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Date May 17, 1968

JAMES LOAMA OWENS, Rural Route Number 3, Sunrise Lake, DeSoto, Missouri, (Jefferson County), telephone number - JUstice 6-2044, who stated he is currently employed as an automobile salesman by the Arnold Chevrolet Company, Crystal City, Missouri, furnished the following information:

In 1959 OWENS, while on parole from the Illinois State Penitentiary at Menard, Illinois, on a conviction for robbery, was residing at the St. Louis Rescue Mission located at approximately 4200 Olive Street, St. Louis, Missouri, which was a sort of "half-way" house where ex-convicts and parolees resided. It was at that Mission in 1959 that OWENS first met and became acquainted with JAMES EARL RAY. OWENS recalls that "BLACKIE" AUSTIN, who was also on parole out of Menard, was also residing at the same Mission in St. Louis at that time and brought RAY around to the Mission as a friend and it was as a result of this that OWENS became acquainted with RAY.

OWENS, as one of the conditions of his parole, was employed at that time at the St. Louis Rescue Mission, as a barber.

After OWENS became acquainted with RAY, he learned that RAY's mother and grandmother were then operating a rooming house on Hickory Street near Mississippi Avenue in St. Louis and OWENS assumed that RAY was living with the mother and grandmother there, although he did not have specific information in that regard. OWENS does recall on one or two occasions he accompanied RAY to the rooming house operated by the mother and grandmother.

OWENS has always liked RAY, characterizing him as a quiet fellow, who never pried or bragged. He was a thinker and a reader. He read a wide variety of things and OWENS does not recall that he had any special interest in any particular subject or topic of reading material. RAY also liked automobiles and liked guns. The type of guns which RAY apparently liked and the only type of guns OWENS knew of him to have were pistols and handguns, not rifles or shotguns.

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On 5/16/68 at Jefferson County, Missouri File # SL: 44-775  
 by SA ALBERT J. RUSHING AJR:jfb 5/16/68  
SA ROBERT L. BENDER Date dictated \_\_\_\_\_

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OWENS learned that RAY was an excellent shot and that RAY sometimes went to secluded spots for target shooting. OWENS once went with RAY somewhere in Illinois for target shooting, at which time RAY had with him two .38 caliber pistols. OWENS shot with RAY on this occasion and observed that RAY was extremely expert and could shoot at a can and keep it bouncing by firing at it and hitting it repeatedly before it stopped rolling.

In association with RAY in 1959 OWENS learned that RAY was a moderate drinker, who did not drink beer and whose favorite drink appeared to be Bourbon highballs. OWENS knows of no particular tavern where RAY frequented but observed that RAY usually drank at taverns in the vicinity of Sarah and Olive Street in St. Louis, which was in the vicinity of the Mission where OWENS usually saw RAY when the latter came by the Mission.

OWENS observed that RAY had no employment during this time but was obviously a professional thief who apparently pulled mainly robberies and occasionally some burglaries.

OWENS characterizes RAY as a "pistol man." RAY was definitely a "loner."

In conversations, OWENS learned from RAY that RAY had served a Federal sentence following a theft of money orders with another man and it appeared from comments made by RAY that he mistrusted other people and would not go on jobs with another person.

RAY impressed OWENS as having sympathy for common people and for the working man and RAY expressed a philosophy that he would only hit places of businesses such as would probably be covered by insurance.

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On two or three occasions RAY came to the Mission with an older man, about sixty years of age, whose first name was JACK and whose surname was something like GOAN (phonetic). OWENS learned that this man JACK was on parole out of Menard and was considered by RAY as an old friend. OWENS cut this old man's hair once or twice at the Mission. He gained the impression that this old man, JACK, was an old professional burglar and that he was "kinky" (still pulling burglaries) even then. OWENS has no definite information as to whether RAY and JACK ever went on any jobs together but observed that they were obviously very friendly.

During this period in 1959 RAY always appeared to have money and to be "well-heeled," although he never worked. It was obvious to OWENS that RAY was obtaining his money from robberies and burglaries. RAY was thrifty and appeared to save his money. On one occasion, at RAY's request, OWENS drove RAY to a bank in St. Louis located on South Broadway near the Anheuser-Busch Brewery and RAY told OWENS on this occasion that he had an account at that bank. OWENS waited in the car outside while RAY went in the bank and RAY then returned to the car and showed OWENS \$1,000.00 worth of Travelers Checks, which OWENS understood had been purchased by RAY in the bank. OWENS did not positively know whether RAY had taken cash into the bank to purchase these Travelers Checks or had withdrawn the necessary funds for the purchase from the account which RAY said he had in the same bank. RAY told OWENS that he had purchased these Travelers Checks for the purpose of taking a trip to Canada.

It was about a month later when OWENS next saw RAY, at which time RAY said he had been to Canada. RAY did not at any time explain to OWENS why he had gone to Canada. This was characteristic of RAY, however, who was always extremely closed-mouth and did not generally explain his activities to anyone.

With regard to the possibility of any other money that RAY might have had in a bank, OWENS has some vague recollection in the back of his mind that RAY might have at some time mentioned having money in a bank other than the one referred to

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above, but OWENS can recall no specific information in this regard.

OWENS can recall only one additional associate or acquaintance of RAY during the 1959 period and that person was "BLACKIE" DE CORE, who was from Chicago and who was a gambler and former professional prize fighter. DE CORE was then about forty years of age and was on a life parole out of Menard and was staying at the St. Louis Rescue Mission at the time. DE CORE did not appear to be nearly as close or as friendly with RAY as did "BLACKIE" AUSTIN and the old man named JACK.

RAY did not gamble and did not fool with narcotics or "junk" of any kind. He seemed to have the attitude regarding women that they were something to use and forget. Actually he appeared to prefer a girl who was a "bum" and was not known to have had any girlfriend as such or any continuing association with any girl or woman.

On the one or two occasions when OWENS was at the rooming house on Hickory Street operated by RAY's mother and grandmother, OWENS also learned that RAY had a young kid brother named "BUZZY," who resided with the mother and grandmother. OWENS has never known or heard specifically of any other relatives of RAY.

RAY always appeared absolutely to have no dislike for Negroes. On the contrary, he always seemed to take a man for what he was, regardless of color. In OWENS' opinion, if RAY killed MARTIN LUTHER KING, as alleged, he did not do so out of any kind of racial hatred and such an act in OWENS' opinion would have had to be for money.

During the period of their association in 1959 RAY used various names, always with the first name JIM. The only three surnames which OWENS can recall as having been used by RAY were the names O'CONNOR, RYAN and RAY. When OWENS initially became acquainted with RAY at the St. Louis Rescue Mission

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RAY was using the name JIM O'CONNOR. The name ERIC STARVO GALT is completely unknown to OWENS and he has no idea where RAY might have obtained or thought of such a name.

Regarding the robbery of the Kroger Store in St. Louis by OWENS and RAY in 1959, OWENS furnished the following information:

Contrary to what OWENS regards as RAY's usual characteristic of carefully planning anything he did, the robbery of the Kroger Store was a stupid job which occurred "at the tail-end of a drunk." Although RAY did not normally drink to excess at all, RAY and OWENS on this occasion had been drunk and were still under the effects of that when the robbery was pulled, and it was merely an effort to get additional money to continue their drinking. RAY informed OWENS that somebody had spotted this supermarket which should be good for several thousand dollars. RAY had already cased it. RAY had with him the same two .38 caliber guns which OWENS and RAY had previously used in target shooting and RAY furnished one of these guns to OWENS for this robbery.

RAY had stolen an old Ford automobile which was their first get-away car and they then switched to OWENS' automobile, at which time some witness apparently obtained the license number on OWENS' car. OWENS and RAY, immediately following the robbery, went to a rooming house on Park Avenue near Mississippi Avenue in St. Louis where RAY then had a room. They went to RAY's room and a few minutes later, when OWENS came out to his car, he found the car surrounded with police who arrested OWENS.

The police then went into the house and arrested RAY also. Neither RAY nor OWENS were ever released on bond following their arrest. OWENS entered a plea of guilty to the robbery charge and received a sentence of seven years. RAY, however, insisted on going to trial and was sentenced to twenty years.

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OWENS, after his plea of guilty, preceded RAY to the Penitentiary at Jefferson City, Missouri, and had already been there several months when RAY arrived to serve the twenty-year sentence.

OWENS was released from the Missouri State Penitentiary in 1963 upon completion of his sentence and was immediately thereafter returned to the Illinois State Penitentiary at Menard as a Parole Violator on the robbery conviction. OWENS owed twenty-three months on that parole violation. He completed all of that term and received his outright release in May, 1965, from Menard.

OWENS thereafter returned to St. Louis and was briefly employed as a Fuller Brush Salesman in St. Louis, following which he was employed from October, 1965, to February, 1966, as a maintenance man at Washington University in St. Louis. In February, 1966, OWENS went to California, where he resided with his mother and brother and he was employed there with White Heat Company, 2508 Randolph Street, Huntington Park, California, for about ten months as a maintenance man. He was then employed by the W. W. Henry Company, Beckett Street, Huntington Park, California, until he returned to St. Louis, Missouri, in December, 1966.

