

Ray Said

MAR 20 1969

Confident

Of Appeal

Freed Inmate

Describes Chat

BULLETIN

In a ruling which legal sources said could "fit the James Earl Ray case like a glove," the Tennessee Supreme Court held today that a convicted criminal can not invalidate a prison sentence by alleging he pleaded guilty on the advice of his lawyer. The court noted a federal ruling to the effect that for a person to be denied due process by ineffective representation by counsel "must be such as to make the trial a farce, sham or mockery of justice."

By LARRY BRINTON

James Earl Ray is confident he will be granted an appeal hearing on his conviction in the slaying of civil rights leader Martin Luther King, a State Prison inmate who was freed today told THE BANNER in an exclusive interview.

"I'll be going back to Memphis before long," James E. Powers, who served out his one-year petit larceny term, quoted the 41-year-old Ray as telling him a few days ago.

Powers served his entire prison term in a cell in the Maximum Security Building and talked with Ray who is confined to a nearby cell.

Nearby Cell

Powers, 45, of Indianapolis, was assigned to Cell 2 in the security building inside the walls of the penitentiary, and Ray was placed in Cell 4 when he was confined here March 10. Cell 3 is vacant.

Powers told THE BANNER that Ray made his statement about returning to Memphis while several of the inmates were talking with him about various jobs available for prison inmates.

Ray has claimed he was "pressured" into pleading guilty to the sniper-death of King and accepting a 99-year sentence.

"He told us that he didn't expect to be in the prison any

ing in the special call in the Shelby County Jail where he was confined for months while awaiting trial in the King murder case.

Powers, who described Ray as "loner," said his prisoner-companion had very little to say about his case, himself or his plans.

"He says so little it is actually hard to tell how the man feels," explained Powers. In what conversations Ray had with Powers and two other inmates locked in nearby cells, William Garvin Allen and Steve Parker, both convicted of slaying a Nashville policeman, Ray made no mention of King, his escape from the Missouri State Prison or his capture in London.

"In fact," stated Powers, "as I recall, Ray didn't say a word to any of us the first day he was confined here."

"Then the next day after I had read my newspaper I asked him if he wanted to read it."

Powers commented.

"Yes, I'd like to," he quoted Ray as replying. Powers said he then reached his arm through his cell bars and slid the newspaper in front of Ray's cell. After reading it, Powers stated, Ray passed it on in the same manner to Allen, who is in Cell 6.

"Ray didn't say anything the rest of the day," Powers said however, indicating that the convicted slayer has since began talking a little more.

"He just doesn't have anything to say unless someone says something to him," Powers said of Ray. "He just doesn't talk much—that's the size of it."

But there have been several references made by Ray during "general conversation" concerning his case, Powers asserted.

Appeared Upset

The only time Ray appeared upset during his conversation with the other inmates, Powers reported, was last week when he read a newspaper story concerning his new lawyer, J. B. Stoner, of Savannah, Ga.

The news account related Stoner's past association with the Ku Klux Klan.

"This is what I need," Ray lamented sarcastically as he read the story. "This will really help me."

Then another time, Ray was quoted as complaining after reading another newspaper story concerning him: "It looks like they aren't going to give up on writing about me."

Powers, who was confined to the maximum security cell for his own protection from other convicts, said Ray appeared to be a good prisoner and had caused no trouble.

The freed prisoner said there was no harassment of Ray by the Negro inmates during the

"Evidently he (Ray) had been advised not to talk or just naturally was reluctant to make any direct statements concerning his case," Powers stated.