

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Witness in Dr. King Murder Denied \$185,000 in Rewards

Charles Quitman Stephens, a material witness in the 1968 slaying of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., today was denied a claim to \$185,000 in reward money offered for information leading to the conviction of King's slayer.

Chancellor Charles A. Rond ruled that Stephens, 54, had given statements to law officers before the rewards were announced, and therefore, had not been influenced by the offers.

Harvey Gipson, one of Stephens' attorneys, said: "Our first reaction is that we're going to appeal. I think the chancellor's argument is wrong. He (Stephens) gave more detailed information after the assassination, up until two weeks after it."

In his opinion, Rond said: "An examination of the various statements made by Stephens ... reflects that he gave to the police all the information he had on the evening of April 4 (1968) and his statements of April 5 in further interviews with the police and the FBI disclosed no information that had not been already given."

Stephens testified that he gave descriptions of James Earl Ray, who pleaded guilty in King's slaying, as the man who fired a shot from the bathroom window of a rooming house at 422½ S. Main on April 4, 1968.

Stephens, who was then living in a room adjoining the bathroom, said his statements were the key evidence used to link Ray to the shooting.

He said his testimony was considered so important that he was placed in protective custody until Ray's trial.

Stephens claimed he was entitled to \$50,000 reward from the Memphis Publishing Co., \$100,000 reward posted by the City Council, \$25,000 reward offered by the Downtown Association, Chamber of Commerce and Future Memphis, \$10,000 reward of the National Alliance of Postal Employees, and \$1,000 pledged by former City Council member Gwen Awsumb.

Attorneys for those who offered the rewards argued that Stephens' information was not vital to Ray's arrest. They said the fingerprints found on the murder weapon were used to charge Ray. Armistead Clay represented Memphis Publishing Co.

Rond said the defendants contended that Stephens' "actions were not that of a volunteer seeking a reward, but of a

recalcitrant witness, thus nullifying his claims."

Witnesses testified that Stephens was jailed following the slaying to prevent him from leaving town. Policemen said Stephens has been arrested more than 20 times on charges of public drunkenness.

Stephens' claim to the rewards was filed in 1969, but had been delayed by Ray's hearings in federal court attacking the willingness of his guilty plea.

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

PAGE 19

MEMPHIS PRESS
SCIMITAR

MEMPHIS, TENN

Date: April 8, 1976

Edition:

Author:

Editor: MILTON BRITTEN

Title:

Character:

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Classification:

Submitting Office: MEMPHIS

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'Ray Loses Try to Alter Guilty Plea

CINCINNATI. — (UPI) — James Earl Ray, the confessed assassin of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who now claims he is innocent, today lost his latest attempt to change his guilty plea and stand trial.

The U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, in a 3-0 ruling, decided that Ray had intelligently and voluntarily pleaded guilty to killing the civil rights leader and had received competent legal advice.

King was assassinated April 4, 1968, in Memphis. Ray, who pleaded guilty to first-degree murder on March 10, 1969, is now serving a 99-year sentence at the Tennessee State Prison in Nashville.

Ever since entering the guilty plea, Ray has been seeking to withdraw that plea and to stand trial.

Ray based his appeal on the contention that his guilty plea was not "voluntarily and intelligently" made because his attorney, Percy Foreman, pressured him into pleading guilty against his will.

Ray contended Foreman made him believe the judge would not permit him to change attorneys and that unless he pleaded guilty, he had no alternative but to go to trial with Foreman, whom he felt he could not trust.

The appellate court decided, however, "the plea was entered voluntarily and knowingly."

The appellate judges said that Judge Preston Battle "very carefully questioned Ray as to the voluntariness of his plea before it was accepted."

"Ray specifically denied at that time that anyone had pressured him to plead guilty," noted the judges. "His responses and actions in court revealed that he was fully aware of what was occurring."

Ray also appealed on grounds he was denied "effective assistance of counsel."

Ray alleged Foreman was interested in getting the case closed in order to make money from magazine, book and movie rights to Ray's story.

Ray had cited contractual arrangements among himself, his attorneys and author William Bradford Huie.

But after examining the court record, the appellate judges concluded that Ray did not show he was prejudiced against because of the contracts.

The court concluded, "The advice which Ray received was within the range of competence demanded of attorneys in criminal cases."

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

PAGE 1

MEMPHIS PRESS
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MEMPHIS, TENN

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Editor: MILTON BRITTEN

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44-1989-SubC 656

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SERIALIZED	FILED
MAY 1 1976	
FBI - MEMPHIS	

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Ray Loses Request To Gain New Trial

By MICHAEL LOLLAR

The U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals yesterday overruled James Earl Ray's request for a new trial, holding he knew what he was doing when he confessed in 1969 to the Memphis murder of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

A three-judge panel of the Cincinnati court said it "is clear he understood the consequences" of his guilty plea and entered the plea "voluntarily and intelligently" on the advice of Houston attorney Percy Foreman.

In Nashville, where Ray has served about seven years of his 99-year sentence, associate state prison warden Robert Childress said, "Ray refuses to comment. He just said he had nothing to say. He was placid about it, just sat there. He never does have much to say about anything."

James H. Lesar, one of Ray's Washington attorneys, said the ruling is "shocking and deplorable. There's no way it's consistent with the evidence."

Ray's attorneys had appealed to the Sixth Circuit after U.S. Dist. Judge Robert M. McRae Jr. of Memphis denied Ray's new-trial request here in February, 1975. Lesar said he is uncertain about a new appeal to the Supreme Court.

"I'll be talking to Ray later this week to see what he wants to do. The Supreme Court is very opposed to reopening guilty pleas these days. But someday, either through the courts or outside the courts, James Earl Ray will be exonerated."

The focal point of his appeal was Ray's claim that he was "coerced" into pleading guilty by attorneys who shared a financial interest in his fate. As his fee, Birmingham attorney Arthur Hanes was to receive 40 per cent of any royalties from a book on the slaying by Hartselle, Ala., author William Bradford Huie.

When Ray replaced Hanes with Foreman, the Houston attorney was assigned

60 per cent of the expected royalties.

Ray claimed Huie had convinced both attorneys the book would not sell if he stood trial and his testimony became public knowledge. McRae said the attorneys should have "performed differently," and the appellate judges said they "disapproved" of the fee arrangement.

But, the Sixth Circuit panel reached the same conclusion as McRae. "Despite our disapproval of such a fee arrangement . . . its existence does not necessarily mean that Ray was denied effective assistance of counsel."

Foreman had told Ray that if he stood trial he stood a 100 per cent chance of being convicted and a 99 per cent chance of being "barbecued" in the electric chair. Ray claimed the warning was unjustified, but the appeals court said, "We cannot view Foreman's advice to Ray as incompetent under the circumstances of this case . . . The advice which Ray received was within the range of competence demanded of attorneys in criminal cases."

Members of the panel which ruled against Ray included Judges Anthony Celebrezze, Harry Phillips and the late William E. Miller, who submitted his concurrence in the unanimous ruling before his death last month.

They also rejected Ray's claim that conditions of his solitary confinement and monitoring of his cell and legal correspondence violated his rights by weakening his physical and mental resistance and exposing defense strategy to prosecutors.

The judges relied on testimony that Ray's mental and physical health improved during confinement and that no mail, notes or monitored conversations revealed any aspect of defense strategy.

Asst. State Atty. Gen. William 'Joe' Haynes, who argued the state's case in Ray's evidentiary hearing, said, "I haven't read the ruling, but what else can I say? I'm pleased."

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

— PAGE 13

— COMMERCIAL APPEAL

— MEMPHIS, TENN

Date: May 11, 1976
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Editor: MICHAEL GREHL
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Character:

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Submitting Office: MEMPHIS

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MAY 11 1976	
FBI - MEMPHIS	

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

The FBI And King

THERE IS NO QUESTION but that the full review of the FBI investigation of the murder of Martin Luther King must be thorough and open.