Upon his return to St. Louis in December, 1966, OWENS took a vacation for about a month and was in Las Vegas and Arizona during that time. He was thereafter employed by the Lindell Plaza Hotel, St. Louis, as a maintenance man. Thereafter, he was employed as the chief engineer at the Liggett and Meyers Tobacco Company in St. Louis until he began his present employment, about five weeks ago, as an automobile salesman with the Arnold Chevrolet Company, Crystal City, Missouri.

OWENS has resided at his present address in Jefferson County, Missouri, since July 23, 1967. His last previous address

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was the Missouri Apartments, Delmar Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri, across the street from St. Luke's Hospital, where he lived for about five months until he moved to his present address.

While in the Missouri State Penitentiary, OWENS and RAY were never assigned in the same residence hall, nor were they assigned in the same working area at any time. OWENS worked the entire time in the plumbing shop in the Penitentiary. RAY worked in the prison cleaning shop and in the bakery during the time OWENS was in the Penitentiary. However, OWENS did see RAY from time to time outside on the Penitentiary yard and occasionally talked to RAY there.

There has never been any animosity of any kind between OWENS and RAY and the latter has never indicated any resentment or any cause of resentment toward OWENS in connection with the Kroger Store robbery or for any other reason. RAY has always appeared to be entirely friendly toward OWENS and has never indicated in any way that he felt OWENS did anything wrong in connection with the robbery or at the time of their arrest in St. Louis.

While in the Missouri State Penitentiary, OWENS became aware that RAY was apparently dealing in pills, such as Benzedrine and amphetamine, which RAY was in some manner obtaining outside the Penitentiary and was selling to inmates in the Penitentiary. OWENS occasionally saw exchange of money to RAY from other inmates. OWENS never knew the manner in which these pills were being conveyed to RAY in the penitentiary but was aware that this type of practice was being carried on by other prisoners in addition to RAY and that there were various means wherein such items could be brought into the penitentiary. It has been OWENS' general understanding for example that sometimes guards have been used to bring in such items, as well as relatives of the inmates on the occasions of their visits, or such items have been brought in by prisoners who work on the Honor Farm and who are not carefully searched when returned inside the walls.

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OWENS did not acquire any knowledge as to how much money RAY made in this practice but would estimate that he might earn as much as \$500.00 or \$1,000.00 in the course of a year or two. OWENS does not know how RAY may have gotten his money outside the penitentiary but again is aware that there are various means by which inmates have been able to accomplish this.

OWENS also became aware while in the penitentiary that RAY was apparently engaged in making small loans to inmates. Although RAY himself did not ever comment to OWENS concerning this business, OWENS at one time had a cellmate who OWENS understood had borrowed money from RAY. OWENS understood that it was the general practice for inmates such as RAY who made loans to receive repayment at the rate of \$3.00 for \$2.00. OWENS does not believe on the basis of his general knowledge and information that RAY might have accumulated an amount such as several thousand dollars as a result of his handling pills and loans in the penitentiary.

OWENS was still an inmate in the penitentiary on the occasion when RAY, while working in the cleaning plant, attempted to escape by putting two old ladders on the wall behind the cleaning plant. According to what OWENS heard immediately after this attempted escape, the ladders broke with RAY, as a result of which he was injured, knocked out and discovered by the prison guards.

Subsequent to OWENS release from the penitentiary, he heard of the incident in which RAY allegedly hid out for a few days inside the penitentiary. OWENS recalls that on one occasion, while in the penitentiary, RAY mentioned to him that he was too young to remain in the penitentiary and serve his entire sentence and RAY spoke in general terms of the possibility that he might some day attempt to escape. RAY referred to no specific plans in this regard, however.

During OWENS association with RAY, he learned from RAY that prior to OWENS becoming acquainted with RAY in 1959 RAY had



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made several trips, apparently at least a dozen trips, to Mexico. RAY spoke of having been in various places and the only specific places OWENS can recall which were mentioned by RAY were Mexico City, Veracruz, Acapulco and Nogales. RAY did not at any time discuss with OWENS the details of his trips to Mexico, although RAY did mention in at least one instance that he had gone to Mexico to "cool off." RAY did not discuss with OWENS the details of his activities in Mexico or who he knew there, but did briefly mention on one occasion that one time when he was in Mexico City he had become involved in an altercation with a man in an alley, who came at RAY with a knife, at which time RAY struck the man in the head with a pistol and thereafter had to leave Mexico City.

OWENS is of the belief that RAY could not speak Spanish, despite his trips to Mexico. In that regard, OWENS said he knows a few words of Spanish but RAY did not know any Spanish.

OWENS believes that on the basis of RAY's having made trips to Mexico in the past, RAY might have conceivably gone to Mexico after his escape in 1967. OWENS has also been aware from RAY that the latter was a military policeman in Germany while in military service and OWENS would assume that RAY might, therefore, also go to Germany.

OWENS characterizes RAY as very smart, a thinker and not a talker. RAY plans every angle before he makes a move. OWENS feels that upon RAY's having escaped from the penitentiary and even before the incident involving the killing of MARTIN LUTHER KING, RAY would not be expected to be in contact with relatives or previous acquaintances at any time after the escape.

OWENS felt, however, in the event RAY had an outside contact who was assisting him in his illicit traffic within the penitentiary and who might owe either money or a favor to RAY in connection with this business, RAY might quite logically contact this party after his escape.

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With regard to the old man named JACK, who was friendly with RAY in 1959, as previously referred to, OWENS has never seen or heard of that man again since 1959 with the exception that OWENS did hear somewhere afterward that JACK had gone back to Menard as a Parole Violator.

OWENS has had checking accounts at the following banks in St. Louis, since his release from the Illinois State Penitentiary at Menard, in May, 1965:

The Jefferson-Gravois Bank, where OWENS opened a checking account in 1965, which was closed in about February, 1966, when OWENS went to California;

The Manchester Bank, where OWENS opened an account in January, 1967, and where there is still a balance in the account of about \$3.00 or \$4.00, the account having been inactive in recent months.

Since October, 1967, OWENS has had a checking account at the American Bank, DeSoto, Missouri, where he currently has an account.

Except for the above, OWENS has had no banking business, including accounts of any kind, loans or safe deposit boxes, at any other bank in St. Louis since his release from Menard in 1965.

Since OWENS' release from the Missouri State Penitentiary at Jefferson City, Missouri, he has had no contact of any kind, either direct or indirect, with RAY and they have never had any correspondence. OWENS has also had no contact whatsoever with any of RAY's relatives, since OWENS was released from the Missouri State Penitentiary. The last contact OWENS has had with anyone known to him to be an associate or acquaintance of RAY, was "BLAKE" AUSTIN, who was in the Illinois State Penitentiary

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at Menard, while OWENS was there 1963 to 1965. "BLACKIE" AUSTIN was still at Menard when OWENS was released there.

Since about February, 1966, OWENS has not on any occasion been inside the Jefferson-Gravois Bank, nor has he been on foot outside that bank on any occasion during that period. At the very most, he may have passed by the bank in an automobile on one or two occasions.

While OWENS was at the Missouri State Penitentiary, he became acquainted with JAMES WALLACE, who was an inmate there. He did not know JAMES WALLACE at all until he became acquainted with him in the penitentiary. OWENS definitely was not raised with WALLACE.

In 1965, during which time OWENS had a checking account at the Jefferson Gravois Bank in St. Louis, he recalls an occasion when he parked his car on the bank parking lot to go to the bank. As he started in the door of the bank for the purpose of making a deposit to his account, he saw JAMES WALLACE, who was standing on the street corner outside the bank, with a girl. As OWENS was going into the bank, WALLACE stated to the effect, "Are you taking some out or putting some in?" OWENS replied to the effect, "I'm putting some in." They had no further conversation.

OWENS was definitely alone on this occasion. OWENS never on any other occasion saw or knew the girl who was with WALLACE and he paid very little attention to her, as a result of which he cannot describe her, except he had impression that she was a white girl, who was rather heavy-set and "was no raving beauty." OWENS is certain that this encounter at the Jefferson-Gravois Bank occurred in the summer time, because he recalls that the girl was not wearing a coat and that both he and WALLACE were wearing short-sleeve shirts and warm weather clothing.

The checking account of OWENS at the Jefferson-Gravois Bank, as previously referred to, was a joint checking account held by OWENS and his mother and was in the names of JAMES and IDA OWENS.

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OWENS denied that he was ever in the company of JAMES EARL RAY at the Jefferson-Gravois Bank on the occasion referred to above or on any other occasions, since OWEN's release from the Penitentiary.

He repeatedly reiterated his denial that he has seen RAY or had any kind of contact with him or any knowledge of his whereabouts since RAY escaped from the penitentiary in 1965.

OWENS cannot recall ever having known anyone by the name of "COOLEY," either in the Missouri State Penitentiary or elsewhere and that name has no meaning or significance to OWENS.

OWENS, without hesitation, stated he would be entirely willing to notify the Federal Bureau of Investigation if he should at any time receive any information which might be of assistance in locating JAMES EARL RAY and stated he would certainly do so.

