

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Copy to:

Report of: RAYMOND B. HOWE Office: KANSAS CITY
Date: May 15, 1968
Field Office File No.: 44-760 Bureau File No.: 44-38861
Title: JAMES EARL RAY;
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
(DECEASED) - VICTIM

Character: CIVIL RIGHTS - CONSPIRACY;
UNLAWFUL FLIGHT TO AVOID CONFINEMENT - ROBBERY

Synopsis:

JAMES EARL RAY reportedly escaped from Missouri State Penitentiary (MSP) on 4/23/67, where he was serving a twenty-year sentence for Robbery First and Operating a Motor Vehicle Without Permission. It is believed he escaped by hiding in a box delivering bread to a prison farm located approximately five miles from the main prison. Subject's brother, JOHN RAY, St. Louis, Missouri, visited him at the prison on 4/22/67. Interviews with fellow inmates and prison officials reveal subject to be a "loner" and was called the "hide-out guy", because he would stay hidden within the confines of MSP for a matter of days at a time. Subject reportedly used amphetamines and barbiturates while in prison. RAY preferred to cell alone at prison, was very quiet, and made few friends. Reports conflict as to any homosexual activity on his part. One inmate stated he read "girlie" books and even engaged in selling and renting books at MSP. He reportedly was "very tight" with his money and used it mainly to support his drug habit. Reports conflict on his anti-Negro sentiments, however, at one time in U. S. Penitentiary, Leavenworth, Kansas, he stated he could not live in a dormitory that was integrated. At MSP, RAY always worked in kitchen or bakery. Subject had made previous attempts to escape from MSP, but was unsuccessful. Because of these attempts, he was given a psychiatric evaluation in October, 1966. This revealed he had no physical disease or defects requiring treatment. He was diagnosed as having a sociopathic personality, anti-social type with anxiety and depressive features, but no mental disease or defect within the meaning of the Missouri State Code. GEORGE BEN EDMONDSON, former

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escapee from MSP, who was located in Canada and is currently incarcerated at MSP, advised that RAY associated with all the St. Louis inmates at the prison and is familiar with the procedure to get Canadian passports, which are easy to come by in Montreal, Canada. Handwriting samples were obtained from prison records and forwarded to FBI Laboratory, which resolved that the "GALT" writings have been identified as being prepared by JAMES EARL RAY. One former cellmate of subject advised that RAY had told him that he had hidden out on two previous occasions on the outskirts of a town called Campeche, Mexico, and that he smuggled small appliances to that area from Brownsville, Texas. Pertinent information from prison records and interviews concerning other suspects or look-alikes in this matter set forth. IN VIEW OF CRIME FOR WHICH SUBJECT BEING SOUGHT, HE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED ARMED AND DANGEROUS.

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DETAILS:

DETAILS REGARDING ESCAPE

On April 22, 1968, Warden HAROLD SWENSON, Missouri State Penitentiary, Jefferson City, Missouri, furnished the following reports from their office concerning the escape by inmate JAMES EARL RAY, number 00416, on April 23, 1967, to Special Agent ROWEN B. AYERS.

In addition to these reports, Warden SWENSON advised that their records reveal this inmate had a visitor at the prison by the name of JOHN RAY, St. Louis, Missouri, on April 22, 1967. JOHN RAY had visited him eight times prior to this visit. The only two other individuals listed by subject on his visitors' list at Missouri State Penitentiary were MARY MAHER, St. Louis, Missouri, grandmother, and JERRY RAY, St. Louis, Missouri, brother. Records show the grandmother did not make any visits to the prison, and JERRY made five, the last being in 1965.

Department of Corrections
INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

To: M. J. ELLIOTT, ASSOCIATE WARDEN-CUSTODY

Date: MAY 3, 1967

D. J. Steele
From: CAPTIAN DANTON STEELE

Subject: INVESTIGATION ESCAPE OF JAMES EARL RAY #00416

Working upon the premise that Inmate James Earl Ray #00416 made good his escape from the institution, Sunday, April 23, 1967, by concealing himself in the Renz Farm bread box and riding out the Sally Port on the Renz Farm truck, I have interviewed all concerned with the Renz Farm bread run and have formed the opinion that Inmate Ray did effect his escape via the Renz Farm bread run and the means of his escape has remained a mystery for ten days because of gross dereliction of duty involving three and possible five prison personnel.

