

4-598 (5-31-98)

U. S. Department of Justice

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DATE 10/10/01 BY SP-10274

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NATIONAL ARCHIVES



44 - HQ-38861-A
SERIALS 6/19/68-2/8/69

SECTION 2

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FBI/DOJ

USE DATE IN HANDLING FILE

SECTION 2
JUNE 1968 THRU
FEBRUARY 8, 1969

Transfer-Call 421

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Mr. Tolson _____
 Mr. DeLoach _____
 Mr. Mohr _____
 Mr. Bishop ☒ _____
 Mr. Casper _____
 Mr. Callahan _____
 Mr. Conrad _____
 Mr. Felt _____
 Mr. Gale _____
 Mr. Rosen ☒ _____
 Mr. Sullivan _____
 Mr. Tavel _____
 Mr. Trotter _____
 Tele. Room _____
 Miss Holmes _____
 Miss Gandy _____

(Mount Clipping in)

Ray Biographer Seized on Contempt Warrant

MEMPHIS (AP) — William Bradford Huie, biographer of James Earl Ray, was arrested on a contempt of court warrant Friday after testifying before the Shelby County Grand Jury. Ray is charged with murdering Dr. Martin Luther King last April.

Huie, who claims knowledge of a conspiracy in the King slaying, had been directed to appear before the grand jury and tell all he knows about the case. He was with the grand jury two hours and 40 minutes.

The warrant was issued by Judge W. Preston Battle, who will try Ray when he goes to trial March 3. The contempt citation, issued in connection with magazine articles Huie wrote, was based on Huie's alleged violation of a strict no pretrial publicity order issued by Judge Battle.

Huie was released after posting \$1,000 bond.

Huie's articles on Ray, in which he said Dr. King's death was the outgrowth of a conspiracy, appeared in *Look* magazine. He purportedly paid Ray up

to \$35,000 for the material he used in writing them.

Battle also turned down a defense motion that Huie be allowed to meet privately with Ray in his jail cell.

The judge said he was convinced the *Look* articles have "caused tremendous damage" to the Ray trial and would render it difficult to obtain a jury "within a reasonable

length of time."

"In light of what has happened in the past, I don't trust Mr. Huie not to violate those orders again in the future when he feels like it," Battle said.

Battle also denied a motion that Ray be photographed in his cell for a magazine.

Percy Foreman, Ray's lawyer, had said money gained from the sale of such photos would go toward paying for Ray's defense. But Battle said making pictures available on an exclusive basis would be "desecrating the temple of justice."

Before going before the jury, Huie told newsmen he could name others he said were involved in Dr. King's slaying, but probably wouldn't do so before the grand jury.

"I can't name people who I think may be in-

involved until they are arrested. I could be sued for libel," said the author. "I am not in the law enforcement business," Huie said. "The only information I have is information given me by James Earl Ray. All of it has

been made available to the FBI and the state of Tennessee."

Judge Battle has cited several others for violating his no-publicity order.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

I-7 Los Angeles Times
 Los Angeles, Calif.

Date: 2/8/69
 Edition: Daily
 Author:
 Editor: Nick B. Williams
 Title: Murkin

Character:
 or
 Classification: LA 44-1574
 Submitting Office: Los Angeles

☐ Being Investigated

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DIVISION 5700

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U. S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE

FEB 17 1969

WALTER SCOTT'S Personality Parade



JAMES EARL RAY



MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

Q. Doesn't the U.S. Justice Department plan to arrest shortly the men who financed the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.?—R. Y., Rye, N.Y.

A. Two prominent New Orleans businessmen reportedly contributed \$25,000 to intermediaries who arranged for James Earl Ray to murder Martin Luther King. These men expected the assassination would cause a war between blacks and whites in this country with the eventual subjugation of the black population.

How much the Justice Department knows of the plot and the personalities involved is difficult to tell at this point. On March 3rd, when James Earl Ray stands trial in Memphis, the plot may begin to unfold. Ray, of course, was a pawn of limited intelligence, unaware of his true financial backers or their diabolical motivation.

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Trotter ☒
Tele. Room ☒
Holmes ☒
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J.G. Moore
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The Washington Post Times Herald **PARADE 2**
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The New York Times _____
The Sun (Baltimore) _____
The Daily World _____
The New Leader _____
The Wall Street Journal _____
The National Observer _____
People's World _____
Examiner (Washington) _____

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Date **JAN 26 1969**

56 FEB 13 1969

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Aide of Dr. King Promises Drive to Help

By ROY REED

Special to The New York Times

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 28—A follower of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. promised today to organize nonviolent street demonstrations, if necessary, to try to save the life of the white man accused of Dr. King's murder.

The Rev. James Bevel, a long-time associate of King in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, called a news conference here today to announce that he would take in defense of James Earl Ray, a former convict who faces trial in the assassination last April 4.

Mr. Bevel visited Ray and his attorney last week in Memphis and tried unsuccessfully to enter the case as Ray's codefender. Judge W. Preston Battle ruled that he could not represent Ray because he had no lawyer's license.

Mr. Bevel said he would try to get a license and would appeal Judge Battle's ruling to a higher court. Failing there, he said, "I will seek justice in the streets by organizing a movement to that end."

In Atlanta, the Rev. Ralph David Abernathy, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, reversed an earlier statement and said he did not believe Mr. Bevel had evidence of Ray's innocence. He said he was embarrassed by his aide's statements.

"James Bevel does not have the power or the authority to speak for the S.C.L.C. or its board of directors," Mr. Abernathy told reporters. "Mr. Bevel is the head of a department within the conference, the department of nonviolent direct action."

In Philadelphia, Mr. Bevel told reporters, "I am calling on the people of America to not let their bitterness and hate so blind them that they permit the State of Tennessee, or any other state, to murder an innocent man."

Asks a 'Program of Life'

He asked rather for an investment of time and energy in a "program of life — not

death." He said he meant by this feeding and educating poor Negroes in America and halting the war in Vietnam.

Mr. Bevel continued to insist that he had evidence of Ray's innocence, but he firmly refused to divulge it. He said his evidence was "a combination of facts."

He added in a private interview later that he had no idea who the murderer was and was not especially interested in finding out.

"That's the state's job," he said. His interest is in saving an innocent man, he said.

Mr. Bevel was in Memphis at the time of the shooting. He said he had been standing in a courtyard of the motel within sight of Dr. King, who was on a balcony.

He said he had recreated the circumstances of the murder from conversations with Negroes in the neighborhood and with other persons.

His one-hour visit with Ray last week in the Memphis jail, he said, persuaded him even more thoroughly that Ray was physically and mentally incapable of staging such an assassination.

Calls Ray a 'Fall Guy'

He said he believed that Ray had stumbled into the case accidentally and was being used as a "fall guy" by the conspirators who actually killed Dr. King.

"And Ray is such a bad character that it is hard for people to care about him," he said, referring to Ray's criminal record.

He said he had found the Negroes of Memphis eager to "burn" someone for the crime and the whites, in their collective guilt, willing to convict Ray "just to get it over with." So, he said, Ray belongs to no one and has no defenders.

Mr. Bevel seems interested in turning the Ray trial into a vehicle for furthering Dr. King's cause of nonviolence, or at least in keeping it from becoming an affront to nonviolence through the taking of still another life.

Save Ray

It is not clear how important Ray's guilt or innocence is to Mr. Bevel, but he has given the impression to friends that preserving the nonviolent principle is most important.

During his years with Dr. King in the Southern civil rights movement, Mr. Bevel seemed less committed to the doctrine of nonviolence than any of the men at Dr. King's side.

