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Ray Trial 220

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MEMPHIS, Tenn. AP - James Earl Ray, accused assassin of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., goes to trial here Tuesday and Shelby County authorities were checking last minute details to ensure maximum security.

Sheriff William N. Morris Jr. said Sunday that no members of the public would be allowed in the courtroom until after the jury is selected. The selection is expected to take about a week. The trial is expected to last at least four weeks.

When the public seats are opened, Morris said, "anyone wishing to attend the trial will have to bring plenty of identification which can be checked by our office. We will take steps to screen out those persons we feel could try to create an incident in the courtroom."

Morris said everyone attempting to enter the courtroom—including the judge, attorneys, newsmen and spectators—would be videotaped and searched before being admitted. Newsmen accredited to cover the trial, attorneys and court personnel already have been photographed and fingerprinted.

There are 77 seats for spectators in the courtroom. Forty-two have been set aside for the news media.

"I think we are as ready as we'll ever be," Morris said.

Ray was arrested in London June 8 at the end of an extensive manhunt and on July 19 was returned to Memphis where the slaying occurred April 4.

He has been held in a jail cell since then, under constant surveillance by closed circuit television and two guards.

Judge W. Preston Battle will preside over the trial in county criminal court.

Ray will be represented by Arthur J. Hanes, a former Birmingham, Ala., mayor, and his son, Arthur Jr. The prosecution will include the county attorney general, Phil Canale, 50, and two assistant attorneys general, Robert K. Dwyer, 45, and James C. Beasley, 42.

Two of Ray's brothers, John and Jerry, both of St. Louis, will attend the trial and have been given reserved seats. King's uncle, the Rev. Joel Lawrence King of Mansfield, Ohio, also will attend, but neither King's widow nor his father will be present.

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