

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

One Of Ray's Lawyers May Leave Case

A smouldering rift between the three lawyers representing James Earl Ray could result, possibly today, in at least one of the attorneys no longer being connected with the case, THE BANNER learned today.

J. B. Stoner, a lawyer of Savannah, Ga., reportedly was slated to visit late today with the convicted slayer to discuss the case and a possible change in the attorneys representing him.

Ray, serving a 99-year sentence in the 1968 sniper-death of Dr. Martin Luther King, has been represented during the past 10 months by Stoner, Richard J. Ryan of Memphis and Robert W. Hill Jr. of Chattanooga.

It was learned, however, that both Ryan and Stoner have discussed withdrawing from further participation in the case unless Hill is no longer connected with the defense.

Although Ryan declined to comment on the reported "split" in the defense team, a source close to the case stated that it was one of the major topics to be covered during the meeting between Stoner and Ray.

Stoner could not be reached for comment. Ryan, located at his Memphis law office, said he was aware that Stoner was slated to talk with Ray, but the attorney would not discuss any particulars surrounding the meeting.

Ray, before being represented by Stoner, Ryan and Hill, had been represented by Houston lawyer Percy Foreman, who was fired after Ray pleaded guilty in Shelby County Criminal Court to the death of the civil rights leader. He previously had been represented by Arthur J. Hanes Sr. and his son, both of Birmingham, but they also were discharged by the prisoner.

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