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Appeals Court Denies Ray Bid For New Trial

From The Commercial Appeal
Jackson, Tenn., Bureau

JACKSON, Tenn., Feb. 24. — Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals refused a new trial for James Earl Ray in a unanimous ruling here Thursday.

The panel of judges upheld a ruling by Shelby County Criminal Court Judge William H. Williams refusing the new trial.

The judges held that Ray's contentions in his appeal were all unacceptable, ruling that they either did not rise to constitutional proportions, they already had been ruled on, or they concerned constitutional rights waived by his guilty plea.

A new trial based on other grounds previously had been refused by the state Supreme Court.

Ray pleaded guilty before the late Criminal Court Judge W. Preston Battle March 10, 1969, to the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King. He received a 99-year prison sentence.

The judges also affirmed the Shelby County Criminal Court armed robbery and assault convictions of Jessie James Taylor.

Taylor was indicted for armed robbery and attempted robbery in connection with three Memphis liquor stores in September, 1970. He was convicted in each.

The court also affirmed the Shelby County Criminal Court conviction of Harold Ray Moultrie for the Feb. 2, 1970, second-degree burglary of the Samuel Gassaway Jr. home.

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— COMMERCIAL APPEAL
— MEMPHIS, TENN.

Date: 2-25-72
Edition:
Author:
Editor: GORDON HANNA
Title:

44-1987 sub c-503
Character:
or
Classification:
Submitting Office: MEMPHIS
 Being Investigated

INDEXED
SEARCHED
FEB 23 1972
FBI - MEMPHIS
Hester