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Ray To Marry In Prison; Bride Calls Him Lovable

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — James Earl Ray will get married this month to a woman who says he is "a lovable man, not an anti-social maniac."

Ray is serving a life sentence for the 1968 assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. But his bride-to-be, Anna Sandhu, says she doesn't believe he is a murderer.

Ray's brother Jerry and Mark Lane, Ray's attorney, confirmed Tuesday that the wedding will take place within the next two weeks inside Brushy Mountain State Penitentiary.

Ray, 50, has never been married. Mrs. Sandhu, 32, is divorced.

"He called me today and he didn't have an exact date but said it would be within the next week or two weeks," Jerry Ray said in a telephone interview from Atlanta. "They planned on doing it in secret until it got out."

Mrs. Sandhu, a courtroom artist for television, discussed her marriage plans in a copyright interview in the Knoxville Journal.

Lane, who represented Ray when he testified before the House Assassinations Committee in August and at his trial last October for escaping from the prison in June 1977, said he also learned of the wedding plans Tuesday.

"I talked to him about 9 this morning and this is the happiest he's seemed since I've known him," Lane said by telephone from San Francisco.

Brushy Mountain Warden Stonney Lane said Ray had not yet requested permission for the marriage. The warden would not let reporters talk with Ray on Tuesday. "I'm a prison warden," he said. "I don't play Cupid for these people."

Prison Chaplain Paul Jones said he had given Ray the forms for a marriage application but did not remember when.

"When we first met, I guess I mainly felt sympathetic about his situation," Mrs. Sandhu said. "But those feelings



Anna Sandhu

To marry James Earl Ray

have changed now, to love and concern. I want people to know that."

Mrs. Sandhu said she met Ray during a television taping last fall. In recent months she has visited Ray twice a week, prison officials said.

Mrs. Sandhu said she believes Ray's story that he did not kill King.

"They're all just picking on him because he's weaker — trying to frame him into a crime he didn't commit," she said.