

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# Ray's Leaving Marks End To Extended Precautions

James Earl Ray got plenty of exercise during the 7 months and 17 days he spent in the Shelby County Jail—often walking the 35-foot length of his cell block and back on his hands.

Sheriff William N. Morris, who gave Raymen their first peek at Ray's maximum security quarters yesterday afternoon, said Ray also did 75-100 pushups at a time and stood on his head, in addition to countless walking trips up and down the long, narrow cell.

To anyone expecting a plush layout, the cellblock would have been a bit of a disappointment. It was a regular maximum security block, consisting of six individual cells, a long bullpen area and a narrow barred walkway along the outside wall. Only a few minor changes had been made.

A row of glass-covered safety bulbs—hardly the glaring floodlights mentioned in several petitions from one of Ray's lawyers—had been installed in the barred walkway. A TV set also was in the walkway, visible through the bars to Ray and the two guards who were in the cell with him at all times.

"He watched a lot of TV," said Capt. Fred Smith, the man in charge of the special guard detail on Ray. "His favorite was 'The FBI' on Sunday nights. He'd make some pretty good comments about the crimes."

Two closed circuit TV cameras were mounted in the cell, one through the end wall and the other in the middle of the long wall. One covered the bullpen area and the other focused on the center pair of the six individual cells. Ray used either of these cells. Each of the six cells has a metal bunk attached to the wall and a metal combination commode and wash basin. A test of the TV cameras showed only an indistinct image of anyone using one of the toilets. A shower stall at the end of the bullpen had a curtain which hid the occupant from view of the camera.

The furnishings were simple—a built-in table and bench along the long side, three chairs and a card table at which Ray sat to confer with lawyers Arthur Hanes and Percy Foreman. Sheriff Morris said the microphones on the TV cameras would not pick up conversations from the card table, but were turned off for good measure when one of the lawyers was in the cell.

A block wall-type telephone affixed to the bars in the center of the cell connected the guards to a small office outside the area. A supervisor was on duty there at all times, watching the two TV monitors. There also was a monitor in the sheriff's office.

The sheriff said the security precautions also included welding up windows and food slots in each of the six cells and putting steel plates over the windows. The addition of the plates made an air-conditioning system necessary.

The security was planned at a series of conferences between state, federal and local officials, the sheriff said, and he was reluctant to give any one person credit for the various ideas.

He said Lt. John Brown of the Federal Bureau of Prisons had been assigned to the jail on a regular basis since last July ("He also has given us a lot of advice and help on the rest of the jail.") and J. J. Clark, a federal prisons supervisor from Washington has been a frequent visitor.

Captain Smith and 12 men—half deputies and the rest city policemen—were assigned to the guard detail. In almost all cases, one policeman and one deputy were in the cell together with Ray. The guards, who worked eight-hour shifts, stripped and put on special coveralls before entering the cell.

Ray and his guards ate the same food as the rest of the prisoners, three trays being brought to the cell in a special locked steel box. "There was no way to know who would get which tray," the sheriff said.

The guards kept a minutely detailed record of Ray's activities—when he ate, what he ate, how he liked what he ate, when he slept and for how long, as well as what visitors he had.

The log also showed Ray's comments on things he read and watched on TV. He was allowed newspapers and magazines which told about his case.

"He expressed displeasure

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

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COMMERCIAL APPEAL

MEMPHIS, TENN.

Date: 3-12-69  
Edition:  
Author: GEORGE HANNA  
Editor:  
Title:

Character:  
or  
Classification: MEMPHIS  
Submitting Office:

Being Investigated

44-1987-Sub-C-33  
MAR 17 1969  
FBI - MEMPHIS

with a lot of stories," said Captain Smith, "especially those that deal with his family or his previous crimes."

The log showed Ray was a good eater (he gained about 15 pounds in jail despite his regular exercise) and averaged better than eight hours sleep a night.

Captain Smith said Ray talked a little bit about his escape from prison in Missouri. "He said this was one place he sure couldn't escape from."

