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Huie Thinks Ray Killed Dr. King to Gain 'Status'

By MARTIN WALDRON

William Bradford Huie, the Alabama author who bought publication rights to the "life story" of James Earl Ray, said yesterday he believed that Ray had killed the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to gain "status" with other convicts.

Mr. Huie said in the third of a series of articles on Ray in *Look Magazine* that he was convinced after eight months of interviewing Ray that he was the lone assassin of the civil rights leader last April 4 in Memphis, Tenn.

For several months, Mr. Huie said, he believed Ray was a hired killer but that information, given by Ray, had not been confirmed.

Mr. Huie said he had concluded that Ray, a "racist," believed that the murder of Dr. King was the "opening shot" of civil war between whites and Negroes and that George C. Wallace Jr., the third party candidate for President last year would be elected and would pardon him.

Percy Foreman of Houston, Ray's attorney when the 41-year-old convict pleaded guilty to Dr. King's murder, agreed in a companion *Look* article that Ray had been the lone killer.

Hanes Sees Conspiracy

But Arthur J. Hanes, a former attorney for Ray, said in a third article in the magazine that he still believed there had been a conspiracy to murder Dr. King.

Mr. Hanes, a former agent for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, said that he had been baffled by many of Ray's answers to questions but that "on balance, both my son and partner, Arthur Jr., and I feel that, at the very least, Ray was helped."

He said he had located two witnesses who contended that

Asserts in Article He Found No Evidence of Conspiracy — Alabamian Disagrees

the fatal shot had been fired from a vacant lot instead of the \$1-a-day rooming house where Ray had registered on the afternoon of the King slaying.

In addition, he said, even if Ray had killed Dr. King with a .30.06-calibre deer rifle, as asserted by the State of Tennessee, it was still unexplained how Ray knew to go to a rooming house where he could get a clear shot at Dr. King as he emerged from his motel room.

"Unless Ray actually walked through and had at least some time to study the rooming house complex from which the fatal shot is alleged to have been fired, we can't believe that Ray could have known that he would have an unobstructed line of fire at Dr. King," Mr. Hanes said.

Paid Ray \$35,000

Mr. Huie, who paid Ray \$35,000 with the promise of more money for the rights to his story, said Ray contended that the "other man" shot Dr. King while Ray waited outside the Memphis rooming house in a white Mustang automobile.

The author said that when

he investigated Ray's story, "I found no supporting evidence I could believe."

Mr. Huie said he had then studied Ray's record and concluded that Ray was a "nigger hater" who had suddenly decided to kill Dr. King to become a hero to segregationists.

"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," said Mr. Huie. "He therefore feels fulfilled: he believes he is liked, respected, even admired. And he is confident that political developments in the United States will cause him to be freed in two to four years."

Mr. Foreman, one of this country's most successful defense lawyers, said much the same thing.

"Ray thinks that the war between the races is imminent," Mr. Foreman said. "And he wants to fire the first shot. The shooting of Dr. King, to him, was the Pearl Harbor of that war."

In previous articles for *Look Magazine*, Mr. Huie had said he believed there was a conspiracy. In the current article, Mr. Huie said that he still believed that Ray smuggled narcotics into the United States from Canada for someone, but that Ray's story of having been hired in Canada to kill Dr. King did not check out.