sentence and went on trial at once rather than waiting until his scheduled April 7 trial. His attorney, Texas trial lawyer Percy Foreman, evidently feared Ray might be sentenced to death — even though no one has been executed in Tennessee in seven years — if he maintained his innocence.

Ray stood up in court to say that "I can't agree with Mr. Clark."

Judge Battle, taken aback, asked "Mr. who?"

"Lamsay Clark," the former attorney general, explained Foreman. Clark had said several times that no one but Ray was in-

volved in Dr. King's killing. So did Foreman and prosecutor Phil M. Canale in Monday's "You don't agree with whose theories?" asked Battle.

"Mr. Canale's, Mr. Clark's, and J. Edgar Hoover's theories about the conspiracy," said Ray. He said no more, and was asked no more, about a conspiracy.

Eligible For Parole At 71

Ray celebrated his 41st birthday Monday and he will be eligible for parole when he is 71. An isolated maximum security cell was ready for him at state prison in Nashville, 200 miles away.

The question of a conspiracy virtually overshadowed Ray's conviction.

"There have been rumors that James Earl Ray was a hired dupe for others to kill Martin Luther King," said Canale. "We have no evidence that any conspiracy was involved."

FOREMAN SAID THAT "it took me a month to convince myself of this fact, what the attorney general of the United States and J. Edgar Hoover of the FBI said last year, that there was not a conspiracy."

But Canale said, "If at any time there is evidence that such a conspiracy is involved, we will take prompt action."

"It has not been established at this time that there was any conspiracy," said the

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judge before turning the case over to the jury. "This is not conclusive evidence that there was no conspiracy. If there was a conspiracy, no member of such a conspiracy can ever live in peace or lie down to pleasant dreams because there is no statute of limitations in capital cases in this state."

Then, quoting from Hamlet, Judge Battle intoned:

"'For murder, though it hath no tongue, will speak with most miraculous organ.'"

The Justice Department said it was still working on the original warrant in the case charging Eric Starvo Galt and a man "whom he alleged to be his brother" conspired to kill King. Galt turned out to be Ray and the "brother" — Ray has two — quickly faded from the investigation.

Since then there has been no official mention of the possibility that more than one man was involved in the slaying.

Foreman, who prides himself in having lost only one client to the electric chair, said: "I never expected . . . when I entered this case that I would be able to do anything other than save this man's life."

Ray, once nicknamed "the Mole," fancies himself an escape artist. He broke out of Missouri state prison before he killed Dr. King, and a detainer from Missouri awaits him if he manages to serve his Tennessee time.

Ray, wearing the blue checked suit he has worn for almost every appearance since his arrest in London last June 8, appeared in the heavily guarded courtroom at 9:45 a.m.

Foreman announced he was changing the plea to guilty in return for a 99-year sentence.

"Is this what you want to do?" Battle asked Ray.

"Yes, I do," Ray replied.

Ray formally waived all right to appeal or any other legal maneuvers. But Battle said at a press conference later that this was a technical matter and Ray still had every right he would have had if the conviction had been a normal one.

At 9:50 a jury—which had been hearing cases for two weeks—was brought into the courtroom.

"I have recommended a sentence of 99 years in the state penitentiary in Nashville," Canale told the jurors, two of whom are Negroes. "We'll put on some proof for your consideration. Can each of you accept that sentence?"

There were murmurs of assent.

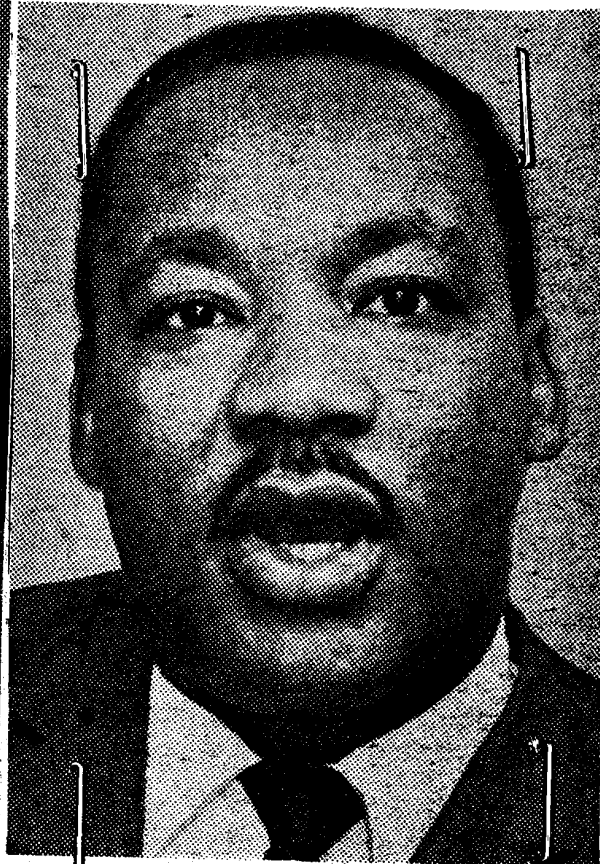
At 10:17, after Ray made his remarks about

conspiracy theories, the jury was sworn in. It took five witnesses an hour and 55 minutes to establish a case against him.

The jury convicted Ray by a show of hands in the jury box and passed sentence without leaving the courtroom.



James Earl Ray said he disagreed with "the theory that there was no conspiracy."



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was slain by rifle bullet April 4, 1968.

Doubt clouds Ray finale

Dr. King's admitted killer voices hint of conspiracy

By Jerry Lipson
Staff Writer

MEMPHIS — Was James Earl Ray involved in a complex plot to kill the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.? Or was he a lone gunman, impelled by racism to cut down the famed civil rights leader? Only the pallid, onetime farmboy from Quincy, Ill., knew for sure Tuesday as he headed for a 99-year term in the Tennessee State Prison at Nashville.

Defense attorney Percy Foreman said Ray acted alone. State prosecutors and Criminal Court Judge W. Preston Battle said there is no evidence of a conspiracy. But, the question remained, taunting the nation.

And it became more tormenting when Ray, in court, volunteered, "I don't agree" to the theory that there was a conspiracy.

PORTERS of the Nobel Prize-winning King said the late leader was the victim of a racist plot condoned

by white society.

Others demanded to know, at the very least, "Why was Ray permitted to 'cop a plea' of guilty — and go to prison without the trial all had expected would reveal a conspiracy?"

The bulldog-visaged Judge Battle probably grazed the bull's-eye when he said, "The fact was recognized soon after this tragic murder took place that there was no possible conclusion to the case which would satisfy everybody."

Ray pleaded guilty here Monday to the slaying, and Battle assessed the 99-year term after a perfunctory hearing before a jury of 12 men, two of them Negro.