"We had a written procedure for everything, for shaving, for taking a shower, just everything," Sheriff Morris said. "Ray seemed to adjust well to this. He seemed to like doing things the same way. Of course life in confinement wasn't new to him."

Captain Smith said Ray was sometimes moody, but rarely a discipline problem.

"When he was unruly, when he wouldn't do what he was told, we'd confine him to one of the individual cells but without the door being locked. Or we'd cut him off from the commissary wagon (which sells ice cream, sandwiches and other items) or take away his newspapers and magazines. He wasn't much of a problem, his chief complaint was that he missed the sunshine (the car trip to Nashville yesterday was the first time Ray had seen sunlight since last July)."

There was no writing on the cream-colored walls.

"He was a very neat prisoner," the sheriff said.

The sheriff said the total cost of the special cell was low. He said the TV cameras and monitors cost less than \$350, the metal plates on the windows \$40, the central air-conditioning about \$1,300 and the locked food server \$35.

With Ray gone, what will happen to the cellblock?

The sheriff said it may be used as a quarantine area or for special medical care of inmates on a limited basis. In any event, the plates will remain on the window, just in case.

With his famous prisoner safely in Nashville, Sheriff Morris was willing to talk about Ray's return from London. Ray was flown nonstop from London to the Millington Navy Base in a U.S. Air Force jet transport. He was whisked to the jail in the Jackson, Miss., Police Department's armored car, escorted by carloads of machine-gun-toting officers. This was in marked contrast to his departure early yesterday in a single police car, wearing a deputy's helmet and jacket to successfully fool cameramen.

The sheriff said he didn't remember just who thought up using Thompson's Tank (so named for Jackson Mayor Allen Thompson). It was driven to Memphis and serviced at J. Tom Moore and Co. on Airways, where it was built.

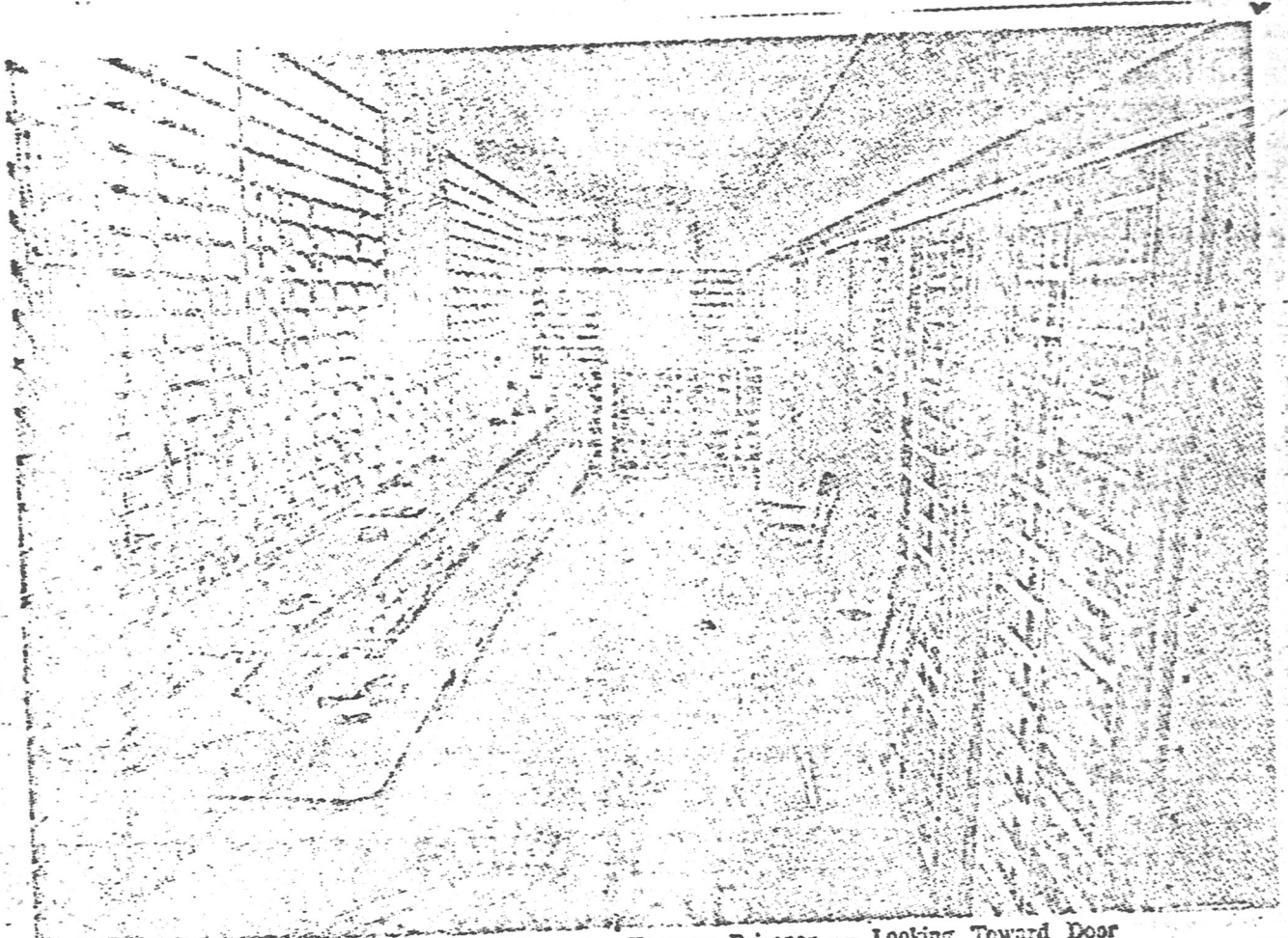
"It cost us \$16, and they drove it all over the south end of town, but nobody noticed I had fear of that jet landing and all the military standing by us and there was a dead battery in Thompson's Tank"