The burden on Atty. Gen. Edward Levi is heavy. He already is under criticism from blacks for refusing to go outside the Justice Department to find an inquiry team.

The suspicions are understandable. Historically we in Memphis have seen such suspicion mount from the moment in April, 1968, that King was shot while standing on a balcony of the Lorraine Motel. We watched as law-enforcement instantly snapped shut every source of information, as agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation took command under a shield of "no comment." Even the question of who had ordered "no comment" was met by "no comment."

Many black leaders already felt King had been harassed by the FBI. Today we know that was so. The late J. Edgar Hoover, from his powerful position as FBI director, displayed hostility toward the black civil rights leader. As one Justice Department official now says, "Instances were found indicating that the FBI undertook a systematic program of harassment of Dr. King in order to discredit him and harm both him and the movement he led."

That bitter fact still leads many black people to question whether the FBI can be trusted to investigate itself in this matter, and whether the U.S. attorney general can be believed when he says the FBI is clean.

IT IS NOW EIGHT YEARS since King was murdered. Hoover is dead. The FBI has undergone much house-cleaning since the days of Watergate. The record of its present director, Clarence M. Kelley, is unsullied. Atty. Gen. Levi, too, has proved that is is not politically beholden. The day of attorneys general such as Robert F. Kennedy and John Mitchell is past.

It is vitally important that this nation and all its people — white and black, majority and minority — have confidence in the Justice Department and the FBI. We cannot do without them. They cannot operate without public trust.

And that is why it is essential that once and for all the Justice Department remove any doubts about possible FBI conspiracy to do harm to King, or to cover up such action.

Levi has named Michael E. Shaheen, a former Mississippian, to retrace all FBI activity in the King death through the voluminous files in Washington and certain field offices, including the one in Memphis. Although the clamor for an outside commission, including civil rights leaders, to run such an inquiry is strong among blacks, Levi rejects this. Shaheen, who has been in charge of overseeing security and conduct within the Justice Department, should be a capable chief for this job.

But if it takes somebody from outside, looking over Shaheen's shoulder in order to achieve full confidence in the inquiry's outcome, so be it. The perception by blacks of misfeasance and/or mischief is as serious to the ultimate effectiveness of the FBI as would be the reality. Both must be thoroughly dispelled by an investigation that leaves no unanswered questions or room for dispute.

This issue must be resolved. The nation should not have to keep rehashing assassinations years after the solutions are supposed to have been found and justice is supposed to have been done.

Blind and worshipful trust of the FBI is a thing of the past. But the people must be convinced it is telling the truth, and that its methods are above reproach.

KELLEY AND Levi appear to be doing admirably in a difficult time.

But until black leaders are satisfied that is so, the necessary confidence in the law-enforcement arm of federal government will not be strong enough.

Persons rising to places of power often speak of taking on a job because it is challenging. None could be more challenging than this one.

*Orig. fwd to
BUREAU 5/6/76*

[Signature]

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

PAGE 4
Section 6

COMMERCIAL APPEAL

MEMPHIS, TENN

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Editor: MICHAEL GREHL

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44-1987 Sub C 658

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FBI - MEMPHIS	

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Court Rules Ray Can't Fire Lawyers

The 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati has turned down James Earl Ray's request that his two lawyers be fired, Robert Livingston said today.

The Memphis lawyer, who has represented Ray for six years without pay, said he was notified of the decision in a brief letter from the court. The letter contained no explanation for the decision, but he said the reason seemed obvious.

"They are not about to let us (Livingston and James Lesar of Washington, Ray's other lawyer) get away and then have him (Ray) come in and represent himself and complain at some later date that he was not adequately represented," the lawyer said.

Ray, serving a 99-year prison sentence for the 1968 murder of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., filed a petition last month asking that Livingston and Lesar be removed from the case.

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

PAGE 1

MEMPHIS PRESS
SCIMITAR

MEMPHIS, TENN

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FBI - MEMPHIS

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Judge Dismisses Civil Rights Suit of James Earl Ray, Calls Him 'Libel Proof'

By KAY PITTMAN BLACK
Press-Scimitar Staff Writer

Calling James Earl Ray "libel proof," U.S. Dist. Judge Harry W. Wellford has dismissed a broad libel and civil rights lawsuit Ray had filed in federal court.

Ray, the convicted murderer of Dr. Martin Luther King, filed the suit himself in June, claiming the defendants had lied about him or had compromised his right to a fair hearing. He asked for \$500,000 in damages from each of seven defendants, including Time, Inc., authors George McMillan, William Bradford Huie and Gerold Frank, former Asst. State Atty. Gen. Henry Haile and Memphis federal court reporter Brenda Pellicciotti.

Ray also named U.S. Dist. Judge Robert M. McRae Jr. as a defendant, claiming the judge worked with Mrs.

Pellicciotti (his court reporter) to deny him copies of hearing transcripts.

However, Ray did not ask for damages from the judge.

Judge Wellford dismissed the suit against Judge McRae and Mrs. Pellicciotti as groundless. He dismissed the suit against state prosecutor Haile as lacking diversity as it applied to federal libel laws since both Ray and Haile are state citizens.

In his dismissal yesterday, Judge Wellford said Ray "is not only a confessed murderer, but also — as the record in the previous case indicates — has had other prior felony convictions."

With that, Judge Wellford asked the question, "Can his reputation be damaged by articles relating to his background and circumstances of his in-court admissions

and guilty plea to the King murder charge?"

Wellford said, "Certainly Ray is a public figure and a claim of libel would necessarily include First Amendment considerations" as to right to write about a public figure.

Articles written and things said about Ray, said Wellford, "merely make reference to that which has previously been published to the effect that plaintiff is guilty of the very crime to which he confessed in a procedure upheld as lawful and fully constitutional by other courts."

Judge Wellford concluded that Ray "is libel proof . . . Ray is a convicted habitual criminal and in light of First Amendment privileges stands no chance of showing any damages to his reputation. All the circumstances indicate this action is frivolous."

In May, the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld Judge McRae's refusal to grant Ray a new trial on what he contended was coercion that led to his pleading guilty in 1969 to the 1968 slaying of the civil rights leader. Ray is serving a 99-year sentence in the State Penitentiary in Nashville.

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

PAGE 3

COMMERCIAL APPEAL

MEMPHIS, TENN

Date: SEPT. 17, 1976

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Author:

Editor:

Title: murkin

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44-1987 Sub C 660

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**Edward E. Redditt**

Redditt Muses About Removal From 'Security'

"As I look back now, it didn't bother me then. It bothered me later. I was so busy I didn't think about it. It bothers me now."

Former Memphis Police Department Sgt. Edward E. Redditt was reminiscing yesterday about his removal from a security detail for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. only hours before King's assassination at the Lorraine Motel on April 4, 1968.

Former Police and Fire Director Frank C. Holloman ordered Redditt off of the detail after reports there was a "contract" out on the detective's life.

Redditt protested the removal, but said he has no reason to question Holloman's motives.

"I was trained not to be afraid of death. I didn't want to jeopardize my family," Redditt remained off duty for three days, his home and family guarded around-the-clock by detectives.

Redditt, then assigned to the police department's intelligence unit, and Lt. E. H. Arkin Jr. were sitting in a police cruiser in front of Redditt's home when word of the assassination came over the police radio at 6:04 p.m., he said.

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

— PAGE 1

— COMMERCIAL APPEAL

— MEMPHIS, TENN

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☐ Being Investigated

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"I was ~~guarded~~," he said. "~~Detectives~~ Emmitt Winters and Melvin Burgess were stationed inside the house."

