

Ray Letter Threatens Suit Against Lawyer

James Earl Ray has written a letter threatening to file suit against Memphis attorney Robert I. Livingston for what Ray terms self-serving statements Livingston has made violating the attorney-client privilege.

Livingston said yesterday the charges in Ray's letter are false.

In the letter to The Commercial Appeal, Ray claims Livingston has made public statements "intended to either keep me in prison solitary confinement or re-isolate me."

The confessed assassin of Dr. Martin Luther King referred to statements Livingston has made claiming Ray would need heavy security if he testifies before a House committee investigating the King assassination.

Also, Livingston has said, "I don't believe the man (Ray) has ever told any of his attorneys the truth."

Ray charged in the letter that those two

statements were self-serving and prosecution-oriented and that Livingston has been improperly touting himself as Ray's lawyer.

"It would appear from Livingston's numerous statements printed that he always has ready access to the press whenever they want to print some prosecution oriented article while actual counsel representing me are more or less ignored," Ray said in the letter.

"There is apparently nothing I can do about Livingston making clownish or invidious (defamatory) statements in his capacity as a private citizen — although there is an attorney-client privilege — but if the bar cannot keep him in effect from interloping into another attorney's case, then a suit may be considered . . .," Ray said.

Livingston said, "This is a bunch of nonsense put in his (Ray's) head by James Lesar," one of Ray's Washington, D. C., attorneys.

"I have not made any self-serving or attorney-serving remarks," Livingston said. "I am not Ray's attorney. I have made it clear . . . since July 8, 1976, I am no longer Ray's counsel."

Livingston had represented Ray as his Tennessee counsel.

Livingston also said he has not violated any attorney-client privilege.

"I've never told anything under the privilege because he (Ray) has never told me anything confidentially or that he didn't tell to the news media or the entire world," Livingston said.

Livingston said he wrote a letter to Ray Dec. 31 urging Ray to testify before the House investigating committee. He said if Ray testifies before the committee and solves the case he might have a chance for executive clemency.