

Knoxville, Tn., October 3, 1978  
Two Sections, 22 Pages  
Volume 113, Number 236

15¢

# The Knox

## James Earl Ray To Wed

By CAROL BYRD  
Journal State Reporter

Copyright © Oct. 3, 1978 by The Knoxville Journal

Early one morning within the next two weeks, James Earl Ray and Anna Sandhu will join hands in the heavily guarded visitor's room at Brushy Mountain State Penitentiary and pronounce their marriage vows.

Ray, who, at 50, is serving a 99-year prison term for the April 4, 1968 shooting death of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., feels the union may be unfair to Anna, since he can't fulfill all the responsibilities of marriage.

But Miss Sandhu feels otherwise.

"I'm marrying him because I love him, and because I know he's not a murderer," Miss Sandhu said. "This marriage is something I'm taking seriously, and so is he.

"When we first met, I guess I mainly felt sympathetic about his situation. But those feelings have changed now, to love and concern."



Anna Sandhu



James Earl Ray

Our 140th Year

# Knoxville Journal



## Local Courtroom Artist

Anna, an attractive, 32-year-old blonde who works as a free-lance artist in Knoxville, was initially hesitant to talk about her planned marriage.

"It's just that it's our personal life, and really no one else's business," she said. "James has this terrible thing against talk shows where people talk about their sex lives and everything.

"And besides, he was worried about what might happen to me, once this leaks out. We were hoping it would be all over and done with before anybody found out."

She hopes to have her brother as the best man, and there probably won't be a maid of honor. As for the pastor — that's undecided at this time.

Stonney Lane, warden at Brushy Mountain, said late Monday that all the legal paperwork has not been completed for the marriage, but "it might be by tomorrow or the next day. I'm just not sure."

He added that the only check prison officials make is

"whether or not either person is currently married."

Miss Sandhu was married several years ago to a student from India — ("He was dark-skinned, so people can't say I'm a racist.") — but is currently single.

The two first saw each other in June 1977 during Ray's preliminary hearing in Morgan County General Sessions Court on an escape charge. Miss Sandhu was working for a local television station, drawing pictures of the proceedings for broadcast.

No words were exchanged during that court meeting, nor in Ray's following trial on the escape charge.

Anna talked with Ray for the first time in the fall of 1977, during an interview, also for a local television station.

"He was surprisingly friendly," she remembered. "I took the money I made off that assignment, and bought

See Ray, Page 11

# Ray

From Page 1

him some books for Christmas."

Ray wrote a thank-you note for the books — one of Carl Sandburg's poetry and another on photography — and their friendship grew from there.

More television interviews followed at the prison, and finally Miss Sandhu requested a private visit with Ray.

"I was extremely nervous the first time," she recalled. "But I was really intrigued by him, and I wanted to find out as much about him as I could.

"We talked, a pretty long while, and I came to realize that he wasn't the big monster everybody made him seem to be."

Their meetings, though strained and in non-private conditions due to security at the prison, developed into a strong friendship, and then into deeper feelings of love.

"Just talking to James and all he's been through, I remember back to my childhood in Virginia. There were all these little chicks at my grandmother's farm, and some of the big ones were just pecking this little one to death.

"That's how I think people are treating James. They're all just picking on him because he's weaker — trying to frame him into a crime he didn't commit."

Anna admits that Ray was "just a penny-ante crook" when he was first incarcerated, but maintains he has educated himself during his past years in prison.

"Sometimes I have to look in a dictionary to understand what all he says," she smiled.

The primary focus of Ray's studies now is to prove his innocence in the King slaying — an innocence he has maintained since three days after he pleaded guilty to the 1968 shooting.

"Those committee hearings were a farce," Miss Sandhu said, in reference to August hearings by the House Committee on Assassinations in Washington, D.C., in which Ray testified. "They don't actually want to know who killed King. They've got James behind bars as a scapegoat. And it just isn't right."

She further pointed to FBI files dealing with five years of surveillance prior to King's death — files she and Ray say were not subpoenaed by the House commission.

"How can they say they've looked into everything where there are five years of evidence they haven't even tried to look at?"

Whether or not James Earl Ray spends the rest of his life behind the Brushy Mountain State Penitentiary walls is of concern to Anna Sandhu, although she readily accepts the fact that their marriage may be one of monitored prison visits.

"Sure, it bothers me that he's in there — especially since it's for something he didn't do. But I love him. And I want people to know that. He's a loveable man, and not an anti-social maniac."