Redditt's partner on the security detail, Patrolman Willie B. Richmond, remained on the detail. "We left him there. I don't know what transpired after that."

In addition to himself and Richmond, there were four police "task teams" of three cars each stationed around the hotel, Redditt said.

Redditt has previously been reluctant to discuss his removal from the security detail and said yesterday, "I still am."

"I told everybody to go look at 'An American Death,' the book (by Gerold Frank). I don't know how he got my log, but it's all there, dates, times; almost, just about, everything I said or did."

Redditt subsequently was transferred to police community relations duty and later served as a field representative for former Rep. Dan Kuykendall (R-Tenn.). He is now deputy director for priority areas in the city's Community Development office.

Holloman could not be reached for comment last night.

Meanwhile, Dep. Fire Chief H. K. Dove yesterday said he fails to understand committee interest created in the transfer of two firemen from Fire Station No. 2 at Main and Butler at about the same time Redditt was relieved from the security detail. The station is about a block from the motel.

"We detail men every day. That's nothing unusual. I can't understand why this is such a big deal," Dove said.

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Probe by Justice Concludes James Earl Ray Acted Alone

WASHINGTON. — (AP) — After a 10-month review, a team of Justice Department lawyers has concluded that James Earl Ray acted alone in the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, informed department sources said today.

The lawyers rejected theories that Ray was only a cog in a conspiracy to assassinate the Nobel Prize-winning civil rights leader, the sources said.

The team of lawyers from the department's Office of Professional Responsibility delivered its report to former Atty. Gen. Edward H. Levi shortly before he left office Jan. 28.

The department plans to make public a "sanitized version" of the report, deleting names of informers and other sensitive material, the sources said.

But the public release has been delayed because department officials want to avoid the appearance of trying to influence the House of Representatives in its debate about launching a lengthy and costly new investigation of the murder of King and President John F. Kennedy.

When the House completes its action, the department will have to release its own report.

Last April, Levi ordered Michael Shaheen, head of the Office of Professional Responsibility to take charge of a review of all department records concerning the investigation of King's death.

He took the action after the depart-

ment's civil rights division finished a five-month preliminary review of FBI files and said a more complete study was necessary.

The series of department reviews was prompted by detailed disclosures by a Senate committee of the FBI's campaign of harassment against King in an effort to discredit him and the civil rights movement. That campaign was carried out under the direction of J. Edgar Hoover.

King was shot to death on a motel balcony in Memphis in April 1968.

Ray pleaded guilty to King's murder. But he told the court he did not agree with statements by the prosecution and his own attorney that there was no conspiracy in the case.

Ray now is serving a 99-year prison sentence in Tennessee. He has unsuccessfully sought a new trial.

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

PAGE 24

MEMPHIS PRESS
SCIMITAR

MEMPHIS, TENN

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(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Woman Gives Name of Informer in King Case

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — (AP) — The wife of a retired Louisville police officer confirmed today that her husband told Rep. Gene Snyder, R-Ky., that he was offered \$500,000 on occasions to kill Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Mary Baird, 44, said her husband, Clifton, who is out of town and unavailable for comment, told Snyder of an offer he said was made by members of the Louisville police department and several FBI agents.

She said her husband, 50, retired from the Louisville police department several years ago after 27 years service.

"He told me about this when I first married him, seven years ago," Mrs. Baird said. "I think he thought he wasn't going to be believed."

She said she believes one reason he came forward a second time with the allegation was because "he wants to know why someone asked him" to kill the civil rights leader, who was assassinated in Memphis, in 1968.

"It sure has been on his mind," Mrs. Baird said. "He said it just got to bothering him and that's why he contacted Mr. Snyder."

She said her husband, before contacting Snyder, told one of James Earl Ray's attorneys of the alleged plot.

Snyder, who disclosed last week that he

had heard from a man who claimed knowledge of a plot to kill King, has refused to divulge the man's name.

Mrs. Baird said her husband told her

"he was offered \$500,000 to kill" King and that "he didn't appreciate it.

"I can't say any more, but he's just not that type of person," she said.

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

PAGE 1

MEMPHIS PRESS
SCIMITAR

MEMPHIS, TENN

Date: MARCH 23, 1977

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Asked why her husband thought he was asked, Mrs. Baird ~~responded~~: "That's the \$64 question. He wants to know why someone asked him."

She refused to divulge the name of the private security agency for which her husband works but said he was out of town on business unrelated to his allegation of the plot.

The Kentucky Post first named Baird as the man who reported the alleged plot to Snyder.

The \$500,000 offer allegedly was made two or three years before King was killed, according to the "informed source" quoted by The Post. ~~_____~~

Mrs. Baird said she had no idea how her husband was identified as the man who made the allegation but that she was glad it is out in the open now.

She said her husband "has definitely told me he was the one" who made the statements about the alleged plot.

Snyder said earlier this week he had met the man "face to face" and was convinced he was a "rational" man. In fact, Snyder said he changed his mind about voting to extend financing for the House Select Committee on Assassinations solely because of his conversation with the man.

Snyder said ~~that before~~ he talked with

Turn to Page 11—WOMAN

Woman Gives Informer's Name

From Page 1

the man, he had voted against continued funding for the committee.

Louisville Police Chief John Nevin said, his department has not received any official communications from the congressional committee investigating King's assassination. He said he didn't know Baird very well and that his first reaction was "that it was preposterous."

C. J. Hyde, longtime Louisville police chief now retired, said he remembers Baird as a "very fine police officer . . . who wasn't afraid of man or beast. . . . It's a surprise to me that he even talked. He never had anything to say about anybody."

Hyde said he knows nothing about the alleged conspiracy.

"I hope there isn't anything to that . . .," Hyde said. "Whenever Dr. King came to Louisville we did everything

possible to see that he would be safe."

During the years before his death, King was a frequent visitor to Louisville. His brother, the Rev. A. D. Williams King, lived here and was active in the civil rights movement during the 1960s.

Snyder, who still refuses to confirm that Baird is the man who told him of the alleged plot, said he received a letter about the allegation late in February.

Snyder has disclosed he talked with a former policeman, that the policeman had a tape recording of an alleged offer to kill King, and that the officer named names. Snyder refused to disclose the names, or even what city the allegations involved.

James Earl Ray Responds Freely to All Questions

PETROS, Tenn. — (AP) — An attorney for convicted murderer James Earl Ray said Ray answered all questions put to him by House assassinations committee attorneys Tuesday concerning the 1968 murder of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Ray met for more than two hours at Brushy Mountain State Prison here with the House attorneys to give a preliminary deposition on his role in King's murder in Memphis. Ray is serving a 99-year sentence at the prison for the killing of King.

Jack Kershaw, Ray's newest attorney, said afterward that Ray was not under oath, but that he answered all questions put to him by Richard Sprague, the committee's chief counsel, and Robert Lehner, who is handling the King portion of the committee's probe.

Kershaw also said his client has not reached any decision on whether he will

take a lie detector test concerning the King murder.

"I don't see any great surprise information coming out until later," the attorney said. "If there are any surprises, they will not be the result of Ray's direct information."

Kershaw said Ray, who claims innocence in the King assassination despite his earlier plea of guilty to the murder, talked only about his own actions or actions of which he had direct knowledge.

"He really does not know what anybody else did," Kershaw said. "We hope their investigation to corroborate what he said will satisfy their goals and ours. As far as Ray is concerned, this is directed solely toward getting his day in court."

Sprague emerged from the session smiling, but told reporters as he entered his car that he would have no comment on the

meeting. He said he would attend a committee meeting today in Washington.

The Tuesday session included Sprague, Kershaw and three other committee staff members. After Sprague and his staff left, Kershaw remained behind the walls for a brief period conferring with his client.

