

Manacled Ray Enters Prison —Conspiracy Angle Thrives

Compiled from AP and UPI

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — James Earl Ray, convicted and sentenced in an "instant trial" yesterday, was led in chains into the Tennessee State Prison today to begin

servicing a 99-year term for murdering Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The burly Ray, who observed his 41st birthday in Memphis yesterday by switching his plea and accepting the

pre-arranged sentence, was whisked out of his Shelby County Jail cell at 5:30 a.m. and transferred to state authorities near the county line.

He was sped 200 miles to Nashville in an eight-car motorcade that pulled up to the state prison shortly after 8 a.m.

Secured by a waist chain connected to heavy handcuffs and ankle manacles, Ray stepped briskly into the cluster of white, red-roofed buildings that form the state prison on the outskirts of Nashville. State Safety Commissioner Greg O'Rear and Highway Patrol Inspector Mickey McGuire walked at either side of Ray, and all three were surrounded by heavily-armed guards.

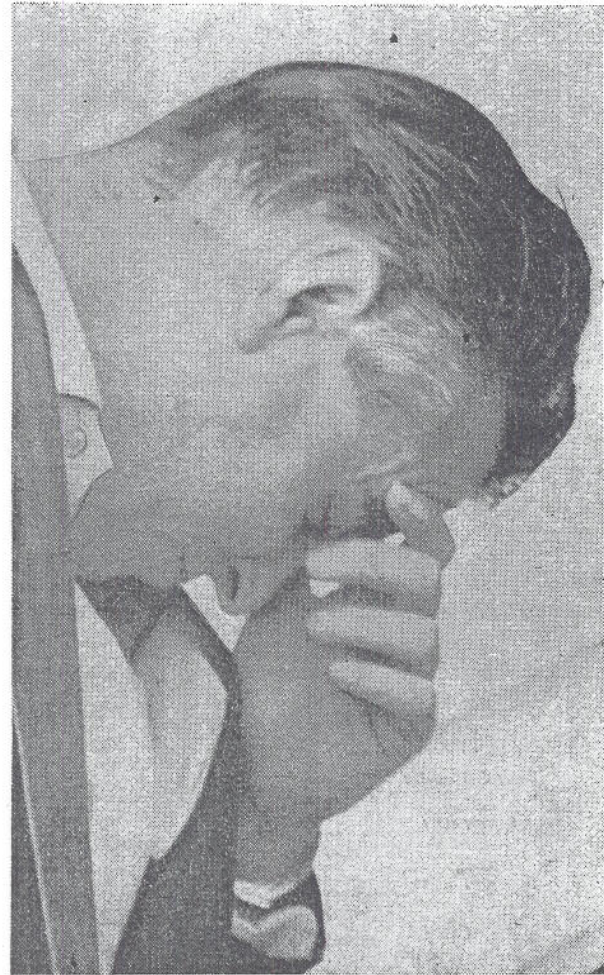
Ray, wearing a dark checked sport coat, dark pants and a white shirt open at the neck, bent over from the waist and shielded his head with his hands to avoid photographers. He ignored shouted questions by newsmen as he walked quickly from the unmarked car that had carried him from Memphis.

Yesterday King's widow, Coretta, said his assassination was the work of more than one person and is still on the conscience of the nation despite the sentencing of Ray.

The Rev. Ralph David Abernathy, who took over leadership of Dr. King's civil rights organization, said he was convinced by Ray's admission of guilt itself that the murder was part of a conspiracy.

"There are the unanswered questions," commented a-

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JAMES EARL RAY ENTERS TENNESSEE PRISON
Manacled slayer was moved under heavy guard.

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thor William Bradford Huie, who wrote Ray's biography while Ray was awaiting trial.

While these and other dissenting voices were being heard, Dist. Atty. Philip M. Canale reiterated at a post sentencing interview last night that the state had uncovered no evidence at all of conspiracy.

Canale said the sums of money Ray spent hopping around the United States and Canada and finally to Europe,

which seemed to some suspiciously large, probably came from the assassin's own efforts as a smuggler and hold-up man.

Ray "got money from several sources," Canale told newsmen, and saved a "fairly substantial sum of money while in prison" in Missouri before the escape which led ultimately to King's death by a rifle bullet on the balcony of a Memphis motel.

Canale said his investigators believed Ray mailed the money out of the prison before he escaped.

Canale added that the investigators believe Ray obtained funds in "one armed robbery and maybe two robberies in Montreal," one in London, and profited by smuggling jewelry and drugs into the United States after his prison break.

Ray's statements in court yesterday confused many who heard them.

After entering his plea of guilty to first-degree murder he stood up and told the judge he disagreed with the theory that no conspiracy was linked with the assassination.

Under questioning by the court, however, Ray said he was still pleading guilty.

A justice Department spokesman in Washington said Ray's plea of guilty had not closed the books on its original investigation of a possible conspiracy.

In Atlanta, Mrs. King said Ray's plea of guilty "cannot be allowed to close the case, to end the search for the many fingers which helped pull the trigger." She added:

"For the moment, we have been spared a trial which would compel us to relive the fearfully tragic events of his death. But we realize that this is but a respite."

But, Mrs. King continued, "All concerned people must press the state of Tennessee and the U.S. Government to continue until all who are responsible for this crime are apprehended."

"Not until then," the widow said, "can the conscience of the nation rest."

The Rev. Mr. Abernathy said he had thought all along that the slaying was the outcome of a conspiracy and was more convinced than ever after hearing of Ray's performance in court.

"The trial," said Ray's biographer, Huie, "went according to script."

"I'm not surprised that Ray got up in court and said what he did about a conspiracy. He's said all along there was another man in the rooming house from which the shot was fired."

"And there are the unanswered questions."

Many Memphis residents expressed relief that Ray's day in court was over.

There had been some apprehension that a prolonged trial might arouse racial feelings in the city and both police and sheriff's deputies had been put on 12-hour shifts.

Perhaps because of its suddenness, caused by Ray's de-

cision to plead guilty, the actual hearing drew few spectators to court. Only four of the onlookers were Negroes. There were no major representatives of civil rights groups and empty spectator seats were turned over to representatives of news media.

Those who clung to a conspiracy theory still were vexed by many questions. For example:

—How did Ray pay his way?

—Where did he get the estimated \$10,000 he spent be-

elaborate, but later said there was some indication Ray had expressed bias against Negroes both in and out of prison.

did Ray plead guilty? "I think race had a lot to do with it," Canale told newsmen who asked the question at his news conference after the hearing. He first refused to

instead of the white-operated Rivermont, where he had stayed previously? —How did he know King would be on the balcony? —If there were no conspiracy, as the state contends, why

across the street from the motel, and how did he know the best vantage point would be from a hallway bathroom window?

tween the time he escaped from the Missouri State Penitentiary in April 1967 until he was captured in London last June 8? —How did Ray pick the rooming house from, where the fatal shot was fired,