The sheriff said the arrival of the plane and the caravan was closely timed. "We had been in radio contact with the plane for hours and they had figured the prevailing winds and everything."

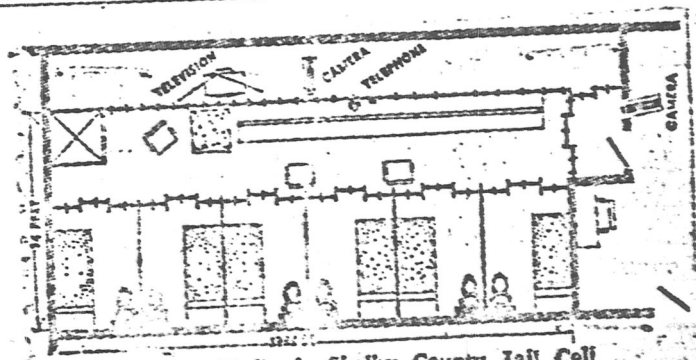
When the plane landed, Morris and other officers boarded and the charges were read to Ray. A card advising him of his rights was then read, and recorded in case there was ever any question that Ray had not been warned. Two doctors, one who had accompanied Ray on the plane and the other who had gone to Millington with the sheriff, compared notes. Ray was dressed in bullet resistant pants and vest and hustled to the armored car. Nine minutes had elapsed.

There were three alternate routes for the trip to the jail and no one but the sheriff knew which one would be used until the last minute. The most direct route, Navy Road to Highway 51 and right odaw Second Street to the jail, was the choice.

The spotlights atop Thompson's Tank which blinded spectators and masked Ray's entry into the jail were an afterthought. "We didn't even know it had them," the sheriff said. "About 45 minutes before we went to Millington somebody suggested we use them. It turned out to be the most effective thing we had."



James Earl Ray's Cell — Minus His Famous Prisoner — Looking Toward Door



Layout Of Ray's Shelby County Jail Cell