The Renz Farm truck, driven by Guard Officer Alfred Burkhardt came through the Sally Port at approximately 8:00 A.M. to pick up the Renz Farm bread, made the pick up and came back through the Sally Port at approximately 8:16 A.M. When the truck arrived at Renz Farm and was unloaded it was discovered by Mr. Bernard Paschang, civilian cook, that the bread was torn and crushed to the extent that only a few loaves were usable and the rest had to be fed to the chickens. To my knowledge, up until the time of this report, there has been no notification from any Renz Farm source of the condition of the bread delivery of that date to any officer or official of the penitentiary. Mr. Paschang did state to me that after he heard of Inmate Ray's disappearance he did make the remark that "Ray probably came out in the bread box". When asked why he did not report this to someone, Mr. Paschang said he did report it to Officer Burkhardt and to someone in the office. (He could not remember who.) He also said he told Mr. Jim Stone, Civilian Cook, when he came to work the next day.

Mr. Jim Stone, civilian cook at Renz Farm, said he saw the bread the next day and it looked like it "had been shoveled into the box". He said it was not fit for use and was fed to the chickens.

Sergeant John Setser was the officer in charge of Renz Farm, Sunday, April 23, 1967, and he stated that he could not recall Mr. Paschang notifying him of the condition of the bread upon arrival at Renz Farm. (This seems a rather weak statement.)

Guard Officer Ezra Sheldon states that he definitely remember checking the Renz Farm bread box and although he did not handle the bread it was neatly stacked almost to the top of the box. (The box holds 60 loaves, Renz Farm ordered 40 loaves, the box should have been two-third full.)

CONCLUSIONS:

Inmate Ray evidently made good his escape via the Renz Farm bread truck. He must have used a false bottom for the bread to be stacked as neatly as Officer Sheldon said it was. No one at Renz Farm admits seeing the false bottom. Why should the inmate dispose of the false bottom when the bread was mangled beyond use?

Department of Corrections
INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

To: M. J. ELLIOTT, ASSOCIATE WARDEN-CUSTODY

Date: MAY 3, 1967

From: ¹⁰²⁴
CAPTAIN DANTON STEELE

Subject:

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Civilian cook Bernard Peschang and whoever else in an official capacity that was aware of the bread delivery are guilty of gross negligence and dereliction of duty and should be appropriately disciplined.

Refer to my report of April 24, 1967, subject inmate James Earl Ray. If inmate Ray did escape via the Rens Farm bread run, then there is a discrepancy in Guard Officer Johnnie Petree's statement that he let him out of the kitchen when the mainline turned out for recreation yard and never saw him again. Guard Officer Petree was on duty at the Kitchen Gate all this time.

SUGGESTION

Officer Alfred Burkhardt is on his regular day off this date and I was unable to contact him. I suggest that he be interviewed in the atmosphere of the Warden's office and acquainted with what we already know. Maybe he can clear this thing up. Someone seems to have been doing some covering up.

cc: Warden -
Mr. Kern
Capt. Steele
File

W. J. P. 05174
Mr. J. P. 04570
Johnnie Petree - 15174
George Jensen - 05516

Copy

Burkhardt - Interview

*From the desk of: Warden Alfred
05174 R. Swenson - Warden
Johnnie Petree - Kitchen - says he
wants it out early in the morning
Betty Petree, friend of Burkhardt,
was in on it, but Jensen, as
stated in bread delivery to
Rens Farm*

Department of Corrections
INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

To: M. J. ELLIOTT, ASSOCIATE WARDEN-CUSTODY

Date: MAY 4, 1967

From: *D. J. Steele*
CAPTAIN DANTON STEELE

Subject: SUPPLEMENT TO ESCAPE INVESTIGATION REPORT OF MAY 3, 1967

Captain Leroy Casey and myself interviewed Guard Officer Alfred Burkhardt this date and obtained his account of the Renz Farm bread run on Sunday, April 23, 1967.

Officer Burkhardt stated that when he reached the Kitchen dock that morning he unloaded his empty bread box and went to the bread room in the main kitchen via the elevator. He checked the Renz Farm box and noted that his bread was loaded, accompanied the inmate who wheeled the box to the loading dock, and watched the box removed from the cart and loaded on the truck by the kitchen inmate and the inside truck driver inmate. Officer Burkhardt stated that he did not observe the inmates straining under any extra load. He then proceeded to the Sally Port and was present when Guard Officer Ezra Sheldon examined the bread box. Officer Burkhardt noted at this time that the bread was still neatly stacked near the top of the box as it was when he left the bread room.

