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# Time Nears For Journey To Memphis

LONDON (AP) — Home Secretary James Callaghan signed an order today for transfer of James Earl Ray to the custody of U.S. marshals for his extradition to the United States.

By COLIN FROST

LONDON (AP) — Minor British charges against James Earl Ray were dropped today, bringing his extradition to the United States a step closer.

Home Secretary James Callaghan was expected within a few hours to sign the extradition order re-

turning the 40-year-old escaped convict to the United States to face trial on a charge of murdering Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The extradition order was issued by Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Frank Milton on July 2. Ray decided on Tuesday not to appeal against it and the 15-day period for filing an appeal expired yesterday.

THE TIME OF Ray's departure for America is a closely guarded secret. Unofficial reports said a U.S. Air Force transport was standing by at Northolt, a U.S. air base west of London, to take the prisoner and an escort of U.S. marshals to Memphis, Tenn., where the Negro civil rights leader was shot April 4.

The two charges on which Ray had been held since his arrest at London Airport on June 8 were dropped at a brief hearing in the Bow Street Magistrate's Court, the theater for all the British legal processes concerning Ray.

The charges were using a forged Canadian passport, under the name of Ramon George Sneyd, and carrying a loaded gun for which he had no license.

RAY WAS NOT in court today.

Arthur Hanes of Birmingham, Ala., Ray's lawyer,

visited him in prison this morning. He said Ray was still extremely anxious to have his lawyer fly home with him when he is sent back to the United States.

Hanes said, however, U.S. authorities still were adamant in refusing him permission to board the plane.

"HE FEARS intensive in-  
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terrogation and grilling by Justice Department agents on the plane," Hanes said. "They will have him captive for seven or eight hours and they can engage him in conversation."

The lawyer told newsmen that he had called Consul General Jack Herfurt last night and was passed a message from Fred Vinson Jr., U.S. assistant attorney general.

Hanes said the message was: "I hope you understand why you cannot accompany this man to the United States and why you cannot see him in private."

To this, Hanes replied: "My answer is No. I do not understand."