SHELBY COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT
CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

November 13, 1968

Sheriff William N. Morris, Jr.
Criminal Courts Building
Memphis, Tennessee

RE: News Media at James Earl Ray
hearing on November 12, 1968

Dear Sir:

I would like to call to your attention the actions of one member of the News Media at the James Earl Ray trial on November 12, 1968.

I personally escorted Mr. Charles Franklin Edmundson, representing the Commercial Appeal, to seat number seven (7) which was assigned to the Commercial Appeal by Judge W. Preston Battle. The position of the seat number seven (7) is North side front row on the aisle. The position of this seat is such that when court is closed for the day the occupant of seat seven is the first person of the News Media to leave the court room, single file, followed by the rows behind row one (1). This has to be done if we are able to clear the court room in an orderly, efficient manner.

On this date at the close of court, I went to Mr. Edmundson in seat seven and started his row single file out of the court room with Mr. Edmunson in front of the line. I was busy seeing that the remaining rows of the News Media were going out single file when I noticed Mr. Edmundson bucking the line and coming back into the court room. Mr. Edmundson was told to file out of the court room and did not do so. Mr. Edmundson was the last member of the News Media out of the court room and he managed to corner Mr. Forman, the defense attorney, in the hall outside of the court room and was trying to get an interview. I notified Chief Nixon and we had to speak to Mr. Edmundson several times and finally escort him from the hall way to the end of the line of the News Media so he would leave this area.

I would also like to call to your attention that on at least one other occasion at a hearing involving James Earl Ray that it was necessary to get Mr. Edmundson from in front of the rail as he was trying to interview Mr. Hanes.

On the morning of November 13, 1968, I contacted Mr. Charles Holmes, who was in charge of the Press and asked if the News Media was advised of the procedure to be used in leaving the court room and going back to the Press Room. Mr. Holmes advised that orally he tolk them it would be single file by seats and they would be escorted by a uniformed officer. Mr. Holmes further stated written procedures of this was given to the News Media also.

I would like to call to your attention the fine cooperation of all other members of the News Media, both local and out of town, in following procedures for entering and leaving the court room. It will be necessary to get 100% cooperation from the News Media or they will turn the court room departure into mass confusion.

Respectfully submitted,

J. L. Cox

J. L. Cox, Captain

JLC/cc