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John Larry Ray, left, and Sheriff's Deputy Capt. John Harberts

H-W photo by Joe Liesen

Ray asks hearing before U.N. court

By JIM CULLUMBER

John Larry Ray, accused of robbing the Farmers Bank of Liberty, was formally charged with armed robbery late Wednesday morning in Adams County circuit court — and demanded future hearings be brought before the United Nations International Court of Justice.

Instead the case was continued to Tuesday to allow Ray an opportunity to decide about his legal representation.

Ray, 47, who was charged with the May 30 robbery of the Liberty bank, complained to Associate Judge Harold Madsen about "FBI propaganda" which points to the possible association of Ray with the attempted assassination of National Urban League President Vernon Jordon in Indiana last month.

The FBI claims Ray is not a suspect, but wants to question him about his whereabouts at the time Jordon was shot.

Because of the publicity surrounding the FBI's desire to question him, Ray told Madsen a fair trial would be impossible in the U.S.

Madsen said he did not have authority to respond to Ray's demand.

Madsen also denied Ray's request for access to a legal library and a typewriter to correspond with attorneys outside Adams County.

"Even in the backwoods of Arkansas they give you access to a legal library," Ray told the judge.

Ray then asked how would he be able to represent himself without access to a legal library.

At that point Madsen set a new court appearance date and asked Ray to decide how he wants to be represented.

Ray is being held in the Adams County jail in lieu of $200,000 bond. About $11,000 of the $15,000 stolen from the Liberty bank has been recovered.

A St. Louis newspaper Wednesday reported Ray said memory lapses prevent him from knowing whether he robbed the Liberty bank or shot Jordon.

When he was arrested by a Madison County deputy sheriff while walking along a highway Monday afternoon, Ray reportedly told authorities he was headed toward the Alton State Mental Hospital for treatment of blackouts he said he had been experiencing since being given medication while a prisoner at the federal penitentiary in Marion.

Ray, convicted of driving the getaway car in a 1970 bank robbery in St. Peters, Mo., had escaped months ago from the U.S. Medical Center for Prisoners in Springfield, Mo., as he was being taken to a halfway house in St. Louis.

FBI agents report they want to question Ray because of the similarities in the wounding of Jordon and the assassination of civil rights leader, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by Ray's brother, James Earl Ray.

"This (the capture of John Ray) isn't a major turn in the investigation," said Wayne Davis, FBI agent in charge of the Jordon investigation.

"The only thing we're interested in is his whereabouts. There's no indication that he is a suspect. What we want to know is where he's been and about his travels while he was away from his place of incareration."

FBI officials say both King and Jordon apparently were stalked by their assailants and the King assassination apparently was financed by bank robberies.

John Ray told reporters Monday he is uncertain of his whereabouts at the time of the attack on Jordon.

"I don't think I did (shoot Jordon)," Ray said. "I have not shot anybody as far as I know."

James Ray, who pleaded guilty to the King assassination, is serving a 99-year sentence in a Tennessee prison.

Ray was returned to Quincy from Edwardsville by chartered airplane Tuesday afternoon by Sheriff Robert Nall.