Temper With a Sharp Tongue

He was high tempered and sharp tongued in those days, striding up and down the dirt streets exhorting whites to get right and Negroes to get strong.

He seemed always on the verge of striking back when the segregationist firebrands made their violent attacks. Reporters had the impression that only the constant restraining hand of Dr. King kept him in check.

He has changed. He no longer covers his baldish head with a brightly colored skullcap, he has grown a beard and he has traded his Alabama overalls for a dansiki.

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Tele. Room _____
Holmes _____
Gandy _____

But he has changed beyond that. His voice is softer and his eyes are gentler. He speaks with more patience. Instead of chasing away white friends, as many black militants have done in recent years, he still surrounds himself with white as well as black workers.

Above all, however, he appears to have been wounded deeply by the death of Dr. King. Friends report that he was distraught for a long period. The experience has apparently changed his thought and his personality.

A friend said of him today: "Jim has finally become non-violent."

The Washington Post _____
Times Herald _____
The Washington Daily News _____
The Evening Star (Washington) _____
The Sunday Star (Washington) _____
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Sunday News (New York) _____
New York Post _____
The New York Times _____
The Sun (Baltimore) _____
The Daily World _____
The New Leader _____
The Wall Street Journal _____
The National Observer _____
People's World _____
Examiner (Washington) _____

Date JAN 29 1969

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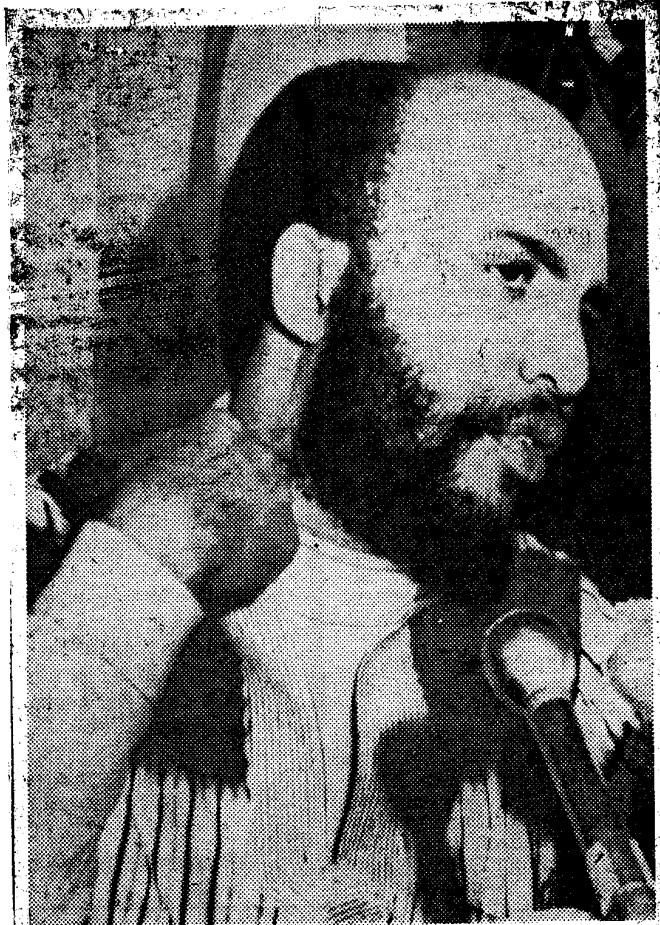
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Associated Press

Rev. James L. Bevel at his news conference yesterday.

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Mr. Bishop	_____
Mr. Casper	_____
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Mr. Conrad	_____
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Mr. Gale	_____
Mr. Rosen	_____
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Miss Holmes	_____
Miss Gandy	_____

Negro Leader Claims Evidence Ray Didn't Shoot Dr. King

Associated Press Writer

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — A ranking figure in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) refused Sunday to elaborate on evidence he claims could free Dr. Martin Luther King's accused assassin.

"I have evidence that would free him," the Rev. James Bevel said at a news conference. "I won't discuss the specific evidence now because it wouldn't be beneficial to James Earl Ray. But, he's not guilty."

The director of SCLC's non-violent education and direct action program, sent a telegram Saturday to Ray in Memphis, Tenn., which read:

"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 32-year-old civil rights advocate and former liaison officer between SCLC and militant



—Associated Press Wirephoto

**REV. JAMES BEVEL
Offers to defend Ray**

Negro groups, said he did not volunteer his information sooner because of the shock immediately following King's slaying.

"I hadn't prepared to be responsive to him," Bevel said. "But then I thought, 'Here's a

man sitting here that shouldn't be here.'"

Ray is scheduled to go on trial March 3 in Memphis on a charge of murder.

"If he (Ray) decides not to take my services, that's his choice," Bevel said. "I would continue to be very good and warm to him. I wouldn't be against him."

Bevel is not a member of the bar, but a lawyer "by circumstances." The native of Jena, Miss., said he was qualified to defend Ray because of the legal experience gained while representing himself during several civil rights cases in Mississippi.

Public Defender Hugh Stanton in Memphis has refused to react to the telegram as has Ray's attorney, Percy Foreman of Houston.

King was cut down by a sniper's bullet while leading a strike by Memphis garbage collectors last spring.

His accused assassin was subsequently arrested in London following an intensive manhunt and extradited to Memphis.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

A-3 Herald-Examiner
Los Angeles, Calif.

Date: 1/20/69
Edition: Night Final
Author:
Editor: Donald Goodenow
Title: MURKIN

Character:

or

Classification: LA 44-1574
Submitting Office: Los Angeles

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JAN 31 '69

Two close associates of the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said yesterday that the murder of the civil rights leader was part of a conspiracy and not the action of only one man.

But they differed on what role James Earl Ray may have had in the April 4 shooting in Memphis. Ray has been charged with killing Dr. King and is awaiting trial.

The Rev. James L. Bevel, head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's nonviolence direct action program, said he believed Ray was incapable—both mentally and physically—of carrying out the assassination of Dr. King.

"We've allowed King to be killed under the guise of law and order and now we're going to allow Ray to be lynched under the guise of justice," Mr. Bevel said at a news conference in Philadelphia.

But in Atlanta, the head of the SCLC, the Rev. Ralph David Abernathy, said he knew of no evidence that might acquit Ray.

Mr. Abernathy said "I felt that Mr. Bevel was merely seeking to state what I have said, that more than one person is guilty in the death of Martin Luther King. I do not believe he was saying Mr. Ray did not pull the trigger."

During the news conference, Mr. Abernathy repeatedly

used the word "conspiracy" in referring to the King assassination.

He said Negro leaders in Memphis believe that persons other than Ray were aware of the plan to kill Dr. King. He cited as reasons the orders to remove two Negro firemen and a Negro policeman from the immediate area of the Lorraine Motel on the day of the assassination. However Mr. Abernathy said the information was second-hand and he couldn't vouch for its validity.

Mr. Bevel has offered to act as a lawyer for Ray, but this has been refused because he is not a member of the bar. He said yesterday that he planned to appeal this ruling against him by Memphis Judge W. Preston Battle.

Mr. Bevel described Ray as "an innocent, mentally deranged man" who has never been involved in any sort of racial conflict and "is not a racist."

He said he conferred with Ray for an hour last week in the Shelby County jail and became "even more thoroughly convinced that Ray is not the assassin of Dr. King."

"It is apparent to me," Mr. Bevel said, that Ray "doesn't have the kind of mind that could do two or three days planning for such a thing."

He added that Ray "is not very well coordinated physically. He would not have the dexterity to fire a gun accurately for 100 yards."

