NIGHT LD

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.

MORRIS, IN CHARGE OF RAY'S SECURITY, BEARS THE ADDITIONAL PROBLEM OF OPERATING A COUNTY JAIL WITH AN AVERAGE OF 325 PRISONERS IN IT DAILY, BUT ONLY 290 BEDS FOR THEM.

FOREMAN, THE CELEBRATED DEFENSE ATTORNEY WHO WAS CALLED IN BY RAY NOV. 12, CONSIDERS THE ELABORATE SECURITY AS GROUNDS FOR MOVING THE TRIAL.

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 WHETHER 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 COUNTRY 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.

THE CONTROL IS THE HEART OF THE SECURITY SYSTEM. BEFORE HE L PUT ARE THREE RED AND THREE GREEN LIGHTS. THREE RED LIGHTS MEAN A "RED ALERT," AND THAT ALL CELL AND OTHER DOORS IN THE JAIL ARE LOCKED.

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 15-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 USES THE TOILET. HE IS WATCHED WHEN HE SLEEPS UNDER THE CONSTANT GLARE OF THE SPOTLIGHTS AND FLUORESCENT LAMPS.

FIVE FEET FROM RAY'S CELL DOOR IS THE "OFFICE," THE NAME GIVEN TO A DESK WHERE RAY'S GUARDS SIT, TWO AT A TIME, THREE SHIFTS A DAY, TALKING TO HIM, PLAYING CARDS WITH HIM, AND WATCHING HIM.

ON ONE END OF THE DESK IS A TELEVISION SET RAY AND THE GUARDS WATCH. ON THE OTHER END IS A MONITOR SET WITH THE GREY IMAGE OF RAY LIVING IN THE CELL THAT HAS BEEN HIS HOME SINCE JULY 19 WHEN HE WAS EXTRADITED FROM LONDON.

A SECOND MONITOR IS IN AN OFFICE ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE 40-YEAR-OLD BUILDING A FEW STEPS FROM THE REMODELED COURTROOM USED BY JUDGE BATTLE. A THIRD IS LOCKED IN A WOODEN CABINET AT THE EDGE OF SHERIFF MORRIS' DESK IN HIS OFFICE. PRISONERS IN THE JAIL SAID RAY HAS BEEN VISITED SEVERAL TIMES BY PHYSICIANS, OR MEN WEARING HOSPITAL UNIFORMS.

HE HAS NOT YET BEEN GIVEN A 30-DAY OBSERVATION PERIOD TO DETERMINE HIS MENTAL ABILITY TO STAND TRIAL. THE PROCEDURE WOULD REQUIRE MOVING HIM TO NASHVILLE AND A STATE HOSPITAL THERE.

THIS IS A NORMAL PROCEDURE FOR ALL PRISONERS ACCUSED OF MAJOR CRIMES, IF THEIR ATTORNEY ASKS FOR THE TESTS.

A RED LIGHT ON MORRIS' DESK LIGHTS WHENEVER RAY'S CELL DOOR OPENS.

UNDER THESE CONDITIONS, ON OCT. 11, A FRIDAY, RAY WAS TESTED FOR

HEAD 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.

HIS FOOD GOES INTO A STEEL LOCKBOX WITH THREE SHELVES AND A CUP HOLDER. THE KEY TO THE LOCKBOX IS KEPT LOCKED IN THE BULLET PROOF CONTROL CENTER.

ONE GUARD TAKES RAY HIS MEAL. THE OTHER GUARD ON DUTY GETS THE KEY TO RAY'S CELL FROM THE CONTROL CENTER.

THE GUARDS, NONE OF WHOM IS ARMED, ALSO FALL UNDER THE SECURITY. SPECIAL NUMBERED TOKENS ARE EXCHANGED ON EACH SHIFT, AND A GUARD CANNOT COME TO WORK OR GET OFF WITHOUT SHOWING HIS TOKEN.

LASTY JULY, SHERIFF MORRIS KEPT HIS MEN ON DUTY AROUND THE CLOCK WITHIN THE JAIL FOR FOUR DAYS, WAITING FOR WORD THAT RAY WAS EN ROUTE FROM LONDON.

WHEN AT LAST THE PRISONER CAME, ONE DEPUTY SAID TO ANOTHER, "BOY, I WISH I COULD GO HOME." THE SECOND ANSWERED, "AMEN." BOTH WERE SUSPENDED FOR 10 DAYS AS DISCIPLINE FOR THEIR COMPLAINTS.

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