

U.S. asks Ray extradition while cops probe activities

LONDON (UPI) — The United States Wednesday formally requested extradition of James Earl Ray to the United States as the accused assassin of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Extradition papers were flown here from Washington and chief U.S. Consular Officer Jack A. Herfurt presented them to the British Foreign Office at a meeting.

At the same time, police intensified their search for any associates of Ray. Informed sources said the police were looking for a man, or men, reported to have been seen with Ray shortly before he checked into two London hotels.

The extradition papers listed the State of Tennessee's case against Ray for the shooting of the civil rights leader in Memphis. They also listed the State of Missouri's claim to Ray as an escaped convict.

MEANWHILE RAY'S mysterious activities in Europe were clouded in a fog of conflicting reports.

Officials confirmed Tuesday only that Ray had been transferred from ancient Brixton Prison to the maximum security wing at Wandsworth Prison. Two policemen were posted inside Ray's prison cell at all times.

Scotland Yard detectives fanned out across London,

interviewing hotelkeepers where Ray stayed under the alias of Ramon Sneyd and confiscating registration records in an effort to determine if he had any contacts in this city.

Hotels reported he seldom ventured from his rooms and received no phone calls, mail or visitors before his arrest at the London Airport last Saturday on a tip from the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation that he was the alleged King assassin.

BECAUSE OFFICIALS offered no explanations for fear pre-trial leaks would prejudice a case against Ray, the London press was in an uproar over the mystery.

The two versions of Ray's movements circulated here were:

Ray arrived in London from Canada around May 5, flew to Lisbon, May 7 and returned June 8 to London to make a connecting flight to Brussels. He was arrested after he walked into the airport transit lounge and questioned for three hours.

This version was furnished by police sources within minutes of the announcement of Ray's arrest and continued to be supplied by the FBI in Washington after local evidence to the contrary appeared here.

RAY RETURNED from Lisbon to London May 17 and stayed in at least two small hotels until he was arrested at the airport en route to Brussels. But passengers leaving England would not go through the transit lounge, although officials insisted that was where he was apprehended.

Reports circulated Ray had gone to Lisbon and planned to travel to Brussels to pick up money transferred to him from a Swiss bank. Lisbon banks were said to have been asked by Scotland Yard to check all new accounts and transfers.

Unanswered was who had

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opened any accounts, when and why.

The London Daily Telegraph insisted Ray telephoned its offices to ask the address in Brussels of a now-outlawed recruiting office for white mercenaries fighting in Africa.

MERCENARY CENTERS

also are said to exist in Lisbon, causing belief that a wish to hide out in a mercenary squad and not money drew Ray to Portugal and Belgium.

The owner of an obscure hotel in the run-down Pimlico district Monday confirmed the second version of Ray's movements.

Mrs. Anna Thomas, owner of the Pa Hotel, said Ray "refused to sign the register but told me his name was Sneyd" when he checked in last Wednesday for three days.

"He kept the door of his room locked at all times and when I brought his breakfast up he told me to leave it outside," Mrs. Thomas told reporters.

"SNEYD HAD very little luggage, only an airline flight bag and I thought perhaps he had come off a long flight. He looked so tired and spoke with an American or Canadian accent."

The tenant left suddenly Saturday morning, paying 4 pounds 10 shillings (\$10.80) for his room, Mrs. Thomas said.

Informed legal sources said that the American request for Ray's extradition to the United States would have to establish his identity as Ray beyond the shadow of a doubt "in the eyes of British law."

The United States also must lay out a good legal case for murder charges in Tennessee, the legal sources said.

THE METROPOLITAN

Chief Magistrate, Frank Milton, examined the U.S. documents at the hearing. If he is convinced of Sneyd's identity as Ray and satisfied the murder charges are based solidly, he will recommend extradition to the British home secretary.

If Ray fights extradition and tries all appeals under British law, it could take from one to three months to return him to America.

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