

Ray Pressured for Plea Of Guilty, Lawyer Says

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NASHVILLE, Tenn., March 22 (UPI)—Attorney J. B. Stoner visited James Earl Ray in his prison cell today and later said Ray was innocent of the murder of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. but had been "pressured into pleading guilty."

Stoner, once an organizer for the Ku Klux Klan and the 1964 vice presidential candidate for the National States Rights Party, also claimed to have new information in the Ray case. He declined, however, to elaborate on his charge that pressure was applied.

He said he couldn't divulge the nature of the evidence because "I might need it later on for his trial."

Asked whether it would stand up in court, he said: "According to the information given me, it will stand up very substantially."

Stoner saw Ray for more than two hours in the maximum security section of the Tennessee State Prison and said he "seemed to be in good spirits for a man in this particular hotel."

Stoner said he was not representing Ray in criminal matter but was handling several

libel suits that Ray intends to file against magazines which made "false and defamatory" charges against him.

Memphis police, meantime, said King's murder was so ineptly carried out that it was hard to believe there was a conspiracy.