

NOV-5-1 FEB 2 1973

Fresh Round Opens to Lift Ray's Term

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—Attorneys for James Earl Ray, convicted slayer of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., have begun another round in their attempt to free him from a 99-year state prison sentence.

James H. Lesar and Bernard Fensterwald Jr., both of Washington, and Robert I. Livingston of Memphis submitted a motion in U.S. District Court asking for a hearing to resolve 37 separate issues involved in a habeas corpus petition filed in December.

The motion was in reply to the state's denial of Ray's contention that he was coerced into pleading guilty to the King slaying.

The habeas corpus petition contended that Percy Foreman of Houston, Tex., and Arthur Hanes of Birmingham, Ala., the first lawyers to represent Ray after his arrest 3½ years ago had conflicts of interest in the matter because of their connection with writer William Bradford Huie.

The petition contended that Foreman coerced Ray into pleading guilty to killing the civil rights leader because a full trial would have ruined the market for Huie's book about Ray.

The State of Tennessee, in its answer to the habeas corpus petition, contends that Ray's guilty plea was voluntary, that the trial judge found a factual basis for Ray's plea and that there was overwhelming evidence against him.

The motion filed Thursday denies the state's contention and asks the court to conduct a full hearing on the matter.