

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# Private Eye Wins Ray Case 'Fee'

Renfro Hays, a private detective, won a \$6,625 judgment against James Earl Ray — but collecting it is going to be a problem.

Chancellor Charles Nearn ruled yesterday that Hays was entitled to a "reasonable" fee of \$4,850, plus \$1,775 expenses, for services rendered as a defense investigator on the Ray case.

Hays, hired by one of Ray's former attorneys, Arthur J. Hanes of Birmingham, contended he worked a total of 1,139 hours on the case between July 7 and Nov. 12, 1968.

He said he interviewed between 200 and 300 witnesses, drove almost 7,000 miles and turned up evidence that would have acquitted Ray — but all he has ever received was \$610 expense money from Hanes.

Hays asked \$6,834, computing his time as being worth \$6 an hour, and expenses of about \$5,000.

Ray, now serving a 99-year sentence on a guilty plea in the murder of Dr.

Martin Luther King, was represented by his Memphis attorney, Richard Ryan.

Ryan charged that Hays had refused to make the evidence available to Ray's new lawyers, who are now trying to reverse the conviction and get him a new trial.

Hays' lawyer, C. M. "Pat" Murphy, introduced a letter written by Ray to Hays last March 27, in which the prisoner said he felt that Hays "should be paid for whatever services" he had performed.

The chancellor asked Ryan for comment on the letter.

The attorney hesitated. Then he replied, "I think it was an error on his (Ray's) part."

Although Hays won the suit, his lawyer concedes he will have a hard time getting the money. Ray says he is penniless, that Hanes and Percy Foreman got all the money he received from William Bradford Huie for publication rights to his story.

Hays has asked the court to settle the debt by attaching and selling at public auction the rifle and Ray's 1965 white Mustang. But both the car and the gun are being held by the attorney general's office for possible future use should Ray get a new trial, and are likely to be tied up for some time.

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