Kershaw said reports that a mysterious Latin man named "Raoul" was Ray's brother are incorrect. Ray has said that he was in Memphis in connection with a supposed gun-running scheme with Raoul when King was assassinated.

"Raoul is a breathing and talking human being," Kershaw said. "The committee is trying to find him now and so am I."

Kershaw added that he believes Raoul is in the United States or Canada and that searches for him are being conducted in Florida, Alabama and Kentucky.

He said Ray met Raoul in Montreal while Ray was still a fugitive after escaping from prison.

"Ray is simply an unwitting tool and instrument in the assassination," Kershaw said. "Now only for the first time ever is there a climate of opinion that gives him a forum," he added, explaining Ray's willingness to talk to the committee officially.

The committee approved a \$2.8-million budget request today.

The biggest cut from the committee's earlier, controversial \$6.5-million proposal was a \$2.3-million slice to cut the staff from 170 persons to 115. The budget figures are for this year.

Sprague told the committee that means the two investigations will take longer and "we'll have to wait and see" whether they can be completed during the two-year life of the current Congress.

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Names Promised To the Probers In Dr. King Case

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

— PAGE 1

— MEMPHIS PRESS
SCIMITAR

— MEMPHIS, TENN

Date: MARCH 22, 1977

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By TIM WYNGAARD
and CARL WEST
Scripps-Howard Staff Writers

WASHINGTON. — A former Louisville, Ky., patrolman is expected to name under oath Louisville and federal lawmen he alleges conspired to kill Martin Luther King Jr. two years before the civil rights leader was assassinated.

Sources involved in the House investigation of the murders of King and President Kennedy said today that the Louisville allegation is the "top priority" in the King investigation but congressional probers also have uncovered the following leads:

✓ A Somerville, Tenn., businessman alleges that while in Memphis he overheard part of a telephone conversation two days before King was murdered there in April, 1968, involving shooting someone on a balcony. The businessman has told investigators for the House Assassination Committee that he heard someone named "Roberto" tell another party "to kill the b—— even if you have to shoot him on the balcony."

✓ A female friend of Jack Ruby, killer of Lee Harvey Oswald, Kennedy's assassin, has told investigators that she has "got religion" and wants to testify about Ruby's activities prior to Kennedy's shooting in Dallas in 1963.

Committee investigators, led by chief counsel Richard A. Sprague, were expected to arrive late today in Petros, Tenn., at Brushy Mountain Prison to interview James Earl Ray, King's convicted killer. Ray and his brother Jerry are expected to be called before the committee to testify.

To complete the investigation of these and other leads that committee members say are promising, the panel states that it needs \$2.7 million for a 12-month probe. The committee is backing away from an earlier request of almost \$13 million to cover a period of two years. The controversy over that request almost killed the committee.

Committee staffers have already interviewed the Louisville policeman about his allegations that three local federal agents and three or four city policemen conspired in the mid 1960s to kill King. The patrolman said he twice was offered \$500,000 to kill King and claims he tape recorded one of the offers.

Rep. M. Gene Snyder, R-Ky., who passed the former patrolman's information along to the assassination committee, said he heard a reproduction of the tape but much of it was inaudible. However, the committee's staff is believed to have the technological capability to improve the quality of the recording.

Sources said that the alleged Louisville King conspiracy preceded by several months what became an open and bitter controversy in the Kentucky city over "open housing," an issue which created deep hatred between the police and the black community.

The sources said King's brother, the Rev. A. D. Williams King, was living in Louisville at the time, was active in civil rights and was pastor of a local church.

Assassination committee leaders met with the House Rules Committee yesterday to outline the new leads in an effort to win approval for continuation of the com-

mittee, now scheduled to end its work March 31.

Committee members stressed that the Louisville policeman, whom they decline to identify, has been checked and "he is a solid citizen." They said he has offered sworn testimony to the committee.

Informed sources say there is "no doubt" that Martin Luther King and not his brother who died in 1969 was the target of the alleged murder conspiracy. Informed sources said the committee regards the Louisville allegations as "hot." "They are placing it at the top," one commented.

The sources also said the committee intends to call "Roberto" as a witness, indicating the committee has determined his full identity.

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Attorney: Ray Told Own Acts

By MARSHA VANDE BERG
PETROS, Tenn. — James Earl Ray, in a session with staff members of the House Assassinations Committee here yesterday, recounted "his own actions" of nine years ago when Martin Luther King was shot, Ray's attorney said.

"He did not attempt to involve anyone else," said Jack Kershaw, of Nashville, Ray's attorney.

KERSHAW met with Ray and five staff members of the special committee investigating the deaths of King and John F. Kennedy.

Chief counsel Richard Sprague and the four other committee staff members from Washington declined comment after the two-hour session inside the walls at Brushy Mountain State Prison.

"Except to say hello, I have no comment," said Sprague before leaving with the others under escort of the Tennessee Highway Patrol.

KERSHAW, in a brief statement to reporters, said yester-

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

PAGE 1

THE TENNESSEAN

NASHVILLE, TENN.

Date:

3/23/77

Edition:

Author:

Editor:

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Submitting Office: MEMPHIS

44-1987 Sub C-664A

☐ Being Investigated

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day's session was "confidential."

"Ray has given a statement reporting his own information and his own actions," Kershaw said.

Ray's brother, Jerry Ray, of Alabama, who recent reports have speculated may have been involved in King's assassination, was not mentioned, Kershaw said.

BUT THE mysterious Raoul, described by Ray as a Latin American of short stature and auburn hair, did come up. He was "mentioned," Kershaw said.

"The committee would like to know where Raoul is, and I'd like to know," Kershaw said.

Raoul is the person Ray has said he left behind in a boarding house room across from the Lorraine Motel in Memphis on April 4, 1968.

AUTHORITIES have said the shots that killed King came from that room on April 4.

Kershaw said he personally learned nothing new from yesterday's session in a counseling room in the prison where Ray is serving a 99-year sentence for King's death.

And Kershaw concluded the committee members learned of no surprises.

"IF THERE are any surprises, they will not be a result of Ray's direct information but a result of the investigation's work," he said.

The Nashville attorney described yesterday's session as "exploratory," and said any information gathered must now be "corroborated."

He predicted, however, ad-

ditional meetings between the committee and Ray before March 31, when the committee's request for additional funding comes before Congress.

KERSHAW said no decision has been made yet on whether Ray will go to Washington and testify before congressional members of the committee.

"There were no surprises, and no breakthroughs," Kershaw repeated. But then he added:

"There was this fundamental breakthrough....Ray will probably, most possibly get a new trial."

KERSHAW said the "national attitude of great curiosity," coupled with the congressional committee's investigation and "the duties and services of a free press" will help get Ray a new trial.

Ray has repeatedly had his pleas for a new trial turned down, most recently by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Since Ray pleaded guilty to the assassination, he has repeatedly said he did not act alone.

KERSHAW described Ray's mood as "happy" and said the Brushy Mountain inmate is "trying to remember in great detail" his actions nine years ago.

Ray did not refuse to answer any questions, Kershaw said.

He was not placed under oath "because the committee didn't see fit to put him under oath," Kershaw said.

The possibility of a lie detector test has been mentioned, but no decision made, the Nashville attorney added.

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Blackmail Threat Is Related In Request to Kill Dr. King

By CARL WEST and TIM WYNGAARD
Scripps-Howard Staff Writers

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — An ex-policeman claims that local and federal law officers tried to blackmail him into assassinating Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1965.

Clifton E. Baird, 50, a former member of the Louisville Police Department, has told the House Assassination Committee that fellow Louisville police officers and FBI agents stationed here offered him \$500,000 to kill King.