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Date May 17, 19681

Mrs. JAMES (MILDRED) OWENS (nee SLOVE), Rural Route Number 3, Sunrise Lake, DeSoto, Missouri, (Jefferson County), who stated she is a registered nurse, currently employed as a nurse at the Bonne Terre Hospital, Bonne Terre, Missouri, was present during an interview conducted by Special Agents ALBERT J. RUSHING and ROBERT L. BENDER with her husband at the residence on May 16, 1968.

At the conclusion of the interview with Mr. OWENS, Mrs. OWENS advised that she and her husband were married on March 9, 1967, at St. Louis County, Missouri; that they have continuously resided together as man and wife since their marriage; that she has never seen JAMES EARL RAY in her life and never heard of him until there was recent publicity regarding him, at which time her husband told her of his previous knowledge of RAY.

Mrs. OWENS said she has no information in addition to that furnished by her husband which might be of assistance in locating JAMES EARL RAY.

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On 5/16/68 at Jefferson County, Missouri File # SL: 44-775  
 by SA ALBERT J. RUSHING AJR:jfb 5/16/68  
SA ROBERT L. BENDER Date dictated \_\_\_\_\_

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## FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1Date May 24, 1968

JAMES LOAMA OWENS, Rural Route 3, Sunrise Lake, DeSoto, Missouri (Jefferson County) telephone Justice 6-2044, was contacted by telephone and inquiry was made of him as to what publications were habitually read by JAMES EARL RAY.

OWENS said that RAY was indiscriminate in his reading and that he read almost anything and everything he could get his hands on. OWENS said he did not believe he could identify any specific publication which RAY read. OWENS said however, that RAY read all the newspapers he could lay his hands on and particularly read the two major daily newspaper publications in St. Louis.

Inquiry was made of OWENS as to whether, in view of RAY's interest in automobiles and guns, as previously indicated by OWENS, RAY might not have read magazines pertaining to automobiles and guns. OWENS said he could not recall that RAY read any particular magazines devoted to those subjects but he did now recall that among all the various things that RAY read were included various sporting magazines. OWENS said that although he could not recall what specific magazines would have been included, he believed that the type of such magazines read by RAY would have included the type represented by Field and Stream and Argosy.

OWENS said he could not be more specific in describing or identifying publications read by RAY.

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On 5/16/68 at St. Louis, Missouri File # SL 44-775  
 by SA ALBERT J. RUSHING/leh Date dictated 5/22/68

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Date May 21, 19681.

JAMES LOAMA OWENS, RFD 3, Sunrise Lake, De Soto, Missouri (Jefferson County), telephone JUSTICE 6-2044, was contacted by telephone, and he advised as follows:

The name of "BLACKIE" DE CORE (phonetic) which was mentioned by OWENS in an interview on May 16, 1967, is the name of that individual as OWENS knew it. He believes the name was actually spelled DE CORE, but is not certain in that respect. He feels definite in his recollection that the name was not pronounced DE COOK. The man OWENS knew as DE CORE was certainly not as big as six feet one inch, and 240 pounds, but was approximately five feet nine inches, and 180 pounds. DE CORE definitely had a criminal record and was on parole from the Illinois State Penitentiary, Menard, Illinois, at the time OWENS knew him in 1959.

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On 5/17/68 at Jefferson County, Missouri File # SL 44-775

by SA ALBERT J. RUSHING:bam Date dictated 5/20/68

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1.

AJR:bam  
SL 44-775

The following is the FBI Identification Record as of May 15, 1968, pertaining to JAMES LOAMA OWENS, also known as JAMES LAOMA OWENS, JAMES LOMA OWENS, JAMES LONA OWENS, FBI #1 397 707:



DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

5-15-68 154 J

*J. Edgar Hoover*  
Director.

The following FBI record, NUMBER **1 397 707**, is furnished FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY.

CONTRIBUTOR OF FINGERPRINTS	NAME AND NUMBER	ARRESTED OR RECEIVED	CHARGE	DISPOSITION
PD, St. Louis, Mo.	James Loma Owens #42884	3-6-37	robbery	10-8-37 7 yrs. in Mo.S.Int. Ref
St. Int. Ref., Jefferson City, Mo.	James L. Owens #2445	10-28-37	robbery 1st.	7 yrs. - #escape 6-27-38 ret. sm day trans. to M SPr. as #51226
SP., Jefferson City Mo.	James L. Owens #51226	7-19-38	PG robbery 1st (3 chgs)	7 yrs. - par. b the Governor 8-3
ONI, Wash DC MID, Wash. DC	James Loama Owens #-	applicant for position Combustion Engr. Co. inc. Maine Boiler Division St. Louis, Mo. 8-15-41		
Capt. of the Port New York, N.Y.	James Loama Owens, #031-1085614-B	ident. card 6-17-43		
SOS War Dept.	James Loama Owens #32-ORS	welder 7-17-43		
U.S. Comm., Wash., D. C.	James L. Owens Residence: H.P.D. San Fran. Calif. Born: [redacted]	F.P. 8-17-45 Hunters Point, San Fran. Calif.	Position: electric welder, U.S. Naval Drydocks, Hunters Point, San Fran Calif.	
PD East St. Louis, Ill.	James Loama Owens #3769	9-4-46	armed robbery	

SEARCHED.....	INDEXED.....
SERIALIZED.....	FILED.....
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FBI - SAINT LOUIS	

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Notations indicated by \* ARE NOT BASED ON FINGERPRINTS IN FBI files. The notations are based on data formerly furnished this Bureau concerning individuals of the same or similar names or aliases and ARE LISTED

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
 FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
 WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

5-15-68 154 JL

*J. Edgar Hoover*  
 Director.

2 The following FBI record, NUMBER 1 397 707, is furnished FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY.

CONTRIBUTOR OF FINGERPRINTS	NAME AND NUMBER	ARRESTED OR RECEIVED	CHARGE	DISPOSITION
SP, Menard, Ill.	James Owens #20208	3-12-47	robbery	1-20 yrs. 6-28-52 paroled paroled 7-7-59 disch 6-27-65
PD, St. Louis, Mo.	James Loma Owens #42884	1-24-48	inquiry	
PD St Louis Mo	James Loma Owens #42884	8-8-54	sus burg	4-29-55 PG sent on ca chg to 6 yrs in Mo SP to run concurrently on chg of burg 2nd deg & larc rape passing worthless checks 2 chgs larc of auto
SP Jefferson City Mo	James Loama Owens #69846	5-18-55	burg 2nd & larc obt money & goods b/m of bogus ck obt money b/m of a bogus ck (3 chgs)	6 yrs paroled 6-8-57 on chg of burg & larc
SP Menard Ill	James Owens #20208	5-8-57	robb etc	1-20 yrs (par viol)
PD St Louis Mo	James Loma Owens #42884	10-10-59	susp robbery	
PD St Louis Mo	James Loma Owens #42884	10-16-59	susp fug Alton Ill-susp rob susp parole viol	
SPen Jefferson City Mo	James Laoma Owens #00134	2-5-60	PG: robb 1st means of D & D	7 yrs disch 1-2-64
SPen Menard Ill	James Owens #20208	1-2-64	PV etc (rob etc)	1-20 yrs

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Notations indicated by \* ARE NOT BASED ON FINGERPRINTS IN FBI files. (The notations are based on data

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
 WASHINGTON, D.C. 20537

3-13-66

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*J. Edgar Hoover*  
 Director.

The following FBI record, NUMBER 1 397 707 , is furnished FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY.

CONTRIBUTOR OF FINGERPRINTS	NAME AND NUMBER	ARRESTED OR RECEIVED	CHARGE	DISPOSITION
PD Long Beach Calif	James L. Owens #226302	10-15-66	intox	BF
USCG	James Loama Owens #Z-512077 AP	FP 1-20-67		

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Information shown on this Identification Record represents data furnished FBI by fingerprint contributors. Where final disposition is not shown or further explanation of status is desired, contact...

1  
SL 44-775  
AJR/ral

RE: FELLOW PRISONER -  
JAMES D. WALLACE

AT ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

On May 21, 1968, Mrs. JAMES D. (BETTY J.) WALLACE, 1031 Lynch, St. Louis, Missouri, who operates a small neighborhood food shop at the same address, was interviewed by SA ALBERT J. RUSHING, at which time she furnished the following information:

Mrs. WALLACE received a letter from her husband, JAMES D. WALLACE, an inmate at the Missouri State Penitentiary, Jefferson City, Missouri, which was dated April 25, 1968, and which included the following: "I guess you should remember the one guy that we met that time at the bank. He's the one that they are trying to rap that King's death on." Upon receiving the letter, Mrs. WALLACE realized from her knowledge of the publicity pertaining to the assassination of MARTIN LUTHER KING that the above portion of the letter referred to JAMES EARL RAY. However, the comments of WALLACE in the letter were puzzling to Mrs. WALLACE because she has been unable to recall any occasion or incident such as that which her husband seemed to be referring to in the letter.