Tolson _____ ✓
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Mohr _____ ✓
Bishop _____ ✓
Casper _____ ✓
Callahan _____ ✓
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Rosen _____ ✓
Sullivan _____ ✓
Tavel _____
Trotter _____
Tele. Room _____
Holmes _____
Gandy _____

The Washington Post *A-5*
Times Herald _____
The Washington Daily News _____
The Evening Star (Washington) _____
The Sunday Star (Washington) _____
Daily News (New York) _____
Sunday News (New York) _____
New York Post _____
The New York Times _____
The Sun (Baltimore) _____
The Daily World _____
The New Leader _____
The Wall Street Journal _____
The National Observer _____
People's World _____
Examiner (Washington) _____

Date **JAN 29 1969**

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JAN 31 '69



Associated Press

The Rev. James Bevel, a SCLC leader, shows newsmen a spot on his neck which he says is the area where an assassin's bullet struck Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Mr. Bevel says James Earl Ray is not Dr. King's killer.

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Ray Is Innocent, King Aide Says

By JERRY MOORE

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—A ranking figure in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference refused Sunday to elaborate on evidence he claims could free Dr. Martin Luther King's accused assassin.

"I have evidence that would free him," the Rev. James Bevel said at a news conference. "I won't discuss the specific evidence now because it wouldn't be beneficial to James Earl Ray. But, he's not guilty."

The director of SCLC's non-violent education and direct action program, sent a telegram Saturday to Ray in Memphis, Tenn., which read:

NO FEE ASKED

"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 32-year-old civil rights advocate and former liaison officer between SCLC and militant Negro groups, said he did not volunteer his information sooner because of the shock immediately following King's slaying.

"I hadn't prepared to be responsive to him," Bevel said. "But then I thought, 'Here's a

man sitting here that shouldn't be here.'"

TRIAL MARCH 3

Ray is scheduled to go on trial March 3 in Memphis on a charge of murder.

"If he (Ray) decides not to take my services, that's his choice," Bevel said. "I would continue to be very good and warm to him. I wouldn't be against him."

Bevel is not a member of the bar, but a lawyer "by circumstances." The native of Itta Bena, Miss., said he was qualified to defend Ray because of the legal experience gained while representing himself during several civil rights cases in Mississippi.

NO REACTION

Public Defender Hugh Stanton in Memphis has refused to react to the telegram as has Ray's attorney, Percy Foreman of Houston.

King was cut down by a sniper's bullet while leading a strike by Memphis garbage collectors last spring.

His accused assassin was subsequently arrested in London following an intensive manhunt and extradited to Memphis.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

Page 2

THE ATLANTA
CONSTITUTION

ATLANTA, GA.

Date: 1/20/69

Edition:

Author: JERRY MOORE

Editor: REG MURPHY

Title: JAMES L. BEVEL

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Character: AT 157-656
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Classification:

Submitting Office: ATLANTA

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Abernathy Backs Aide on Ray

ATLANTA, Jan. 23 (UPI)—The Rev. Ralph D. Abernathy said today he "supports" one of his aides, the Rev. James Bevel, in his offer to defend James Earl Ray, accused of the assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

However, a Southern Christian Leadership Conference spokesman said, neither Mr. Abernathy nor Mr. Bevel claims to have specific evidence or knowledge that would clear Ray of murder charges in the case.

The spokesman, Thomas Offenberger, also said Mr. Bevel feels he has been misquoted about evidence to clear Ray since he made his offer to de-

fend him in a telegram last Saturday.

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

Offenberger said Mr. Abernathy "supports this attempt" to clear Ray.

"If a conspiracy exists, and I believe it does, it must be fully exposed," Mr. Abernathy said. "I call upon America's oppressed and victimized to come to the aid and defense of the accused man."

The statement mentioned a "broader guilt" of racial prejudice in the Nation that Mr.

Abernathy in the past has blamed for Dr. King's slaying.

Mr. Abernathy made the statement in a telegram released by the SCLC office here. The president of the civil rights group is vacationing in the Virgin Islands.

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 People's World _____
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People

Bevel for the Defense



The Rev. James Bevel talking with an unidentified reporter.

THE Rev. James Bevel, a ranking figure in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, told a news conference he has evidence that the accused slayer of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. — James Earl Ray — is guilty. "I have evidence that would free him," Mr. Bevel said.

Meanwhile, an unidentified SCLS spokesman said Mr. Bevel "has been under a lot of pressure lately. Since Dr. King's death he has gone into a deep depression and if he sent that telegram, he is speaking for himself."

Los Angeles police have issued an all points lookout for two brothers implicated in the shooting deaths of two Black Panther members at UCLA last week. Several witness linked George Phillip Stiner, 22, and Larry Joseph Stiner, 21, to the murders.

Lloyd Rittner, president of the New Orleans school board, says that any demonstrators for a Black Student Union who show up at Fortier High School, as threatened, will be arrested and stand a chance of being "suspended indefinitely" or expelled.

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The Washington Daily News _____
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People's World _____
Examiner (Washington) _____

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SCLC Official 'Clears' Ray But Won't Reveal Evidence

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — The director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's nonviolent education and direct action wing says James Earl Ray is innocent of murdering Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. But he isn't saying what evidence he has.

At a news conference yesterday, the Rev. James Bevel said, "I won't discuss the specific evidence now because it wouldn't be beneficial to James Earl Ray. But he's not guilty."

Sends Telegram to Ray

Bevel, 32, a former liaison officer between SCLC and militant Negro groups, sent a telegram to Ray on Saturday which read: "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."

King, who headed the SCLC, was shot to death in Memphis, Tenn. Ray was arrested in London after an intensive manhunt and extradited to Memphis, where he faces trial beginning March 3.



-AP

REV. JAMES BEVEL

Bevel said he didn't step forth with his alleged information sooner because "I hadn't been responsive to him."

Not Speaking for SCLC

"But then I thought, 'Here's a man sitting here that shouldn't be here.'"

The SCLC headquarters in Atlanta made clear Bevel was speaking for himself, not the organization.

Bevel said he would continue to be "very good and warm" toward Ray even if Ray decides not to accept his services.

Bevel is not a member of the bar, but a lawyer "by circumstances," he said. A native of Itta Bena, Miss., he has represented himself several times in civil rights cases in Mississippi.

There has been no comment from either public defender Hugh Stanton in Memphis or Ray's attorney, Percy Foreman of Houston, on Bevel's telegram.

The Washington Post
 Times Herald
 The Washington Daily News
 The Evening Star (Washington)
 The Sunday Star (Washington)
 Daily News (New York)
 Sunday News (New York)
 New York Post
 The New York Times
 The Sun (Baltimore)
 The Daily World
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 The National Observer
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BEVEL 1/19 NX

BY HELENE ANNE SPICER

PHILADELPHIA (UPI)--A BEARDED NEGRO MINISTER, PRESENT AT THE LORRAINE HOTEL IN MEMPHIS WHEN MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. WAS SLAIN, SAID SUNDAY HE HAS "EVIDENCE" TO PROVE JAMES EARL RAY INNOCENT OF THE CRIME.

THE REV. JAMES L. BEVEL, 32, AN OFFICIAL OF THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE, SAID HE HAS OFFERED TO TAKE RAY'S CASE WITHOUT A FEE.

BEVEL, WHO HAS NO LAW DEGREE, DECLINED TO DISCUSS HIS EVIDENCE

"IN TERMS OF DISCUSSING SPECIFICS, THAT WOULDN'T BE TO HIS (RAY'S) BEST BENEFITS," BEVEL SAID.

ASKED WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE EVIDENCE IF RAY DOES NOT ACCEPT HIS HELP, BEVEL SAID:

"I GUESS HE'D GO TO JAIL OR TO THE ELECTRIC CHAIR OR WHATEVER YOU DO TO THOSE PEOPLE, I'LL JUST KEEP IT."