He then proceeded to the Renz Farm, stopping on the way at Mr. Carl Mill's residence to deliver Mr. Mill's bread which was in a separate box. Officer Burkhardt stated that he went to the rear of the truck and inmate Lloyd R. Reno #10970, who rode the cab of the truck with him, got in the back of the truck and handed him Mr. Mill's bread, which he delivered. He did not at this time notice anything amiss in the truck.

When he reached the Administration building he backed up to the Front Door, went to the rear of the truck and watched the Renz Farm kitchen inmates unload the bread. He stated that at this time one of the inmates commented that the bread was sure in a mess. He said that he never looked at the bread or gave it a thought as to why the bread would be messed up but that he did ask the inmate if he thought they would have to go after another load. The inmate assured him that they could use the bread and he dropped the matter.

Officer Burkhardt emphatically states that he never saw the bread after it reached the Renz Farm. Mr. Bernard Peschang never reported the condition of the bread to him, and that he had never heard of the condition of the bread from anyone else. He was asked why it didn't seem strange to him that, after seeing the bread neatly stacked in the Sally Port, it should be in a mess upon arriving at his destination. He said he just never thought anything about it any further than checking as to whether or not he would have to return for more bread.

Captain Leroy Casey, in the course of his investigation of Inmate James Earl Ray's escape, talked to Officer Burkhardt on the telephone Monday, April 24, 1967. Officer Burkhardt, at that time, told Captain Casey that he arrived at the Renz Farm with all the bread he had left the walls with. Later Captain Casey talked with Officer Burkhardt in person and was told by the officer that he actually had not seen the bread after it reached the farm but assumed it was all there because they didn't run out of bread and there were no complaints.

Department of Corrections
INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

Subject: RAY, James, #00416-J
To: B.J. POIRY, MAJOR

Date April 24, 1967

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CONCLUSIONS:

Guard Officer Johnnie Petree was negligent of his duty in not trying to locate Inmate Ray when he did not report for work at 11:00 A.M. and in not reporting the absence of Inmate Ray to Control Center and to Officer Harold Schaffer who relieved him at 12:00 P.M.

Guard Officer Harold Schaffer was negligent to a lesser extent in not knowing to whom he spoke to over the telephone on a matter as important as a missing inmate, also for not reporting to Control Center, especially since Inmate Ray is well known as being escape prone.

The daily call sheet for the kitchen is made out by Kitchen office inmates and signed by the guard officer on duty. Whether this procedure is directed by civilian cooks is not clear. The call sheet is delivered in the evening (for the next day) by the inmate-first-cook. This call sheet should be directed by and signed by the civilian cook in charge and countersigned by the guard officer. Inmates should be required to honor the call sheet unless cancelled by the civilian cook.

All off duty kitchen and dock workers are allowed to eat their meals in the kitchen. This creates too much traffic and confusion. The Kitchen Gate Officer would be able to better control the traffic if only duty workers were allowed in the kitchen.

The large number of outside people both inmate and civilian allowed inside the walls on weekends is definitely a security risk, especially when the regularly assigned Round Gate and Front Door officers are not on duty. Definite procedures should be set up.

cc: Warden Swenson
Mr. Elliott, A.W.C.
file

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 4/24/681

On April 21, 1968, Major BERNARD J. POIRY, Custodial Officer, Missouri State Penitentiary, said he has been unable to recall the name of the person who told him about RAY escaping in the bread container from the prison bakery in April of 1967. He said, however, the person who allegedly helped by putting a card board cover over him was not GEORGE OWENS, but GEORGE JONES, who is still in the penitentiary and employed in the bakery. He said there is no doubt in his mind but that RAY escaped via the bread truck.

Major POIRY also said that he received information on April 21, 1967, from the prison "grapevine, no source identifiable, that the talk in the pen is that RAY made contact with WALTER NOLAN, who was released from the penitentiary on a writ, and that probably NOLAN was the "brains" behind the KING murder. He said there was absolutely no information to confirm this report and he has no information that NOLAN and RAY even associated together in the penitentiary.