Tennessee law permits guilty pleas in murder cases, unlike Illinois, but the state is required to present its evidence to a jury, which then confirms verdict and sentence.

THE PLEA and 99-year term was agreed to last week by Foreman and State Atty. Gen. Phil M. Canale after weeks of delicate negotiations.

Ray must serve 33 years before he's eligible for a parole

hearing. Under a life sentence, he would be eligible for a hearing after only 12½ years.

Foreman told reporters that when he entered the case last November, after Ray fired Birmingham attorney Arthur Hanes Sr.:

"From the very first day I talked to him, I never hoped to do anything except save his life."

"Like everybody else," Foreman added, he at first believed "all this crap (about conspiracy) was true," but soon found he could verify none of it.

FOREMAN said that "within 30 minutes" after Shelby County public defender Hugh M. Stanton Sr. was appointed co-counsel in December, Stanton started talking about a guilty plea.

"I authorized him to explore it, and he told me two or three weeks later that he thought it could be done and I started to explore it," Foreman said. Foreman said he'd also discussed the situation with Ray, pointing out the likelihood of a severe sentence if he were

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convicted.

Finally, Ray, in a letter, authorized him to seek a deal, Foreman said, and he set the wheels in motion. Canale said he was first approached on Feb. 21.

THOUGH RAY apparently had agreed to forgo a full-scale trial, Foreman conceded there were "difficulties" right to the end. He was concerned that one of the parties might back out.

Throughout his tenure as Ray's lawyer, the bear-sized Texan said, he never discussed the slaying directly. "I never asked Ray that question," he said, when asked if Ray had told him he had pulled the trigger.

"I STILL THINK it was a conspiracy," said Ray's brother, Jerry Ray, after Monday's hearing.

Asked why his brother agreed to the plea, he replied, "They were gonna burn him."

Foreman said it took him "about 30 days" to reach the conclusion long held by Canale and his prosecutors that Ray was a lone killer.

He added in his opening statement to the jury that, as long ago as last July, FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover and former U.S. Atty. Gen. Ramsey Clark had said the same thing — no conspiracy.

But Foreman had barely sat down in Battle's postage-stamp-size courtroom when Ray himself raised the first murmur of doubts again, when he asked Battle for permission to speak.

WHILE 40 newsmen and two dozen spectators, including Ray's brothers John and Jerry, held their collective breath, Ray said in a barely audible voice:

"I don't exactly accept the theories of Mr. Clark. I mean

on the conspiracy thing. I don't want to add something on to it which I haven't agreed to in the past."

Battle very carefully asked Ray a key question, vital to the plea:

"Are you pleading guilty to murder in the first degree in this case because you killed Dr. Martin Luther King under such circumstances that would make you legally guilty of murder?"

Replied Ray: "Yes, sir. Make me guilty on that."

FOREMAN LATER told reporters that Ray had said that only to keep the conspiracy notion alive; that it meant money to him for stories he could sell.

"He's got a goddam gold mine in stories. He didn't want to kill the golden goose," the gravel-voiced attorney said.

In a two-hour presentation after the jury was sworn in, Canale's lieutenants offered a strong chain of evidence linking Ray to the slaying.

King was felled April 4 by a single bullet as he stood on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel. The shot was believed fired from a second-floor bathroom window or a rooming house overlooking the motel.

Deputy Atty. Gen. James Beasley told how the state could place Ray in the bathroom when the shot was fired, of finding the fatal rifle and numerous belongings traced to Ray in a package outside the building.

AS IF anticipating an outcry, Battle said after sentencing Ray that the prosecution "at this time" lacks enough evidence to make any conspiracy indictments.

But he added significantly: "This is not conclusive evidence that there was no conspiracy."

"If this defendant was a member of a conspiracy, no member of such conspiracy can ever live in peace or security or lie down to pleasant dreams."

At least, not as long as Ray lives.

Canale later stressed that "every effort" had been bent to track down a conspiracy, with staff members traveling thousands of miles domestically and abroad.

"As far as having any proof that King was the victim of a conspiracy ... we have none," Canale said.

ASKED FOR a motive if Ray were a lone killer, Canale replied: "I think race had a lot to do with it. He was a racist."

"We're satisfied he had sufficient means of income to lead the life he was leading without being paid to kill King," he added. He did not elaborate.

ANOTHER reason he sought a guilty plea, said Foreman, who claims he's lost only one client to the executioner in 1,000 murder cases, is that he fears a resurgence of capital punishment.

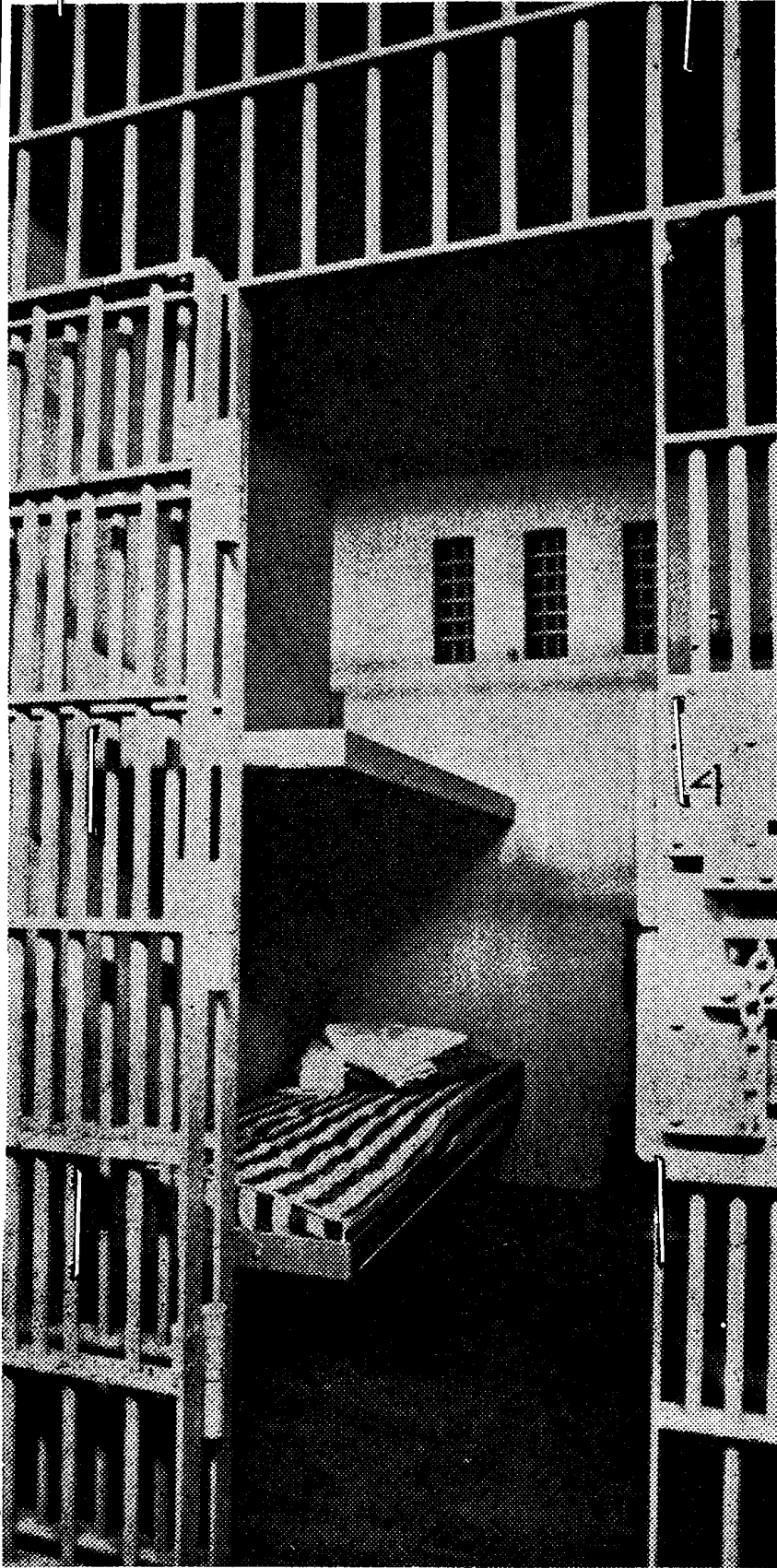
Despite the long trend away from it—no executions in Tennessee since 1960—Foreman said he saw the pendulum about to swing in the other direction.