Mrs. WALLACE's husband was released on parole from the Missouri State Penitentiary in the spring of 1965 and was immediately thereafter confined for about four weeks at the Cochran Veterans Administration Hospital in St. Louis for surgery of the ear. From the time of WALLACE's parole until April or May, 1967, Mr. and Mrs. WALLACE resided together at 2244A Missouri, St. Louis, and they thereafter resided together in the 2200 block of South Jefferson, St. Louis, until December, 1967, or January, 1968, when they moved to 1031 Lynch, where Mrs. WALLACE continues to reside. They resided together at the latter address until WALLACE was returned to the Missouri State Penitentiary in March, 1968.

From the time of WALLACE's parole in the spring of 1965 until about the end of July, 1967, or the first of August, 1967, neither Mr. or Mrs. WALLACE had any banking business of any kind at any bank. During that period Mrs. WALLACE is certain they had no occasion to be at the Jefferson-Gravois Bank in St. Louis. On July 21, 1967, Mrs. WALLACE's father died, and she thereafter shared in proceeds from Government savings bonds and insurance of her father. From these proceeds

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AJR/ral

Mrs. WALLACE and her husband opened a joint checking account at the Jefferson-Gravois Bank, and this occurred at about the end of July, 1967, or the first of August, 1967. This account is in the name of JAMES D. and BETTY J. WALLACE. Mrs. WALLACE also opened a savings account on August 11, 1968, at the Jefferson-Gravois Bank in the name of herself and her mother, Mrs. DOROTHY STEPHENS.

It is Mrs. WALLACE's best recollection that she and her husband went together to the Jefferson-Gravois Bank in late July, 1967, to cash the Government bonds which had been her father's. She believes her husband also went to the bank with her at the time they opened the joint checking account. It is possible, according to her recollection, that her husband may also have accompanied her to the bank on one or two other occasions during that same period of time in the summer of 1967. Mrs. WALLACE recalls no occasion during this period of time in the summer of 1967 when she and her husband drove to the bank by automobile, but instead they walked to the bank on each occasion from their residence on South Jefferson, which was in proximity to the bank.

Upon searching her memory at this time, Mrs. WALLACE believes that she does recall a specific instance when her husband accompanied her to the bank during the period referred to in the summer of 1967. She recalls that they went to the bank on this occasion at approximately 6:00 p.m. or between 6:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. It was still daylight on this occasion, and she feels certain that it would have been on a Friday since the bank closes at 2:00 p.m. on other days of the week, but is open on Fridays until 7:30 p.m. Mrs. WALLACE recalls that on this occasion it was very warm summer weather, there had been a summer rain earlier that day and the weather was cloudy and grey. She vaguely recalls that as she and her husband walked out of this bank on this occasion, her husband waved to someone outside the bank. Mrs. WALLACE glanced very briefly at the person at whom her husband waved, and she believes the person was a white male, but since she glanced at him very quickly, she does not recall his appearance otherwise and is unable to describe him further in any respect. She does not recall that there was any conversation at all between her husband and the man on this occasion. After her husband had waved at the man, Mrs. WALLACE inquired of her husband as to

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who he was, and her husband replied to the effect that it was a "fellow from the joint", which Mrs. WALLACE took to mean that he was someone her husband had known in the penitentiary.

Specific inquiry was made of Mrs. WALLACE as to whether she could recall any occasion when she was at the Jefferson-Gravois Bank with her husband, at which time her husband saw possibly two men at or near the bank to whom he remarked that he was glad he got his money out before they got in; and whether she remembered that one of the men may have replied to the effect that "they were putting in". Mrs. WALLACE said she could not recall having witnessed any such conversation. She commented, however, that her husband is given to making such joking remarks and such a conversation would not surprise her, although she could recall no such conversation specifically.

Photographs of JAMES LOAMA OWENS and JAMES EARL RAY were exhibited to Mrs. WALLACE. She stated that OWENS is completely unknown to her, but that the photographs of RAY looked vaguely familiar to her, although she could not at this time relate the photographs to any particular person she had ever seen in the past. She commented specifically that she could not relate the photographs of either RAY or OWENS to the man she saw at the Jefferson-Gravois Bank and to whom her husband waved on the occasion referred to above. Although the photographs of RAY looked vaguely familiar to her, she has no idea where she might have seen such a person, except that over a period of years, including the year 1959, Mrs. WALLACE has frequently attended religious services at a Salvation Army establishment located near the address on Hickory Street where the RAY family once resided according to what Mrs. WALLACE has read in the newspapers. Mrs. WALLACE believes it remotely possible she might have seen JAMES EARL RAY in that area in 1959, although she does not specifically recall such an occurrence. With regard to her vague recognition of photographs of RAY, Mrs. WALLACE originally had that reaction to photographs of him when she saw pictures of RAY in the newspapers and on television at the time he was first identified in this investigation.

Mrs. WALLACE and her husband now have five children, the youngest of whom is an infant. Over a period of several

years, shoes for their children have customarily and frequently been purchased by them at Hill Brothers Shoe Store, located on South Jefferson nextdoor to the Jefferson-Gravois Bank. When Mrs. WALLACE and her husband have gone together to this shoe store, they have sometimes parked their car on South Jefferson and on some occasions have parked it near the entrance to the Jefferson-Gravois Bank. Mrs. WALLACE suggested that in the event her husband has made some error as to the occasion when he may have seen persons at the Jefferson-Gravois Bank with whom he had a conversation as previously indicated, the error might be based on some occasion when they were together at the shoe store rather than at the bank.

From the time Mr. and Mrs. WALLACE opened accounts at the Jefferson-Gravois Bank in the summer of 1967 until they moved to 1031 Lynch in December, 1967, or January, 1968, there was no occasion, according to Mrs. WALLACE's recollection, when they went to the Jefferson-Gravois Bank in an automobile, inasmuch as they walked to the bank from their nearby residence on each occasion.

1.  
SL 44-775  
HCK:pjh

ALLEGED APPEARANCE OF JAMES EARL RAY AT JEFFERSON -  
GRAVOIS BANK, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, IN SUMMER OF 1967

Mr. RALPH S. PHILLIPSON, Assistant Vice President, Jefferson - Gravois Bank, 2604 South Jefferson Avenue, telephone PR 1-8833, who was contacted at the bank by Special Agent (A) HOWARD C. KENNEDY on May 14, 1968, advised that he was then unable to locate any account of any type, that is, checking, savings or loan account, as well as a safe deposit box, in the name of JAMES EARL RAY or any of his known aliases. Likewise, he was unable to locate any record or any such account on a safe deposit box in the name of JAMES LAOMA OWENS or JAMES OWENS.

On the following morning, May 15, 1968, Mr. PHILLIPSON advised that he had made a further check of bank records but was unable to locate any accounts in the names of these individuals or in any of their known aliases.

He suggested, however, that contact be made with Mr. A. G. ARB, Vice President, Jefferson - Gravois Bank, since Mr. ARB or his secretary, Mrs. MELBA KOEHLER, frequently handle customers coming into the bank.

Mr. PHILLIPSON was unable to identify photographs of JAMES EARL RAY exhibited to him as being identical with anyone observed by him at the bank at any time.

Mr. A. G. ARB, Vice-President, Jefferson - Gravois Bank, who was contacted by SAA KENNEDY at the bank on May 15, 1968, advised that he is unable to identify photographs of JAMES EARL RAY exhibited to him as being identical with anyone previously observed by him at the bank.

Photographs of RAY were also exhibited to Mrs. MELBA KOEHLER, Secretary, and also to Mr. CHARLES VOGEL, Executive Vice-President, Jefferson - Gravois Bank, by SAA KENNEDY on May 15, 1968, but they were unable to identify photographs of the subject as being identical with anyone previously observed by them at the bank.



## FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1Date May 22, 1968

Records of the Jefferson-Gravois Bank of St. Louis, 2604 South Jefferson Avenue, St. Louis, telephone PR 1-8833, disclosed the following information with regard to a regular joint checking account, account number [REDACTED], maintained there in the past in the name of JAMES L. OWENS.

A signature card disclosed that this account, a joint checking account of OWENS and IDA B. OWENS, was opened August 9, 1965, with a \$100 initial deposit. The account was closed February 28, 1966.

OWENS' residence address was shown as 2241 Oregon Avenue, St. Louis, telephone TO 5-1279. The record showed he was employed as a barber at the Belmor Barber Shop, address not shown; IDA B. OWENS was listed as a housewife. The record showed further that they previously banked at Lindell Trust Company, St. Louis, Missouri. OWENS' Missouri vehicle operator's license was shown as number [REDACTED]. There was no record of any account for subject, under his true name or known aliases.

These records may be obtained on issuance of a subpoena duces tecum which should be directed to Mr. A. G. ARB, Vice President, Jefferson-Gravois Bank.

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On 5/16/68 at St. Louis, Missouri File # SL 44-775  
by SA HOWARD C. KENNEDY (A) :paw:hcv Date dictated 5/16/68

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SL 44-775  
HCK:paw

Re: ALLEGED APPEARANCE OF JAMES EARL RAY  
AT JEFFERSON-GRAVOIS BANK, ST. LOUIS,  
MISSOURI, IN SUMMER, 1967.

