

Tennessee Court Turns Down Plea Likened to Ray's

NASHVILLE, March 26 (UPI) — In a ruling that a high legal source said could "fit the James Earl Ray case like a glove," the Tennessee Supreme Court held today that a convicted criminal could not invalidate a prison sentence by asserting that he had pleaded guilty because of faulty advice from his lawyer.

Ray was sentenced to 99 years in the Tennessee State Prison this month after pleading guilty in Memphis to the murder of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

He has since been described as wanting a new trial on the ground that his lawyer, Percy Foreman of Houston, had "pressured" him into pleading guilty. The Tennessee court ruled on an appeal by Robert E. Richmond, who was convicted. Richmond argued that he should get a new trial be-

cause his lawyer, in getting him to plead guilty, had given him "improper advice."

"In cases in which this exercise of judgment by counsel [that of urging a defendant to plead guilty] has been attacked, it has been uniformly held that this is not a ground for invalidating the judgment," the court ruled in rejecting Richmond's appeal.

A legal source highly knowledgeable in Tennessee criminal law said Richmond's argument was similar to that reportedly made by Ray.

"This is the same thing that Ray has to rely on," the source said. "As I interpret the ruling, even if a man has been lied to by his attorney he is stuck with the sentence."

Two Plays Close Quickly

Two closings were announced yesterday. Roger O. Hirsch "World War 2½" was drawn after a single performance on Monday. Martinique Theater Tiger Wear a Petersen, Theater