"You're going to see more electrocutions in the next year than in the past 10," he said.



James Earl Ray
Was he a lone gunman?

Home for 99 years



This is the maximum security cell at the Tennessee State Prison at Nashville that will be occupied by James Earl Ray who was sentenced to 99 years in prison Monday after his conviction for the slaying of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (UPI)

Slayer of King Was a Loser— Right from Start

BY HARRY STATHOS

A NEW YORK DAILY NEWS SPECIAL

JAMES EARL RAY was a born loser. In some ways he couldn't help himself. He came from a rootless, impoverished family of losers who made few friends.

Ray was born March 10, 1928, in Alton, Ill. His father, James, was a drifter at 25. His mother was Lucille Maher, who came from a devout Irish Catholic family. She was only 17 when she married.

The Rays were a depression family, like so many of the thousands of poor rural families that struggled for survival during the lean years of the 1930s.

Alton is a blue-collar city of about 47,000 in the industrialized area that spreads out on both sides of the Mississippi. The city was the site of the last Lincoln-Douglas debate.

It is also the place where Elijah P. Lovejoy, the crusading publisher, was killed in 1837 by a mob incensed by his outspoken stand for the abolition of slavery.

About two years after Ray was born, the family moved to Quincy, about 115 miles north. But by the time James started school in 1935, they were living in Ewing, about 30 miles away, on the other side of the river in Missouri.

EWING FOLKS knew then as the Rayns family. Mrs. Rayns was described as a tired, hard-working housewife who did the best she could. But James, altho he was an apt pupil, was regarded as a menace to the Ewing community.

James dropped out of high school and joined the army in 1946. He was stationed in Germany most of his tour and climbed to private first-class. He served a term at hard labor for drunkenness and resisting arrest and was ultimately given a general discharge in 1948 because of "ineptness and lack of adaptability to military service."

Ray promptly embarked on a career of lawbreaking. He was known as a gutsy crook who could be as elusive as an eel when he was cornered.

BUT RAY was also known as a "penny ante" criminal. His most profitable known caper, grossing \$2,200, was bungled when the escape car crashed. His specialty was botching his getaway. His toughest conviction was for the \$11 stickup of a Chicago cab driver in 1952.

In 1954, he hooked up with a man he had known since the early 1940s, Walter Rife. Driving thru 38 states, the pair cashed forged money orders in many of them.

"Ray was a mean, nasty fighter," Rife once said. "He fought to win, no matter what it took—a club, knife or gun. I never saw him lose a fight."

THREE TIMES during his stay at the Missouri State penitentiary, where he was serving 20 years for armed robbery, Ray tried to escape. The fourth time, in April 1967, he succeeded by hiding under loaves of bread and getting away in a delivery truck.

At that point, James Earl Ray faded into oblivion. A few months later, alias Eric Starvo Galt, he emerged from nowhere. And an ex-con who was a loner suddenly emerged as a man who had learned how to dance, became an avid ballroom fan and graduated from bar-tending school.

Ray became a national figure when he pulled the trigger of a .30.06 rifle and saddened millions thruout the world by assassinating Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

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MAXIMUM SECURITY

Ray Moved to Nashville Prison

[CHICAGO'S AMERICAN Wire Services]

NASHVILLE — James Earl Ray, admitted assassin of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., today was transferred from Memphis to the state penitentiary here.

Ray, sentenced to 99 years in prison, was driven the 200 miles from the Shelby county jail in Memphis.

As Ray passed thru a line of reporters and photographers in the lobby of the prison, he attempted to hide his face behind his handcuffed hands. He made no comment.

He will be kept in maximum security for a month to six weeks until his classification is completed.

After this period, Warden Lake Russell said, "he'll be treated like everyone else."

Ray, 41 years old yesterday, will not be eligible to seek parole for 30 years, under Tennessee law.

His first days in the large gray rock structure will be spent alone in a cell a little larger than most—about 8 by 10 feet. The only furnishings are a bed, chair, wash basin, and toilet.

It will be "kind of a quarantine until we get all the data in his records and determine under what type security he should be held and where he should work," Russell said.

In Memphis he was kept under constant surveillance by closed-circuit television in a continuously-lit cell.

In Washington, the justice department said it is continuing its investigation into a possible conspiracy in the assassination of Dr. King. Even so, high officials close to the case believe Ray acted alone and there was no conspiracy.

After Ray was sentenced in

Memphis the justice department said thru a spokesman:

"The investigation into the conspiracy allegation is still open."

It was learned thru other sources, however, that altho the investigation will continue, federal officials do not have evidence to show that Ray was hired to kill King or that he plotted the assassination with anyone.

To the contrary, some sources say, there is reason to believe Ray characteristically acted alone. Nor is there skepticism about the court procedures that were followed in Memphis in which Ray's guilty plea and the sentence were arranged in advance. The justice department was notified in advance to what was taking place.

"We never gave up looking for a conspiracy," said one official source, "but we did not find any evidence."

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[AP Wirephoto]

NASHVILLE—James Earl Ray ducks head in effort to avoid photographers as he is led to Tennessee State prison. State patrol officer is in rear.

Mystery remains

Was Ray a part of plot on King?

