

Brother Doubts Ray Is Still Alive

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BY ARI PETAQUE
CHICAGO (CDN)—The person closest to James Earl Ray—his brother, Jerry has appealed to him to surrender.

But at the same time, the brother voiced doubts that the country's most-wanted fugitive is still alive. And Jerry Ray said other members of the family fear that the accused assassin of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. may be dead.

The brother was located by a reporter in the tiny room he occupies at a suburban Chicago country club. He works there as a maintenance man.

Jerry Ray, wearing jockey shorts, slipped from a can of beer while sitting on his cot as he described his brother as "the hottest man in the country... the most wanted man there ever was."

Last Visit Together

"If he is still alive," Jerry Ray continued, "I urge him to surrender himself to the FBI or to contact someone in the family and ask them to make surrender arrangements."

Jerry Ray described himself as "the closest person to my brother," but said he hadn't seen

his brother," but said he hadn't seen his brother since visiting him in prison last year. That visit was shortly before James Earl Ray escaped from the prison at Jefferson City, Mo., the brother added.

Jerry Ray, who also has a long criminal record, said he and James had visited each other several times in jails, and "I only saw him a few times on the outside" in recent years.

Because of his own prison record, Jerry Ray asked the reporter to withhold the name of the club where he lives and works. Ray said he is now going straight and fears he would be fired if the club received undesirable publicity.

In discussing the killing of Dr. King, Jerry Ray said he found it difficult to believe his brother pulled the trigger because he "never was a man of violence."

Wasn't His Style

"Check his record of all the trouble he's ever been in, and you'll find he never fired a gun or pistol-whipped anyone or slapped anyone around," said the brother. "That wasn't his style."

But Jerry Ray conceded his brother could have been "used," as he put it, by persons conspiring to kill King.

The brother obviously had received a large payoff at some point, Jerry Ray said.

"Look at all the money he came into all of a sudden," he continued. "Buying Mustangs, taking trips to Mexico. Look at the mileage he put on his car. You don't get that kind of money from sticking up grocery stores, and my brother wasn't the kind to stick up currency exchanges."

James Earl Ray never displayed animosity toward Negroes, according to the brother.

"My brother wasn't about to shoot a man because he was colored," he said.

'Always a Talker'

But Jerry Ray said he and other members of the family had heard of the brother's interest in the political ambitions of segregationist George Wallace, the former Alabama Governor.

There was a time, Jerry Ray said, that his brother thought about entering rural politics. "He got the idea in the serv-

ice. He always was a good talker."

But James Ray turned to crime rather than politics after his discharge from the Army in 1948.

Asked what caused his brother to go wrong, Jerry Ray said, "It's the old routine—a broken family, poor and in need."

Was the brother a marksman?

Jerry Ray repeated that the brother never fired a pistol in holdups, but he did remember that the brother was familiar with guns, as were most farm boys, during his youth.

The theme of death often repeated itself in Jerry Ray's conversation.

He said that if the brother "makes contact with the people who used him, he will be dead."

He also said he feared some "trigger-happy ex-con" might kill his brother "because there's such a big bounty on his head."

Tells of FBI Visit

And at another point, "If he's still alive, the FBI's going to get him, you can be sure of that."

Jerry Ray said he had reason to respect the investigative



JERRY RAY
Urges brother to give up.
Associated Press Radio photo

work of FBI agents. Within three minutes after the picture of James Earl Ray was flashed on TV screens as the killer of King, "the FBI was knocking on my door to question me," the brother said.

There are many aspects of the published reports concerning his brother that confuse him, Jerry Ray said.

"For example, every picture I see of him makes him look different," he said. "And there are reports that seem to show him being in two or three places at one time."

Again, Jerry Ray speculated that there had been "a giant conspiracy" in which his brother somehow had been "used."