Sources close to the assassination committee said Baird claims at the time of the alleged conspiracy his police superiors thought he was involved in a dynamite ring operation in Western Kentucky and therefore would have to take part in the plot to kill King or face implication in the bombing case.

Baird, the sources said, has written the committee that he was at the time under "intense investigation" by the FBI and police officials in his home town of Owensboro, Ky., about 100 miles southwest of here. Ultimately, however, he was not implicated in the bombing conspiracy despite his claimed refusal to take part in the alleged plot against King.

The sources close to the committee said that Baird's claims of attempted black-

mail would explain why a veteran, but low-ranking policeman would have been approached by the alleged King conspirators. Questions about Baird's possible motive for being involved in a plot against King were a stumbling block for early investigators checking his claims.

House assassination committee members are using Baird's charges to win support for continuing their controversial study. At this point there is no apparent connection between the alleged 1965 plot and the 1968 Memphis murder — except for past claims that the FBI somehow was involved in King's death, or in covering up details of the 1968 slaying.

But backers of the House investigation into the murders of King and President John F. Kennedy have used Baird's allegations — contained in a secret letter sent to Rep. M. Gene Snyder, R-Ky., — and the tape to turn around House leaders and win their support for continuation of the committee.

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PAGE 1

MEMPHIS PRESS
SCIMITAR

MEMPHIS, TENN

Date: MARCH 28, 1977

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Editor: SERIALIZED *cl*

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Investigators for the committee went behind Brushy Mountain State Prison walls at Petros, Tenn., today for the second time in less than a week to interview James Earl Ray about his role in the 1968 assassination of King.

The committee, mired in staff and personality conflicts, had accomplished little until Baird approached it with his charges several weeks ago.

Stunned at a request for a \$13 million budget for a two-year probe, House leaders were preparing to kill the committee at the end of this month. But assassination committee leaders secretly briefed House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill (D-Mass.) on Baird's allegations, and O'Neill has called for continuing the investigation for one year on a \$2.7 million budget.

The House is scheduled to vote on that Wednesday.

Veteran Louisville policemen say they are "stunned and puzzled" by Baird's charges and categorically deny them. Similar denials have been made by FBI agents assigned to Louisville in the mid-1960s. One senior police officer branded Baird's allegations as a "figment of his imagination."

Federal and local lawmen have checked Baird's background and privately described him as "stable" and "credible." "He was a solid cop," said a federal source.

Meanwhile, Scripps-Howard News Service has learned that the tape recording Baird contends was made during a discus-

Turn to Page 6 — **BLACKMAIL**

Blackmail Cited in King Case

From Page 1

sion of the offer with one of the lawmen has been authenticated by House assassination investigators as being made about the time — in 1965 — that Baird claims he received the offers.

It has also been learned that:

- ✓ Baird has identified by name and rank six present and former Louisville policemen — not three or four as previously reported — as being involved in the alleged conspiracy to kill King. He also has given the assassination committee the last names of three agents then working out of Louisville FBI headquarters allegedly involved in the plan.

- ✓ Baird has told investigators that he overheard a discussion about killing King among local police and FBI agents at police offices here and subsequently taped an assassination offer with a recorder hidden beneath the front seat of his personal car. That is the reel-to-reel tape he has turned over to the assassination committee and which technical experts have verified ~~dates~~ from the period under investigation.

- ✓ Scripps-Howard also has learned that Baird has tried to make his story public previously. He once approached a reporter with the allegations he later turned over to the congressional committee, but got nowhere. Last year Baird also told his story to attorneys for James Earl Ray, convicted for killing King in Memphis in 1968, but they decided there probably was no connection between a possible 1965 Louisville plot and the Memphis murder.

Baird, who retired in 1975 from the Louisville police force after 27 years, now is employed as a private security guard here. Reporters' efforts to reach him have been unsuccessful, but in a two-and-a-half hour session with House investigators, he maintained he was innocently involved — because of the blackmail attempts — in the plot against King, Scripps-Howard has learned.

During most of the 1960s there was racial tension between police and the black community here over open housing, an issue pushed by the slain civil rights leader and his brother, the late Rev. A. D. Williams King, at the time ~~pastor of~~ a local church.

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Lawyer Says Talks May Reveal 'Raoul'

PETROS, Tenn. (UPI) — James Earl Ray turned over to staff members of the House Assassinations Committee Monday information his lawyer said could identify the shadowy figure 'Raoul' in the Martin Luther King Jr. assassination.

Chief counsel Richard Sprague and three other committee investigators spent six hours behind the walls of Brushy Mountain State Prison with Ray, King's confessed assassin.

Jack Kershaw, Ray's latest attorney, said the investigators have a third meeting scheduled with Ray April 4, the ninth anniversary of the King assassination.

"Mr. Ray answered every question in great detail to the best of his ability," Kershaw said. "As a result of these interviews, they have a great deal of material substance."

Sprague refused to comment on what Ray told the investigators Monday or at a similar session at the prison last Tuesday. But he confirmed that a third meeting will be held as he left the prison.

"Yes, we'll be back," Sprague said.

Among the information Ray provided the committee or made available through his previous lawyers, Kershaw said, are travel dates and motel lodging records documenting his own movements as well as telephone numbers Ray claims to have used to contact Raoul, a mysterious figure Ray has blamed for the King murder.

Kershaw said the telephone numbers were given to Ray by Raoul and Ray later passed these numbers on to his attorneys.

Kershaw said Ray gave the investigators permission to examine materials

which he had given his previous attorneys, beginning with Arthur Hanes of Birmingham, Ala., and continuing through his latest group, which includes attorneys in Washington and Memphis.

Ray has no facts to support any conspiracy except the insistent and persistent contention that Raoul directed his actions for about a year before the murder and up to 30 minutes before King was killed, Kershaw said.

"I have three leads that give me confidence that Raoul will materialize," Kershaw said.

Ray, who turned 49 March 10, met with Sprague and other committee investigators for two hours last Tuesday. At that time, Kershaw said he gave no informa-

(Continued on Page 3)

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

PAGE 1

COMMERCIAL APPEAL

MEMPHIS, TENN

Date: MARCH 29, 1977

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Editor:

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Submitting Office: MEMPHIS

☐ Being Investigated

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Probers Said Near Name For 'Raoul'

(Continued from Page 1)

tion which had not been previously made public.

Kershaw hinted a week ago that a decision on a lie detector test for Ray would be made soon. But, on Monday, he said a decision on whether Ray will take a polygraph test will be announced in two weeks.

He said investigators discussed a statement by a former Louisville policeman, Clifton Baird, who contended that FBI agents and police officers had discussed with him a conspiracy to murder King. Kershaw said Ray had received a letter from Baird detailing the plot in March, 1976.

Kershaw said he made a copy of that letter available to the committee investigators.

The House committee, seeking to persuade Congress to keep it in business past Thursday, said in Washington Monday it has new, but "uncorroborated" evidence on the killings of John F. Kennedy and King.

The panel's first formal report of the year was issued while the House Rules Committee considered the panel's bid for continuation. At the same time on the House floor, former chairman Henry Gonzalez (D-Texas) was reiterating his criticism of Sprague.

In an hour-long speech, Gonzalez repeated allegations Sprague exceeded his authority and the House leadership abandoned him when he sought unsuccessfully to fire Sprague. Gonzalez then resigned as chairman.

"I have been treated shabbily," Gonzalez said, his voice choking. "If my name was O'Brien, or Rosenthal, or Martin Luther King or Walter Fauntroy or George Washington Carver, I would not have been treated this shabbily."

The names were those of blacks, Irishmen and Jews, some prominent in history and others serving in the House.

The panel had been given only temporary life to March 31 because of opposition to its budget request for \$13 million over two years and House weariness of the Gonzales-Sprague squabble.