RAY IS JAILED IN MEMPHIS AWAITING TRIAL FOR MURDER IN THE SLAYING OF KING, FOUNDER OF THE SCLC. KING WAS SHOT AS HE STOOD ON THE HOTEL BALCONY LAST APRIL 4. RAY'S TRIAL HAS BEEN POSTPONED UNTIL MARCH.

BEVEL, SITTING ON A BAMBOO CHAIR IN A NEATLY FURNISHED APARTMENT IN THE HEART OF THE NORTH PHILADELPHIA GHETTO, SAID HE DOES NOT KNOW RAY'S PRESENT ATTORNEYS.

"POSSIBLY WE WOULD NOT GROOVE TOGETHER," HE SAID.

THE SCLC'S ATLANTA HEADQUARTERS MADE CLEAR BEVEL WAS SPEAKING FOR HIMSELF, NOT THE SCLC.

"HE HAS BEEN UNDER A LOT OF PRESSURE LATELY," THE SCLC SAID OF BEVEL.

"SINCE DR. KING'S DEATH, HE HAS GONE INTO A DEEP DEPRESSION AND IF HE SENT THE TELEGRAM, HE IS SPEAKING FOR HIMSELF," AN SCLC SPOKESMAN SAID.

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WASHINGTON CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

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BEVEL'S TELEGRAM TO RAY SAID:

"I WOULD LIKE TO INFORM YOU THAT I WOULD BE VERY HAPPY TO TAKE YOUR CASE WITHOUT FEE. I WAS PRESENT AT THE LORRAINE HOTEL WHEN DR. KING WAS KILLED. YOU HAVE BEEN CHARGED WITH MURDERING HIM. OF COURSE, I KNOW YOU ARE NOT GUILTY."

COPIES OF THE TELEGRAM ALSO WERE SENT TO VARIOUS NEWSPAPERS.

ASKED WHY HE WAITED SO LONG TO COME FORTH WITH HIS EVIDENCE, BEVEL SAID IT WAS NOT UNTIL NOW HE FELT HE "HAD ENOUGH EVIDENCE... ENOUGH TO COME TO THE CONCLUSION" ABOUT RAY'S INNOCENCE.

ASKED HOW HE COULD DEFEND RAY WITHOUT A LAW DEGREE, BEVEL REPLIED, "THE CONSTITUTION DOESN'T SAY YOU HAVE TO HAVE A LAW DEGREE."

AS HE ANSWERED QUESTIONS USING MANY GESTURES, A FRIEND SNAPPED PICTURES OF HIM. BEVEL WAS WEARING A FAKE LEOPARD SKIN SHIRT OVER AN ORANGE SHIRT WITH BROWN SLACKS.

THE 32-YEAR-OLD MINISTER SAID HE HAD BEEN JAILED ABOUT 25 TIMES FOR CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIONS, INCLUDING TWICE WITH KING, ONCE IN BIRMINGHAM AND ONCE IN SALMA, ALA.

BEVEL HAD GONE TO MEMPHIS TO HELP RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS FOR THE POOR PEOPLE'S MARCH ON WASHINGTON. HE SAID HE WAS STANDING "ON THE GROUND" OUTSIDE THE HOTEL WHEN KING WAS SHOT.

THE SCLC SENT BEVEL TO PHILADELPHIA LAST SUMMER TO SERVE AS DIRECTOR OF NONVIOLENT EDUCATION.

BEVEL SAID HE ATTENDED THE AMERICAN BAPTIST SEMINARY IN NASHVILLE, TENN., AND HAS BEEN A MINISTER FOR THE PAST 12 YEARS.

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Former King Assistant Claims Ray Is Innocent

Saying He Has Evidence to Free Accused Assassin, Rev. James Bevel Offers Help

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—A ranking figure in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference said Sunday he had evidence he claimed could free Dr. Martin Luther King's accused assassin, but he refused to elaborate.

"I have evidence that would free him," the Rev. James Bevel said at a news conference. "I won't discuss the specific evidence now because it wouldn't be beneficial to James Earl Ray. But he's not guilty."

The director of SCLC's nonviolent education and direct action program, Mr. Bevel sent a telegram Saturday to Ray in Memphis, which read:

"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 32-year-old civil rights advocate and for-

mer liaison officer between SCLC and militant Negro groups, said he did not volunteer his information sooner because of the shock immediately after Dr. King's slaying.

"I hadn't prepared to be responsive to him," Mr. Bevel said. "But then I thought, 'Here's a man sitting here that shouldn't be here.'"

Ray is scheduled to go on trial March 3 in Memphis on a charge of murder.

"If he (Ray) decides not to take my services, that's his choice," Mr. Bevel said. "I would continue to be very good and warm to him. I wouldn't be against him."

Not Member of Bar

Mr. Bevel is not a member of the bar, but a lawyer "by circumstances." He said he was qualified to defend Ray because of the legal experience he gained while representing himself in several civil rights cases in Mississippi.

Public Defender Hugh Stanton in Memphis has refused to react to the

telegram as has the attorney, Percy Foreman of Houston.

Dr. King was killed by a sniper's bullet while in Memphis last spring to a strike by garbage collectors.

His accused assassin was subsequently arrested in London after an intensive manhunt and extradited to Memphis.

Asked why he waited so long to announce that he had evidence, Mr. Bevel said it was not until now that he felt he "had enough evidence... enough to come to the conclusion" about Ray's innocence.

He said that when Dr. King was shot last April, he was standing "on the ground" outside the motel.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

I-5 Los Angeles Times
 Los Angeles, Calif.

Date: 1/20/69
 Edition: Home
 Author: Dial Torgerson
 Editor: Nick B. Williams
 Title: Murkin

Character:

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Classification: LA 44-1574
 Submitting Office: Los Angeles

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Mercy Plea Made for Ray at Rites for King

Abernathy Asks That Jan. 15, Civil Rights Leader's Birthday, Be Declared a Holiday

BY JACK NELSON

Times Staff Writer

ATLANTA—An impassioned plea that the life of the killer of Dr. Martin Luther King be spared and that Dr. King's birthday—Jan. 15—be declared a national holiday were made here Wednesday at ceremonies commemorating the civil rights leader's 40th birthday.

Dr. King's widow and parents nodded agreement as the Rev. Ralph David Abernathy, Dr. King's successor as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, urged "the forces of goodwill throughout the land to exert their total influence in seeing to it that the life of James Earl Ray, or whoever is proven to have pulled the trigger that felled our sainted and beloved leader, is spared."

Ray, 40, accused of assassinating Dr. King in Memphis last April 4, is scheduled to go on trial for murder here on March 3.

Unusual Memorial

Prior to the series at Ebenezer Baptist Church, where Mr. Abernathy spoke, an unusual memorial program to Dr. King unfolded in the Georgia State Senate where the Rev. Martin Luther King Sr. and several civil rights leaders received a warm reception.

The two black members of the 84-man senate—Leroy Johnson and Horace Ward—participated in the brief program. Except for one segregationist member (Roy Noble) who walked out, the senate listened attentively.

Ward quoted from Dr. King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech at the 1963 march on Washington and Johnson introduced to the senators Rev. King Sr.; Rosa Parks of Detroit, who sparked the 1955 Montgomery bus boycott that propelled Dr. King to civil rights leadership; the Rev. Walter Fauntroy, vice mayor of Washington and head of SCLC's office there, and several African officials.

Aids Groundbreaking

The visitors were welcomed by Lt. Gov. George T. Smith, who later participated in ground-breaking ceremonies for the \$2.5 million Martin Luther King Jr. Village, a model community and housing development sponsored by SCLC and the Ebenezer Baptist Church. It will be constructed under the National Housing Act.

