

King's Son Seeks New Ray Trial

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Atlanta — Charging that the whole truth about the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination will die with James Earl Ray, the late civil rights leader's confessed assassin, King's family is asking that he be given a trial to answer the questions that have haunted them for 30 years.

"The lack of a satisfactory resolution to questions surrounding the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. has been a source of continuing pain and hardship to our family," Dexter King, a son of the civil rights leader, said at a news conference yesterday at the King Center with his two sisters, his brother and his mother, Coretta Scott King.

Over the years, Dexter King said, "because of the painful nature of this tragedy, we have reluctantly ignored it, stayed away from it." But now, with Ray dying of cirrhosis of the liver in a Nashville, Tenn., prison, they want the

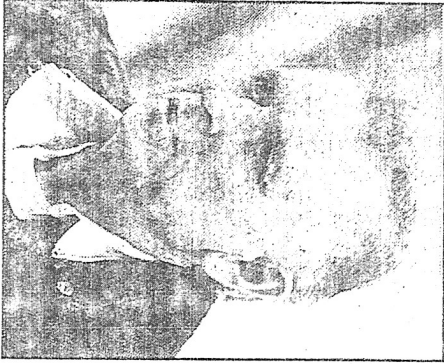
truth known, King said. "It was time to come forward, make a statement about this, which has haunted us for years. If Mr. Ray does not pull through, this will die with him," King said.

Ray, 68, pleaded guilty to killing King and was sentenced to 99 years in prison but later recanted his confession.

Ever since a sniper's bullet cut down King on the balcony of a Memphis motel in 1968, several theories have surfaced as to who was responsible. A 1978 congressional report concluded Ray shot King but said a St. Louis-based conspiracy of bigots was behind the slaying.

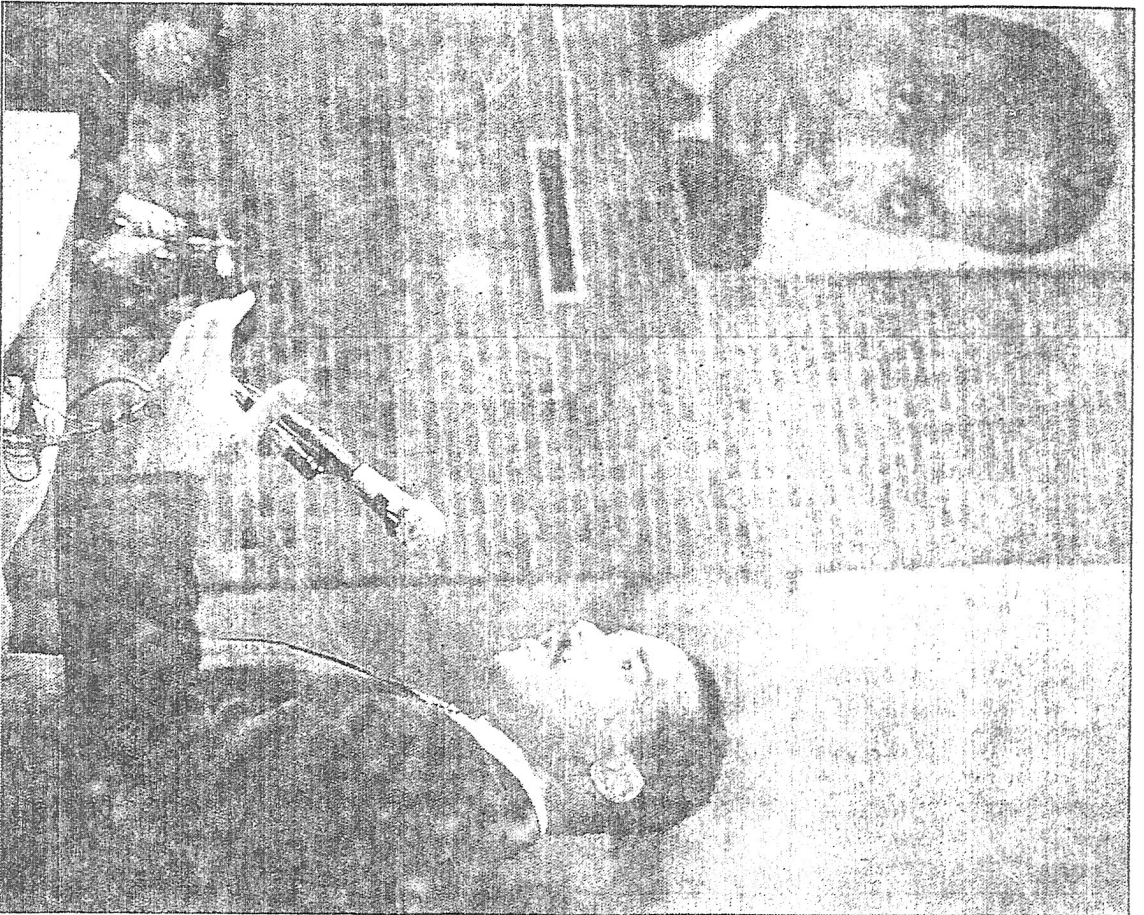
Dexter King said he has always believed others were involved in his father's death, and that a trial may even exonerate Ray. "I think that, by having the trial, a lot of information will be shared that not only will vindicate Mr. Ray but point to others."

In order for Ray to get a trial, his attorneys must prove there is new evidence that could exonerate him.



James Earl Ray

AP Photo, 1991



Dexter King, a son of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., tells reporters he wants a Ray trial.

AP Photo