

Ray Pleads Not Guilty In Prison Escape Case

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Wartburg, Tenn.

James Earl Ray was brought into court in chains yesterday and pleaded not guilty to escaping from Brushy Mountain State Prison, where he is serving a 99-year term for the slaying of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Ray's attorney, Jack Kershaw, said that although the world is well aware Ray and six others fled from the prison last June 10, the not guilty plea was based on the contention Ray has been held illegally for nine years.

Kershaw said he would attempt to use the escape trial to go into "all the

circumstances" concerning Ray's confinement for the King assassination.

Since pleading guilty to the assassination, Ray has changed his story and says he is not responsible for the slaying. He has asked for a new trial.

Ray and the six prisoners who went over the prison wall with him were chained, handcuffed and under heavy guard when they arrived by van at a makeshift courtroom 11 miles from the prison. They will be tried individually between September 29 and October 27, when Ray's trial is scheduled to begin.

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