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BULLETIN

LONDON AP - James Earl Ray abandoned his fight against extradition Tuesday. He agreed to return to the United States voluntarily for trial on charges of assassinating Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

A legal informant said Ray signed a statement declaring he would not press the British High Court appeal against a Magistrate's Court order issued July 2 extraditing him to the United States.

The statement was signed in an irregular hand, "Ramon George Sneyd," the alias under which he has been held here since his arrest at London airport June 8.

HP444ped July 16

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URGENT

LONDON Ray Add: June 8.

Ray's American lawyer, Arthur J. Hanes Jr. of Birmingham, Ala., is flying to London in hopes of accompanying Ray back to the United States. Hanes is due in London Wednesday morning. Ray is expected to be on a plane to the United States within a day after that.

He will be sent home under heavy guard, probably on a special aircraft, either an American military plane or a civilian jet chartered by the U.S. government. Then he is to be turned over to authorities in Tennessee for trial in Memphis on charges of assassinating the Negro leader there last April 4.

Ray's statement, signed Tuesday morning during a conference with his court-appointed British lawyer, cut short a complicated legal case. Ray was contending that King's murder was a political crime and therefore he could not be extradited under British law. But he apparently decided several days ago to drop his appeal, which had been set for the High Court before three British judges on July 29. He had been advised by his lawyers here that the appeal had little chance of success, although they wanted to go through with it to help clarify British extradition law.

People who have talked to Ray in Wandsworth prison recently said he had been growing restless and tired of waiting, especially after two months on the run following King's murder and months before that dodging the police as an escaped convict from the Missouri State Prison. However, he has protested his innocence of the killing throughout, and they said he was ready to return to the United States to start preparing for the trial.

Last week he wrote a brother in the United States telling him to arrange payment as an advance for Hanes' legal fees. Then he remarked: "I could appeal my extradition hearing but I am getting tired of listening to these liars so I might close it up about Tuesday." Ray's British lawyers knew about this letter and questioned him about his feelings. The "liars" he referred to apparently were the British police, who have quoted him as saying, "Oh, God, I feel so trapped" after his arrest. He denied saying anything like that.

In addition, Hanes was reported to have told Ray he wanted him back in the United States soon, so work on the defense case could begin in earnest. During their meetings in prison here, the Alabama lawyer and his client have not been able to confer out of earshot of British prison officials.

Ray's formal statement will be handed to the British Home Office, which already has the extradition warrant signed two weeks ago by Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Frank Milton. When the two documents are submitted to Home Secretary James Callaghan—probably Wednesday—he will be able to sign the final papers turning Ray over to the U.S. authorities here.

The statement read: "I, Ramon George Sneyd, state that I wish to forego my appeal to the divisional court of the High Court of Justice for a writ of habeas corpus and that I have decided of my own accord voluntarily to submit to the extradition order made against me. . . .

"I have made this decision after considering all the facts, and I believe that this is the best course of action for me to adopt."

He finished by expressing his thanks for the "advice and assistance" he had received from his British lawyers and then signed the typed, one-page declaration.

Appearing in Bow Street Magistrates Court Tuesday for a brief hearing, Ray gave no outward sign of his decision. He chewed gum while he sat facing the magistrate and heard his lawyers agree to have him held in prison for eight days until his next court appearance. Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Frank Milton asked if he had anything to say, and Ray replied: "No, sir."

These hearings, one every week, have been formalities connected with his arrest here on charges of entering the country under a forged Canadian passport and carrying an unlicensed gun. Police say they will be held on the books but not prosecuted. Conceivably, he could be extradited back here for trial on them if acquitted in America.

In fact Ray had already signed his statement shortly before the court appearance.

HP456ped, July 16