King plot theory kept alive at Ray memorial

FROM TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICES

NASHVILLE—James Earl Ray was remembered Thursday in a memorial service dominated by questions of whether he was the real assassin of Martin Luther

rights leader, in a statement read at the service by a nephew of her determination for a full investiga-tion to seek out the truth about the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.," said Coretta late husband. Scott King, widow of the slain "We were saddened by the physical pain and suffering James Earl "On this occasion we renew our

Ray endured during the last months of his earthly life," she all of this . . . is that it makes it harder to get at the truth," said Isaac Farris, a nephew of King and chief operating officer of the King Center in Atlanta. "The hardest part for us about

true story about the assassination also backed a trial, claiming the

has yet to be told.

Farris spoke to a black and white crowd inside Metropolitan Interdenominational Church near downtown Nashville. The church agreed to hold the service after in Nashville declined. two other mostly black churches

criminal justice system to give him his day in court, which is the birthright of every American."

regret at the tragic failure of the

"We also shared .

King could not be present because they had planned to be in Wash-Farris said Coretta and Dexter

pleading guilty to the King assassination in Memphis on April 4, 1968. But he recanted almost

99-year prison sentence after

70 last month while serving a

Ray died of liver failure at age

killer lament failure to get trial Families of slain rights leader,

immediately and until the end of his life had sought a trial. He claimed he was a pawn in a ington to meet with President Clinton on the conspiracy ques-

ers remain unidentified and unpunished. Coretta King, son Dexter and other family members larger conspiracy whose organiz-Thursday's nuclear tests by Paki-stan had occupied Clinton's attenceled at the last minute because TIOL He said the meeting was can-

toward recommending some action." Reno had called the family and 'the tone is she may be moving But he said Atty. Gen. Janet

ward. Farris said no new date had been set for the White House involved who would come fortion, with immunity for anyone sion" to investigate the assassina-"truth and reconciliation commis-King's widow has called for a

killed King and that he hadn't been part of a plot. But some books and Ray's own over the years concluded that Ray Several official investigations

actions have kept the conspiracy

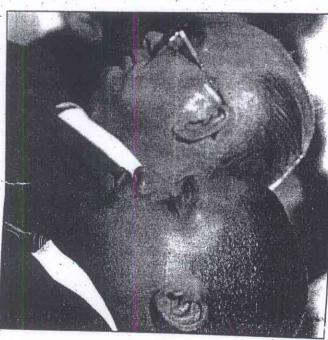
and pink flowers and a single red candle, conspiracy interspersed Ray's ashes rested in a ceramic with prayer and song was again urn in front of an altar with red At Thursday's service, in which

Ray was "a gentle, caring man, very wry, humorous man, with tenacity," said Rev. James Lawson in his eulogy, "He was not the assassin of Dr. King."

maintained that Ray was innostrike that brought the civil rights leader to Memphis. He has long Lawson, pastor of Holman United Methodist Church in Los Angeles, was involved in the 1968

personally for being here." this never should have happened. My brother didn't deserve to be Ray's brother, Jerry, told the assembly "the sad part is that all trial years ago. If James were here he would thank all of you here. . . . He should have had a

Jerry Ray said. Ireland, home of his ancestors, Ray's ashes will be scattered in



of Martin Luther King Jr., pray during Thursday's memorial service. Jerry Ray (left), brother of James Earl Ray, and Isaac Farris, a nephew AP photo