Mr. A. G. ARB, Vice President, Jefferson-Gravois Bank of St. Louis, 2604 South Jefferson Avenue, St. Louis, telephone PR 1-8833, on May 16, 1968, made available for examination records of this bank disclosing sales of travelers checks in the period from January 1, 1967 through August 30, 1967. It is noted that this bank sells travelers checks of American Express Company, First National City Bank of New York, and Bank of America. These records, consisting of duplicate copies of the application for travelers checks signed by the purchaser, did not disclose the sale of any travelers check to JAMES EARL RAY in his name or that of any of his known aliases, nor did the records disclose any sale of travelers checks to JAMES OWENS, an associate of RAY. No travelers checks sales were disclosed to JOHN RAY or CAROL PEPPER, JAMES EARL RAY's brother and sister, respectively.

Mrs. MARGARET HOLMES, teller, Jefferson-Gravois Bank, who handles the sale of travelers checks at the bank, was unable to identify photographs of JAMES EARL RAY exhibited to her May 16, 1968, by SA HOWARD C. KENNEDY as being identical with anyone she has ever seen at the bank.

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1Date 5-23-68

Records of the Manufacturers Bank and Trust Company of St. Louis, 1731 South Broadway, St. Louis, Missouri, telephone MA 1-1230, disclosed the following information:

The only available records in existence at this time pertaining to sales of Travelers' Checks by Manufacturers Bank and Trust Company in 1959 are contained in a large bound journal or register listing sales of American Express Travelers' Checks in the period from June 9, 1942, to June 29, 1962. This register is comprised of 300 pages and it is being stored for permanent retention. This register in the period August through December, 1958, and in the calendar year 1959 did not disclose any sale of Travelers' Checks to JAMES EARL RAY or JAMES L. OWENS nor did it show any sale listed in any of their known aliases.

These records may be obtained on issuance of a subpoena duces tecum which should be directed to Mr. HARLEY E. SCHWERING, Senior Vice President, Manufacturers Bank and Trust Company, St. Louis.

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On 5-17-68 at St. Louis, Missouri File # SL 44-775

by SAA HOWARD C. KENNEDY:amb Date dictated 5-17-68

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SL 44-775  
HCK:amb

RE: ALLEGED BANK ACCOUNT OF JAMES EARL RAY AND  
ALLEGED PURCHASE OF TRAVELERS' CHECKS AT MANU-  
FACTURERS BANK AND TRUST COMPANY OF ST. LOUIS,  
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, IN 1959

Mr. HARLEY E. SCHWERING, Senior Vice President, Manufacturers Bank and Trust Company of St. Louis, 1731 South Broadway, St. Louis, Missouri, who was contacted at the bank by SAA HOWARD C. KENNEDY on May 17, 1968, caused a search to be made of central files of this bank for any record of a checking, savings, or loan account, as well as any safe deposit box, in the names of JAMES EARL RAY and JAMES L. OWENS and all of their known aliases. In the course of this investigation only one account believed pertinent to this investigation was located. This account was in the name of JAMES CARL O'CONNOR, last known address 1727 South 11th Street, St. Louis, Missouri. Prior investigation has disclosed that the name of JAMES O'CONNOR has been used as an alias by JAMES EARL RAY and the address of 1727 South 11th Street, St. Louis, Missouri, was a prior residence address of RAY's father, JERRY RAYNES, also known as JERRY RAYNS, and RAY's sister, Mrs. ALBERT (CAROL) PEPPER, who was then known as CAROL RYAN. Detailed information concerning this account is set forth elsewhere in this report.

The Bureau advised on May 27, 1968, that no latent fingerprint impressions were found on the signature card of JAMES CARL O'CONNOR in connection with the above account (said card being designated Q 354 for identification purposes), and that because of the presence of some characteristics which would not be explained on the basis of the available known writings of subject, it could not be determined whether the "JAMES CARL O'CONNOR" signature on the card was prepared by the subject; however, significant similarities were noted between this questioned signature and the available known handwriting of RAY.

1Date 5-23-68

Mr. JOSEPH STAHLSCHMIDT, Auditor, Manufacturers Bank and Trust Company of St. Louis, 1731 South Broadway, St. Louis, Missouri, who was contacted at the bank, furnished the following information and records:

A signature card executed on March 9, 1959, at the time a checking account was opened at this bank in the name of JAMES CARL O'CONNOR, 1820 South 12th Street, whose address was subsequently changed to 1818 South 12th Street and then to 1727 South 11th Street, St. Louis, Missouri, bears the handwritten signature "JAMES CARL O'CONNOR." It is believed that this is the only handwriting of O'CONNOR appearing on this card, however, the card contains further handwritten notations indicating that O'CONNOR had no telephone and that he was employed as an attendant at a service station, identity or location of which was not known. The card also showed that he had no former bank accounts.

Mr. STAHLSCHMIDT made available for use in this investigation the original signature card. He requested that it be returned to this bank when it is no longer needed.

On 5-17-68 of St. Louis, Missouri File # SL 44-775  
 by SAA HOWARD C. KENNEDY:amb Date dictated 5-17-68

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Date 5-23-68

Records of the Manufacturers Bank and Trust Company of St. Louis, 1731 South Broadway, St. Louis, Missouri, telephone MA 1-1230, disclosed the following information:

A checking account, known as a personal check plan, was opened by an individual using the name JAMES CARL O'CONNOR at this bank March 9, 1959, with an initial deposit of \$159. This account was closed July 20, 1959, by a withdrawal of \$4.

When the account was initially opened O'CONNOR used the residence address 1820 South 12th Street, St. Louis, Missouri, but subsequently his address was changed to 1818 South 12th Street, St. Louis, and then it was again changed to 1727 South 11th Street, St. Louis, Missouri.

This account showed the following additional deposits on the dates indicated:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Amount of Deposit</u>
March 10, 1959	\$ 40
March 13, 1959	40
March 18, 1959	30
March 20, 1959	40
March 26, 1959	370
April 14, 1959	100
May 14, 1959	150
June 2, 1959	42
June 9, 1959	30
June 10, 1959	10
June 17, 1959	10.

The account showed withdrawals or charges ranging in amount between \$4 and \$600. Microfilm records disclosed photographs of the face side only of the following-described checks drawn against this account:

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On 5-17-68 at St. Louis, Missouri File # SL 44-775  
 by SAA HOWARD C. KENNEDY:amb Date dictated 5-17-68

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<u>Date</u>	<u>Payee</u>	<u>Amount</u>
March 25, 1959	Y. P. WEBBE	\$ 50
March 26, 1959	"	600
April 10, 1959	CAROL RYAN	6
April 26, 1959	"	6
May 1, 1959	Standard Auto Parts	20
May 4, 1959	JAMES CARL O'CONNOR	40
May 9, 1959	CAROL RYAN	6
May 12, 1959	JAMES CARL O'CONNOR	30
May 21, 1959	"	50
June 19, 1959	"	100
June 23, 1959	"	36
June 27, 1959	Carson-Union-May-Stern	4
June 30, 1959	JAMES CARL O'CONNOR	30
July 12, 1959	CAROL RYAN	4

Only one check item was not located on microfilm records, this being a \$30 withdrawal on June 2, 1959.

These records may be obtained on issuance of a subpoena duces tecum which should be directed to Mr. HARLEY E. SCHWERING, Senior Vice President of the Bank.

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SL: 44-775  
TLB: pdp

RE: 1959 ASSOCIATE  
VINCENT P. WEBBE

The following investigation was conducted by  
SAs THOMAS L. BUCKLEY and CHARLES S. DUKE at St. Louis,  
Missouri, on May 20, 1968:

ANTHONY GROCHOWSKI, 1111 Delmar, advised that he  
was the brother-in-law of VINCENT P. WEBBE, who died a year  
or more ago. GROCHOWSKI stated that in the years immediately  
prior to his death WEBBE had been a bondsman. GROCHOWSKI  
suggested that his wife, EVA WEBBE GROCHOWSKI, would be  
able to furnish more details regarding VINCENT WEBBE and that  
she could be located at 1431 Chouteau.

On May 20, 1968, EVA WEBBE GROCHOWSKI advised that  
her brother, VINCENT P. WEBBE, died June 28, 1967. She  
stated that she had been rather closely associated with her  
brother and frequently kept bond records for him. She advised  
that he only signed police court bonds and never to her knowledge  
signed a bond for any substantial amount of money. According  
to GROCHOWSKI, WEBBE was in the egg and poultry business in  
St. Louis from 1921 to 1941 and that after 1941 he lived  
a life of semi-retirement; the bonding business being only  
a sideline. She stated that VINCENT WEBBE was in ill health  
for about six years before his death and during that time  
seldom left home.

According to GROCHOWSKI, ANN WEBBE, VINCENT's wife,  
still resides at 1114 Delmar but she stated that ANN WEBBE  
does not read or write English and doubts that any information  
could be obtained from her if she were contacted.

She stated that her brother kept rather casual records  
of his bonding business and she has no idea where these  
records could be located today.