On 4/21/68 at Jefferson City, Missouri File # KC 44-760
by SA ROWEN B. AYERS : SS Date dictated 4/22/68

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1Date 4/24/68

GEORGE HAROLD JONES, Missouri State Penitentiary (MSP) #45516, who has been in the MSP since 1957 from St. Louis, Missouri advised he is now head baker at the penitentiary. He said he was working in the bakery with JAMES EARL RAY when the latter escaped in April of 1967, but he has never been contacted in connection therewith. He said he also worked in the bakery when RAY was working in the kitchen. He said they were acquainted for six or seven years. He said he never talked to RAY about his plans to escape and did not know how RAY escaped. He said a man could conceal himself in the bread boxes used in 1967. He said they were wooden boxes about 4 1/2' by 2 1/2'.

He said however if a man concealed himself in one of the boxes the officials of the penitentiary would have known about it as soon as the box was delivered without bread. He said after RAY was missing, the officials continued their search for him for about 12 or 13 days on the theory he had "hid out" as he had done before. He said inmates were forbidden to take sandwiches out of the eating areas because officials thought they might take food to RAY. He said he was making a sandwich one afternoon and a lieutenant asked him what he was going to do with it. He said he was going to take it to RAY, in a kidding manner. The officer said "he knew RAY went over the wall". He did not recall the identity of the officer.

JONES said he did not know RAY's friends. He said he never heard of a RAYMOND LEWIS CURTIS. He said RAY is not the type of person who would kill MARTIN LUTHER KING. He said RAY never talked about Negroes or anything else and he believes "they have the wrong guy".

JONES said that he never heard of RAY using drugs and he knew RAY was not a homosexual. He said he could not furnish any information as to the whereabouts of RAY or could he name anyone who could.

On 4/22/68 at Jefferson City, Missouri File # KC 44-760
by SA ROWEN B. AYERS : ssc Date dictated 4/23/68

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KC 44-760

The following investigation was conducted by
Special Agent THOMAS H. WEAVER:

AT JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI:

On April 23, 1968, Major BERNARD POIRY, Assistant Associate Warden of Custody, Missouri State Penitentiary (MSP), advised that a thorough search of the property room at the MSP failed to reveal any personal effects of JAMES EARL RAY left behind after his escape. He said that he usually goes through any personal effects left behind by an escapee for leads, but he cannot recall whether or not he ever saw anything left behind by RAY. He stated that if other inmates know an inmate has escaped, they will strip his cell of anything worthwhile. Major POIRY advised that he will continue to search for any personal property of RAY and will advise if such is located.

On April 29, 1968, Mr. BERNARD PESCHANG, Route 2, a cook at the Renz Prison Farm, Missouri State Penitentiary, advised that he had worked at the kitchen at the MSP in about 1963-64 when RAY was working there pushing a food cart to the hospital. He recalled at the time that RAY was known as the "hide-out guy" from a previous occasion when he hid inside the prison for some time before being found. He recalls that on a Sunday morning, during April, 1967, the bread truck arrived at the Renz farm when PESCHANG was there as the cook, and the bread was "messed up". RAY had hidden out again once while PESCHANG was at the Renz farm, and when he saw the bread box with the "messed up" bread, he thought then, without knowing why, that "JIMMY RAY must be out again". He did not know at the time, he said, that RAY was working in the bread room at the main prison, and he has no idea who might have helped RAY escape on this occasion. When he heard later that RAY had indeed escaped, he recalled the "messed up" bread and notified his superiors at the Renz farm. The bread box used to transport bread in an open truck from the main prison to the farm had contained sufficient bread to be used on the day it was received, but it was a large enough box that a man in a cramped position could have been hidden under some layers of loaves.

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PESCHANG said that he has no idea who RAY's close friends were, and as he recalled, RAY "got along" but was not close to anyone. He knew RAY was unhappy in prison, from working with him at the kitchen at the main prison, and he had heard RAY say that he would "make it to South America" if he ever got out of prison. He said he never heard RAY make any statements to indicate he was unusually prejudiced against Negroes, and he did not seem to be the type to have it "in" for anyone, but was just "for JIMMY RAY". He said that the bread in the bread box on the day RAY reportedly escaped, was turned around and turned over, and not neatly stacked as it usually was on arrival at the farm. He does not believe any incidents at the time occurred which would indicate any guard had anything to do with helping RAY escape, and he could not be certain that RAY got out in the bread box, but it would have been possible.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

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Date 4/29/68

Mr. HAROLD SCHAEFFER, 630 Adams, Jefferson City, Missouri, employed at the Missouri State Penitentiary from 12:00 PM to 8:00 AM as tower watch on Tower 14, formerly gate guard in the Penitentiary Kitchen (and bakery) said he worked on the latter assignment for about two years in the period between 1965 and 1967, and knew JAMES RAY.

