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Ray Writes 7-Page Account Of Differences With Lawyers

By JAMES CHISUM

James Earl Ray peeked yesterday from behind the curtain of silence he has maintained about the shooting of Martin Luther King Jr.

Ray pleaded guilty to the murder March 10, 1969, but has tried since for a new trial. Previous comments had come from his lawyers. But yesterday, in a seven-page, typewritten document, Ray spoke for himself

He repeated previously publicized charges that defense attorneys Arthur Hanes Sr. and Percy Foreman and writer William Bradford Huie used financial contracts to maneuver him into pleading guilty against his will.

Bernard Fensterwald Jr., the 11th attorney to represent Ray, filed the document yesterday in criminal court, along with an answer to Atty. Gen. Phil M. Canale's request that a motion for a new trial be dismissed.

The attorney has indicated he will appeal an adverse decision to higher state courts or to federal courts.

Ray said he had intended to take the stand at his trial, but didn't want to take a chance that the information he had would reach the prosecution through his attorneys.

"I favored taking the witness stand because I had testimony to give which I didn't want the prosecution to know of until as late as possible so there would be no time to alter the records, such as phone numbers, and at this stage of the proceedings I had reasons to believe Mr. Hanes was giving all information I was giving him to novelist Huie, who in turn was forwarding it to the prosecution via the FBI," he said.

Foreman, Ray said in his affidavit, had cited the following reasons for pleading guilty:

"He said the media had already convicted me and cited the pretrial articles written in Life Magazine and the Reader's Digest with the help of government investigative agencies as examples. . . .

"Foreman suggested, specifically, that it would be in my financial interest to plead guilty.

"That the prosecution had promised a witness considerable reward money for testifying against me, that this witness had already been given a raise in a welfare check he was receiving from the government, that the prosecution was also paying his food and wine bills. . . .

"That the Chamber of Commerce was pressuring the trial judge and the attorney general's office to get a guilty plea as a long trial would have an adverse effect on business — boycotts and such. Further, that the chamber wasn't unhappy about Dr. King being removed from the scene — hence the acceptance of a guilty plea.

"That the trial judge (Judge W. Preston Battle) was concerned about the effects a trial would have on the city's image and that the judge had even dispatched his amicus curiae committee chairman, Mr. Lucius Burch, to persuade some SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference) members to accept a guilty plea.

Even after this, Ray wrote, he wanted a trial. But, he said, Foreman continued to argue.

"Mr. Foreman's reply was that if I pleaded guilty he could get me a pardon, after two or three years, through the office of Nashville attorney John J. Hooker Sr., as a relative of Mr. Hooker would then be governor," he said. Mr. Foreman has since denied making such a statement.

It was also my belief that I would only receive one trial — that appellate courts wouldn't be looking too close for technical error in case of conviction — therefore I didn't want the one trial faked.

"Considering I had no other choice at the time, I tentatively agreed to enter a guilty plea to a technical charge of homicide."

In his affidavit, Ray hinted at mysteries still known only to himself in the case.

He said his first disagreement with Mr. Hanes began with a request for money from Huie. He said he wanted to hire a Tennessee lawyer to stand by and also to hire investigators "to go to Louisiana to check on some phone numbers."

"I didn't want anyone connected with William Bradford Huie doing this since I knew then that Mr. Huie was a conveyor, an admitted conveyor, of information to the FBI — hence the prosecuting attorney," he wrote.

After Foreman became his lawyer, he said, the attorney came to his cell with pictures.

"He said they were pictures of people the FBI wanted to get out of circulation. He showed me one picture containing white males — supposedly taken in Dallas, Texas, in November, 1963. He said they were either anti-Communist Cubans or associated with anti-Communists.

"Foreman asked me if I would identify one of the men as the man who shot Martin Luther King if the FBI arrested him and transported him to Memphis.

"I told Mr. Foreman, no, that I didn't want to get involved in that type of thing for various reasons."

Ray is confined to Brushy Mountain Penitentiary in East Tennessee. The hearing before Criminal Court Judge William H. Williams tomorrow is to decide whether Ray will be brought to Memphis to testify during a hearing on whether a new trial will be held. Judge Williams previously denied a defense request that Ray be brought here for tomorrow's hearing.

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

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COMMERCIAL APPEAL
MEMPHIS, TENN.

Date: 9/1/70
Edition:
Author:
Editor: GORDON HANNA
Title:

Character:
or
Classification:
Submitting Office: MEMPHIS

Being Investigated

SEARCHED
SERIALIZED
INDEXED
FILED
1970
FBI - MEMPHIS

44-1987-Sub-C-478