GROCHOWSKI advised that the name JAMES EARL O'CONNOR  
is entirely unfamiliar to her and she cannot recall a transaction  
between any such person and her brother amounting to \$600.  
She examined photographs of JAMES EARL RAY and stated that he was  
entirely unknown to her. She also advised that the name JAMES  
EARL RAY and his known aliases are unfamiliar to her.

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SL: 44-775  
TLB: pdp

RE: FELLOW INMATE  
ANDREW WILSON DE CORE, also known as  
Blackie DeCore,  
DeCora

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The following investigation was conducted by  
SAs THOMAS L. BUCKLEY and CHARLES S. DUKE at St. Louis,  
Missouri, on May 20, 1968:

Mrs. MARY LOUISE SAWYER, 1517A Cora, advised  
that she has worked as a nurse at St. Louis City Hospital #1,  
1515 Lafayette, for approximately four years. She stated  
that she met ANDREW WILSON DE CORE about two years ago when  
he was a patient at that hospital. He was confined to the  
hospital for a considerable length of time because of a  
broken arm and broken leg. Mrs. SAWYER advised that after  
his release from the hospital and his subsequent return to  
the Missouri State Prison at Jefferson City she wrote to  
him a number of times. SAWYER advised that she was not  
aware that DE CORE had been released from prison and stated  
that she has no idea of DE CORE's present whereabouts. Mrs.  
SAWYER examined photographs of JAMES EARL RAY and advised that  
he was entirely unknown to her. She also stated that none  
of RAY's aliases were familiar to her.

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Date May 13, 1968

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JOHN PAUL VELANTI was re-interviewed at the St. Louis Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and furnished the following information:

He described JAMES W. BROWN of Birmingham, Alabama, as a good friend with whom he "celled" and also "took care of" in Missouri State Penitentiary (MSP). He described BROWN as a friend who would have no reason to lie about him. He first met BROWN in the MSP at Jefferson City, Missouri, although they were previously in the Kansas City Jail at the same time but occupied different tanks. He associated with BROWN while both were inmates at the MSP and after both had been transferred to the minimum security prison at Moberly, Missouri.

VELANTI denied recalling any conversations whatever with subject JAMES EARL RAY and still insists he does not know subject RAY.

VELANTI admitted running a poker game and lottery at MSP and in this capacity had numerous inmates working for him in various halls at the penitentiary. He knew all of these individuals personally and recalls their names. He specifically mentioned one such individual as BILL KAUFFMAN. He specifically recalled that subject RAY did not work for him and recalled no inmate at the MSP with either first or last name RAY with whom he associated or conversed at length.

He denied planning or executing a burglary or robbery of the oil company or any other establishment in Atlanta, Georgia, and advised that if he had pulled such a job it would have been alone.

He denied ever having lived in Atlanta but recalled having stayed there overnight on a couple of occasions when driving through.

VELANTI stated he married his wife, BETTYE, nee PRITCHARD, in 1965 in Juarez, Mexico. He has no information whatever concerning her present whereabouts. Her last address known to him was 1270 Chaney Drive, Bossier City, Louisiana. VELANTI's son, JAMES, by a previous marriage to SHIRLEY HOLSTEIN

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On 5/11/68 at St. Louis, Missouri File # SL: 44-775  
 by SA CLETIS B. BIDEWELL  
SA WILLIAM H. WARFIELD CBB:pdp Date dictated 5/13/68

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was killed at the age of 15 in a car wreck in 1962 in Atlanta. VELANTI was married to SHIRLEY HOLSTEIN in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1948 and they were divorced around 1950. He stated this son never resided with his present wife, BETTYE.

VELANTI emphatically denied being questioned while in jail at Kansas City or at the MSP concerning any gangster in the Kansas City area. He was questioned by Detective HATFIELD, Kansas City Police Department, in regard to the offense for which he was convicted in Kansas City. This was on a charge of armed robbery of one JOHN RINGO who at that time operated the Drake Hotel in Kansas City. VELANTI stated he was not guilty of this robbery; however, he took a "bum rap" in the matter rather than divulge his actual whereabouts and the person or persons with whom he was associated at the time the robbery was committed. The other violation, according to VELANTI, was in the State of Kansas and he would probably have received more time than the 20 years he got in Missouri. He also was of the opinion at the time that he could beat the rap in Missouri.

VELANTI refused to discuss his actual whereabouts at the time of the Drake Hotel robbery, the violation in which he was involved, or the person or persons with whom he was associated in this matter. He stated any investigation in this matter could possibly jeopardize his present parole status even though the Statute of Limitations has run on that crime.

VELANTI denied any knowledge of the connection between New Orleans gangsters and gangsters in Kansas City. He stated he has no relatives residing in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, or Atlanta, Georgia.

VELANTI admitted having considered attempting to escape from the MSP but never planned such an escape with any accomplice. He denied ever having heard of a prisoner's plan to escape to Liberia or having a place he could hide out in a cave in Virginia.

Subsequent to the assassination of President JOHN F. KENNEDY, VELANTI admits fighting with a fellow prisoner outside

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the Catholic chapel at the MSP because of a derogatory statement made by this prisoner concerning President KENNEDY as a Catholic. He does not recall the name of this prisoner and no charges were filed in connection with the incident. He denied that this individual could have been subject JAMES EARL RAY. He does recall Father SCHAFER was at that time the Chaplain but understands that Father SCHAFER now has a parish in California, Missouri. The above-described incident took place at the MSP in 1963.

VELANTI recalled that when he was in the MSP A Hall was occupied by Negroes; however, he understands it now houses trustees.

VELANTI stated he could recall many prisoners making derogatory remarks concerning Negroes but he advised that inasmuch as he is Catholic, derogatory remarks regarding Catholics were not made in his presence.

When questioned concerning any individuals who might dislike him and furnish false information concerning his alleged association with RAY, VELANTI mentioned the following individuals:

JOHNNY SHELTON, white, male, age 28, believed presently back in MSP on an armed robbery charge from Kansas City, Missouri;

MIKE NOVOGRADIC (phonetic), white, male, age 26, believed to be doing 25 years at MSP on a charge of assault and molestation from Kansas City;

"BUGA RED" TOWNSEND, white, male, doing life at MSP for killing a priest.

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Date May 13, 1968

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JOHN PAUL VELANTI upon re-interview on May 12, 1968, stated after considering the matter he now recalls one JIMMY RAYE (phonetic), a white male, age 27, 6'1", 150 pounds, left handed, who was somewhat active in gambling activities at the Missouri State Penitentiary (MSP). This individual was also a basketball player at the institution. RAYE is still believed to be at MSP and at one time an older brother, believed to be LARRY RAYE, was an inmate at the penitentiary. VELANTI is of the opinion this RAYE may be confused with subject JAMES EARL RAY by the person furnishing information regarding an association between him and subject RAY.

VELANTI recalled JIMMY RAYE (phonetic) having been in trouble in connection with a gambling debt owed to TEX MARTIN, MSP inmate, described as a white male doing a 25 year sentence from Kansas City on a rape charge. MARTIN was also active in running gambling games. VELANTI persuaded MARTIN to "lay off" RAYE in connection with the gambling debt owed him. He further recalled this incident having taken place in 1963 or 1964 at which time JIMMY RAYE was housed in C Hall while he, VELANTI, was residing in G Hall.

VELANTI stated his wife's true name at the time he married her was BETTYE PITTARD. While in MSP he corresponded with her under this name as well as under the names BETTYE PRITCHARD, BETTYE PETERSON and BETTYE VELANTI. He was not positive but believed her maiden name to be PETERSON. His wife under the name BETTYE PITTARD was employed for several years as a key punch operator for the Louisiana - Arkansas Railroad at both their Shreveport and Atlanta offices. Her parents and relatives are believed to reside in Atlanta. He recalled that BETTYE was at one time a member of the downtown branch of the Alcoholics Anonymous Club in Shreveport, Louisiana. She also may have been a member of Alcoholics Anonymous in Atlanta.

With respect to a date on which he could have been involved committing a crime in Atlanta, VELANTI advised he was released from the penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kansas, on July 27, 1958, and picked up in Kansas City on February 9, 1959. During the period between these two dates he spent most

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On 5/12/68 at St. Louis, Missouri File # SL: 44-775  
 by SA CLETIS B. BIDEWELL  
SA WILLIAM H. WARFIELD CBB: pdp Date dictated 5/13/68

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of his time as an employee of the Monte Young Carnival which operates out of Salt Lake City. This carnival was operated by a female, one NINA (last name unknown). During this employment VELANTI worked under the name and Social Security Number of a sheep herder by the name of WREZ XYLOIX (pronounced RAY ZELWAN). When the carnival closed the season in October he went to Shreveport, Louisiana, where he resided with his wife, BETTYE, until the time he was picked up in February 1959 in Kansas City. He stated that he used the name XYLOIX in order to avoid possible arrest in the State of Oregon where he was wanted for investigation armed robbery. He advised that Oregon had placed a detainer against him upon his release from Leavenworth, but that he had "beat" this detainer at Leavenworth, Kansas, and was never returned to Oregon.

During the course of the interview VELANTI mentioned the name of a former MSP inmate presently in the St. Louis area, one JAMES CARPENTER, who might be in a position to furnish information concerning activities of subject RAY in the MSP.