Earl Ray's widow, Coretta King, told a press conference that a Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial will be developed in Atlanta around two locations: the Auburn Ave. area of the Ebenezer Church and the house where he was born two blocks away, in the area of Atlanta University, where he was graduated from Morehouse College.

Mrs. King estimated the total cost at between \$25 to \$40 million and said the

money would be raised through foundations and private and corporate donations.

The remains of Dr. King now in Southview Cemetery, will be permanently interred in a memorial park that will be part of the Auburn Ave. development, she said.

Almost 1,000 persons crammed into the Ebenezer Church and

2,000 stood outside or sat in an annex and listened to Monday's program over loudspeakers. Dr. King was co-pastor of the church at the time of his death.

Actor Harry Belafonte, a longtime friend of the Kings and a board member of SCLC, sat in the front row beside the widow and her four children. He applauded Mr. Abernathy's call for sparing the life of Dr. King's killer.

Mr. Abernathy said it would be "needless to kill one man for the sins of millions. For us to kill all of those who are truly guilty of taking Dr. King's life, we would be guilty of mass murder, perpetrating an atrocity as bad as that of Adolf Hitler. Executing the killer would not deal with our

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I-25 Los Angeles Times
Los Angeles, Calif.

Date: 1/16/69
Edition: Home
Author: Jack Nelson
Editor: Nick B. Williams
Title: Murkin

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Classification: LA 44-1574
Submitting Office: Los Angeles

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major problem, only with the symptom of our problem," Mr. Abernathy said, adding that the real problem is that the nation has "concentrated on violence and we are saturated with hate."

Mr. Abernathy noted that no day is set aside in the United States to honor a black man and he said that Congress by making

Jan. 15 a legal holiday, could help blacks by "enriching our heritage in America and strengthening our faith in the democratic system."

U.S. Rep. John Conyers Jr. (D-Mich.), a Negro, said that last year he had 63 sponsors for a bill declaring the day a holiday and that he is again sponsoring the legislation and has found increased support for it.

"Sacred Holiday"

Cleveland Robinson of New York, president of the Negro American Labor Council, said, "It should be a sacred holiday in the sense and for the purpose that we are here today."

"We don't want anyone to believe we hope for

added, "we're in the U.S. black people in America just ain't gonna march on that day anymore."

The remark prompted a standing ovation, except for its lone Negro member who stood and applauded. Members of the Georgia Tech Glee Club, who participated in the program, remained seated.

Theodore Hibbler, an elderly sanitation worker from Memphis, recalled that Dr. King was in that city to give sanitation workers leadership in their drive for better working conditions when

he was assassinated.

"We'll never forget his leadership," Hibbler said. "He gave his life for some people would not."

least of Memphis, the sanitation workers.

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Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

"THE ATLANTA JOURNAL"

ATLANTA, GA.

RALPH MCGILL

Ray-King Case 'Rumors'

Percy Foreman, attorney for James Earl Ray, who is charged with the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, seemingly was in a somewhat petulant mood after a recent court argument in which he failed to obtain further postponement of the Ray case. The date set is



March 3.

The Texan also was quoted as saying he had requested—and failed to obtain—all the FBI files on the murdered civil rights leader. He understood, he said, that "it," the file, says that for two years before the April killing by rifle fire there was a "squad of FBI agents assigned to prevent the assassination of Dr. King."

One may be sure there was no such squad. The FBI investigates. It probably had agents at many of Dr. King's meetings, especially those where threats were involved, to check out characters known to be psychotic, "wanted" persons and those considered dangerous. But the FBI is not in the "guarding" business and no evidence exists that Dr. King was so watched over by a squad of agents assigned to him.

Unfounded Rumors

There was one flurry of such rumors some years ago when a group which had invited Dr. King to speak, in trying to raise money for the occasion, informed its members that the expenses would be great because of the FBI men with Dr. King. I recall that this was checked out and Dr. King reportedly said there was nothing to the statement and that he was embarrassed by it. Some of his staff likely would recall the details. At any rate, it is out of such things that unfounded rumors flourish.

Mr. Foreman will certainly be entitled to any FBI files that relate to the investigation of the assassination of Dr. King. But to ask for the total file, with any details unrelated to the shooting and investigation of it, is unrealistic. This sort of thing was tried during the days of the late Joe McCarthy investigations. The FBI then and in other instances has withheld its "raw" files. Such files, of course, often contain crackpot letters, phony charges, malicious accusations, and many other items that are part of any investigation. It would be highly improper and without legal precedent to release any material that is not directly related to the killing.

F.B.I. Witness

The FBI can, of course, make reply to a query as to whether it did, indeed, as Mr. Foreman reportedly "heard," maintain a squad of agents with Dr. King to prevent his assassination. The answer, one may be sure, will be no. The FBI does not provide guards. Its agents who appear as witnesses will, of course, be subject to cross-examination, as are all witnesses. The state of Tennessee will conduct the trial—not the FBI or the federal government.

No one outside the FBI now has official or detailed knowledge of what evidence has been gathered. There is general belief among newsmen who have been assigned to the case that the FBI has done a superb job. Enough of the evidence was produced as a part of the legal procedures necessary to extradite Ray from London to give a hint of how much the FBI had learned.

It would seem, from that and other dribbles of news, that the FBI did a typically first rate job on the evidence left by Ray in an Atlanta rooming house. Also, well delineated are Ray's journeyings before and after Dr. King's death.

All agents who worked on the case and the total files relevant to it will be readily available to the defense.

Rumor mills will, of course, be busy during the case. There may be efforts to smear Dr. King with all the calumny and hatred flung at him in life, although it is difficult to see how these smears would be made admissible.

The trial judge may well be faced with rulings to prevent such tactics. The small court room more and more seems an asset.

Date: 1/2/69
 Edition: REG MURPHY
 Author: RALPH MCGILL
 Editor: O
 Title: MURKIN

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Submitting Office: ATLANTA

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RAY 12/18 NX
 MEMPHIS, TENN. (UPI)--SPECULATION THAT JAMES EARL RAY, THE MAN
 ACCUSED OF ASSASSINATING DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR., MAY WANT
 ANOTHER DELAY IN HIS TRIAL SURROUNDED A MEETING TODAY BETWEEN
 PERCY FOREMAN, RAY'S ATTORNEY, AND TRIAL JUDGE W. PRESTON BATTLE.
 FOREMAN, THE CELEBRATED TEXAS DEFENSE LAWYER, WAS TO SAY IN A
 HEARING TODAY WHETHER OR NOT HE WOULD BE READY TO TAKE THE RAY
 DEFENSE TO TRIAL BY MARCH 3.

RAY OFFICIALLY HIRED THE HOUSTON ATTORNEY NOV. 1, THE DAY HIS
 TRIAL WAS TO BEGIN.

DROPPING HIS FORMER DEFENSE COUNSEL, EX-BIRMINGHAM, ALA.,
 MAYOR ARTHUR J. HANES SR., GAINED RAY A POSTPONEMENT IN HIS TRIAL
 ON FIRST DEGREE MURDER CHARGES FROM NOVEMBER TO MARCH.

HANES HAS MAINTAINED SINCE THEN THAT HE SUSPECTED HE WOULD BE
 READ OUT OF THE TRIAL CAST AS MUCH AS THREE WEEKS BEFORE RAY
 FIRED HIM. HANES CONTENDS RAY SWITCHED LAWYERS ONLY TO DELAY HIS
 TRIAL.

