

URGENT

Ray

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LONDON AP - Arthur J. Hanes, the Birmingham, Ala., lawyer retained to defend the accused assassin of Martin Luther King Jr., arrived in London today and said he would have a first meeting with him within hours.

But Hanes insisted the man he would be seeing was Ramon George Sneyd, not James Earl Ray as claimed by the U.S. government and accepted by the British court which agreed to extradite him last Tuesday.

Hanes said his client might plead innocent or innocent by reason of insanity to charges brought against him.

He added: "Of course, he may not be extradited. I am not certain that he will be."

Regarding the identity of the man wanted in the slaying of King, Hanes said: "He is Ramon George Sneyd as far as I am concerned. This man

regarding the identity of the man wanted in the slaying of King, Hanes said: "He is Ramon George Sneyd as far as I am concerned. This man has identified himself as such. I am saying that the U.S. government and the authorities of Tennessee have the burden to prove otherwise.

"It will have no bearing in Tennessee that the British courts say he is James Earl Ray."

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King was assassinated April 4 in Memphis, Tenn., and a worldwide manhunt began for James Earl Ray.

Ray was arrested at London Airport June 8 by Scotland Yard agents and accused of using a forged Canadian passport in the name of Sneyd and possessing an unlicensed gun. Those charges are still pending.

Ramon George Sneyd is the name of a Toronto constable who has similar physical characteristics to Ray. In the two months before his arrest, Ray stayed for a time in Toronto and apparently picked up enough information about the constable to use his name.

After a two-day hearing at Bow Street Court, London's chief metropolitan magistrate, Frank Milton, ordered Ray extradited as a fugitive criminal wanted for murder and armed robbery in the United States.

Ray's court-appointed British lawyers have 15 days in which to appeal to a higher court. They said they intend to file an appeal.

Hanes told newsmen he would have a first meeting with his client at Wandsworth Jail in south London within a couple of hours of his arrival by plane from Los Angeles.

"I am going to talk to him (Ray) and get some of his background," Hanes said. "As of now I am acting officially for him."

Hanes said it would be his first meeting with the man the British arrested as Sneyd. He acknowledged that the Home Office had granted him permission to see Sneyd last week but claimed that he got that authority "three or four days after I got back to the states."

"I do not suggest there has been anything devious," the Alabama attorney explained. "I think it was just the system and perhaps that they don't move on the spur of the moment.

"I am grateful they have now given me permission, Sneyd has been in contact with me by letter and was somewhat perturbed that I could not see him."

Ray was defended at Bow Street by a British lawyer, Roger Frisby, appointed under the court legal aid scheme.

Pressed about who was paying for his services, Hanes replied: "No one, no organization, only Sneyd himself has contacted me.

He has indicated that he is in a position to pay. He may be able to raise money from his family.

"This is a challenge and it is a big case. The man called on me for assistance; the man needs help. I would do the same for anyone, black or white. I am made that way."

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