He recalled that he went on duty at 11:00 AM on April 23, 1967. He said RAY worked in back of the kitchen as a bread slicer who packed the bread boxes. He worked alone. He said he did not know RAY well. He said RAY would have had to leave the penitentiary, if he escaped in a bread box, sometime before 11:00 AM, as the bread goes to the farms early in the morning, or at least before 11:00 AM. He said the other guard on duty with him was ROBERT HIGGINS who now lives some place in Arizona.

He recalled that about 3:00 PM he was contacted by Warden SWENSON who told him that RAY had escaped and wanted to know what he knew about it. He said he did not know RAY had left, as he had no occasion to check on him. He said he was "bawled out". He said a search continued inside the walls for RAY for several days.

SCHAEFFER said he did not know any associates of RAY, and had no dealings with him. He denied that he had ever furnished RAY with any amphetamine, or any other type of contraband.

He said he has heard very little talk about RAY, either following his escape or since the allegation appeared in the papers that RAY was being sought for the murder of Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING. He said he could furnish no information concerning his whereabouts or of anyone who might have such information.

Mr. SCHAEFFER said he knows "WHITEY" DOWDA. He said about eight months ago, DOWDA was in Jefferson City, Missouri with his new wife, and stayed for a couple of nights. He formerly worked in the penitentiary kitchen, and would

On 4/25/68 at Jefferson City, Missouri File # KC 44-760

by SA ROWEN B. AYERS:ENV Date dictated 4/26/68

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have known RAY, according to Mr. SCHAEFFER. He said he was walking on Capitol Avenue and DOWDA came by and asked him if he wanted a ride to his car. He went with DOWDA and another guard by the name of JOHN PETREKE or PETREE, or similar, to a tavern and a few beers. PETREKE asked DOWDA if he and his wife wanted to stay all night at the PETREKE residence. He did not know if the invitation was accepted. He said DOWDA was on his way to California at the time. He was driving a Volkswagen which he said belonged to his wife. He said he was with DOWDA for about 1½ hours. He said he observed DOWDA at the front gate of the penitentiary talking to the door man, but did not see him go in. He said he did not know how well RAY knew DOWDA.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 4/27/68

Mr. STEPHAN I. KRAL, Elston, Missouri, Officers' Dining Room Supervisor, Missouri State Penitentiary, formerly guard at Renz Farm, said it was his regular job in 1967 to drive the truck to the main prison for bread five days a week, except weekends. He said the truck leaves Renz Farm about 8:00 a.m., and gets the bread no later than about 8:30 a.m. He said the empty box is taken from Renz Farm and taken to the loading dock. At that place the driver gives the order for bread. The inmates take the empty box on an elevator to the bakery and a box is loaded with the order. It is then brought back to the dock. The driver is supposed to check it to be sure it contains nothing but bread. He said the box was about 4 by 3 feet. He said it holds about 100 loaves of bread and they are packed 15 loaves to each layer. He said he always ran his arm down inside the box to count the layers. He said the truck then goes out to the truck tunnel. There a guard again checked to be sure there was nothing under or around the truck, including the box and under the hood. He, if satisfied, signaled the tower and the exit gate was released and the truck went back to the farm. He said the truck made several stops for lights, intersections, etc., en route and one would have no difficulty getting off the truck. He said the box was large enough to hold a man.

Mr. KRAL said that he heard some talk, after RAY escaped, that some officers had seen RAY "practicing a little yogi", that is, curling up in corners, and similar. He said he presumed he was doing this to see if he could fit in the bread box, but he had no personal information in this regard. He also said he "heard" that Renz Farm had been receiving more bread than requested for two or three days prior to April 23, 1967.

Mr. KRAL said the entire delivery trip from Renz to the Penitentiary and back did not continue until after 9:00 a.m.

He said he did not know what procedures of checking were followed on April 23, 1968, as this was a weekend and both the regular driver and regular tunnel checker were off duty.