TODAY'S HEARING WAS VIEWED EITHER A MERE FORMALITY TO SET THE
 OFFICIAL TRIAL DATE AT MARCH 3 OR A POINT OF DEPARTURE FOR A
 VARIETY OF COURSES OPEN TO RAY.

THE POSSIBILITIES INCLUDED:

--A DEAL WITH THE PROSECUTION TO PLEAD GUILTY TO A LESSER
 CHARGE--CONSPIRACY PERHAPS--IN EXCHANGE FOR INFORMATION ON ANY
 ALLEGED PLOTTERS IN THE APRIL 4 ASSASSINATION OF THE NEGRO CIVIL
 RIGHTS LEADER.

--A REQUEST FOR ANOTHER POSTPONEMENT TO ALLOW FOREMAN TIME
 TO TRY AT LEAST ONE OTHER TEXAS MURDER CASE, A CHARGE OF MURDER
 FOR HIRE AGAINST CHARLES HARRELSON, ACCUSED OF KILLING TWO TEXAS
 BUSINESSMEN.

--A CHANGE OF VENUE, MOVING THE RAY TRIAL OUT OF MEMPHIS TO ANOTHER
 TENNESSEE CITY.

FOREMAN GAVE NO INDICATION OF HIS PLANS FOR THE HEARING WITH
 BATTLE.

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FOR MR. TOLSON

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(RAY)

MEMPHIS, TENN.--ATTORNEY PERCY FOREMAN TODAY WAS GRANTED A DELAY UNTIL DEC. 18 IN HIS FIRST SCHEDULED COURT APPEARANCE IN DEFENSE OF JAMES EARL RAY.

FOREMAN HAD BEEN SCHEDULED TO GO BEFORE CRIMINAL COURT JUDGE W. PRESTON BATTLE THURSDAY TO IRON OUT THE DETAILS FOR RAY'S TRIAL ON CHARGES OF SLAYING DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

AN AIDE HANDLING SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MARCH 3, 1969, TRIAL SAID BATTLE GRANTED FOREMAN'S REQUEST FOR THE DELAY "BECAUSE HE SAID HE HAD A CONFLICT."

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Ray defense: 'leftists' murdered Dr. King?

Recent articles in the *New York Times* and *Look* magazine indicate the possibility of attempts to use the trial of James Earl Ray, accused assassin of Martin Luther King, as a vehicle for smearing the left.

It was revealed in the Nov. 10 *Times* that Arthur J. Harris, the lawyer recently fired by Ray, was planning to carry out his defense on the fantastic assumption that the assassination was plotted and financed by "black militants with foreign ties." According to the *Times*, Harris said that he had concluded that the only organizations capable of carrying out the elaborate plan which allowed the assassin to kill King and elude capture for two months was either the CIA or "black militants with Red Chinese or Cuban backing." Harris, who was elected mayor of Birmingham on a racist platform and who is a supporter of segregationist Eugene (Bull) Conner, apparently decided on the latter.

There is no way of knowing what will be the line of defense of Ray's new lawyer, Percy Foreman. When asked what he thought of Harris' theories, Foreman declined comment.

The *Times* article appeared concurrently with the publication of a sensational series of articles in *Look* magazine which quotes James Earl Ray as saying that he was involved with other conspirators in a plot to kill King. The series is written by author William Bradford Huie, and is based on a correspondence he has been having with Ray who is in jail in Memphis awaiting trial.

According to Huie, Ray wrote him that his only contact with the apparent "plot-ers" was through a man who identified himself as "Raoul." Raoul is described as having promised Ray, an escaped convict, travel papers and \$12,000 to go into business in a new country if he would carry out certain "activities."

Ray is quoted as saying that although he acted under the direction of the conspirators as early as eight months before the mur-



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

der, "nobody told me anything about any planned murder of King or anyone else."

Ray's letters to Huie contain detailed descriptions of how he lived during the months before the assassination. He relates how he carried out a number of tasks assigned to him by "Raoul," including the smuggling of three packages by car from Windsor, Ontario, to Detroit and the smuggling of a tire, apparently containing contraband, across the Texas-Mexican border.

At the end of the second article Huie draws some conclusions about the case which he says are based on "what I know and what I have learned from Ray." Huie asserts that the King assassination was "planned, not by impulsive men who hated him personally, though they probably did hate him, but by calculating men who wanted to use his murder to trigger violent conflict between white and Negro citizens."

"He was murdered by a white man, or white men, who would be described as 'Southerners' or 'racists,'" Huie writes. "Dr. King was the secondary, not the primary target. The primary target was the United States of America."

It's hogwash, but it apparently sells magazines.

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The National Observer _____
People's World _____
Examiner (Washington) _____

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Huie Voices No Doubt Of Ray's Involvement

(Space Below)

There is no doubt as to James Earl Ray's involvement in the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and this has "been understood" between him and Ray from the beginning, author William Bradford Huie said yesterday.

Apparently stung by suggestions that his articles in Look magazine, based on handwritten notes from Ray, may damage Ray in his trial on a charge of murdering Dr. King, Mr. Huie said some key facts in the case are so clear "they could be stipulated by any defense lawyer."

Percy Foreman, Ray's new attorney, and Melvin Belli, noted California attorney, are among those who have been critical of Ray's former counsel, Arthur J. Hanes Sr. of Birmingham, for co-operating with Mr. Huie in obtaining material for the Look articles.

Mr. Foreman has not discussed the matter for quotation. But Mr. Belli in a telephone interview with The Commercial Appeal Saturday said, "The (Huie) articles leave the impression Ray was a dupe in a conspiracy and would have shot anyone."

Mr. Huie retorted that, "In dealing with Ray, I made it clear from the beginning we'd have to reveal he was involved (in Dr. King's murder). Ray's purchase of the gun in Birmingham and his leaving it in front of Bessie Brewer's rooming house on South Main are so clear it could be stipulated (admitted) by any defense attorney."

Mr. Huie was referring to the scope-sighted, pump-action rifle abandoned near 422½ South Main a few minutes after Dr. King was shot April 4. The state is expected to exhibit this gun at the trial as the murder weapon. An FBI ballistics expert has said it bears Ray's fingerprints.

Mr. Huie's statements appear to confirm reports current for three months or more that had Mr. Hanes remained as Ray's attorney he would have pleaded that Ray acted as a dupe for others. One such report said the defense would plead that Ray acted as a decoy for the "real killer" and that the gun left on South Main was a "plant" to throw police off the trail.

Mr. Huie repeated that Dr. King's murder resulted from a conspiracy, as he wrote in Look, but would not say whether Ray has given him the names of any co-conspirators.

"If he'd told me any other conspirators, it would not be any good till the FBI arrested them," he said. "It would be libel per se for me to name them. If the FBI can't make the case, I sure can't."

Atty. Gen. Phil M. Canale talked yesterday with Mr. Huie by telephone, it was learned. It is understood that Mr. Huie was asked whether he would submit Ray's handwritten notes to the attorney general for use as evidence in the trial.

Mr. Canale would not discuss Mr. Huie's reaction. But it

is assumed to have been favorable, as Mr. Huie earlier said, "I will withhold nothing useful to the State of Tennessee . . . I will make a full disclosure when asked to."

Atty. Gen. Canale said he did take up with Mr. Huie whether the writer himself would be willing to volunteer as a prosecution witness.

Mr. Huie indicated he might consider certain material coming to him from Ray as confidential between himself as a reporter and Ray as a news source. He said he paid Ray \$25,000 for about 20,000 words handwritten by Ray in the Shelby County Jail and relayed to him through Mr. Hanes.

Mr. Huie has said the \$25,000 was to be used by Ray to pay Mr. Hanes as his defense counsel and that Mr. Hanes had a legal paper, permitting him to take over Mr. Huie's payments to Ray as they were remitted.

