

Ray Denied Meeting with New Lawyer

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — James Earl Ray, who wants to disavow his admission of guilt in the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., has been denied an immediate meeting with a Memphis attorney at the state prison here.

Harry S. Avery, Tennessee commissioner of corrections, said Richard J. Ryan was turned away by prison officials yesterday because he had not been officially retained as Ray's lawyer.

In another development, the Tennessee Supreme Court handed down a decision which could become a major hurdle for Ray in his bid to gain a new trial and overturn his 99-year sentence.

The court, in an opinion by Justice Allison B. Humphreys dealing with a burglary conviction, ruled that a convicted criminal cannot seek to invalidate a prison sentence on grounds he was misadvised by his attorney to plead guilty.

Jerry Ray, James' brother, said last week Ray would ask for a new trial on grounds he was "pressured" by his former attorney, Percy Foreman, into entering a guilty plea. Foreman has denied he put pressure on Ray.