By Jerry Lipson
Staff Writer

MEMPHIS — Was James Earl Ray involved in a complex plot to kill the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.? Or was he a lone gunman, impelled by racism to cut down the famed civil rights leader?

No one knew for sure, except the pallid onetime farmboy from Quincy — and anyone with whom he may have conspired.

Ray Tuesday began serving a 99-year term in an isolated, heavily guarded cell at the Tennessee State Prison at Nashville.

Defense attorney Percy Foreman said Ray acted alone.

State prosecutors and Criminal Court Judge W. Preston Battle said there is no evidence of a conspiracy.

But, the question remained, taunting the nation.

And it became more tormenting when Ray, in court, volunteered, "I don't agree" with the theory that there was no conspiracy.

SUPPORTERS of the Nobel Prize-winning King said the civil rights leader was the victim of a racist plot condoned by white society.

Others demanded to know, at the very least, "Why was Ray permitted to 'cop a plea' of guilty — and go to prison without the trial all had expected would reveal a conspiracy?"

The bulldog-visaged Judge Battle probably grazed the bull's-eye when he said, "The fact was recognized soon after this tragic murder took place

that there was no possible conclusion to the case which would satisfy everybody."

THE JUSTICE Department said the FBI still is investigating the possibility of a conspiracy.

Ray's brother, Jerry, said "I still think it was a conspiracy."

Asked why his brother agreed to plead guilty, Jerry Ray replied:

"They were gonna burn him."

During Monday's dramatic hearing in the Memphis courtroom, when James Ray pleaded guilty and agreed to a 99-year prison term, he told the court:

"I don't exactly accept the theories of Mr. Clark (former U.S. Atty. Gen. Ramsey Clark). I mean on the conspiracy thing. I don't want to add something onto it which I haven't agreed to in the past.

FOREMAN later told The Daily News that Ray had said that only to keep the conspiracy notion alive in order to make money selling stories.

"He's got a gold mine in stories. He didn't want to kill the golden goose," the gravel-voiced attorney said.

"From the very first day I talked to him. I never hoped to do anything except to save his life," Foreman said.

"Like everyone else, he (Ray) at first believed all this talk (about conspiracy) was true," but soon found out he could verify none of it, the attorney said.

After Ray pleaded guilty he underwent the formality of

a brief trial before he was sentenced by the jury of 12 men, 2 of them Negroes.

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Birmingham attorney Arthur Hanes Sr.:

"From the very first day I talked to him, I never hoped to do anything except save his life."

"Like everybody else," Foreman added, he at first believed "all this talk (about conspiracy) was true," but soon found he could verify none of it.

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"I authorized him to explore it, and he told me two or three

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Finally, Ray, in a letter, authorized him to seek a deal, Foreman said, and he set the wheels in motion. Canale said he was first approached on Feb. 21.

THOUGH RAY apparently had agreed to forgo a full-scale trial, Foreman conceded there were "difficulties" right to the end. He was concerned that one of the parties might back out.

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spiracy indictments.

But he added significantly: "This is not conclusive evidence that there was no conspiracy."

"If this defendant was a member of a conspiracy, no member of such conspiracy can ever live in peace or security or lie down to pleasant dreams."

At least, not as long as Ray lives.

Canale later stressed that "every effort" had been bent to track down a conspiracy, with staff members traveling thousands of miles domestically and abroad.

"As far as having any proof that King was the victim of a conspiracy ... we have none," Canale said.

ASKED FOR a motive if Ray were a lone killer, Canale replied: "I think race had a lot to do with it. He was a racist."

"We're satisfied he had sufficient means of income to lead the life he was leading without being paid to kill King," he added. He did not elaborate.



James Earl Ray tries to hide his face from photographers Tuesday as he is led to a maximum security cell in Tennessee State Prison at Nashville. (AP)

Killer's actions and travels

Questions unanswered in

Ray case

By Associated Press

James Earl Ray's plea of guilty to the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. put the lid on a court trial that might have aired puzzling questions about his escape from prison, his motive in killing King and his flight from justice.

His imprisonment without the searching inquiry of a trial leaves these key questions unanswered:

How did he pay his way? From the time of his escape from Missouri State Penitentiary at Jefferson City, April 23, 1967, until his capture in London, June 8, 1968, he spent an estimated \$10,000.

HE HAD traveled to Toronto, Montreal, Atlanta, Birmingham, New Orleans, Puerto Vallarta in Mexico, Los Angeles, Memphis, Portugal and London. He reportedly robbed a Montreal house of prostitution of \$800 and a London bank of about \$400.

Minutes after King was shot in Memphis, one police radio channel was occupied with details of a fake pursuit of a white Mustang, which apparently concentrated police attention away from the more logical and immediate routes of flight to adjoining Arkansas or Mississippi. There has been no public explanation of the coincidence that the white Mustang of the hoax was the same kind of car Ray used.

KING HAD previously stayed in the white-operated Rivermont Hotel, but he moved into the Negro-operated Lorraine Motel on April 4, 1968, the day he was slain. How did Ray know for certain that King had a room on a balcony exposed to a

number of positions across a street?

How did Ray pick the rooming house on Main St. and how did he know that the best vantage point would be from the hallway bathroom, from which the fatal shot was fired? He had been offered a kitchenette in another part of the establishment, but this would have looked out to Main St., away from the Lorraine site.

OF RAY'S aliases, three were of men living in the Toronto area: Paul Bridgman, Ramon Sneyd and Eric Starvo Galt. Galt's actual middle name is St. Vincent.

Did someone select the names? What were the odds that he could randomly select such names and then find sufficient information to use them, as he did in seeking passports and other official documents in the names of Bridgman and Sneyd?

While in Birmingham before the assassination, Ray bought a white Mustang for \$1,995 cash.

Later, when he was in Los Angeles on Feb. 28-29, 1968, the Alabama highway patrol received a telephone request for a duplicate license for "Galt" as Ray was known. It was sent to a Birmingham rooming house on March 1, with a request for 25 cents fee. The quarter was received by the highway department on March 6. Who placed the call? Who sent the quarter?

IN AN ATLANTA rooming house before the slaying, Ray had departed, leaving a map that bore his finger prints and had four places circled on it: King's home, the headquarters of the Southern Christian

Leadership Conference, King's church and a project housing area where the white Mustang was abandoned after the slaying. Did Ray figure out the information on his own, or were others involved?

Before the slaying, Ray went to the Aero Marine Supply Co., near the Birmingham airport, where he first bought a .243 Remington rifle. He returned the next day, to get a more powerful Remington Camemaster. Why would he have risked making an exchange? Why would he have

decided on a more powerful weapon? The .243 would have been just as deadly, say some hunters.