Mr. Tolson	_____
Mr. DeLoach	_____
Mr. Mohr	_____
Mr. Bishop	_____
Mr. Casper	_____
Mr. Callahan	_____
Mr. Conrad	_____
Mr. Felt	_____
Mr. Gale	_____
Mr. Rosen	_____
Mr. Sullivan	_____
Mr. Tavel	_____
Mr. Trotter	_____
Tele. Room	_____
Miss Holmes	_____
Miss Gandy	_____

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

PAGE 19

THE COMMERCIAL
APPEAL

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

Date: 11-27-68
Edition:
Author:
Editor: FRANK R. AHLGREN
Title:

Character:
or
Classification:
Submitting Office: MEMPHIS
☐ Being Investigated

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(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

PERCY FOREMAN:

'It's Not That I'm Vain, Proud or Egotistical. I Just Don't Have Anything to Be Modest About'

Mr. Tolson _____
Mr. DeLoach _____
Mr. Mohr _____
Mr. Bishop _____
Mr. Casper _____
Mr. Callahan _____
Mr. Conrad _____
Mr. Felt _____
Mr. Gale _____
Mr. Rosen _____
Mr. Sullivan _____
Mr. Tavel _____
Mr. Trotter _____
Tele. Room _____
Miss Holmes _____
Miss Gandy _____

The Great Voice, pitched to a righteous fury, lashed the memory of the slain man as a tyrant, a wife-beater, a monster who had poisoned little puppy dogs and strangled a parakeet.

A spell-bound jury and a courtroom of spectators, mostly lawyers studying the master's style, marveled at the Jehovah-like wrath, the superb rhetoric from the bull throat of the orator.

Now the Voice throbbed with sympathy for the widow so unjustly accused of killing her husband.

Thirty minutes later the widow, a barmaid named Ethel Mae Simpson — she had fired six .45 slugs into her husband — walked out of the Houston courtroom a free woman.

So, once again (was it for the 1000th time? "I don't keep records," he says), Percy Eugene Foreman, age 66, six feet 4 inches tall, 255 pounds, had prevailed.

Never a Bore

He has been described as another Clarence Darrow, a shyster, a legal Robin Hood, and an insatiable publicity seeker. He may be all that, but he's much more: a multi-millionaire, a nonpareil extrovert with a yard-wide ego. He can be incredibly rude and incredibly tender or charming, always flamboyant, never a bore.

Foreman, who has thrust himself again into the spotlight of national attention by taking over the defense of James Earl Ray, accused slayer of the Rev. Martin Luther King, says glibly:

"I don't pretend to be the greatest lawyer who ever lived or even the greatest lawyer today, but on the other hand I don't deny it."

Once, needled by an adversary for his supreme egotism, Foreman retorted: "It's not that I'm vain, proud or egotistical. I just don't have anything to be modest about."

Strip away the layers of arrogance from the man, says a critic-admirer, "and you'll find a monumental sneer for the whole human race."

Foreman loves to play God, says the same critic-admirer, "And he laughs at man's foibles, his fears and anxieties."

His Other Side

To hosts of others Foreman is a kind, benevolent genius who gives his time and talents to represent them without fee.

To Gregory Ayala, a bus boy, "Mr. Foreman is the greatest man alive. He came to the city jail at midnight to bail me out. The law thought I was kiddin' when I told them Mr. Foreman was my lawyer. Me, a Mexican busboy. So I ask Mr. Foreman how much I owed him after he got me off. And he says, 'don't owe him nothin' and give me \$10 for cab fare home.'"

Working without a fee, Foreman won acquittal for four Texas policemen accused of brutally beating a federal prisoner. A grateful Peace Officers Assn. of Texas gave Foreman a diamond-studded wrist watch at a testimonial dinner.

Less than three months later he lost his title as the White Knight for peace officers. It happened in the early 1950s in San Angelo, after he won freedom for Diego Carlino, who had been accused of the gangland slaying of a Houston gambler.

Attacked by Officers

Minutes after the jury acquitted his client, a Texas Ranger and a sheriff attacked Foreman with their fists in a hallway near the judge's chambers.

Foreman had accused the two lawmen of torturing his client to confess to the killing of Martin Luther King. "Foreman called me everything from a Russian investigator to a Gestapo agent. It's the same old story. He puts the officers on trial."

One juror remarked after Foreman was attacked: "If we had not been convinced already that the defendant was innocent, this certainly would have convinced us."

On his return to the Shamrock Hotel in Houston where he was living at the time, Foreman met the press. Setting aside crutches, he sagged wearily into an overstuffed chair. Bandages striped his face. In sign language he indicated he couldn't talk through his battered lips.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

"THE HOUSTON
CHRONICLE"
HOUSTON, TEXAS

Date: 11-24-68
Edition:
Author:
Editor: EVERETT D. COLLIER
Title:

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'Father, Forgive Them'

What did the Great Man have to say of his treatment at the hands of the sheriff and the Ranger? Foreman, picking up a pen and a yellow legal pad, wrote quickly in a bold hand: "Father, forgive them. They know not what they do."

Those were the days, before the tons of national publicity on the Candy Mossler-Melvin Powers murder trial in Miami, when he was more readily available for a price-less quote.

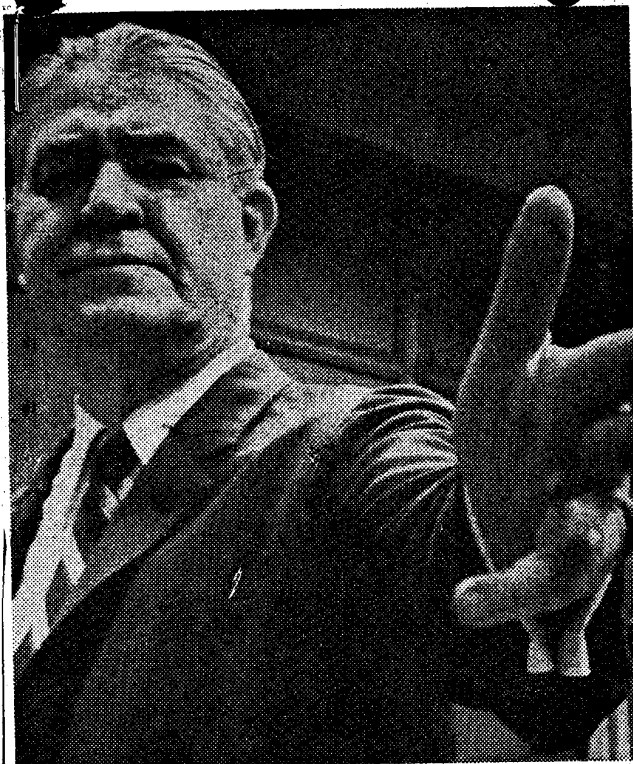
Not that he still isn't today, but the demands on his time have made him less accessible. However, he remains the darling of the press.

The years haven't robbed him of his greatest appeal, an unfettered, natural flamboyance. As he has done for years he still wears his tailored black suits with a rumped, potato-sack look.

The pants pockets are tailored for specific depth, almost to the knees to contain the rolls of currency he carries. The deep pockets, he explains, minimize the chance of money falling out.

Fathomless Eyes

The massive, jowled face is as flexible as a baby's. Only the gray-green, fathomless eyes remain the same. Too



Chronicle Photo

ATTORNEY PERCY FOREMAN ADDRESSES A JURY "My Clients Want Freedom, Not Justice," He Says

long ago they were programmed to detect the greed, deceit, malice or hate in the human race.

During his 45-year career as an attorney he has lost one client to the executioner: a drive-in operator named Steve Mitchell who shot and killed his wife.

