ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

October 26, 1980

James Earl Ray Seeking Executive Clemency Hearing

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — James Earl Ray, convicted assassin of the Rev. Martin Luther King, is seeking executive clemency as part of a continuing effort to be freed from his 99-year prison sentence.

In a letter last month to the state Board of Pardon and Paroles, Ray asked for an application to obtain an executive clemency hearing. The board recommends clemency candidates to the governor.

"Without going into details at this time, if the board grants me a hearing, I will attempt to present to the board exculpatory evidence and related matter, including those responsible for financing the MLK homicide," Ray said in his letter.

Ray, 52, is confined at Brushy Mountain State Prison in Petros, Tenn. Since being sentenced on March 11, 1969, he has escaped once and is reported to have made at least three other attempts to break out.

Ray plead guilty of the April 4, 1968, killing, but later recanted his plea, saying it had been coerced.