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Ray NL 500 up
By LAWRENCE MALKIN
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LONDON AP - James Earl Ray gave up his battle against extradition Tuesday and agreed to return to the United States for trial on charges of assassinating Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

He is expected to fly home under heavy guard in the next few days for trial in Memphis, Tenn., in the shooting of the Nobel laureate there last April 4. Ray, an escaped convict from the Missouri State Penitentiary, was arrested in London June 8. He has steadily claimed his innocence of the killing.

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Ray NL Sub
LONDON Ray NL A260 sub for 3rd graf to identify attribution: killing.

Michael Eugene, his British attorney, said Ray signed a statement accepting extradition rather than pursue an appeal in the British High Court. A Magistrate's Court issued an order July 2 for his extradition.

The statement, 4th graf
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A legal informant said Ray signed a statement declaring he would not pursue an appeal in the British High Court against a Magistrate's Court order July 2 extraditing him to the United States.

The statement, signed Tuesday morning at a conference with his court-appointed British lawyer, cut short a complicated legal case which had little chance of success.

People who talked to Ray recently in Wandsworth prison said he had been growing restless and tired of waiting. Another factor was the news that the British had refused to continue legal aid for his appeal. He had been granted free legal service for the lower court case.

Ray's statement was signed in an irregular hand, "Ramon George Sneyd," the alias under which he had been held here since his arrest.

It said, "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."

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 the appeal, which had been set for the High Court before three British judges on July 29.

Ray could be on a plane headed for the United States within 24 hours.

His American lawyer, Arthur J. Hanes of Birmingham, Ala., is flying to London and is due here Wednesday morning. He may ask for permission to accompany Ray home, but U.S. officials indicated this request would be turned down.

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LONDON Ray NL A260 add: down.

Once Ray is handed over by the British, his custody becomes the responsibility of the U.S. Justice Department. The U.S. government probably will take Ray home under heavy guard on a special plane, either a U.S. military jet or a chartered civilian airliner.

Ray, who has persistently denied killing the Negro leader, made no reference to the case itself in his brief typewritten statement.

The document may become part of the record, but not necessarily. His British lawyers now have it. They can either send it to Home Secretary James Callaghan as evidence that Ray has waived extradition, or they can do nothing. Ray's 15-day grace period to appeal against his extradition order expires Wednesday night. If no appeal is filed, he automatically becomes eligible for immediate extradition.

Ray was ordered to be extradited after a two-day hearing at Bow Street Magistrate's Court, which held there was sufficient evidence to try him for King's murder.

Last week Ray 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 and 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.

Ray gave no outward sign of his decision when he appeared in Bow Street Court earlier Tuesday for a brief hearing. He chewed gum while he sat facing the magistrate and heard his lawyers agree to have him held in prison for eight days until the next court appearance.

These hearings, one every week, have been formalities connected with his arrest in London on charges of entering the country under a forged Canadian passport and carrying an unlicensed gun.

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Frank Milton asked if he had anything to say, and Ray replied: "No, sir."

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LONDON Ray NL A264 2nd add: sir."

Ever since Ray's arrest, Scotland Yard has assigned a team of a dozen detectives to the task of tracing his movements in London. Working up to 18 hours a day, they checked hundreds of hotel registers, checked scores of banks and interviewed hundreds of people who had even the most remote contact with Ray.

The investigation now is finished and the dossier eventually will be forwarded to the U.S. authorities.

The key point about the probe is that it drew a complete blank on the possibility of any confederates for Ray, at least in London. Police informants said they found no evidence here that Ray was involved in any conspiracy.

The inquiries also extended to Lisbon, Portugal, although the informants would not say who conducted the investigation there.

The evidence indicates that Ray arrived in London on May 7 from Toronto, Canada, left for Lisbon on the same day and then returned to London on May 17. He was traced to three separate hotels, all near international air terminals. All reports indicated he was a withdrawn, secretive person, with no outside contacts.

The Scotland Yard investigation has turned up no evidence that Ray, at least while in London, had any cash to spare or had anyone here to help him financially.

The Scotland Yard inquiry confirmed that Ray was trying to make his way to Africa, possibly to join a white mercenary unit, or possibly to reach Rhodesia, whose breakaway regime has no extradition agreement with the United States.

When Ray was arrested he was carrying 60 pounds - \$144.

He also had a British Overseas Airways Corp. ticket to Toronto, where he is believed to have obtained a forged Canadian passport, and a British European Airways ticket to Brussels, where he had been told mercenaries were recruited.

The police list of his property also mentions a map of Portugal and several paperback books. They included one about Rhodesia; "Psycho," on which the movie was based, "Self-hypnotism," and "How to Cash in on Your Hidden Memory Power."

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