

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Ray Wants To Void Guilty Plea

James Earl Ray, confessed killer of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., wants to void his guilty plea and get a new trial in Memphis.

Ray's intention to seek a new hearing was stated in a letter he wrote from his cell in State Penitentiary to Judge W. Preston Battle, who on March 10 accepted the guilty plea and imposed a 99-year sentence.

Petition

"He said he's going to file a post-conviction petition and get a lawyer," Judge Battle said Wednesday in disclosing receipt of the letter. "If he does, then we'll have an evidentiary hearing."

Such a hearing would give Ray a chance to show that his legal rights were impaired to the extent that a new start in the case is warranted.

Expressing no surprise at Ray's move, Judge Battle commented: "Everybody does it." Petitions from prisoners have flooded the courts in recent years in the wake of Supreme Court decisions more sharply delineating the pretrial rights of accused persons.

Percy Foreman, the lawyer who advised Ray to plead guilty and who says his connection with the prisoner is now ended, said in New York:

"I think that James Earl Ray enjoys the spotlight and any way he can keep the center of the stage he will do it. I wish him well. I don't think it advisable

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

PAGE 1

NASHVILLE BANNER

NASHVILLE, TENN.

Date: 3-20-69
Edition:
Author:
Editor: ALVAND C. DULKLEBERGER
Title:

Character:
or
Classification: MEMPHIS
Submitting Office:
 Being Investigated

44-1987
SEARCHED.....INDEXED.....
SERIALIZED 116 FILED 116
FBI -- MEMPHIS

orig. sent to Bureau 3-27-69

44-1987-Sub-C-356

"but that's his responsibility, not mine."

Foreman Opinion

Foreman reiterated his personal conviction that contrary to the views of many who suspect a conspiracy, Ray acted alone.

"James Earl Ray decided, and he alone decided, to kill Martin Luther King so that he could claim the glory," Foreman declared.

"I think James Earl Ray was a racist. He thought he would be a hero. He completely misconceived the thinking of the white race."

Only a day after his guilty plea Ray told officers taking him from Memphis to the Nashville penitentiary:

"I was convinced if I didn't plead guilty I was going to the electric chair. I wish the hell I hadn't now because with what they had on me I believe the worst I'd gotten would have been life."

Under a 99-year sentence, Ray, now 41, is ineligible to seek parole until he has served 30 years. With a life sentence he would be eligible in 13 years 7 months.

Ellington

Meanwhile Gov. Buford Ellington of Tennessee, referring to the theory that Ray was part of a conspiracy, said he wonders now "one man alone could do all the things he did."

Ellington saw the bulk of the evidence against Ray before signing papers for his extradition from London after his arrest there last June.

Meanwhile, author Clay Blair Jr. stated dozens of questions were left unanswered by the swift proceedings in Memphis. Blair has listed 19 of these questions in the first chapter of his book, "The Strange Case of James Earl Ray—The Man Who Murdered Martin Luther King Jr., published today by Bantam Books.

Questions

Blair has raised additional questions since the book went to press and today has called for the appointment of a blue-ribbon Federal investigating committee, similar to the Warren Commission, to investigate the Ray case. Among the questions this commission should answer, he stated were:

- Why did James Earl Ray elect to escape from prison at Jefferson City, Mo., only four days before he was scheduled for a hearing before the Missouri Supreme Court which might have resulted in a motion to set him free?
- Who was the accomplice Warden Swenson says helped Ray escape in a bread box? What action has been taken against him?
- If Ray earned substantial

sums of money inside prison by selling drugs, as Memphis authorities assert, how did he smuggle the money out of prison and who kept it for him?

- Who was the "friend" who helped Ray in East St. Louis immediately after he escaped?
- Who were the "friends" he looked up in Quincy, Ill., following his escape?
- Did any of these "friends" give him a pistol?
- Did Ray rob or help rob the Alton, Ill., bank on July 13, 1967?
- Why did Ray, a fugitive with money stashed away, hang around boyhood haunts for weeks?
- Why did Ray, a fugitive with money stashed away, go to Chicago and take a job in a restaurant, the Indian Trail in Winnetka?
- Who was the mysterious visitor at the restaurant?
- In Canada, who provided Ray with the alias Eric S. Galt, a living person resembling Ray and with scars matching Ray's?
- Why did Ray, as Galt, splurge six hundred-odd dollars on clothes and a lark in the Laurentian Mountains, when for that money, he could have bought forged seaman's papers, or a passport, or both?
- Who is the mysterious girl Ray met in the Laurentians?
- Did Ray meet a blonde Latin named Raoul? Why would Raoul, a stranger, and presumably an underworld figure, entrust Ray with thousands of dollars?