Its report offered no new indications of its discoveries since its inception last September.

It said the "most important development in the King investigation is the willingness of James Earl Ray . . . to talk to the committee."

The panel also said it had information of a "conspiracy" to kill King, reportedly from a now-deceased informant for what the report described only as "a Southern police department."

The informant claimed he overheard "a conversation between members of two organizations in which it was said that when Dr. King returned to Memphis they would be forced to kill him."

Meanwhile, the Scripps-Howard News Service reported Monday that Baird, the former Louisville Police Department officer, told the committee that federal law officers had tried to blackmail him into killing King in 1965.

Baird claimed that fellow Louisville police officers and FBI agents offered him \$500,000 to take part in the killing of King. Baird also claims he was under investigation at the time on belief that he might be involved in a dynamite ring operation in Western Kentucky and that other officers believed he might take part in the plot rather than face implication in the bombing case.

However, the Scripps-Howard Report said, that there are no indications that there could be any connections between Baird's claims involving a 1965 plot and King's assassination in 1968.

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Why James Earl Ray Case Reopened Retired Prosecutor Bonders

By CLARK PORTEOUS
Press-Scimitar Staff Writer

"I still believe James Earl Ray stood in a bathtub in the rooming house at 422½ S. Main and fired the shot which killed Dr. Martin Luther King on April 4, 1968."

That's what the Memphian who perhaps knows the most about the King slaying says he believes.

Phil M. Canale, retired Shelby attorney general, prepared the case for trial against Ray, but Ray pleaded guilty in Criminal Court and was sentenced to 99 years.

Canale spoke to the Exchange Club at Cafe St. Clair shortly after spending an hour and a half yesterday with investigators for the Congressional Committee on Assassinations. Canale is now practicing law with offices at \$100 Poplar.

Asked why there should be another investigation of the case, Canale replied, "You've got me."

Canale was aided in his speech with a slide presentation on facts in the case by John Carlisle, chief investigator for the attorney general's office who is also considered to be an authority on the case.

Canale said there is renewed interest in the case because of the Congressional investigation now underway. Canale said there is nothing new he could tell the investigators who are in Memphis. He said he told them the same thing he has told a number of other investigators, that his evidence indicates Ray killed King.

"Ray could not have fired the shot with accuracy from his room," Canale said. "Others in the rooming house called him the 'new boarder,' and he spent a lot of time in the bathroom the day King was killed."

Canale said this had disturbed a wino who wanted to get into the bathroom. Canale said Ray rented the room under the name of "Willard" the day King was killed.

Canale told of evidence indicating Ray had bought a rifle and about Ray's fingerprints being found on it, and about Ray buying binoculars. Canale told other facts about the investigation, including the discovery of the rifle, binoculars, toilet articles in front of Canipe Amusement Co., next door to the rooming house.

He said Ray had given three different versions as to where he was when the shot was fired, the latest being that he was having a tire fixed.

Canale said only Ray's fingerprints were found on the gun and binoculars. He said Ray had bought two guns in Birmingham shortly before the shooting of King, telling the sporting goods dealer he was going big game hunting.

Canale said the investigation indicated Ray had a map of Atlanta with King's home, church and office sites circled, and that Ray had been in Los Angeles the same

Date page, name of
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PAGE 1

MEMPHIS PRESS
SCIMITAR

MEMPHIS, TENN

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Author:

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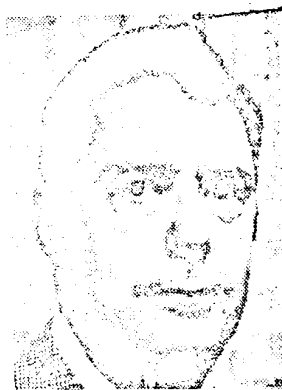
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time as King and appeared to have been following him.

"Ray was a racist," Canale said. "While serving time in the Missouri State Penitentiary, he refused an offer to go to an honor farm because it was integrated. Also, in prison, while watching TV or listening to a radio, about a march led by King, Ray said, 'somebody needs to kill King.'"

Canale said, when Ray pleaded guilty, there was talk about a conspiracy, but Canale said he found no evidence of a conspiracy. He said authorities have never been able to locate "Raoul," whom Ray said had helped him. "We think he may have known Raoul in Canada in connection with dope smuggling," Canale said.

Canale said that, after Ray was captured in London, Ray buried his head in his hands and said, "My God, I feel so trapped." Canale said Ray made no further statement at the time.



Phil M. Canale

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**THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE,**

Date: 3/22/85

PAGE B8

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Submitting Office:

Ray's appeal for new trial is kept alive

CINCINNATI (AP) — James Earl Ray, convicted of the 1968 slaying of Martin Luther King Jr., won a legal victory yesterday that keeps alive his appeal for a new trial.

The Sixth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals set aside a Tennessee federal court decision dismissing Ray's complaint that he was denied a transcript relevant to Dr. King's death. Ray claimed the clerk of the criminal court in Shelby County, Tenn., unconstitutionally withheld the transcript.

The lower court dismissed Ray's

complaint without a motion from court officials. The decision yesterday sent the case back to Tennessee for reconsideration.

Ray claims the transcript concerns a hearing involving Charles Quitman Stephens, who was jailed in 1968 as a material witness in Dr. King's death. Stephens, who was a resident of a rooming house near the Memphis motel where Dr. King was killed on April, 4, 1968, told authorities he saw a man running from the area shortly after the murder.

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THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

Date:

Edition: 8/21/86

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Submitting Office: MEMPHIS

Indexing:

Ray hits barrier

NASHVILLE — James Earl Ray, serving a life term for the slaying of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., should be denied access to FBI transcripts of conversations involving an associate of the civil rights leader, a U.S. magistrate has recommended.

Ray wanted copies of the transcripts, because, he said, they contained information that would prove he did not assassinate Dr. King, who was killed April 4, 1968, in Memphis.

Ray sought copies of transcripts of conversations of Hunter Pitts Odell, one of Dr. King's inner circle of friends and advisers. But the FBI balked, and Ray sued for the documents.

U.S. Magistrate Kent Sandidge said the law exempts from public inspection files in which a third party has not consented to release of the information. Odell has not approved such a release of information.

44-1987 Sub C-469

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FBI - MEMPHIS	

FBI/DOJ

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Ray Transcript Request Denied

NASHVILLE (UPI) — Convicted assassin James Earl Ray failed in an attempt to obtain FBI wiretap transcripts of conversations of slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., after a federal magistrate denied Ray's request.

"The telephone conversation transcripts sought by the plaintiff here stem from an unfortunate chapter in our nation's history and their very existence raises serious invasion of privacy questions," U.S. Magistrate Kent Sandidge said Tuesday in a report.

Sandidge's report is not final and must be approved by U.S. District Judge Thomas A. Wiseman.

Ray, who is serving a life sentence at the Tennessee State Penitentiary for killing King, tried to obtain the transcripts under the Freedom of Information Act, a federal law that makes most government documents available to the public.

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THE DAILY HERALD
COLUMBIA, TENN.

8/20/86

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44-1987 Sub C-670

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THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

Date: PAGE

Edition: 5/1/87

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Submitting Office: MEMPHIS

Indexing:

Dispute puts brakes on sale of Ray's car

By Jimmie Covington
Staff Reporter

Disposal of James Earl Ray's 1966 Mustang will be delayed because the lawyer of private investigator Renfro Hays has filed a petition to withdraw from the case.

In the petition filed in federal court, lawyer Asa H. Hoke said a conflict arose between him and Hays before a court order was entered last week, clearing the way to sell the car.

The order designated Hoke as trustee to receive the car, kept at the Shelby County Correction Center since the assassination of

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968.

