

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Hays' Suit Asks For \$500,000

Renfro T. Hays, private investigator active in the James Earl Ray case, has asked federal court for an award of \$500,000 damages against Phil Canale, Shelby County attorney general and James A. Blackwell, criminal court clerk.

Hays contends that he is the rightful owner of the 30.06 rifle and telescopic sight allegedly used in the Martin Luther King slaying April 4, 1968, and the white 1966 Mustang in which Ray, convicted slayer of the civil rights leader, is said to have escaped.

Hays accused Canale and Blackwell of "wrongfully and unlawfully" refusing his demand for delivery of these articles and said they were guilty of depriving him of their possession "without due process of law and without just compensation."

Demanding \$250,000 compensatory damages, Hays claimed he was entitled to a like sum in punitive damages charging that "the defendants, especially Canale, have acted willfully and maliciously" in refusing to turn over the property to him.

Hays demanded a jury trial of the lawsuit.

On May 8, Circuit Judge John W. Wilson dismissed a suit brought by Hays seeking possession of the auto and rifle. The judge ruled that Canale and Blackwell have the right to hold the property as potential evidence in case Ray wins a new trial.

Earlier this year, Hays won a \$6,000 chancery court judgment against Ray for investigative work for which he claims he has never been paid. He said he wants the auto and rifle to satisfy that claim.

Ray is serving a 99-year sentence at the state's Brushy Mountain maximum security prison at Petros, Tenn.

170-831
44-1900

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

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PRESS SCIMITAR

MEMPHIS, TENN.

Date: 12/18/70

Edition:

Author:

Editor: CHARLES H. SCHNEIDER

Title: SCHNEIDER

Character:

or

Classification:

Submitting Office: MEMPHIS

Being Investigated

SEARCHED.....	INDEXED.....
SERIALIZED.....	FILED.....
DEC 21 1970	
FBI - MEMPHIS	

44-1987-Sub-C-41