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URGENT

LND Lead Ray

By BILL JOHNSON

Associated Press Writer

MEMPHIS, Tenn. AP -James Earl Ray, charged with murder in the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., switched his attorney Sunday and set the stage for a continuance of his trial.

Shelby County Sheriff William N. Morris JR, told a late night news conference that Ray had signed a letter of intent to hire noted criminal attorney Percy Foreman of Texas to represent him.

Mr. Foreman has told me that it is his intention to appear before Judge W. Preston Battle Tuesday morning at 9:30 a.m. to request a continuance in the trial of the case pending against James Earl Ray," Morris said.

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Memphis, Tenn.-first add and lead Ray, AZ03: said.

Foreman will replace Arthur J. Hanes of Birmingham, who had represented Ray since shortly after he was apprehended.

Hanes had told the court once earlier that serious difficulties had arisen between him and Ray over the conduct of the trial and that at some later date he might have to withdraw as counsel.

Morris said Foreman, who once represented Jack Ruby and was defense counsel in the murder trial of heiress Candace Mosler, came to the jail Sunday with two of Ray's brothers, John Ray and Jerry Ray.

The sheriff said the three asked to see Ray and during the visit "certain decisions were made and a letter was written," to Hanes.

"This letter was presented to me for reading by Mr. Foreman and it declared an intent by James Earl Ray to dispense with the legal services of Mr. Hanes and his son and of an intention to obtain new counsel and a Tennessee lawyer," Morris said.

There was no immediate indication of who this Tennessee attorney would be.

Hanes told newsmen later he would not object to the motion Tuesday. There was no indication when any new trial date might be.

King was shot to death here April 4 while in Memphis to support striking city garbage workers. Ray was arrested in London June 8 at the end of an extensive manhunt and returned to Memphis July 19.

Ray has been held in a jail cell since then, under constant surveillance by closed circuit television and two guards. A tight no-publicity order was invoked by Battle, who is to preside at the trial.

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MEMPHIS-3rd lead Ray, A307, insert after 7th graph which was 1st graph A303: Foreman x x x apprehended.

Ray's sudden switch came as a surprise to him but that he would not object to the motion to be offered Tuesday.

"I first learned of this at 8:30 this evening," Hanes said after the sheriff's news conference. "I was prepared to go to trial Tuesday morning.

However, Hanes added, "I never want a reluctant client."

Hanes had, 8th graph.

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CORRECTION

MEMPHIS-Insert 3rd lead Ray, A310ns, make read at start: Hanes said the, sted "Ray"

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