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Ray WL 550

By BILL RAWLINS

Associated Press Writer

NASHVILLE, Tenn. AP — James Earl Ray, serving a 99-year sentence in the death of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., sought Friday to void contracts for at least \$200,000 with his former lawyer and a biographer. Robert Hill Jr., a Chattanooga lawyer, filed suit in U.S. District Court accusing lawyer Percy Foreman of Houston, Tex., and writer William Bradford Huie of Hartsville, Ala., of "looking out for their monetary interests, rather than the rights" of Ray.

The suit and exhibits show Foreman was to receive royalties up to \$100,000 from writings by Huie on Ray's life. Huie was to receive at least \$25,000 himself from sale of magazine articles and a book entitled, "He Slew the Dreamer."

The result, the lawsuit said, was that Foreman had a "a strong monetary interest in having Ray found guilty and sentenced to a 99-year term for a crime which he did not commit."

The development came as a spokesman for Criminal Court at Memphis said an announcement was expected Wednesday on a date for a hearing for Ray's attempt to win a new trial on a first-degree murder charge in King's death. Ray fired Foreman after pleading guilty March 10.

Both the new trial bid and the attempt to nullify the contracts with Foreman and Huie are based on Ray's charges that he was "induced by Foreman—a charge which Foreman has denied."

The lawsuit in federal court says Ray "charges that Foreman advised, then cajoled, then pressured him into pleading guilty to the aforementioned charge of murder in the first degree."

The petition for a preliminary injunction against enforcing the contracts said, "Foreman told him that this course was the only way to save Ray's life—all of this in spite of the fact that petitioner had at all times protested his innocence to Mr. Foreman."

King was slain April 4, 1968, in Memphis, where he had gone to lead a demonstration of the city's 1,200 garbage workers, who settled a strike against the city soon after the civil rights leader's death.

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Ray pleaded guilty before the late Judge W. Preston Battle Jr. of Memphis. When Battle died subsequently of a heart attack, Criminal Court Judge Arthur Faquin Jr. of Memphis was assigned to preside over Ray's case—including his bid to win a new trial.

Other accusations against Foreman and Huie in the federal lawsuit included one that Foreman "released statements to... Huie... purported to be from Ray" which were "of a confidential nature and privileged between client and attorney."

Ray charges "that there since has appeared in a national (Look) magazine an article in which Huie sets forth certain statements purportedly made by Ray. Even if such statements were true, which petitioner denies, they could only have been based on statements made to his lawyer, therefore bringing them under the rule of privilege between attorney and client...."

Ray's suit also says that Foreman was "the agent of the correspondent William B. Huie and was in fact looking out for their monetary interests, rather than the rights of this petitioner."

Hill, meanwhile, told newsmen that he had been turned back by Warden Lake Russell when he sought to visit Ray at the state penitentiary Friday morning.

Harry S. Avery, state corrections commissioner, said no prisoner is allowed to visit anyone but his defense lawyer during his classification period, which takes about six weeks.

Ray has notified prison officials that his new defense lawyer, after he fired Foreman, is Richard C. Ryan of Memphis. Ryan, Hill and J.B. Stoner of Savannah, Ga., all were listed as Ray's lawyers when he filed his formal bid for a new trial earlier this week.

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