

RAY'S SECRET LETTER FROM JAIL

Hints Own Funds for Defense

Planned to Come Back

Chicago Daily News

CHICAGO—A two-page letter written by James Earl Ray after his arrest in connection with the assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King suggests he originally intended to return voluntarily for trial, and implies he has independent funds to pay for his defense.

The letter also removes any doubt that Ray and "Ramon George Sneyd," the name under which he was arrested, are the same person.

The undated letter was sent from London's Wandsworth Prison, where Ray has been held, to a married sister who lives in a suburb of St. Louis. A copy was obtained by the Chicago Daily News.

It was signed "Lord R. G. Sneyd."

KIN CONVINCED

While government officials have not expressed doubt that Ray and Sneyd are the same person, Ray's alias caused legal confusion during his extradition hearings. Ray's attorney, Arthur Hanes, of Birmingham, Ala., continues to use "Sneyd."

Ray's younger brother, John, is convinced the letter is genuine despite the signature.

"That 'Lord' is probably just his little joke."

'BACK SHORTLY'

The letter said, in part:

"Dear John,

"I will just write you a few lines to let you know every-

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thing is alright. I will probably be back shortly.

"Anyway, don't come over, for one, you couldn't get in. Attorney Hanes couldn't, and two, it's too expensive."

"About Judge Casey wanting to reverse my case, I don't want it reversed I will explain later, but you know their things are not doing anything to benefit me."

(Judge John G. Casey, who originally sentenced Ray, was reported ready to rule on his appeal when Ray broke out of jail.)

"If you could, I would like for you to give the attorney Arthur Hanes \$600.00 you can get some of it off Jerry and I will straighten it up with you when I get back."

OTHER BROTHER

(Jerry Ray is another brother. While the letter inferred they would be reimbursed for the \$600, neither Jerry nor John would speculate on where the money would come from.)

"You mention Percy Foreman. He is a good attorney, but I will wait until I get back as I want some attorneys who can work together, so I will let Hanes decide on someone he thinks would be best.

"I could appeal all my extradition hearing but I am getting tired of listening to these liars, so I might close it up about Tuesday.

"Lord R. G. Sneyd."

Even though the letter was addressed to Ray's married sister, it was written in response to a letter sent by John, who wanted to assure himself the man arrested June 9 in London was actually his brother.

"At first I was going to ask him if he was my brother,

but then I was afraid they might not give it to him, or that they might not let him write back."

HIRING LAWYER

John said he finally addressed his letter to James Earl Ray. In it he raised the possibility of seeing him in the London prison.

He also said he asked about hiring a Texas criminal lawyer, Percy Foreman, to handle Ray's defense and discussed action on Ray's appeal of the 20-year armed robbery sentence he was serving when he escaped.

Both John and Jerry Ray contend their brother had been "set up" to act as a decoy in the King assassination, while the "real killer" escaped.

from Missouri State Prison April 23, 1967.

John Ray, who formerly ran a saloon in St. Louis, visited his brother at the Missouri prison that day.

The letter from James Earl Ray was written on stationery with the letterhead "H. M. Prison, Heathfield Road, Wandsworth, London, S.W. 13."

A British court ordered Ray extradited to the United States during a hearing on July 2 at which he was represented by a court-appointed attorney.

Since that ruling, due for an appeal July 29, and since his meeting with Hanes, who has agreed to represent him,

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