AFTER THE slaying, Ray obtained a passport in Toronto under the name of Sneyd. The bureau of vital statistics in Toronto has no record of sending a duplicate "Sneyd" birth certificate to him. One was sent to Ray, as "Paul Bridgman," but it was returned, unreceived. Without any document to show his identity

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how was Ray able to get the passport in the name of Sneyd?

Once he went abroad and arrived in Portugal, Ray was safe from American law since the United States has no extradition agreement with Portugal involving capital cases. He went to London. Why?

The answers to these key questions might have emerged if witnesses had been called, evidence had been presented and Ray had been on the stand for cross-examination.

PUBLIC WANTS DEEPER PROBE OF KING DEATH

Ray's Confession No Satisfaction

BY WAYNE THOMIS

[Chicago Tribune Press Service]

Nashville, March 11 — James Earl Ray, confessed assassin of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., tonight is in an 8-by-10-foot detention cell in the state penitentiary here, beginning the 99-year compromise sentence imposed at Memphis yesterday.

Altho Ray's status is established — by the quick trial in which he pleaded guilty to first degree murder in a deal for the "less than death" punishment — there was no letup in the national outcry for a full and complete disclosure of what is regarded here and abroad as a complex murder conspiracy.

Several Interpretations

Authorities have done little to discourage this belief, and Ray, in court yesterday, jumped to his feet at one point to inform Judge W. Preston Battle that he "disagreed" with statements made by former United States Atty. Gen. Ramsey Clark and J. Edgar Hoover, chief of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, who said they "did not believe the King killing was carried out by conspirators."

This action was interpreted in several ways by both attorneys and investigative experts who heard it.

[In his suburban Washington home, Clark declared tonight that he had never said flatly there was no conspiracy involved in the murder of Dr. King. He said he had insisted only that he knew of no evidence of a conspiracy.]

No Complete Solution

Ray is doing his part in keeping the idea of the broad plot behind the murder alive," said one observer. "It could be that he is reminding anyone who might have been behind the killing that he always could speak out in the future," said another. "He has insisted from the beginning that he was a duped or unwitting agent in the affair, and this helps keep that story in the news," said a third.

Judge Battle consulted with representatives of the American Bar association and with federal attorneys before accepting Ray's plea of guilty. It was offered for the first time by Atty. Percy Foreman, Ray's counsel, on Feb. 28, it was disclosed yesterday. Judge Battle said in a statement at the close of the Memphis trial:

"From the beginning it has been recognized here that no possible solution to the Ray indictment for murder would satisfy all groups. It was necessary for this court to proceed, with consultations, along lines which scrupulously follow the law and directives of the Supreme court and dictates of the court's own conscience."

This prediction by the judge already has been borne out by editorial blasts condemning Tennessee authorities for not conducting a full trial and "blinging into the open the details of what undoubtedly constituted a conspiracy."

But gathering of solid legal evidence of such plots and consortiums is another matter. Shelby county and federal attorneys, who assisted them in gathering and preparing the case against Ray, told Judge Battle before trial, and repeated themselves publicly afterward, that "not enough was brought out to justify presentation of conspiracy charges to a grand jury."

300 Witnesses Interviewed

More than 300 witnesses in the United States, Canada, Portugal, and Britain were interviewed, and more than 80 had been subpoenaed for the Ray trial. None of these persons had a tangible fact to support the conspiracy angle, it was stated. There is a great deal of evidence seemingly to support conspiracy suspicions. A strong part of it has been the psychiatric and psychological exam-

inations of Ray when he was a prisoner for four years in the Missouri penitentiary, serving a 20-year sentence for armed robbery. He was a small timer, as a criminal, these studies showed.

But most important, in the currently national scene, was the analysis that the physicians and doctors made of his character. Ray has no psychotic quirks that suggest insanity. Instead, they said, he is a hard-core criminal with motivations that stem only from desire for financial rewards without real labor.

"Gun for Hire"

In other words Ray is not a killer, a bigot, a robber or thief because of insanity, latent or developed. Instead he is a cold and calculating "gun for hire."

In the face of these probabilities — and no one in the case now is willing to rule out the possibility of conspiracy — there nevertheless was nothing that was to be offered during Ray's trial along these lines, according to State Atty. Gen. Phil Canale, on whose shoulders the responsibility lay.

In an interview after Ray's sentencing, Canale said there were several areas where absolute certainties were lacking. One of these related to a motive for Ray's act if there were no conspiracy. The

other was in the tracing of his funds, spent over a period of 11 months during which the trail seemed to coincide "too often to be coincidence" with the travels of Dr. King.

Made Repeated Trips

Repeatedly Ray made auto trips in his white Mustang car from the Atlanta area where he kept a series of hideouts in the years 1967-68 to the Los Angeles area. Also charts and maps of Atlanta, found in one of Ray's rooms, had inked circles around Dr. King's home, and around the headquarters of the Southern Christian Leadership conference, which Dr. King headed there.

With reference to funds, the FBI once computed that Ray had spent almost \$25,000 for equipment, travel, lodgings and schools in which he enrolled — one for a dancing class, the other a bartending class — while he was a fugitive and prior to Dr. King's assassination.

"We know now," Canale said yesterday, "that Ray was involved in at least two holdups in Montreal, Canada, and of a bank in England, after Dr. King's death. We think he might have been involved in a stickup of a small Illinois bank, just after he got out of the Missouri penitentiary."

"Also we know that he had accumulated quite a sum work-

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ing in the penitentiary laundry. I am talking of about \$2,300. This had been sent out of prison and presumably was available to him after his escape. All this money, as well as we can total it, hardly accounts for the kind of living which Ray did, even tho he preferred hole-in-the-wall rooming houses and motels."

It is proven that Ray had a safe-deposit box in a Birmingham, Ala., bank. From it he took \$2,000 in cash to purchase his Mustang [price \$1,995] on Aug. 30, 1967.

Canale is not so open in discussing the motive which he would have presented to a jury if Ray had gone to trial. "This was mainly racist," Canale said after Ray's sentencing.

Judge Battle will rule on April 11, on contempt of court citations against two Memphis newspaper men and four others involved in "pre-trial violations of publicity rules" laid down by him. He said his decisions in these matters "still were within the bosom of the court."



[AP Wirephoto]

Ray Reaches Prison

James Earl Ray, confessed slayer of Dr. Martin Luther King, is searched as he arrives at Tennessee penitentiary in Nashville.

Ray's Nontrial

THE ABRUPT, pre-arranged end to the trial of James Earl Ray, with Ray pleading guilty to the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King and being sentenced all within 2½ hours, undoubtedly represented a great saving of time. But it was a great loss in every other respect. Aside from legally settling the issue of Ray's guilt, this substitution of a deal for a trial raises questions instead of answering them—questions like "What was the big hurry?"

