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MEMPHIS, Tenn. AP — James Earl Ray took the first formal step Monday to get a full-fledged trial for the slaying of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

A motion, signed by Ray and a trio of attorneys, requesting a new trial was filed in Shelby County Criminal Court.

No date was set for hearing the motion. It was anticipated that Ray, who was held in a top-security cell in the Memphis jail for eight months, would be returned for such a hearing.

The petition charges that Ray's previous guilty plea was "a farce, a sham and a mockery of justice." He has contended he was forced into making the plea.

Ray's three-page motion said that one of the grounds on which he seeks a new trial is the "conflict of interest" of his two previous defense attorneys, Arthur Hanes of Birmingham and Percy Foreman of Houston.

Ray said the two attorneys "actually represented William Bradford Huie and their own financial interests. . . ." Huie has written magazine articles regarding Ray, will publish a book on Ray's life and is negotiating movie rights for it.

The motion said if Ray had been allowed to take the witness stand, "there would have been no profits for those parties."

Ray pleaded guilty March 10 to shooting King and was sentenced to 99 years in the state penitentiary. He began talking about moving for a full trial virtually as soon as his guilty plea was entered.

The motion, signed by Richard Ryan of Memphis, Ray's third defense attorney, who conferred with Ray in the state penitentiary in Nashville on Saturday, and lawyers J. B. Stoner of Savannah, Ga., and Robert W. Hill of Chattanooga, Tenn., alleged that Ray had been pressured into entering the guilty plea and thus avoiding a jury trial.

Under Tennessee law, a guilty plea in a capital case requires the state only to present evidence that a crime was committed. In the March 10 hearing the state presented five witnesses to prove that King had been killed, and then an assistant prosecutor outlined the case the state would have presented had there been a full trial.

Ray previously wrote two letters to the late Judge W. Preston Battle, who had received his guilty plea, stating that he wanted a new trial. The second letter was found among Battle's papers after the judge died March 31.

Judge Arthur Faquin was named by the other criminal court judges to take the Ray case after Battle died. The new trial motion was filed in his division of court.

Ray had been represented by Percy Foreman, the noted attorney from Houston, Tex., when he entered his guilty plea. Soon after he was transported to the state penitentiary in Nashville to begin serving his term, Ray wrote Battle that he had fired Foreman. Ryan later was listed as Ray's new counsel, and Judge Faquin gave Ryan permission to meet with Ray in the state penitentiary.

Stoner, long associated with Ku Klux Klan legal activities, had met with Ray earlier. At that time he said he was representing Ray only in civil matters.

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