THE COURT: All right, is there anything anyone would want to say at this time?

MR. FOREMAN: No, Your Honor.

THE COURT: All right, gentlemen. All of you who can do as you said you would do and accept this compromise settlement on a guilty plea and punishment of 99 years in the State penitentiary, hold up your right hand.

(Thereupon, the jury complied with the request of the Court.)

THE COURT: I believe that is everyone. All right, you can have someone sign the verdict, Mr. Blackwell.

(Thereupon, the verdict was signed.)

THE COURT: James Earl Ray, stand.

(Thereupon, the Defendant complied with the request of the Court.)

THE COURT: On your plea of guilty to murder in the first degree, as charged in the indictment, it is the judgment of the Court that you be confined for 99 years in the State penitentiary.

You may be seated.

(Thereupon, the Defendant complied with the request of the Court.)

THE COURT: Now, we have been here for some time and I don't propose to keep us here much longer, but I think that the Court should make a few remarks at this place in the proceedings.

The fact was recognized soon after this tragic murder took place that there was no possible conclusion to the case which would satisfy everybody. And it was decided at that time that the only thing that the Judge who drew the unlucky number, which was me, could do was to try this case as nearly as possible like all other cases and to scrupulously follow the law and the dictates of his own conscience. I feel that I have done this.

Memphis has been blamed for the death of Dr. King, to me, wrongfully and irrationally. Neither the decedent nor his killer lived here and their orbits merely intersected here.

The State has made out a case of first degree murder by lying in wait. And the question might arise in many minds, "Why

accept any plea at all? Why not try him, try to give him the electric chair?"

Well, I have been a Judge since 1959, and I myself have sentenced at least seven men to the electric chair, maybe a few more. My fellow Judges in this County have sentenced several others to execution.

There has been no execution of any prisoners from Shelby County in this State since I took the Bench in 1959.

All the trends in this country are in the direction of doing away with capital punishment altogether.

Then how about the conspiracy angle of this case and the punishment of any co-conspirator?

It has been established by the prosecution that at this time they are not in possession of any evidence to indict anyone as a co-conspirator in this case. Of course, this is not conclusive evidence that there was no conspiracy. It merely means as of this time there is not sufficient evidence available to make out a

case of probable cause against anybody.

However, if this Defendant was a member of a conspiracy to kill the decedent, no member of such conspiracy can ever live in peace or security or lie down to pleasant dreams, because in this State there is no statute of limitations in capital cases such as this. And while it is not always the case, my 35 years in these criminal courts have convinced me that in the great majority of cases, Hamlet was right when he said, "Murder, though it hath no tongue, will speak with most miraculous organ."

I believe the settlement of this case is a just one to both the Defendant and the State. I have accepted and approved the settlement. The Defendant is represented by able and eminent counsel. All his rights and all the safeguards surrounding him have been zealously and conscientiously observed and adhered to.

I cannot let this occasion pass without paying tribute to Tennessee, Southern,

American and Western free world justice and security which was truly a team effort involving scores and even hundreds of persons.

You have heard from stipulation here the police departments of Canada, of Mexico, of Portugal, of England, of the F.B.I., the local police, the State of Tennessee, the Sheriff's office here has had the onus of this prisoner's security. I highly praise them all. I think that it took the team effort to bring this case to a just conclusion.

I must also mention Mr. Charles Holmes, the Sheriff's liaison with the news media, and finally, my amici curaie committee, whose efforts have been of inestimable value to me.

I wish all these people to know officially and personally that I appreciate their efforts in bringing this case to a just conclusion, and if I have overlooked anyone I want to especially thank them too.

Defendant in open court has voluntarily

admitted his guilt to first degree murder, this in the presence of the Court and this company, and he has pled guilty before this jury and accepted his punishment.

This Court, nor no one else, knows what the future will bring, but I submit that up to now we have not done too badly here for a "decadent river town".

If I may be permitted to add a light touch to a solemn occasion, I would like to paraphrase the great and eloquent Winston Churchill, who, in defiant reply to an Axis threat that they were going to wring England's neck like a chicken, said, "Some chicken, some neck."

I would like to reply to our Memphis critic, "Some river, some town."

Is there anything else?

GEN. CANALE: Yes, sir. Your Honor, we have this dangerous weapons indictment, and I would like for the Court to -- I recommend a nol pros on that without cause.

As Your Honor knows, he was indicted for this before he was apprehended in

London. Carrying a dangerous weapon is not an extraditable offense under our treaty with England, and the treaty also says that whatever he wasn't brought back on, he cannot be held to try it on, and as far as carrying a dangerous weapon, I recommend a nol pros without cause on it, Your Honor.

THE COURT: I have already ruled that we couldn't travel ---

GEN. CANALE: Your Honor has already said we couldn't travel on that, didn't you?

Just one more thing for the record, Your Honor.

It was stipulated and agreed between the defense and myself that these mock-ups we have in the courtroom, the two mock-ups of the scene, were accurate replicas of the scene down there. We have referred to them quite a bit, but I just thought I better put it in the record, that it was stipulated and agreed that they were accurate mock-ups to scale.

THE COURT: All right, sir. Now, I believe that I have been told that lunch has been prepared for the jury.

DEPUTY: Yes, Your Honor.

THE COURT: All right, gentlemen, you have spent a long morning, so you will get a lunch out of it anyway.

All right, is there anything else before we recess?

All right, you can adjourn the Court.

(ADJOURNMENT)