The issue of whether Ray did in fact shoot Dr. King in Memphis was the main one only as far as his trial as an individual was concerned. Of wider importance is the question of whether Ray acted alone or was part of a conspiracy to kill the civil rights leader.

We have seen no evidence of such a conspiracy, and are quite willing to believe that none existed. The point is that this question has been summarily shuffled aside, not answered. Instead of a trial, which would have subjected all the evidence to a thoroughgoing test in public, we have a hearty assurance from the prosecutors and Ray's attorneys that everything's all right—they're convinced, so we don't have to worry about it.

That was not the point of this trial, or of any trial under our system of jurisprudence. If we were prepared to take the experts' assurances for everything there would be no need for public trials at all.

As it is, the American public is left guessing about questions such as these: Where did Ray, after escape from Missouri state penitentiary a year before the murder, get the money to travel as widely as he did—to several cities in the United States and to Canada, Mexico, Portugal, and England? What is the explanation for the fake broadcast on police radios just after the shooting that seems to have diverted police attention away from the escape route Ray used? How did he choose as aliases the names of actual persons, and collect information about them to use in obtaining passports and other official documents? What did Ray mean with his obscure statement in court, to the effect that people who believed there was no conspiracy were wrong?

As Memphis' Criminal court Judge W. Preston Battle made clear, the 99-year sentence for Ray by no means settles these questions; if there was a conspiracy, "no member of it can ever live in peace and security." But in a case of such towering importance as Dr. King's murder, this use of a trial for bargaining purposes was extremely ill-conceived.

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Ray Headlines Touched Sensitive Nerve

Memphis Isn't Off the Hook Yet

See editorial, page 17

BY ANTHONY BURTON

A NEW YORK DAILY NEWS SPECIAL

MEMPHIS—Among the millions of words written about the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., there were three which really agitated the people of Memphis.

A news magazine referred to the Mississippi river city as a "decaying river town." Local editorial writers thundered protests. Judge W. Preston Battle, after sentencing James Earl Ray to 99 years for the murder of King, could not resist a reference to the nagging words.

He recalled Winston Churchill's reply when Germany in World War II threatened to ring Britain's neck as if she were a chicken. "Some chicken, some neck," Churchill growled.

Battle said, "Some river, some town"—the last words said in court before Ray was hustled off to a lifetime of imprisonment. It was doubtful if the judge would have the last word, however.

HE SEEMED TO THINK that the disposal of Ray had finally lifted from his town the cloud that settled over it with the killing of King.

Evidently, it did not occur to the chubby, courtly jurist, or to the prosecution, that the swift settlement of the case with a guilty plea and an agreed-to sentence, might leave the public with the impression that the case had been dealt with in clandestine fashion.

I did not matter that 90 per cent of criminal cases in Tennessee are dealt with in a similar way. It did not matter that the sentencing of Ray in no way blocks the indictment of co-conspirators if any are found. To the public there will always be something suspicious about the rush to judgment.

BATTLE TOLD THE COURT it was decided to handle Ray's case as a routine prosecution.

At best, this appeared to be naive. The case was not an ordinary one and no magic could transform it into one.

When defense attorney Percy Foreman suggested the deal in which Ray would plead guilty, the prosecution and judge agreed without lifting an eyebrow, just as they might have done in any other case.

Now, questions are being asked about Ray's motive if there was no conspiracy. There are questions about the motives of others involved in the case.

WHY DID FOREMAN agree to the 99-year sentence? Solely to saving Ray from the electric chair? No killer has gone to the chair in Tennessee for years.

And there was always the chance he could have left enough doubt in the jury's mind to have freed Ray completely.

Ray's first defender, Arthur Hanes, had left the case with most of the money received for the sale of Ray's story to author William Bradford Huie.

Foreman is noted for his willingness to take anything from jewelry to a car in payment, but Ray had nothing left.

THE MOTIVES of the prosecution and judge in being concerned about the image of Memphis are more easily discerned.

Swift disposal of the case gets Memphis out of the headlines it would have occupied for weeks if the case had gone to trial.

Also, there was concern that a protracted trial might have churned up racial tensions especially if Ray had gone free.

Few doubt the officials meant well. The trouble is that if people are to believe in conspiracies among the wicked, it's not much of a step to start believing conspiracies are possible among the just.

Stanton

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The state vs. Ray

King conspiracy theory riddled

By Jerry Lipson
Staff Writer

MEMPHIS — If he had pleaded innocent, prosecutors were prepared to prove conclusively that James Earl Ray fired the shot that killed the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Close analysis of a partial transcript of Monday's hearing erased any doubt that Ray

may have been a decoy to lay a false trail as many had earlier believed.

It showed that the shambling, dark-haired escaped convict left a trail of clues that could have led him to the electric chair.

ALTHOUGH IT doesn't ease suspicions that Ray may have had accomplices, the transcript knocks down several props used to

support conspiracy theories — such as the "Convenient" discovery of the death weapon.

The 5,950-word statement, presented in court by Deputy Atty. Gen. James Beasley, contained the facts of the case as agreed to by prosecutors and Ray's attorney, Percy Foreman.

It names 51 persons Beasley said would link Ray to the fatal rifle and put him in the

rooming house bathroom where the shot was fired — and when

THIS IS THE picture it draws:

His white Mustang parked on the street below, Ray on April 4, 1968, checked into the seedy flophouse overlooking the Lorraine Motel about 3 p.m. and took a rear room with a view of the motel.

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He went out and returned about 4 p.m. after buying a pair of binoculars at the York Arms Co., a mile away.

Two hours later, Ray was dashing wildly down the front stairs, a parcel loosely wrapped in a green spread under his arm, while Dr. King lay dying on the motel balcony.

Ray had planned to dump everything in the car, but by the time he hit the street, it was swarming with police. He panicked momentarily.

SPOTTING THE shadowy doorway to the Canipe Amusement Co. next door, and thinking it was closed, he dropped his bundle and sprinted for the car.

It was a mistake. Owner Guy W. Canipe and two customers were inside. They heard the package fall and, attracted by the thud, saw "the back of a white man" going away.

The package contained a rifle and telescopic sight, clothing, binoculars and several beer cans, all with plenty of fingerprints.

Two prints, a thumb on the rifle stock and a finger on its telescopic sight, were of "sufficient clarity" for identification, the transcript said.

IN THE ROOMING house, Ray had left prints all over the bathroom and the room he had occupied, 5-B.

Police talked to another roomer, Charles Quitman Stephens, who had "heard footsteps" from Ray's room next door "into the bathroom."

"At approximately 6 p.m., Mr. Stephens heard a shot coming apparently from the bathroom. He then got up and went . . . out into the corridor to see the left profile of Ray as he turned into the hall leading to the front stairs

In the bathroom, police found fresh markings on the window sill and "proof would show . . . that the markings on this sill were consistent with the machine markings" on the barrel of the rifle found downstairs.

