Several Books Planned on Ray Case; First to Be Out

By MARTIN WALDRON

Special to The New York Times

MEMPHIS, March 12-"Next to cotton, James Earl Ray is Memphis's biggest industry," Percy Foreman said last fall after he succeeded Arthur J. Hanes as Ray's lawyer.

Mr. Foreman, who said he was promised no fee for defending Ray on a murder charge in the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., at the time also scorned what he referred to as the "pandering press" and its curiosity about Ray.

Books in Preparation

The chief target of the Hous-The chief target of the Houston lawyer's scorn seemed to be William Bradford Huie, the Alabama author who had bought the rights to Ray's life story and was getting handwritten memorandums from Ray in the Shelby County jail. Mr. Huie had written two articles about Ray for Look magazine.

This week, at least five books on James Earl Ray and the as-sassination of Dr. King were in preparation.

One of the books on Ray and the assassination is ready for printing and distribution. It was written by Clay Blair, a former editor of the Saturday Evening Post.

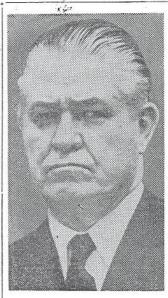
Evening Post.

Other Authors

Bantam Books said that Mr.
Blair's book, "The Strange Case of James Earl Ray," would be published next Monday or Tuesday. It will be a history of Ray and of the murder, with a chapter on the courtroom proceeding of last Monday when Ray pleaded guilty to murder-language of logic to a man who has spent most of his life behind bars. If he did this alone, he may have been turned on for reasons lost in the depth of his own personality."

Doubts a Conspiracy

Mr. Frank, who began his



Percy Foreman



William Bradford Huie

And Mr. Foreman had succeeded Mr. Hanes, of Birmingham, Ala., not only as Ray's attorney but also as a business associate of Mr. Huie.

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"I hope my book will be a full history of the assassination of Martin Luther Kind and what happened on all levels. And if there was a conspiracy, I hope to know that. I will try to tell the entire unfolding story," Mr. Frank said.

"From Ray's history of in-eptitude," he said, "I would assume that he was helped in

include Gerold Frank, who has written six best-sellers, among them "The Boston Strangler"; George E. McMillan of Atlanta; James D. Squires, a Nashville newspaperman; and Mr. Huie.

Mr. Frank's book may be the most comprehensive. With a reported advance of \$100,000, the New York writer plans to spend two years researching and writing his b ook for Doub day & Co., Inc.

Where other authors have expressed opinions as to wheth

Dr. King's murder was the result of a conspiracy, Mr. Frank said that he was trying to get more evidence before making a decision.

'History of Ineptitude'

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Mr. McMillan said that he had hired a psychiatrist to help him interpret the psychological effect on Ray of his many years in prison, his background of poverty and his family life.

"Things like, what does it do

to a guy to sleep in the same bed with his parents when he is growing up," he said. Mr. McMillan said his book

was to have been published four months after the end of Ray's trial. The date may be pushed forward, he said.

Mr. Squires's book, to be published by New American Library, may be the second book out on Ray. Mr. Squires, who has covered the case for his newspaper, The Nashville Tentessean, said the writing should be completed in the next two weeks. two weeks.

He said he hoped the book would be a "complete account of the murder of Dr. King, the arrest of Ray, the hiring and firing of Hanes and what went on in Memphis."

The book has not yet been

Mr. Huie, who bought the publication rights to Ray's life story last July, originally had signed a contract calling for proceeds from a book to be split between himself, Mr.

Next Week

Hanes and Ray.

Disbelieves Theory

He paid an advance of \$25,-000 to Ray, who signed the money over to Mr. Hanes as part of his legal fee.

Mr. Huie, a resident of Hartselle, Ala., who is the author of a half-dozen best-sellers, wrote in the two articles for Look magazine last fall that

Ray said there had been a conspiracy to murder Dr. King.

However, Mr. Huie said in Memphis this week that he no longer believed in the conspiracy theory.
Mr. Huie said that Ray had

told him that the assassin went into a rooming house and shot at Dr. King across the street while Ray was seated in front of the rooming house in the driver's seat of a white Mustang car

tang car.

The author quoted Ray as saying that the assassin rushed down the stairs of the rooming house and hid on the floor of the back seat of the car, cover-ing himself with a sheet while

ing himself with a sheet while Ray drove him out of town.
"When I could not find the man, I concluded that Ray himself made the decision to kill Dr. King," Mr. Huie said,
"A third article for Look was prepared this week by Mr. Huie and Mr. Foreman, In addition. and Mr. Foreman. In addition, Mr. Huie is completing a book on Dr. King's assassination for the Dell Publishing Company. The book, which will concen-trate on activities of Ray before and after the murder, has been tentatively titled, "He Slew the

Although Mr. Hanes still has a claim against a portion of the proceeds from the sale of Mr. Huie's book, the Alabama author told reporters in Mem-phis this week that he had a contract with Mr. Foreman.