

## Producer's Lawyer Denies Deal to Film Biography of Ray

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MEMPHIS, March 24 — An attorney for Carlo Ponti, the Italian movie producer, said today that Mr. Ponti had not signed a contract to make a movie of the life story of James Earl Ray, the confessed murderer of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The lawyer said there had been no deal made and that negotiations had fallen through.

Percy Foreman of Houston, Ray's former attorney, said yesterday that the movie rights had been sold for \$175,000 plus 13 per cent of the receipts.

In New York today, Mr. Ponti's attorney said there had been discussions with Mr. Foreman and with William Bradford Huie, the Alabama writer, but that Mr. Ponti had not bought any rights.

The lawyer questioned the need to buy Ray's story. He

said there was enough information in the newspapers to make a film.

Mr. Foreman had said he would receive a \$150,000 fee from Ray for defending him. Ray pleaded guilty two weeks ago and is serving a 99-year sentence in the Tennessee State Prison at Nashville.

Mr. Foreman said his fee would come from the movie rights and from book and magazine royalties to be paid to Mr. Huie. Mr. Foreman estimated that his 60 per cent share of the proceeds from Mr. Huie's writings and for the movie rights would amount to \$400,000. However, anything over \$150,000, he said, would be put into a trust for Ray's family.