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1Date May 23, 1968

JOHN PAUL VELANTI called to indicate his concern that individuals, unknown to him, had linked his name with that of subject RAY, whom he could not actually recall. He expressed the opinion that certain individuals would like to see him charged with violating his parole and returned to the Missouri State Penitentiary to "get even with him" for things he had not done.

He expressed a desire to cooperate in any way in connection with this investigation and mentioned he had visited with another former inmate at the Missouri State Penitentiary who claimed he had seen subject JAMES EARL RAY in St. Louis approximately two weeks after the escape of RAY from the Missouri State Penitentiary. He declined to identify this person over the telephone but advised he might furnish this individual's name in a personal interview at a later time.

VELANTI indicated that in the conversation with this individual they discussed the fact that RAY was supposed to have walked out of the Missouri State Penitentiary with visitors, rather than having escaped concealed in a bread box.

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On 5/13/68 at St. Louis, Missouri File # SL: 44-775  
 by SA CLETIS B. BIDEWELL :jfb Date dictated 5/17/68

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1Date May 24, 1968

JOHN PAUL VALENTI again called the St. Louis Federal Bureau of Investigation Office to promise his continued cooperation and indicate a continuing feeling of apprehension that something might happen which might possibly lead to the revocation of his parole.

VALENTI mentioned in the conversation that he and JAMES H. CARPENTER had visited JOHN EUGENE GAWRON on the previous night. He stated GAWRON mentioned he had been talking to the FBI.

VALENTI advised that both he and CARPENTER believed that after having visited with GAWRON that GAWRON probably harbored subject RAY after his escape from the Missouri State Penitentiary. VALENTI, however, stated that GAWRON made no such admission in any statement actually made by him.

VALENTI promised to be alert for any information which might be of value in efforts to locate subject RAY.

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On 5/14/68 at St. Louis, Missouri File # SL: 44-775  
 by SA CLETIS B. BIDEWELL :jfb Date dictated 5/20/68

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Date May 31, 1968

JOHN PAUL VELANTI, presently residing 3420 Cumberland, Maplewood, was interviewed at the St. Louis Office. He reiterated information previously furnished that he could not recall any specific instance in which he met subject JAMES EARL RAY while in the Missouri State Penitentiary (MSP) although he may have done so. He also advised he had no contact with subject RAY prior to his incarceration in the MSP or since his release from that institution.

He denied that he had recently obtained a revolver from any source and stated that if JIMMY CARPENTER had obtained a gun he knew nothing about it. He went on to state that he was doing everything within his power to avoid violating his parole and that obtaining a gun of any kind would be an extremely foolish act on his part.

With respect to his activities since his release from MSP on March 21, 1967, he stated he came immediately to St. Louis, Missouri, and for a short period of time was employed by the Baris Furniture Company at 11th and Delmar. He resided for a period of time at Dismas House located at Ninth and Cole. Around May 3 or 4, 1967, he obtained employment from the Bardgett Printing and Publishing Company, 2035 Delmar, where he worked until he was laid off in December, 1967. Although he was employed steadily at the publishing company, he worked part time on a desk job at Dismas House and also worked as a night cook quite a bit at John Clatto's Place located at Eighth and Delmar. He started working part time as a radio announcer in October, 1967 at Our Lady of the Snows, Belleville, Illinois, and is presently employed full time as a radio announcer there.

VELANTI advised that a former inmate of the MSP one RUSSELL BRANNEN advised him in a conversation two or three weeks ago that he, BRANNEN, had on one occasion observed subject RAY in St. Louis subsequent to his escape from the MSP. BRANNEN stated that this was approximately ten days after RAY's escape and he saw him in the vicinity of the 1800 block of Mississippi Street in South St. Louis. He went on to say that BRANNEN made the statement that RAY did not escape from the MSP in a bread truck as generally reported but walked away from the institution with a group of visitors who were leaving. According to VELANTI, BRANNEN did not indicate he knew of any particular individual who might have assisted RAY in this escape. He could not furnish the exact address of BRANNEN but stated he believed he was still on parole to Missouri State parole officers in St. Louis, Missouri area.

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On 5/29/68 at Maplewood, Missouri File # SL: 44-775  
 by SA JAMES T. DEARBORN  
SA CLETIS B. BIDEWELL/mjb Date dictated 5/29/68

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SL: 44-775

VELANTI was questioned concerning the present whereabouts of JIMMY CARPENTER and he stated that although he had not seen JIMMY in several days he understood he was still residing at 1817 Rutger using the name JOHN MEZZO and employed as a cook at Clatto's located at Eighth and Delmar. He advised he had learned CARPENTER may have entered the St. Louis City Hospital to have an eye operation but had been unable to locate him and he also stated that CARPENTER had not reported to work for the last two nights at Clatto's Restaurant. He promised to locate CARPENTER as soon as possible and have him call the St. Louis FBI Office.

VELANTI advised upon questioning that he had heard nothing whatsoever which would indicate to him that subject JAMES EARL RAY might have been involved in the armed robbery of the Alton, Illinois, Bank which occurred in July, 1967.

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SL: 44-775  
CBB:mjb

UNKNOWN SUBJECTS (2);  
BANK OF ALTON, ILLINOIS  
July 13, 1967  
ST. LOUIS FILE: 91-3877

The following investigation was conducted by SA CLETIS  
B. BIDEWELL at St. Louis, Missouri, on May 29, 1968:

BOB TYLER, Personnel Manager of Bardgett Printing and  
Publishing Company, 2035 Delmar, advised after checking his records  
that JOHN P. VELANTI obtained employment at his concern through  
Dismas House on April 5, 1967, and that his employment was terminated  
on December 5, 1967, due to reduction in the work force. He stated  
that VELANTI's work as a printing estimator was very satisfactory  
and that he attended night school during the period of his employment  
to increase his efficiency in this capacity.

Mr. TYLER advised that the employment records for that  
concern for July 13, 1967, reflect that VELANTI punched in for work  
at 7:49 AM and punched out for lunch at 11:59 AM. He punched back  
in for work at 12:47 PM and punched out at the end of the day at  
6:03 PM.

It is noted that the robbery of the Bank of Alton, Illinois,  
on July 13, 1967, was committed at 1:35 PM.

Date May 14, 1968

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JAMES (JIMMY) H. CARPENTER, former Missouri State Penitentiary (MSP) number 01761, presently residing 1817 Rutger Street, St. Louis, Missouri, was interviewed on May 12, 1968. CARPENTER was born [redacted] at Jonesboro, Arkansas. On May 1, 1967, he was released on parole from the MSP, Jefferson City, Missouri.

On June 1, 1967, CARPENTER was arrested in St. Louis, Missouri, on a charge of armed robbery and although not convicted on this charge he remained in the St. Louis City Jail for approximately nine months before being released at the time of his trial.

Shortly after his release from MSP CARPENTER advised he met subject JAMES EARL RAY on the street in the 1800 block of South 11th Street and conversed with him for a few minutes. According to CARPENTER, this date would have been around May 11, 1967, since he recalls he obtained employment on that date in St. Louis. At the time of this first contact subject RAY was wearing a mustache and mentioned the fact that he was "hot" and had to be careful. He was dressed in a sweater and dark trousers and this visit with subject RAY was very short.

CARPENTER recalled seeing RAY on another occasion on the street in the 1800 block of South 11th Street three or four days later. On this occasion he and subject RAY had a beer together in a tavern believed to be located on the west side of the street in the 1800 block. Subject RAY stated he was broke and CARPENTER loaned him \$10. RAY also mentioned he needed a "rod" to get hold of some money and CARPENTER told him he was trying to go straight, had no pistol, and would not try to get one.

CARPENTER mentioned he saw RAY on one other occasion two or three days later in approximately the same location. At this time he, CARPENTER, was in an automobile and RAY was on the street. He was of the opinion that RAY did not see him on this occasion. According to CARPENTER, although he does not recall the exact words of the conversation he got the impression from RAY that he was going to pull a holdup or robbery of some kind in St. Louis to get some money and then travel to the east side or somewhere in Illinois where he had

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On 5/12/68 at St. Louis, Missouri File # SL: 44-775  
 by SA CLETIS B. BIDEWELL  
SA WILLIAM H. WARFIELD CBB: pdp Date dictated 5/13/68

SL: 44-775

friends or relatives. He stated these individuals were not specifically mentioned but he got this impression from conversing with subject RAY.

CARPENTER advised subject RAY furnished no information concerning where he was staying in St. Louis and made no mention of associates or relatives with whom he might be associated or living. CARPENTER stated he did not observe RAY in company with any other individual on any of the above-mentioned occasions. He did state that RAY mentioned in the conversation that he "walked out" of the MSP with a group of visitors from the outside. It was CARPENTER's understanding that this was in connection with a ball game that had been played at the penitentiary and that the date, approximately, RAY walked away was April 24, 1967. CARPENTER was questioned specifically concerning any information he might have as to the identity of any individual assisting subject RAY in his escape and he stated he could furnish no information whatever in this respect. He further stated he has not seen subject RAY since around May 18, 1967, and is not in possession of any information concerning his possible whereabouts since that time.

