

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

New Legal Role Takes Shape In Ray Case

By ROBERT KE...

Savannah, Ga. (AP) — Long associated with anti-Negro and anti-Jewish causes was reported on his way to Nashville last night to talk to James Earl Ray while another attorney who once represented the man convicted of killing Dr. Martin Luther King expressed renewed interest in the case.

J. B. Stoner, linked in the past with the Ku Klux Klan and the National States Rights Party, said he will talk to Ray about the possibility of filing a libel suit against a magazine, but that he would represent Ray in a criminal proceeding if he were asked.

Former Birmingham Mayor Arthur Hanes, who represented Ray until he was replaced by Percy Foreman of Houston, Texas, Nov. 1, said he had "received a very nice letter from Mr. Ray."

"I don't have any firm plans to go to Nashville, however. I have never had any intentions of getting back into the case in an active way, although I thought, of course, I would like to talk to him."



J. B. Stoner
—UPI Telephoto

In Nashville, prison authorities said they knew of no appointment scheduled for Ray today, but if Mr. Stoner, or anyone else, can show he has been retained by Ray he should have no difficulty in seeing him, Warden Lake Russell said.

Mr. Stoner stopped in Chattanooga to visit an attorney friend, Robert Hill Jr., and one source later said Mr. Hill was

going with Mr. Stoner to Nashville.

"I don't think Mr. Ray is guilty," said Mr. Stoner. "That's one reason we plan to bring a libel suit. On the criminal matter, I'm not in a position to say anything about it now because I haven't reached the stage yet where I can."

Mr. Hanes, who was assisted by his son, Arthur Hanes Jr., when he represented Ray, said his client at one stage talked of possible civil actions.

"Some months ago — in Shelby County — Mr. Ray mentioned that he wanted to sue some national publications, but I told him I was not interested," said the elder Hanes.

Criminal Court Judge W. Preston Battle, who presided when Ray pleaded guilty March 10, sentenced him to 99 years in prison and Wednesday was notified that Ray was planning new legal moves, was out of the city and was not expected to return until late next week.

No writ or motion could be considered in the case until he returns, although one could be

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

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COMMERCIAL APPEAL

MEMPHIS, TENN.

Date: 3-22-69
Edition:
Author: GORDON HANNA
Editor:
Title:

Character:
or
Classification:
Submitting Office: MEMPHIS

Being Investigated

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SERIALIZED <i>lll</i>	FILED <i>lll</i>
MAR 26 1969	
FBI - MEMPHIS	

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3-25-69*

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filed at any time with the Criminal Court clerk.

Observers agree that Ray could file a writ of habeas corpus claiming his conviction was invalid, but they differ as to whether he can file a motion for a new trial. Such a motion would have to be filed within 30 days from the time of conviction.

There appeared little likelihood that Mr. Stoner and Mr. Hanes would be associated in legal representation of Ray.

Mr. Stoner first conferred with Ray in his Shelby County jail cell Sept. 28 and soon afterward Mr. Hanes told Judge Battle there was a possibility he would withdraw from the case because he "would not let that man Stoner be associated in any case I was involved in."

Although declining to tell what was in the "very friendly letter" he received from Ray, Mr. Hanes said it did not mention Mr. Stoner.

"I don't want to criticize anybody," said Mr. Hanes. "But I said I don't want to work with him (Mr. Stoner) and that still goes."