St. Louis Post-Dispatch

June 25, 1980

Wants Trial By U.N., John Ray Tells Judge

By Charles Bosworth Jr.
Of the Post-Dispatch Staff

QUINCY, Ill. — John Larry Ray told a judge in Quincy this morning that he cannot get a fair trial in the United States and wants his bank robbery case heard before the United Nations.

A second appearance for Ray in Adams County Circuit Court was set for Tuesday. Associate Judge Harold L. Madsen allowed Ray to act as his own attorney until then, but Madsen denied Ray's request for access to a law library and typewriter.

Quincy police say that when Ray was arrested Monday in Alton, he told them he had planned to sign himself into the state mental hospital there because he was "mentally unbalanced."

In a rambling statement today to the judge, Ray said that "FBI propaganda" concerning plans to question him in connection with the shooting of National Urban League Director Vernon Jordan in Fort Wayne, Ind., last month, has prevented Ray from getting a fair trial. Ray is charged with armed robbery in the May 30 holdup of the Farmers Bank of Liberty, Ill., 11 miles east of Quincy. Madsen continued the $200,000 bond on Ray.

Ray said he would like his trial held before the United Nations, saying at

See RAY, Page 7

Ray

■ FROM PAGE ONE

different times that it should be before "the international court of justice" or "the United Nations court of civil rights."

State's Attorney Robert Bier of Adams County suggested the second appearance next week "to see if Ray calms down by then."

Sheriff Robert Nall said Tuesday that he was told Ray would be defended by Mark Lane of Memphis, the lawyer who also defended Ray's brother, James Earl Ray, convicted killer of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King.

Nall said Anna Ray of Knoxville, Tenn., James Earl's wife, mentioned Lane's role in a telephone call. Nall said Mrs. Ray alleged that John Ray had been framed in the bank robbery.

Lane could not be reached today, but a spokeswoman in his office said she knew nothing of such plans.

Nall, who said that providing for Ray's security would burden the Sheriff's Department staff, said he would use county patrol deputies as extra guards in the jail.

After Ray's capture, the bank that was robbed put up a sign in its lobby. The sign reads: "Crime does not pay. Just ask the brothers, James and John Ray."

The bank was robbed of $15,000 by a man wearing a nylon stocking mask and carrying a pistol.

Nall said Ray told police that he has suffered recently from memory lapses, sometimes blacking out for two or three weeks. Nall said Ray told him that he had planned to check himself into the Alton State Mental Hospital. Nall quoted him as saying, "I'm mentally unbalanced."

Nall said: "I'm totally amazed at the guy. He's very cunning. You know, dumb like a fox. He's very jovial and very accommodating. He's never resistive of anything. He's not like the normal type of criminal we deal with every day."

Nall noted that the Ray family lived near Quincy in Newtown when James and John were children.

John Ray was arrested Monday in Alton by Sgt. Conrad "Pete" Baetz of the Madison County Sheriff's Department. Baetz was off duty Monday and returning from a shopping trip with his wife when he noticed a man who looked like Ray walking along Illinois Route 140 near the mental hospital.

Baetz had met Ray when Baetz was a staff investigator for the U.S. House Select Committee on Assassinations.

Baetz called for a uniformed deputy and then assisted him in the arrest. Ray was taken before Circuit Judge Victor Mosele in Edwardsville Tuesday and ordered returned to Quincy on the armed robbery charge.

When Mosele asked Ray whether he could post the $200,000 bond, Ray replied that it wouldn't matter because the federal government also had a hold order on him. The order was issued after Ray failed to report to a halfway house in St. Louis in February after being released from the federal prison at Marion, Ill. He served time in the prison for bank robbery.

Ray was flown to Quincy from Civic Memorial Airport at Bethalto Tuesday afternoon.

Wayne Davis, special agent in charge of the FBI in Indiana, said Ray will be questioned on his whereabouts when Jordan was shot. Davis would not say when Ray would be questioned, but other sources said it could be today.

Earlier Tuesday, FBI Director William H. Webster said the similarities between King's assassination and the attempt on Jordan's life had prompted the FBI's interest in questioning Ray, even though he is not considered a suspect and there is no evidence linking him to the shooting. Both civil rights leaders were shot with 30.06 rifles at motels.

Nall said he believes a .38-caliber revolver found in a shopping bag Ray was carrying when he was arrested was the one used in the bank robbery. Nall said he believes tests will match it to a slug removed from a tree in a pasture where the stolen car used in the robbery was found. Nall said he thinks the slug entered the tree when the robber test-fired his revolver.

Nall also said a sport cap matching the description of the one worn by the robber was found in Ray's bag, along with pieces of nylon stocking similar to the mask worn by the robber. Nall said none of the money was recovered.