

RAY ON THE RUN HAD A TERRIBLE TIME

The

'I Always Thought He Slept in

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Bed With His Clothes On'

LONDON, June 13 (UPD) — James Earl Ray had a terrible tour of Europe.

The accused assassin of Martin Luther King Jr. couldn't find his way to the bathroom in a London hotel.

British currency confused him.

He was so nervous that he had his breakfast tray set down outside his hotel door.

A London hotel clerk judged him simple. A Lisbon waiter called him cheap. One hotel owner where he slept declared his going was "good riddance" and announced plans to change the name of her hotel.

Ray had a month to visit such sights as the Tower of London, the sunny beaches of Portugal and the British Museum. But he was on the run, it rained and he stayed mostly in his rooms or sought out just those bars that feed on luckless travellers.

STOPOVER

Ray arrived in Britain May 8. He hurried off to Lisbon to pick up some money transferred from a Swiss bank account, according to Scotland Yard sources.

In Lisbon, Ray entered a third class waterfront hotel at 8 p.m. and asked for a room. He apparently had yet to pick up his money. The clerk thumbed him to Room 2 on the second floor.

It overlooks a narrow street and has a bed, a wardrobe, a chest of drawers and two chairs. It costs \$2.10 a day. Ray set down his suitcase and a briefcase. There he stayed nine days.

Luis, the receptionist, remembers him as quiet, lonely and shy. Chambermaid

Maria Celestre, 31, said he did not tip. Both recall he went out very late at night and sometimes at 6 a.m. He washed his own socks.

Ray asked Joao, the night porter, for permission to take a young woman up upstairs. Joao said no. The girls in the nearby bars remember him. One named Maria can't seem to recall if he spent one or two nights with Ray. She will describe it all for a tip.

Gloria at the Galo bar winks when asked. Paula, around the corner at the Bohemia bar, smiles. The man at the Canadian embassy remembers. Tely fixed up a passport for Ray when he showed a Canadian birth certificate. He then returned to London.

Jane Nassau, 21, a hotel clerk, first saw Ray when he showed up May 28 in a taxi-cab at London's New Earl's Court hotel, a building of white stone adorned with blue awnings.

SHAPELY

Jane is a North of England girl, with dark hair and shapely legs in a blue miniskirt.

"He was extremely shy, pathetically shy. I didn't know why he was so secretive. I just thought he was nervous," she said.

"He signed in as a Canadian. But I thought it was strange. He had this deep Southern drawl. I learned about Southern drawls from television and I can tell a Southerner from a Canadian.

"I asked him lots of questions, like if he

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was seeing a lot of London. But he would just say, 'oh, yes,' and fiddle with his keys. He was extremely nervous, always doing things with his hands.

"I tried to talk to him but then I stopped myself. I was afraid he might think I was trying to chat him up (flirt)."

Ray emerged one night from his room in search of the bathroom. In a dark hall he bowled over a porter who had climbed a ladder to change a light bulb. "He apologized," Jane said.

A BIT THICK

Patiently Jane tried to explain the intricate British currency. "But he was a bit thick and it didn't sink in. He was very slow," she said.

Later another hotel clerk found a paperback spy novel, "Assignment Tangier," that Ray had dropped. In the back was a mass of figures indicating Ray's attempts to compare the value of dollars to pounds.

A second man had appeared with Ray when he checked in. Jane never saw him again. Ray left June 5, carrying the airline flight bag he always clutched, possibly containing the Liberty Chief pistol he was arrested with Saturday.

Jane called out goodby and that Sen. Robert F. Kennedy had been shot. "He just shrugged and walked away," she said.

Contrary to what he had told Jane, Ray headed for a new hotel. It was raining and the first hotel he tried was full. The clerk recommended the Hotel Pax, owned by Mrs. Thomas.

He paid \$10.80 in advance for three nights' stay. Mrs. Thomas saved the five pound note he paid with. She also saved the syringe she found in his room. She didn't like Ray.

CALLS AND CARD

He received four phone calls — Scotland Yard is trying to find out who from — and a postcard. The card came for Ian Colvin, a newspaperman Ray had phoned in search of help in joining an African mercenary unit.

Mrs. Thomas said one caller was a woman with an American "twang". Ray was out and the twang was heard no more. Mrs. Thomas thought something was funny.

"I always thought he slept in bed with his clothes on. When I brought his breakfast tray, he told me to leave it outside, like he was still in bed. Then, a minute later, before I had gone a step, he was at the door fully dressed, picking it up . . . he was so neurotic," she said.

Ray kept out the maid. He made his own bed. She ordered him into another room and had a look. "Yanks are all the same. I thought he had a lady in there. But he didn't have any lady in my hotel."

He left the hotel early. "I thought, 'good riddance to you,'" Mrs. Thomas said. She said she now will change the hotel name from Pax, meaning peace.

Ray left her hotel just in time to keep a date he didn't know he had—with the police at London Airport.