Ray is serving a 99-year sentence for the slaying.

Under the consent order last week by U.S. Dist. Judge Julia Gibbons, all parties involved in the matter or their lawyers agreed that the car could be turned over to Hoke to hold as trustee for Ray and Hays.

Lawyer Duncan Ragsdale said

the plan called for the car to be sold, with Ray and Hays sharing the proceeds.

In his petition, Hoke said the court might wish to approve his withdrawal from the case and appoint another trustee.

According to the petition, Hoke had found it had "grown impossible to consult with his client as to the settlement of this matter."

44-1987 Sub C-671

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FBI - MEMPHIS	

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THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

Date:

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Edition:

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Classification:

Submitting Office: MEMPHIS

Indexing:

Getaway car
used by Ray
will be sold
Assassin to receive
share of proceeds

44-1987-Sub C-62

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FBI - MEMPHIS	

U.S. Dist. Judge Julia Gibbons yesterday cleared the way for the sale of the 1966 white Mustang James Earl Ray drove away from Memphis after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Under an agreement in an order filed by Judge Gibbons, the car will be turned over to representatives of private investigator Renfro T. Hays and Ray. Proceeds from the sale will be shared between Ray and Hays, said lawyer Duncan Ragsdale, who represents Ray.

Ragsdale said contact has been made with an official of the planned civil rights center at the Lorraine Motel about the possibility of the car being acquired by the museum.

D'Army Bailey, a foundation leader, said yesterday that museum plans do not include an exhibit involving the Mustang or other physical items relating to the assassination. However, he said the issue is not a closed question.

Bailey, who said he had been contacted by Ragsdale and Hays, said he will bring up the topic at a foundation board meeting today. "If there is a reflection of interest on the part of the board, I will certainly pursue it as actively as I can," he said. "I do think it would be important for this community to maintain that vehicle here in the city."

Since 1968, the car has been kept in a small, white concrete shed at the Shelby County Correction Center.

In 1985, county Mayor Bill Morris suggested that the car be sold with the proceeds going to county government for the cost of storage.

In the agreement in the federal court order, the county, Morris and Atty. Gen. Hugh W. Stanton agreed to waive all claims regarding the vehicle, including storage costs. Ray and Hays also agreed to make no future claims against the county, state or city relating to the car.

Ray had filed a federal court suit to block sale of the car and had sought \$20,000 in damages.

Hays, who at one time worked for Ray or his attorneys as a private investigator, had intervened in the federal case as a result of a claim on the car stemming from outstanding investigation fees, Ragsdale said.

According to the order, Hays and Ray have agreed that claims and counter-claims between them be dismissed.

Ragsdale has written several automobile foundations, historical collections and similar groups to determine if there is interest in acquiring the vehicle. "It is really up to Mr. Ray and Mr. Hays about who finally gets the car. I will certainly recommend to my client if there is any way possible to give preferential treatment to the civil rights museum," Ragsdale said.

The federal court order specifies that the car is to be turned over to lawyer Asa H. Hoke, who represents Hays. Hoke is to hold the vehicle in trust.

Ray, who is serving a 99-year prison term for the King murder, drove the white Mustang away from a boarding house at 422½ South Main. Several days later it was found in Atlanta.

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Ray carries on legal fight to get King, lawyer files

KNOXVILLE (AP) — James Earl Ray continues a legal battle to get Justice Department files on his original lawyer and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the civil rights leader he was convicted of slaying.

Through his lawyer, Ray asked a federal judge to force the Justice Department to comply with two federal Freedom of Information Act requests.

Those requests seek information about Percy Foreman, Ray's former attorney, and about FBI surveillance of Dr. King.

Foreman, of Houston, Texas, represented Ray when he pleaded guilty to murdering Dr. King and said he believed Ray acted alone in the slaying.

"These documents have to do with the actions of Percy Fore-

man as counsel. They have to do with the basis of yet another petition for relief on the basis of inadequate representation and legal counsel," London lawyer William F. Pepper, Ray's lawyer, said Tuesday.

Ray is serving a 99-year prison sentence at Brushy Mountain State Prison in Petros, Tenn., for the 1968 slaying of Dr. King.

Ray pleaded guilty in 1969 to the killing, but then recanted his plea and has been trying since then to win a retrial. Dr. King was shot in Memphis while on a visit to support striking sanitation workers.

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THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL
MEMPHIS, TN

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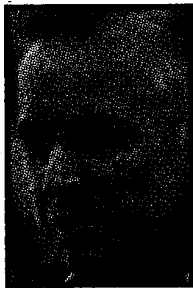
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Brit TV wants to put James Earl Ray on 'trial'

By Lawrence Buser
The Commercial Appeal

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s admitted assassin, James Earl Ray, has long sought to reopen his case with a trial, and now he may get one, though the outcome would have no bearing on his 99-year prison sentence.

A British television company is considering putting together a trial of sorts to be filmed in Memphis and shown next year on the 25th anniversary of King's death.



Thames Television of London has filed a petition in Criminal Court here seeking access to the boxes of evidence from the case. That evidence includes the high-powered rifle authorities say Ray used to kill King on April 4, 1968, at the Lorraine Motel. A hearing on the petition has been set for Friday before Judge John P. Colton Jr.

"We're basing this effort on the quickly changing feeling about releasing information, especially in light of the JFK film on the Kennedy assassination," said Memphis attorney Wayne Emmons, who filed the petition for Thames. "This information should be made available for the public good."

The petition asks the court to allow producers to examine and

Please see RAY, Page A9

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A19
The Commercial Appeal
Memphis, TN

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The Commercial Appeal 4/27/95
"Brit TV wants to put James
Earl Ray on 'trial'"

From Page A1

Ray

test the evidence, using experts in nationally recognized laboratories. The results then could be examined and argued by experts and lawyers in a documentary-type trial.

"It's not set in concrete yet, but I've always had a fascination with the story," said Jack Saltman, an executive producer of documentaries for Thames who is in Memphis laying groundwork for the project. "By not trying Ray, the truth may have been done justice, but it has not been seen to have been done. This will be as serious an analysis as television is capable of producing."

Saltman produced a film documentary on the King assassination for the British Broadcasting Corp. 15 years ago.

Several years ago, Thames did a courtroom production exploring the Nazi ties of Austrian leader Kurt Waldheim. Judges determined at the end of the program that there was not enough evidence to try Waldheim for war crimes.

"I feel that's a very interesting method of looking at a story," said Saltman. "Somewhere out of that background I'd like to do something here."

Thames is the largest of five branches of Britain's privately owned ITV and produces daily news, documentaries, soaps and sitcoms. It is perhaps best known here for *The Benny Hill Show*.

Saltman said he has interviewed Ray in prison for a pre-

vious show and that he supports the idea of a court review of his case, even if only a television production.

The court petition includes an affidavit of London attorney William F. Pepper, who has represented Ray on several appeals and who says he has twice discussed the Thames production with Ray. "I confirm on Mr. Ray's behalf that neither he nor I have any objection to this petition being granted," Pepper said in the affidavit.

Criminal Court Clerk Minerva Johnican said a detailed inventory is being made of the assassination evidence and that whether it is made available to Thames is up to the judge.

In any case, Johnican said the evidence, which includes everything from King's bloody shirt to Ray's phony passports, should be preserved in a museum-type setting, perhaps at the South Main flophouse from which the fatal bullet was fired.

Last year, Colton and a special Circuit Court judge dismissed separate petitions by private attorneys and an investigator to gain permanent possession of the rifle authorities say was used to kill King.

State prosecutors opposed releasing the rifle because it might be needed as evidence should Ray ever be granted a trial. Prosecutors have not taken a position on the Thames request.

