

TESTIMONY ENDS IN RAY HEARINGS

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Decision Due in Several

Weeks on Retrial Plea
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MEMPHIS, Oct. 31—Testimony ended today in a hearing to determine whether James Earl Ray should be given a new trial in the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Mr. Ray has contended that he was treated unfairly by the state and by his defense attorneys before he pleaded guilty to murder in March, 1969.

Federal District Judge Robert M. McRae Jr. said he planned to close the hearing tomorrow after the reading of depositions from two witnesses who refused to testify in person—Percy Foreman of Houston, a lawyer, and William Bradford Huie of Hartselle, Ala., a writer.

The judge indicated that he would take several weeks to reach a decision. The hearing was ordered by the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit after years of agitation by Mr. RAY.

Before the end of testimony today, Arthur Hanes of Birmingham, Ala., one of Mr. Ray's original attorneys, said that he had always considered Dr. King's murder to be "a political killing," and that the British Government should have refused to extradite Mr. Ray to the United States to stand trial.

Arrested in London

Dr. King was shot to death in Memphis on April 4, 1968. Mr. Ray was arrested in London on June 8 of that year. He was sentenced to 99 years in prison after pleading guilty to Dr. King's murder on March 10, 1969.

Mr. Ray has since contended that he pleaded guilty because he thought he might get the death sentence in a trial and because he considered himself to be an unknowing accomplice in the assassination and thus might be legally guilty.

In their depositions, both Mr. Foreman and Mr. Huie said they believed that Mr. Ray had acted alone in the assassination. Mr. Foreman said he thought that Mr. Ray filled Dr. King because he wanted to get attention. Mr. Huie said that he had become involved in financing Mr. Ray's trial because he wanted the truth about the killing to be made public.

Mr. Ray, who was on the witness stand for about 10 hours during the hearing, told Judge McRae that he considered Mr. Foreman and Mr. Hanes, whom he dismissed in November, 1968, two days before his trial was scheduled to start, to be more interested in promoting a book by Mr. Huie than in organizing an adequate defense.

In his testimony today, Mr. Hanes—who is recovering from heart surgery—said he had agreed to assist Mr. Huie with a book about the case because he felt that was "a better way" of raising defense money than a public appeal would have been. But he denied that he had ever allowed Mr. Huie to make suggestions about how to defend Mr. Ray.

Conspiracy Theory

Mr. Hanes said that he and his son and partner, Arthur Hanes Jr., believed that Mr. Ray was an unknowing participant in a conspiracy to assassinate Dr. King.

"I thought perhaps a black militant organization was behind the slaying," Mr. Hanes said.