

Lane Called Rebel Looking For Cause

By MICHAEL LOLLAR

The two telephone lines in the drafty 40-year-old house sometimes ring in unison. James Earl Ray wants to know if his new-trial petition has been filed. An Australian newspaper wants to schedule an interview. A local radio station wants to discuss the multimillion-dollar finances of the People's Temple. And the Jaycees want Mark Lane to speak.

"Who is calling?" Lane asks before identifying himself. He agrees to interviews and assures Ray the petition will be filed soon.

Returning to the den, where he will be interrupted by telephones no less than once every five minutes, he asks April Ferguson, the live-in law partner whom he calls "darling," to be sure to make his hair appointment at Don Pedro before he leaves town on Thursday. The refrigerator is on the blink, and something needs to be done about that, too.

Lane, who has traveled widely and often nests in the vicinity of his current cause, moved to Memphis in September. He spent almost two years in Wounded Knee, S.D., in 1973-74, investigating the town's Indian takeover and helping defend two Indians, charged with felonies in an eight-month trial.

Dismissing the charges against the Indians, U.S. Dist. Judge Fred J. Nichol told Lane: "You're the best investigator in the United States." Lane, hoping to live up to the praise, says of Memphis, "I just came here to get a new trial for James Earl Ray . . . It is the sole reason. The political reasons (for the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. murder) must be unveiled."

His 10-year pursuit of an FBI or CIA link to the murder and his almost Jack-in-the-box involvement with highly publicized big-time murders have been the source of



Mark Lane

both a comfortable livelihood and a media reputation as everything short of an outright grave robber.

The day after the Jonestown jungle massacre, New York Daily News columnist Jimmy Breslin confessed to despising Lane through the years as a "disreputable William Kunstler."

His involvement in Guyana began with a telephone call, Lane says, from writer-producer Donald Freed with whom he collaborated on "Executive Action," a movie based on the John F. Kennedy assassination.

"Freed told me it was an interesting thing down there — more than 1,000

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ST. PETERSBURG TIMES ■ THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1979 19A

news of canada

Mark Lane draws boos from college students

Compiled from Times wires

KINGSTON, Ontario — Activist lawyer Mark Lane, who represented the Peoples Temple at Jonestown, Guyana, made a \$3,000 appearance at Queen's University Monday and was booed and taunted for what students called his exploitation of a tragic situation.

Paul Steep, a law student, said the students "object to someone profiteering on a tragedy of this magnitude."

Ray Files Petition For A New Trial

James Earl Ray, who pleaded guilty to murdering Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968 but has been trying to change his plea ever since, yesterday filed another petition for a new trial in Criminal Court.

The petition, filed by Mark Lane and Charles Galbreath, his attorneys, contends that Ray is entitled to a new trial because the trial judge in his case, W. Preston Battle, died before hearing a motion for a new trial.

The petition also declared the conviction is flawed because no degree of murder — first or second — was specified in the verdict which sent Ray to prison for 99 years.

The petition is in the court of Judge William H. Williams and is set for a hearing March 1.

Before his death from a heart attack, Battle predicted Ray would be back in court many times in efforts to get a new trial.

"We have not heard the last of James Earl Ray," he told a reporter. "He is a pretty good jailhouse lawyer and I expect he will be filing writs from now to doomsday."

claim for a new trial, and in a hearing before U.S. Dist. Judge Robert M. McRae Jr. basically attacked his first defense lawyers, claiming they pressured him into pleading guilty so they could collect royalties on a book.

McRae turned down the request for a new trial.

Galbreath, a former Court of Criminal Appeals judge, announced in October that he would join Lane as the latest in a line of attorneys who have represented Ray and would join in efforts to gain Ray a new trial.

Also, three former King associates expressed doubt that Ray killed King. They are Rev. Ralph David Abernathy, who succeeded King as head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Rev. James Lawson and Rev. Jesse Jackson.

The latest request for a new trial was filed yesterday. Leland M. McNabb, an assistant attorney general assigned to Williams' court, said it might have been filed a week earlier. But the petition was mailed. When it arrived last week it lacked enough postage and was returned to Lane and Galbreath for remailing, he said.

The Commercial Appeal, Memphis, Saturday, January 27, 1979