Under 24-Hour Surveillance

Foreman Expected To Demand Privacy For James Earl Ray

By HENRY P. LEIFERMANN

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (UPI)—The extraordinary surveillance of James Earl Ray in his suite of steel-plated cells never stops. He is watched as he eats, sleeps, bathes — in his every moment, no matter how personal.

It has become an issue in what is expected to be a demand by Percy Foreman, Ray's Texas attorney, to move out of Memphis Ray's murder trial in the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Details of the procedure by which Ray is guarded, how he gets his food, how his heart was tested in his cell and how television eyes never leave him became known in interviews last week.

The tension produced among Ray's special guards already has led to at least two 10-day disciplinary suspensions by Sheriff William N. Morris Jr.

Foreman, the celebrated defense attorney who was called in by Ray Nov. 12, considers the elaborate security as grounds for moving the trial.

Produces Bad Image

He is understood to feel the constant surveillance presents Ray to the public—and to potential jurors—as a supercriminal too dangerous to let out of his cell, and as a threat to himself in the chance that he might take his own life.

Such a public image of Ray would prejudice any jury, Foreman feels.

A motion for a change of venue could be filed by Foreman at any time. He is scheduled to appear before Criminal Court Judge W. Preston Battle Thursday to say wheter he will be ready to go to trial March 3.

Ray's trial was continued from Nov. 12 to March 3 when Foreman succeeded Arthur J. Hanes Sr., and his son as defense counsel.

The protection of Ray begins at a steel-plated door on the first floor of the Shelby County Criminal Courts building which houses the county jail and the courtroom where Ray is to be tried.

Visitors and guards approach the door and speak into a microphone to a deputy sheriff who sits eight hours a day behind a combination locked door, in a bullet proof cage called the control center.

Cleared By Control Center

If cleared by the control center, the visitor is passed into a small room. Standing under a sign reading "no guns allowed," the visitor is searched.

From there, an elevator takes visitors to the third floor, where Ray is locked in "a tank," a suite of cells once used for 16 men.

Brilliant fluorescent lights surround Ray's cells, they are never turned off. Two small spotlights to add more brilliance for a closed circuit television monitoring system shine constantly into Ray's 18-by-22-foot cell.

High in a corner over the door to the prisoner's cell is one television camera, another is in the corner opposite it. A third, in a corridor outside the cell, focuses on a shower stall.

The curtain has been removed from the shower and Ray is visible and watched when he showers. He can also be seen when he used the toilet. He is watched when he sleeps under the constant glare of the spotlights and fluorescent lamps.

Under these conditions, on Oct. 11, a Friday, Ray was tested for heart trouble. The results of the tests are not known publicly but Ray is believed to be in good physical health.

However, the 40-year-old ex-convict has a history of psychosomatic illnesses. The symptoms are real, but they are produced in Ray's mind, and not by his body, the physicians say.

Elaborate precautions against poisoning Ray's foods are added to the security system, and an operation costing Shelby County several hundred thousand dollars—2,937.60 alone to put bullet proof glass in the control center.

Ray's meals come from food prepared by a trusty for the deputy sheriffs specially picked by Morris to guard Ray in three shifts, 6 a.m. to 2 p.m., 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. and 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.

JAMES EARL RAY