The weapon was traced to the Aero Marine Sporting Goods Co. in Birmingham, Ala., where clerks said it had been bought on March 30, along with a rifle telescope.

BEASLEY said witnesses would identify Ray as the man who, under the name of Harvey Lowmeyer, exchanged the rifle for a smaller one bought the day before.

Beasley later said Ray, after buying the first weapon, had called the store saying "his brother" wanted a different rifle, and requesting the exchange.

It was this reference to a mysterious brother, he added, that led the FBI to issue its first conspiracy warrant shortly after the shooting.

MEANWHILE, a white Mustang found abandoned in Atlanta yielded more clues — sheets, clothing, maps of Mexico, Birm-

ingham, Los Angeles and Atlanta, a Polaroid camera case, and a 1967 license plate. The plate checked out to William I. Faisley, who, the transcript said, would testify that Ray bought the car using the name of Eric S. Galt.

The maps, containing the "handwritten name of Eric S. Galt," revealed fingerprints similar to those on the rifle.

Sweepings of the car turned up hair particles matching those taken from the bundle found outside Canipes' store.

Other witnesses, the transcript said, would identify Ray as the man who under the names of Galt, Paul Bridgeman and Ramon George Sneyd, turned up in Montreal, Toronto, London and Lisbon.

THE TRANSCRIPT does not say how Ray managed to elude police for 13 months after escaping from the Missouri State Prison in May, 1967—possibly his longest period of freedom since leaving the Army in 1949.

Nor does it offer any clues as to how, or where, Ray obtained the money to buy the car, rifle, binoculars, air fare to London, or the know-how of obtaining a passport.

But it leaves no doubt that Ray left so many clues behind he might as well have identified himself immediately as the assassin.

THE STATE is not saying categorically that Ray was a lone killer, only that they have been unable to unearth any evidence that he was either helped or hired.

Secrets Of King's Slaying Go With Ray Into Prison

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UPI) — Wearing chains and true to the code of silence of a convict, James Earl Ray took into Tennessee State Prison Tuesday the secrets of the slaying of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Ray, who pleaded guilty Monday in exchange for a 99-year sentence, was taken from his Shelby County Jail cell in Memphis

at 5:30 a.m. to a highway patrol barracks near the county line, then sped 200 miles to Nashville in an eight-car caravan.

He was lodged in cell No. 4 in the maximum security building, two cells away from William Garvin Allen, an accused Black Power advocate who was convicted of killing a policeman 14 months ago.

Allen said he had no special feeling about Ray being his neighbor.

"As far as I am concerned, society is what killed King," Allen said.

Six Weeks Of Tests

The prison has a population of 1,938 — of whom 824 are Negroes.

Ray will spend the next six weeks undergoing a series of tests, and at the end of that time it will be decided if he will be kept in maximum security or integrated with the other prisoners.

The deal in which the 41-year-old Ray was permitted to plead guilty in exchange for his life left the King case shrouded in as much mystery as ever.

Ray, who has been in and out of prisons all of his adult life, offered no reason for his confessed crime, although the state said he had a deep hatred of Negroes.

Criminal Court Judge W. Preston Battle, who heard the Ray case, said:

"The fact was recognized soon after this tragic murder took place that there was no possible conclusion to the case which would satisfy everybody.

"It was decided at that time that the only thing the judge could do was try the case as nearly as possible to other cases and to follow the law and his own conscience. This I have done."

Plot Angle Under Probe

The U.S. Justice Department, which long had said it believed the April 4, 1968, killing of Dr. King was the act of one man, disclosed for the first time Monday that it is looking into the possibility of a conspiracy. It refused to say what evidence—if any—it has of a plot.

Ray made three breaks from the Missouri State Prison, where he was serving 20 years for armed robbery, before he finally escaped a year before Dr. King was killed.

Despite his quiet manner, officials say, Ray apparently believes there is no prison that can hold him.

Ray's brother Jerry, who was in court when

sentence was passed, said at the time of Ray's capture that he would have a hard time believing his brother killed the integration leader out of hatred for Negroes.

"If he did this, he did it for a lot of money," Jerry commented.

Widow, Leader Comment

The Negro community served notice that it would not accept the sentence of Ray as the final solution to the case.

Mrs. Coretta King, the slain civil rights leader's widow, urged authorities "to continue until all who are responsible for this crime have been apprehended. . . ."

The Rev. Curtis Harris, executive secretary of the Virginia Council on Human Relations, was more forceful, declaring:

"The Negro community will not accept a two-dollar white boy in exchange for a multi-million-dollar black boy — 99 years for Ray in exchange for the life of Dr. Martin Luther King."

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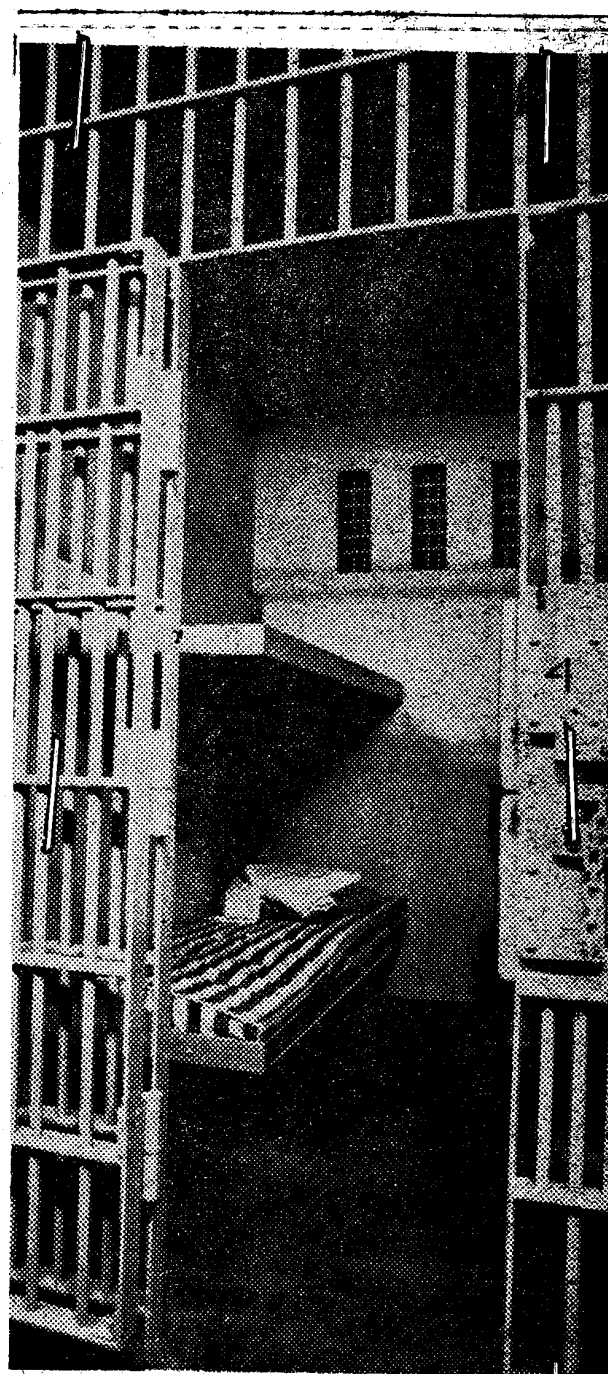
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Heavily guarded and manacled, James Earl Ray, sentenced to a 99-year term for the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., arrives at the Tennessee State Prison in Nashville Tuesday. Ray was housed in the prison's maximum security section. (AP)



