

# Ray's Trial Set for Nov. 12 After He Pleads Not Guilty

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MEMPHIS, July 22—James Earl Ray pleaded not guilty today to a charge that he murdered the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. last April 4. His trial was set to begin Nov.

12. The date was picked to avoid the upcoming elections.

Ray's plea was entered by his attorney, Arthur J. Hanes, who also entered a not guilty plea for Ray to a charge of carrying a dangerous weapon.

Ray did not speak during the 13-minute arraignment. He sat motionless at a table beside Mr. Hanes after being brought to courtroom No. 3 from the Shelby County Jail under heavy guard protection.

The courtroom used for the arraignment is directly below the armor-plated suite of cells that Ray is occupying.

## F.B.I. Agent Observes

Other than newsmen and security guards, there were only a half-dozen spectators in the courtroom. One spectator was Robert G. Jensen, the special agent in charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation office in Memphis. Much of the evidence against Ray was gathered under Mr. Jensen's direction.

Reporters were searched from head to foot before being allowed to enter the courtroom. They were also photographed and their voices were recorded by a video tape machine.

Many small objects, such as

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finger nail files, were taken from the reporters before they were allowed to cover the arraignment.

The hearing was the first court appearance of Ray in this country since he was returned from London last Friday by the United States Air Force. It began 25 minutes after its scheduled 9:30 A.M. start.

Ray was brought into the courtroom through a rear door. He did not bear a close resemblance to his photographs. Most early photographs of James Earl Ray released by the F.B.I. had shown a rather thin-faced man with a long sharp nose. His face today was fuller, as if he had gained weight in jail. The effect was to shorten his nose.



Associated Press

**AFTER ARRAIGNMENT:** Arthur J. Hanes, right, with son Arthur Jr., after arraignment of client James Earl Ray, accused assassin of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Mr. Hanes held news conference outside Shelby County jail in Memphis, where Mr. Ray pleaded not guilty to charges.

## Appears to Be 40

He looked his age, given by the F.B.I. as 40. Witnesses who had seen the man accused of killing Dr. King had said that he was about 30 years old.

Ray's long, black hair was brushed back. He had a touch of gray at each temple. Overall, he seemed to blend into the background.

The suspect had on a dark blue suit with a touch of gray in it, a blue tie and a light blue shirt. He was not wearing the dark horn-trimmed glasses he had worn since being arrested at the London Airport on June 8. He had the glasses on when he was booked at the Shelby County Jail at 4:29 A.M. Friday.

When Ray was seated at the defense table in the 38-by-55-foot courtroom, Criminal Court Judge W. Preston Battle entered the room and mounted the bench.

After the prosecutor, Shelby County Attorney General P. M. Canale Jr., had introduced Mr. Hanes and his son, Arthur J. Hanes Jr., to the court, Judge Battle said:

"James Earl Ray, you are charged with first-degree murder and with carrying a dangerous weapon."

The defendant had never acknowledged being James Earl Ray. In London, he used the name Ramon George Sneyd, and Mr. Hanes has been referring to him by this name.

However, the attorney, a former Mayor of Birmingham, Ala., made no comment about the judge's use of the name James Earl Ray.

## Delay in Plea Rejected

Judge Battle told Mr. Hanes that he could wait until the opening of Ray's trial to enter a plea if he wanted to. However, Mr. Hanes said that Ray would like to plead today and asked that the two indictments against Ray be read.

The first indictment accused him of murdering the Negro civil rights leader with a rifle. The second charged him with carrying a dangerous weapon, a rifle.

The indictments listed four aliases for Ray—Eric Starvo Galt, John Willard, Harvey Lowmeyer, and the same name spelled as Harvey Lowmyer.

The F.B.I. has said that Ray used the name Galt in Birmingham and the name Willard in Memphis. The man who bought a rifle that was found near the assassination site on April 4 is believed to have used the name Lowmeyer.

After each of the indictments had been read by a court clerk Mr. Hanes said:

"Your honor, at this time we would like to enter a plea. The defendant wishes to enter a plea of not guilty."

Judge Battle said that it was customary to set a trial date at arraignments but he offered to delay setting one. "I certainly want to give both sides adequate time for preparation," he said. "Mr. Hanes, do you want a few days or a few weeks before deciding?"

that he and Mr. Hanes had agreed earlier that the trial could begin the last week in September. But they met again this morning and decided that the trial might take several weeks, Mr. Canale said.

Tennessee law is unclear as to whether jurors engaged in a trial can vote by absentee ballot, Mr. Canale said. If the trial should continue from late September through Nov. 5, election day, jurors might be unable to vote, he said.

Judge Battle frowned at this argument. "I believe we could finish this trial in six weeks," he said.

Yes, agreed Mr. Canale, adding that it might depend on how quickly a jury could be selected.

Judge Battle then agreed to a suggestion of the two lawyers that the trial start Nov. 12. This apparently will effectively prevent the trial and its outcome from becoming a campaign issue this fall.

The judge also offered to pro-

quire Ray's pleading that he had no funds. "The court would have to have a finding of indigency, and I would have to question him," the judge said.

"No, Your Honor," said Mr. Hanes. "Arrangements have been made to pay for a transcript." If the arrangements should fall through, Mr. Hanes said, he might then plead Ray as an indigent and ask for a free transcript.

The arraignment then ended and Ray was returned to his air-conditioned cells.

Mr. Hanes has said that Ray has not complained about his cells and the elaborate protection devices set up in the jail.

In addition to the quarter-inch steel armor over the cell windows, there is a steel garbage can of sand nearby the cell to be used as a bomb disposal unit.

Guards are with Ray day and night and two closed-circuit television cameras monitor him.

Mr. Hanes said that Ray was pleased with the food in Memphis. "He didn't care much for the food in the British jails," he said.

In a sidewalk news conference this afternoon, Mr. Hanes said that he would hire private detectives to help prepare a defense for Ray.

He said that he had met with Ray after the arraignment today but he declined to say what they had discussed.

He said that he had entered a plea of not guilty to speed the case. "This matter has got to be disposed of," he said.

Mr. Hanes said that he had received two \$10 donations in the mail to apply toward Ray's defense fund. Earlier he had received a \$5 donation.

Mr. Hanes and his son left for Birmingham this afternoon to begin work on the case.