"He deserved to die," Foreman has said.

The prosecutor who sent Mitchell to the chair and sullied the Foreman record was the late A. C. Winborn, a bald little man with bags under his eyes and a great gift for oratory and tears that could stir a jury to emotional frenzy.

"How can you face your wife and little children tonight if you free this monster to prey on society?" Winborn would ask a jury.

Spurgeon Bell, a chief justice of the First Court of Civil Appeals, recalls he was an as-

sistant district attorney in the early 50s when Winborn hung the black mark on Foreman's trial record.

He Learned a Lot

"I helped prosecute the Mitchell case with Winborn," says Bell, "and Percy knew he had met the master. There's no doubt in my mind that Percy learned a helluva lot from the late Mr. Winborn."

The courtroom theatrics of Foreman, born in a log cabin in Polk County, are legion. In his defense of Nago Alaniz, on trial for the murder of a South Texas attorney, Foreman told the jury:

"If you find my client guilty, don't send him to the prison. He's an attorney and a prison record will ruin his life. Send him to the electric chair."

After the jury acquitted Alaniz, a courtroom observer asked Foreman:

"My God! How could you

tell the jury to send your client to the chair?"

"I could afford to be brave," Foreman smiled, "There were only 17 reversible errors made by the state."

His Home Life

He lives with his wife, Marguerita, a former ballerina and actress, and their 10-year-old daughter, also named Marguerita, in a \$50,000 home once owned by a former client who ran afoul of the law.

Without shame, Foreman says, "it was the best home my client (Irwin Blum) had at the time."

He claims "no compunction in charging a client all the traffic will bear. The laborer is worthy of his home. And that's Scripture."

Foreman, whose worth is estimated at \$6 million, set a \$200,000 fee to defend Melvin Lane Powers, the pitted-faced co-defendant in the Jacques Mossler murder trial.

Mrs. Candace Mossler, the sexy, socialite grandmother and co-defendant, had put up \$46,000 worth of her gems as a retainer fee for her nephew's defense. Powers himself signed over to Foreman about 5 acres valued at about \$400,000, in the wealthy Southwest Houston area.

Before his trial in Miami, Powers filed a pauper's oath. Foreman told a Florida judge at the time: "I think your honor should take judicial knowledge of the fact that having employed me, Mr. Powers is unquestionably an indigent man."

His Legal Strategy

Foreman's pattern of legal strategy to free Powers (and Candy Mossler rode the slipstream of the Powers acquittal) was on his tried-and-true technique he long ago perfected: tedious pre-trial preparation and daring attacks on the veracity of state's witnesses and the character of the slain Jacques Mossler.

His functional guideline as a crime attorney, he has often said, is predicated on the

principle "my clients want freedom, not justice."

On the phone one day he told a man seeking his legal services:

"I don't care if you're innocent or guilty. I just want to know if you're in trouble. If you are, you need the best lawyer in the nation. And I'm the best."

To an irate divorcee who charged into his office with a pistol in her hand, he said: "Honey you don't want to shoot me because I'm the only man in the world who could get you off a murder charge."

His Divorce Cases

His reputation as a defense attorney rests on his record of acquittals for accused killers ("All my clients are innocent."), however, he's the undisputed king of the divorce courts in Houston.

"I started handling divorces wholesale in 1938," he says. "Since then I've handled more divorces than any living lawyer in the world — the world, mind you, not just the United States. During one World War II year I handled 2250 cases and I'm still going strong."

He turns down 19 out of 20 women seeking divorces, he says, "because they ought not to get a divorce. It's just not economically feasible for them."

Too many women are unrealistic, he says, "they just don't realize that they aren't forever young, beautiful, lithe. They don't see the crows feet crawling over their faces. They can't anticipate or see a fading of their physical charms."

The Legend Grows

The Foreman legend has grown, certainly because of great intellect and skill, and also because of his ability to attract publicity.

For instance, Foreman is generally credited with obtaining a \$6.5 million settlement for Mrs. Cecil Blaffer

Hudson, who had sued her husband for divorce.

Another attorney, the highly respected J. Edwin Smith, had worked three years preparing the contested settlement for trial. At almost the very last moment Mrs. Hudson dismissed Smith and hired Foreman to represent her. Smith later sued and collected \$175,000 for his legal services.

However, at the settlement it was Foreman posing with Mrs. Hudson for the news pictures.

Foreman has been the object of adulation, praise, scorn, vilification and curses. During a recent CBS Television show illustrating the style of Foreman in a courtroom, he heard himself described as a "no good bastard."

A Scream in Court

On another occasion a grief-stricken widow screamed at him in a court room after he had successfully defended her husband's accused killer:

"You may be a big successful lawyer," cried Mrs. Katherine Ainsworth, "but you set a killer free. He killed my husband and he should have been punished. There's no justice."

For once the big man seemed checkmated. No wise retort. No cutting quip. He simply said: "All right, lady. If that's all you have to say, goodbye."

Her final outcry was: "Go to hell, Mr. Foreman."

The situation was too basic, pat: You never argue with a distraught woman.

Now, in the winter of his life, Foreman has hinted at retirement. However, better than anyone else, he knows he won't quit. There's the James Earl Ray case and the whole world will be watching him.

Too long ago the sweet wine of fame infiltrated his bloodstream. And there's no known cure for an incurable superstar hooked on the needle of glamour and success.

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

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Hanes, Ray's new lawyer confer here

Birmingham attorney Arthur Hanes Sr. affirmed Tuesday that famed Houston murder lawyer Percy Foreman flew to Birmingham Monday to confer with him on the defense of James Earl Ray, accused in the slaying of Dr. Martin Luther King.

Hanes, who was replaced by Foreman as Ray's attorney in a surprise move Nov. 10, said, "There were some developments," but added that any further information would have to come from Foreman.

Foreman was not in his office Tuesday for comment.

Hanes said that Foreman had visited him following a long-distance phone conversation between the two attorneys Monday morning.

Hanes declined to reveal any of the conversation.

Foreman, he said, flew into the city Monday, had lunch and dinner with him, and "discussed the case in my office for several hours."

Hanes pointed out that he is still docketed in Memphis as being a counsel in the Ray trial, which was continued after Ray hired Foreman two days before the scheduled Nov. 12 date.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

31 THE BIRMINGHAM NEWS

Birmingham, Alabama

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Editor: John W. Bloomer

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Submitting Office: BH

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Ray's Lawyer Seeks FBI File

Memphis, Dec. 18 (UPI) — Percy Foreman, making an unsuccessful bid for a further delay in the trial of James Earl Ray, said today he understood FBI agents had shadowed Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. for two years trying to prevent his assassination.

That and other clues, the celebrated Texas lawyer said, make him believe "someone other than James Earl Ray" murdered the civil rights leader last April 4.

The disclosure came during a hearing before Judge W. Preston Battle, called to set a firm trial date for Ray. Battle kept a March 3 date as tentative.

Foreman complained of fruitless attempts to get the FBI's files on King, the assassination and the search for the killer. "I asked J. Edgar Hoover three times" (for the files), Foreman told the court.

He said he has yet to hear from Hoover, but understood from other FBI sources that agents trailed King.

MURKIN

The Washington Post _____
 Times Herald _____
 The Washington Daily News _____
 The Evening Star (Washington) _____
 The Sunday Star (Washington) _____
 Daily News (New York) 49 _____
 Sunday News (New York) _____
 New York Post _____
 The New York Times _____
 The Sun (Baltimore) _____
 The Daily World _____
 The New Leader _____
 The Wall Street Journal _____
 The National Observer _____
 People's World _____
 Examiner (Washington) _____

Date DEC 19 1968

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