Cell No. 4 in the maximum security section of the Tennessee State Prison at Nashville—the one in which James Earl Ray was lodged. (UPI)

THE AMERICAN PUBLIC AND JUSTICE will be short-
changed if an intensive investigation isn't launched to determine
whether or not James Earl Ray was part of a conspiracy to
assassinate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. All indications point
to Ray as a hired killer. Who hired him?

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King Case Not Ended

The sudden end of the trial of James Earl Ray for the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. leaves many questions unanswered. The public is entitled to the answers because the murder was more than a simple crime of passion; it was planned with malice aforethought and had sociological and political overtones that must be explored further.

Ray's plea of guilty and his acceptance of a sentence of 99 years in prison is not an unusual procedure in American courts. Such pleas have the general approval of the American Bar Assn. Ray escaped a possible death sentence, but this is not an important consideration. Dr. King himself was opposed to capital punishment.

"The execution of Mr. Ray, who has not yet told the full story, would not serve the ends of justice," says Mrs. Coretta King, the widow of the Negro leader.

What would serve the ends of justice would be answers to the questions left dangling as Ray silently goes to prison.

Were there others involved in the assassination? Ray's defense attorney said Ray acted alone but Ray himself said he did not agree with the theory that there was no conspiracy. This courtroom remark by Ray must be amplified.

What was Ray's basic motive? What went on in his mind to bring him to the assassination? He has been described as a racist. Some federal investigators have come to the conclusion that Ray hated Negroes so intensely he needed no one to inspire him to commit the crime. On the other hand, a Justice Department spokesman said after the sentencing:

"The investigation into the conspiracy allegation is still open."

Bits and pieces of the story have been publicized. Where did Ray get the thousands of dollars it took for him to travel as he did during the year between the time he escaped from Missouri State Penitentiary and the day he killed Dr. King? The simple answer is that he financed himself by robberies. How was an escaped convict able to obtain a Canadian passport and travel abroad after the murder? There is no simple answer to that question.

William Bradford Huie, the Alabama author, is supposed to have the Ray story and the "rights" to publish it. The right to Ray's story belongs to the American people. Until the full story is on the record, as it might have been if Ray had been given a full hearing, doubts about the case will corrupt public opinion and plague public officials.

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The shadow of doubt

James Earl Ray was brought into open court in Memphis, admitted he killed Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and was promptly sentenced to 99 years in prison. By this sequence, not unprecedented in ordinary murder cases, the State of Tennessee was spared a long and costly trial, the difficult problem of trying to get a death sentence was bypassed, and the state made certain the killer did not squirm free. In other words, justice was served.

Or was it?

The painstaking investigation and Ray's plea of guilty combine into a virtual certainty that Ray was the man who pulled the trigger of the rifle that killed Dr. King. Yet there are other pieces in this case that do not quite add up. And the gnawing doubts that remain must be resolved before the final curtain is allowed to drop on the story.

For this was no ordinary murder case precisely because Dr. King was no ordinary man. He lived and died at the center of a national storm and while he lived there were many people who wished him dead just as there were many who revered him as a saint. The suspicion that Ray did not plan his deed alone—that he may have been the mere instrument of a widespread conspiracy—will not die with his conviction.

Ray himself lent fuel to such speculation when he stood up in court to repudiate statements discounting the conspiracy theory. Yet this matter was not pressed. It was allowed to drop with the prosecution's comment that there was no proof of a conspiracy. No more is there proof that there was none.

The contrast is inescapable between the procedures followed with James Earl Ray and with Sirhan Sirhan in Los Angeles. Despite Sirhan's open-court admission that he killed Robert F. Kennedy and the overwhelming evidence that he acted alone, that trial drags on

“for the historical record.” Perhaps it is being overdone, bogged in the technicalities arising from California's death sentence rather than any question of guilt. We do not say that exactly the same process was essential in trying James Earl Ray.

Yet in Memphis, with all the uncertainties that are involved, the most remarkable aspect is the haste in closing the case. The kind of bargaining that averted a trial would be considered highly unusual in Illinois courts.

Even in a protracted trial, the questions about a possible conspiracy might not have been answered. The one man who could answer the questions—Ray himself—could not be forced to testify.

The fact remains, however, that by disposing of this case so precipitously the court has not put to rest the doubts that needed to be confronted directly. Rather, it has added an element of mystery where there was too much of it already.

The Justice Department says it is continuing its inquiries, even though it now has no evidence of conspiracy. This it most certainly should do, and share its findings with the public.

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King 'plot' evidence studied

King 'plot' evidence studied

Daily News Wire Services

WASHINGTON — The chairman of a Senate subcommittee said Wednesday that his group has direct information that indicates James Earl Ray did not act alone in the killing of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Sen. James O. Eastland (D-Miss.) said the Senate Internal Security subcommittee is assembling evidence concerning a possible conspiracy.

Ray, who pleaded guilty Monday to the murder of King and has begun serving a 99-year prison sentence, told a Memphis court that he does not go along with theories that the murder was not part of a conspiracy.

EASTLAND said:

"There are some things about this affair that indicate to me that there may have been a conspiracy.

"In the first place, somebody had to know King was in the motel. Somebody had to know which room he was in. Somebody had to know that he was going out on the balcony, where he was shot.

Somebody had to show Ray

which room he was to occupy so that he could shoot King," Foreman.

EASTLAND said he doesn't know whether "there will ever be any hearings on this matter, but we are assembling available information."

He said the subcommittee is relying on its own staff resources and does not have access to any information compiled by the FBI or others in the Justice Department.

Case against Ray appeared airtight

By Jerry Lipson
Staff Writer

MEMPHIS — If he had pleaded innocent, prosecutors were prepared to prove conclusively that James Earl Ray fired the shot that killed the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

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It names 51 persons Beasley said would link Ray to the fatal rifle and put him in the rooming house bathroom where the shot was fired — and when. **THIS IS THE picture** it draws:

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He went out and returned about 4 p.m. after buying a pair of binoculars at the York Arms Co., a mile away.

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