"It is not the role of the media to supplant the judicial process," said Saltman, "but when the judicial process has come to the end of the road, then it is perfectly reasonable to try to use the media to look at the subject again."

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B2
The Commercial Appeal
Memphis, TN

Date: *5/2/92*

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Ray to pay wife

NASHVILLE — A judge has ordered convicted killer James Earl Ray to give his wife \$3,000 of the proceeds from a book he published last November, *Who Killed Martin Luther King Jr.*

Anna Christine Ray told probate court she would lose her house unless she receives money from Ray. Andrew Hall of Wartburg, Ray's attorney, said Friday that Ray expects to receive royalties "any day now."

—AP

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Mock Ray trial would use Ewing as prosecutor

By Lawrence Buser
The Commercial Appeal

Former U.S. Atty. W. Hickman Ewing Jr. would be the prosecutor if a British television company gets court approval to produce a mock trial for James Earl Ray, the confessed assassin of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Officials with Thames Television of London Friday asked Criminal Court Judge John P. Colton Jr. for an inventory of evidence and authority to have it tested and presented in a trial to be filmed here later this year. Colton made no ruling but set another hearing date for May 15.

Producers want to show the four-hour, unscripted production worldwide next year on the 25th anniversary of King's assassination. Although the trial would carry no legal weight, Thames officials said it would explore real evidence and would involve Ray and his attorney.

"My client obviously will plead not guilty," said William F. Pepper, a London attorney who has represented Ray for 14 years. "James is willing to take the witness stand. I am personally convinced he is not guilty, that he did not pull the trigger."

Pepper, who would represent Ray in the production, said a television trial exploring the evidence could be a step toward Ray eventually receiving a real trial or even, perhaps, executive clemency.

Ewing, the chief federal prosecutor here for nearly 10 years, is now a private attorney in Germantown. He said the public seems receptive to opening investigations such as that in the King case and that the Thames' trial format seems like "a good way to do it."

Ray pleaded guilty in 1969 to shooting King on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel April 4, 1968 and was sentenced to 99 years in prison. He now says he was advised by his attorneys to plead guilty to avoid the death penalty and has filed numerous appeals seeking to withdraw that plea and to go to trial.

Ray is inmate No. 65477 at the maximum security Tennessee State Prison in Nashville. His first parole eligibility hearing would not be until 1996.

Jack Saltman, executive producer of Thames, said the production would cost more than \$3 million. He hopes to film the trial over a 12-day period in a local courtroom before the end of the year.

"This is not trial by TV," said Saltman, who added his position is neutral in the case. "It is trial on TV. It leaves the entire process to the reputable attorneys and judge. It is not a trivialization. It is a very, very serious pro-

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The Commercial Appeal 5/2/68
"Mock Ray trial would
use Ewing as prosecutor"

From Page B1

Mock

lease of files gathered by the House Select Committee on Assassinations which are under seal until the year 2029.

duction."

Key to the program will be gaining access to 15 boxes of physical evidence stored in a vault in the Criminal Court Clerk's office. The evidence includes the 30.06 high-powered rifle the government says Ray used to fire the fatal shot into King's head; King's bloody clothing; a morgue photo; Ray's Canadian passports, maps, hotel receipts, beer cans, a bedspread and hundreds of other items.

Saltman said that, with court permission, the case could be turned over to Ewing and Pepper who could examine, test and present the evidence in a trial format before a judge and jury.

He said he has talked to several retired judges but that no agreement has been reached. Jurors might be chosen from Memphis or from several surrounding cities, he added.

All costs of the trial production would be paid by Thames, Saltman said. He would not say how much Ewing and Pepper will be paid.

Don Strother of the District Attorney General's Office did not take a position on the matter Friday but said he planned to confer with the state Atty. Gen. Charles Burson before the hearing in two weeks.

Critics of the government's investigation have called for re-

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The Commercial Appeal 5/2/92
"Mock Ray trial would use
Ewing as prosecutor"

By Karen Pulfer Focht



Jack Saltman of London's Thames Television wants Criminal Court Judge John P. Colton Jr. to grant access to evidence in the James Earl Ray case.

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Memphis, TN*Date: *6/5/92*

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Ray faces TV mock trial in King death

By Lawrence Buser
The Commercial Appeal

A British television network will begin filming a mock trial for James Earl Ray here in October and will use actual evidence from the Martin Luther King Jr. assassination, a producer said Thursday.

Jack Saltman of Thames Television in London and local prosecutors reached a compromise agreement Thursday giving the network supervised access to evidence.

He said the unscripted trial also will include a retired judge, real attorneys, witnesses and testimony from Ray himself by satellite hookup from prison in Nashville.

A spokesman in Atlanta for King's widow, Coretta Scott King, said that unless the production uncovers new evidence it will be no more than "theatrics and a media stunt."

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"Ray faces TV mock trial
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Mock

The four-hour, \$3 million-plus production is scheduled to be shown worldwide Jan. 15, King's birthday. King was shot April 4, 1968, as he stood on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel, which now is the National Civil Rights Museum. Next year marks the 25th anniversary of the assassination.

Ray, 64, pleaded guilty to the murder and was sentenced to 99 years in prison. Ray since has said he was coerced, that he was a pawn in a conspiracy and has sought to withdraw his plea and have a trial.

A 1978 investigation by the House Select Committee on Assassinations concluded that Ray fired the fatal shot but that there was "a likelihood of a conspiracy." King's widow does not dispute that conclusion unless new evidence is found, said spokesman Steve Klein.

"She believes Ray was involved but she's not convinced he acted alone," said Klein, a research associate at the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Non-violent Social Change in Atlanta. "I don't see any harm in (a mock trial) except it dredges painful memories for those involved. If there's nothing new, then what's the point?"

Local prosecutors had opposed

Thames's request to take the state's evidence from the case and have it examined elsewhere by experts. But Thursday prosecutors agreed to let the network view the evidence and use it in the mock trial, but without taking it elsewhere.

"I don't have any problem with that," said Dist. Atty. Gen. John Pierotti.

The evidence in the case is stored in 15 boxes in a vault in Criminal Court Clerk Minerva Johnican's office. Items include the 30.06 rifle said to be the murder weapon, King's clothing, Ray's assorted passports, hotel receipts and hundreds of other items.

Former U.S. attorney W. Hickman Ewing Jr. will be the prosecutor in the case and Ray will be defended by William F. Pepper, an attorney in London who has represented Ray for 14 years.

Saltman said the two-week production will begin in mid-October, probably in the Shelby County Courthouse where the state Supreme Court hears cases periodically.

He said three retired judges from outside Tennessee are considering offers to preside over the case. A jury of citizens, perhaps from other cities, will be picked for the trial, he added.

Ewing said Thursday he will approach the mock trial, which has no legal bearing on Ray's status, like any other case.

"You try to determine all the facts and then you put your case together," said Ewing, now in private practice in Germantown.

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Memphis, TN.

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State opposes use of Ray evidence in TV mock trial

By Lawrence Buser
The Commercial Appeal

State prosecutors Thursday filed a motion opposing a British network's request to use state evidence for a mock trial of James Earl Ray.

The motion by Dist. Atty. Gen. John Pierotti said the request by Thames Television is "without precedent or legal authority" and should be dismissed from Criminal Court.

Two weeks ago Thames asked Judge John P. Colton Jr. for per-

mission to view, test and use the evidence for a made-for-television trial of Ray, admitted assassin of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

No ruling was made and a second hearing is scheduled today.

Ray pleaded guilty in 1969 to killing King but since has filed appeals professing his innocence and seeking a trial.

Ray said in a court affidavit that he has no objection to the Thames production.

But prosecutors want to protect the evidence on the outside chance that Ray's effort to get a real trial is granted.

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