

Ray Motive Said To Elect Wallace

NEW YORK — (AP) — James Earl Ray thought assassinating Dr. Martin Luther King would help elect George Wallace president, author William Bradford Huie says, and he expected to be pardoned for the slaying after Wallace's inauguration.

Huie, an Alabamian who bought publication rights to Ray's story of his life, says Ray considers himself a political prisoner and expects to be freed within four years. He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 99 years.

Huie analyzes Ray's motives in the current issue of Look magazine, with information supplied by Ray, his lawyers and his family.

Huie said last October that "powerful men probably made the decision to kill Dr. King." But he has changed his mind.

"One or two men other than James Earl Ray may have had foreknowledge of this murder, and that makes a little conspiracy," Huie said this week. "But if there was a conspiracy, I now believe that James Earl Ray was probably its leader, not its tool or its dupe."

Look also carries articles by Percy Foreman of Houston, who was Ray's lawyer when he pleaded guilty, and Arthur J. Hanes, one of Ray's earlier lawyers. Foreman agrees with Huie that Ray was the lone killer, but Hanes dissents.

"I still believe that Ray killed Dr. King because he was directed to do it," Hanes, a former mayor of

Birmingham, Ala., wrote. "Despite his plea of guilty in court, I also feel that Ray did not carry out the murder entirely alone."

Foreman wrote:

"I don't believe there was any conspiracy, Ray thinks that the war between the races is imminent, and he wanted to fire the first shot."

Huie agreed with Foreman on that. He said:

"Ray took what he regards as a political action approved by millions of Americans. Ray thinks he fired the first shot in a social or racial conflict, a second civil war, which will eventually result in his being freed."

Judge Death May Give Ray New Trial

MEMPHIS — (UPI) — The death of the trial judge in the James Earl Ray case could bring the convicted slayer of Dr. Martin Luther King a new trial under Tennessee law, an appeals court judge said today.

The key apparently was the contents of a letter mailed by Ray to Judge W. Preston Battle, 60, who died of a heart attack yesterday.

Ray pleaded guilty to the April 4, 1968, murder of King in Memphis and received a 99-year prison sentence during a jury trial required by Tennessee law in all criminal cases. Ray said his lawyer, Percy Foreman, advised him to plead guilty to avoid a possible death penalty.

Second Thoughts

But after Ray began serving his sentence, he reportedly had second thoughts and

considered seeking a new trial. He wrote Battle asking, sources said, for a new trial.

Judge Charles Galbreath of the state court of criminal appeals said in Nashville that a Tennessee law provides any motions for a new trial pending before a deceased judge must be granted. The law does not define a motion, or how it must be filed, he said.

Legal Argument

"An attorney could make an argument that a letter asking for a new trial, in general terms, was a motion for a new trial," the judge said.

The decision, perhaps, will have to be made by Battle's successor, to be appointed by Gov. Buford Ellington.

The state supreme court last week had dealt a blow to Ray's hopes for a new trial, ruling in a case "that fits Ray's case like a glove" that a defendant cannot get a new trial on grounds he was talked into pleading guilty by his attorney. Ray reportedly contends Foreman pressured him into his guilty plea.