CARPENTER advised he recalled subject RAY very well from his association with him at the MSP. He described RAY as a "loner" who participated in gambling in the penitentiary. He stated, however, that RAY spent so much of his time in solitary confinement due to his attempts to escape that he did not have much opportunity to participate in these activities. He advised that he was as close to RAY as anyone in the penitentiary and recalled that RAY took narcotics, and often came to his, CARPENTER's, cell to converse and offer narcotics to CARPENTER. With regard to RAY's closest associate at MSP, CARPENTER advised that he was as close to RAY as any inmate. He went on to state that based on this association and his general knowledge of RAY it was hard for him to imagine RAY being involved in the MARTIN LUTHER KING slaying. In this respect he stated he did not feel RAY would be motivated by animosity toward Dr. KING and was not the type of individual who would be trusted by people wanting to dispose of KING. He knew of no connections that RAY had while in MSP which

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would afford him access to information regarding a planned assassination of Dr. KING. It is CARPENTER's opinion that if RAY made such connections he did so while on the run subsequent to his escape.

CARPENTER recalled an inmate at MSP known as (first name unknown) COOLEY (phonetic) described as white male, 45 years old at the present time, 6' tall, 150 pounds, slender build, black hair. He stated this individual walked with a noticeable limp, believed to be in his right leg, and that the right leg was curved out noticeably. He advised that COOLEY was an inmate at MSP on two separate occasions. He believes that COOLEY was last released prior to 1960 when subject RAY entered MSP. COOLEY worked in the penitentiary kitchen. He described COOLEY as a "fanatic". CARPENTER could relate no specific circumstances on which he based his opinion that COOLEY was a fanatic, or what COOLEY was fanatical about. CARPENTER merely stated that COOLEY had "way out" ideas, and that he, COOLEY, attempted to appear as an intellectual. He recalled that COOLEY read science and sex books continually. Inasmuch as COOLEY's last release was prior to subject RAY's incarceration at MSP, CARPENTER does not believe there was any association between subject RAY and this COOLEY. CARPENTER knows of no organization known as COOLEY's organization or any group headed by COOLEY.

During the interview CARPENTER mentioned an individual known to him as JACK (last name unknown) who in May of 1967 was in charge of a rooming house at 1805 South 11th Street. CARPENTER met this individual while incarcerated in St. Louis subsequent to his arrest on June 1, 1967. It was his recollection that JACK (last name unknown) was arrested on June 2, 1967, suspected of burglary of a tavern located near his residence at 1805 South 11th.

During conversation with JACK (last name unknown), who was described as a white male, age 70, 6' tall, 200 pounds, gray hair, subject RAY was discussed. Although JACK did not specifically say so, CARPENTER got the impression that RAY

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was probably living with him or staying part-time with him at 1805 South 11th. He also recalled JACK mentioning subject having a brother residing somewhere in the general area. Although CARPENTER could not recall the brother's name he thought it to be JOHN. JACK (last name unknown) advised it was his understanding that subject RAY, who was well known to him, was believed to have walked away from the penitentiary following a ball game.

It was CARPENTER's understanding that JACK (last name unknown) had never done any time in Missouri but had spent approximately 29 years in penitentiaries in Illinois on charges of safe cracking, robbery and so forth. At the time JACK was arrested in St. Louis on June 2, 1967, he was extremely worried because his parole out of Illinois did not expire for a period of two or three more weeks.

CARPENTER stated that during his incarceration at MSP he "ran the store" for quite a period of time. He is presently employed as a cook for JOHNNY CLAYTO at 18th and Delmar Streets and plans to enter the St. Louis City Hospital in the near future for an eye operation to remove cataracts. About the time CARPENTER saw subject RAY in St. Louis he was employed for a short period of time as a cook in a cafeteria located in the Mart Building in St. Louis.

Date June 24, 1968

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JAMES (JIMMY) H. CARPENTER was interviewed at the Standard Service Station located on the southeast corner of 18th and Clark Streets where he spends most of his time. He still resides at 1817 Rutger Street, St. Louis. He has made arrangements to enter the St. Louis City Hospital, located on Lafayette Street, in the near future to have an eye operation for the removal of cataracts.

With reference to subject JAMES EARL RAY, CARPENTER reiterated information previously furnished in this matter. He stated RAY walked away from the Missouri State Penitentiary in the afternoon of April 23, 1967, and he, CARPENTER, was released on May 1, 1967. Approximately two weeks subsequent to his release he visited briefly with subject RAY on South 11th Street in St. Louis on two different occasions. On the second occasion he had a drink with RAY in a bar, name unrecalled, in the 1800 block of South 11th and he loaned RAY \$10 since he stated he was in need of money. RAY indicated he planned to obtain a gun possibly in East St. Louis, Illinois, and make a "score" in the near future.

CARPENTER in his brief visits with RAY got the impression RAY was living with some of his relatives not far from the 1800 block of South 11th, although RAY did not actually make a statement to that effect.

CARPENTER stated that subject might have been residing with JACK GAWRON, who resided in that area, but neither RAY nor GAWRON ever made a definite statement indicating that RAY was living with GAWRON.

CARPENTER repeated information previously furnished that although he considers himself one of subject RAY's closest friends in the Missouri State Penitentiary, he never heard him make any statements either in the penitentiary or after his escape that would link him in any way with the MARTIN LUTHER KING slaying. He went on to state that he felt certain that if RAY is involved it is through RAY's efforts to obtain money and not through any idealistic feelings or hate feelings that he might harbor.

CARPENTER exhibited a cooperative attitude and promised

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On 6/21/68 at St. Louis, Missouri File # SL: 44-775  
by SA CLETIS B. BIDEWELL  
SA WILLIAM H. WARFIELD CBB: pdp Date dictated 6/24/68



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to call the St. Louis Federal Bureau of Investigation Office immediately in the event he obtains any information which might be of value in determining how subject RAY might have come in possession of money he reportedly spent during the period subsequent to his escape from the Missouri State Penitentiary and prior to his recent apprehension in London, England.

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SL 44-775

AT ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

The following investigation was conducted on May 23, 1968, by SA ALBERT J. RUSHING:

Mrs. MARY L. GROSS, Chief Clerk, St. Louis City Jail, exhibited a jail record reflecting the following information:

JAMES H. CARPENTER, 2312 Park, age 56, a laborer, entered City Jail on June 5, 1967, on charges of carrying a concealed weapon and robbery with a dangerous and deadly weapon. On September 29, 1967, the charge of carrying a concealed weapon was removed when CARPENTER was found not guilty by a jury on that charge. On February 16, 1968, he was sentenced to one year in the City Jail (jail time allowed). He was released from City Jail by parole on March 1, 1968. CARPENTER indicated his nearest relative was his wife LOIS.

Mrs. GROSS advised that the record referred to above clearly reflects that CARPENTER was continuously incarcerated from June 5, 1967, to March 1, 1968.

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Date May 22, 1968

JOSEPH H. MC CORMICK, 2115a Park, Apartment #5, was interviewed at his place of employment, Bee Line Trucking Company, 718 South 7th Street, St. Louis, Missouri. MC CORMICK furnished the following information:

He viewed photographs of subject, JAMES EARL RAY, as depicted on Federal Bureau of Investigation wanted flyer 442-A dated April 19, 1968. MC CORMICK advised that he did not know this man, and had never heard anyone speak of him.

MC CORMICK at first denied having lived in the 1800 block of South 11th Street, but later in the interview did admit that he resided with one JIM RAMSEY at 1805 South 11th Street, approximately four months ago. He advised that he and RAMSEY resided at this address for approximately two months.

He stated that RAMSEY worked in a shipyard in St. Louis in the vicinity of 8300 South Broadway. RAMSEY is currently in Waldenberg, Arkansas, where he supposedly has relatives. MC CORMICK advised that prior to moving to the South 11th Street address he resided at 1910 Rutger. In May of 1967, MC CORMICK believes that he lived at 809 Allen rear.

MC CORMICK advised that he is acquainted with JACK GAWRON and that he used to work with GAWRON out of Manpower, Incorporated, St. Louis, Missouri. He advised that he last saw GAWRON that morning on the way to work. He explained that GAWRON is a good friend of his and he often sees him both in the morning, prior to going to work, and in the evening after work. MC CORMICK first denied ever having heard GAWRON mention the name of JAMES EARL RAY. Later in the interview, MC CORMICK advised that he had heard GAWRON mention the name of RAY. GAWRON had advised him that RAY was his "foster son." GAWRON also told him that he, GAWRON, and RAY had "poked up" a couple of places. GAWRON did not mention when or where these holdups occurred, nor did he mention the amount obtained. MC CORMICK recalled that GAWRON advised him that he had seen subject, RAY, approximately six weeks ago. MC CORMICK advised that he was unaware of the location or circumstances of this meet.

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On 5/15/68 at St. Louis, Missouri File # SL 44-775  
 by SA F. JACK WILLIAMS  
SA WILLIAM H. WARFIELD WHW/leh Date dictated 5/17/68

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