

Immediate release

January 27, 1969

OPEN LETTER

To Judge W. Preston Battle, Criminal Court, Memphis, Tenn.

concerning the JAMES EARL RAY HOAX

by JOACHIM JOESTEN

Your Honor:

James Earl Ray did not kill Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

He was a paid decoy and as such deserves to be punished for his part in the conspiracy. But he did not fire the shot that killed Dr King and, for all his criminal past, he, too, is entitled to justice.

Ray has been charged with murder by the State of Tennessee on the basis of a deliberately false and fraudulent FBI Report. The FBI knows, and so does the State, that Ray did not commit the murder of which he has been accused. The felony of this false accusation is compounded by the hidden intent to shield, through the sacrifice of a scapegoat, the real assassin of Dr. King, whose identity is well known to the FBI.

I am making these charges on the basis of a careful and detailed study of the case. My findings and conclusions are laid down in a 45,000-word documentation, of which a copy is being airmailed to you under separate cover today. Copies are also being sent to the Rev. Ralph Abernathy, Head, Southern Christian Leadership Conference; to the American Civil Liberties Union; and to a select group of newspapers.

This documentation is not just a layman's brief for the defense of a man wrongfully accused. It is also a public indictment of his accusers, in particular J. Edgar Hoover, who personally supervised this frame-up.

I hereby declare and affirm that J. Edgar Hoover wilfully, knowingly and with malice aforethought conspired with other felonious "law-enforcement officials" to bring about the judicial murder of James Earl Ray through trumped-up charges and doctored evidence.

Because Hoover knows that his false and fraudulent case will not stand up in court, extreme pressure is now being brought on Ray, a man virtually defenseless because of his long criminal record and his involvement in the conspiracy to kill King, falsely to plead guilty in return for a promise of leniency. Ray has been informed unambiguously that, if he defends him self against the murder charge, he will be convicted, sentenced to death and executed. On the other hand, he has been promised a recommendation of mercy a comparatively light sentence and an early pardon if he accepts the role of a lone assassin.

That would obviate the inconvenience, for J. Edgar Hoover and the State authorities of having to prove their false and untenable charges in court, but it would hardly serve the cause of justice in America

I trust that you, the judge, will not tolerate this travesty of justice. The documentation which I am making available to Your Honor, will help you establish the truth.

Respectfully yours,

*Joachim Joesten*