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MEMPHIS AP - James Earl Ray, contending that two of his lawyers were more interested in financial gains than his fate, has officially asked for a new trial in the slaying of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

In a petition filed Monday Ray said he was "pressured" into a March 10 guilty plea because a trial would have made the facts a "matter of public record for the free use of all" and would have endangered the success of a projected book and movie.

Ray was represented first by Arthur Hanes of Birmingham, an attorney he fired in November, and then by Percy Foreman of Houston, who arranged a 99-year sentence in exchange for the guilty plea.

The motion said Foreman "pressured him, and he, the defendant, under duress due to this pressure, entered a plea of 'guilty' for the sole financial gain of the said attorney."

Attached to the petition were letters and agreements involving Ray, author William Bradford Huie of Hartselle, Ala., who is writing a book about Ray and negotiating movie rights, Hanes and Foreman.

They outlined financial arrangements under which Huie, who has already written a series of magazine articles on the case, will pay part of his royalties to the two attorneys.

Ray said in the motion that if he had taken the stand in a full scale trial, "then he would have no book."

He contended that his guilty plea was "a farce, a sham and a mockery of justice."

No date has been set for a hearing on the motion. The attorney general's office has said that Ray would be returned from his maximum security cell in the penitentiary in Nashville to Memphis for any such hearings.

The motion was filed by three men listed as attorneys for Ray - Richard J. Ryan of Memphis, J. B. Stoner of Savannah, Ga., and Robert W. Hill Jr. of Chattanooga.

Ray formally dismissed Foreman as his attorney in a letter to Criminals

Ray formally dismissed Foreman as his attorney in a letter to Criminal Court Judge W. Preston Battle on March 17. Battle, who had received the guilty plea March 10, died of a heart attack March 21 and a previously undisclosed second letter from Ray was found among his effects.

It said the letter should be taken as notice of an intention to seek a new trial and the petition filed Monday was listed as an amended and supplemental motion to the letter, which was dated March 26.

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