On 4/26/68 at Jefferson City, Mo. File # KC 44-760

by SA ROWEN B. AYERS (lib) Date dictated 4/26/68

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 4/27/68

Mr. ALFRED BURKHARDT, 305 Boonville Road, formerly employed by the Missouri State Penitentiary, said he was the relief driver of the "bread truck" for Renz Farm on April 23, 1967. He said he picked up the bread about 8:30 a.m. He noted the box was on the platform (loading dock). He said this was unusual because usually the empty is taken from the truck and the full box returned. He said he recalled it had been there the day before. He said he was supposed to check the box to be sure it contained nothing but bread. He said the box was about 3 by 2-1/2 feet. He said he had heard that someone tried to get into one of these boxes, after RAY's escape, and could not do it with room for bread. He said the box is checked at the dock, and at the tunnel. He said, however, that it was not "probed." He said the check was visual. He said the box was delivered to Renz Farm and he heard no more about it.

However, he "heard" the next day that civilian cook at Renz Farm complained "that the bread had been all messed up." He also "heard" that there was no shortage of bread on April 23, 1968. He said he also "heard" that some of RAY's clothing had been found on the loading dock a week or two after the escape. He said the only thing unusual about this particular trip and perhaps the 22nd, was that the box was on the dock when he arrived there.

On 4/26/68 at Jefferson City, Missouri File # KC 44-760

by SA ROWEN B. AYERS (lib) Date dictated 4/26/68

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WARRANT OF ARREST

On April 24, 1968, an amended complaint, as authorized, was filed by Special Agent ROWEN B. AYERS before United States Commissioner W. C. SHELEY at Jefferson City, Missouri, charging JAMES EARL RAY with Unlawful Flight to Avoid Confinement in connection with the commission of a crime of Robbery First, in violation of Title 18, Section 1073, United States Code. Bond returnable was set by the United States Attorney at \$5,000.00 to the United States Commissioner at Jefferson City, Missouri.

Mr. SHELEY issued a warrant on the above complaint on April 24, 1968, which has been transmitted to the Office of the United States Marshal at Kansas City, Missouri.

HANDWRITING SAMPLES

On April 20, 1968, one copy of a letter in the handwriting of JAMES E. RAY dated October 24, 1966, was furnished to the FBI Laboratory for comparison purposes. The letter was from RAY to Dr. EARL C. KEPLER, Biggs Building, Fulton, Missouri, and was furnished to Special Agent ROWEN B. AYERS by Dr. G. B. PETERSON, State Hospital No. 1, Fulton, Missouri, on April 19, 1968.

On April 27, 1968, thirty-four pages containing purported handwriting and hand printing of JAMES EARL RAY were forwarded to the FBI Laboratory, also for comparison purposes. These items were contained in the Missouri State Penitentiary file of RAY and were furnished to Special Agent ROWEN B. AYERS on April 26, 1968, by Mr. HARRY LAUF, Records Officer, Missouri State Penitentiary, Jefferson City, Missouri.

On May 6, 1968, twenty-two pages of handwriting of JAMES EARL RAY as obtained from the U. S. Penitentiary, Leavenworth, Kansas, and one copy of a form dated April 4, 1958, signed by JAMES EARL RAY, obtained from U. S. Probation Officer, Kansas City, Missouri, were forwarded to the FBI Laboratory for comparison purposes. The twenty-two pages of handwriting samples were obtained by Special Agent MAX E. RICHARDSON and the form from the U. S. Probation Officer, Kansas City, Missouri, was obtained by Special Agent THOMAS J. CONNOLLY.

REPORT
of theFEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20535

To: FBI, Memphis (44-1987)

Date: April 24, 1968

Re: MURKIN
CR

FBI File No. 44-38861

Lab. No. D-561271 JK

Specimens received 4/22/68

K171 Missouri State Penitentiary form dated 10/24/66,
bearing known handwriting of JAMES E. RAYALSO SUBMITTED: Copies of two-page report of psychiatric
examination dated 10/24/66

Result of examination:

The "Galt" writings considered together and specimen K171 can be identified as having been prepared by the same individual.

Because of the limited questioned material and the lack of comparable letters and letter combinations, it could not be determined whether the "Harvey Lowmyer" signature on the Q72 gun invoice was prepared by JAMES E. RAY, K171.

Specimen K171 is being retained.

REPORT
of theFEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20535

To: FBI, Memphis (44-1987)

Date: May 1, 1968

Re: MURKIN
CR

FBI File No. 44-38861

Lab. No. D-561775 JK

Specimens received 4/29/68

K211 Various documents comprising thirty-four pieces of paper bearing purported known handwriting and hand printing of JAMES EARL RAY, obtained from his file at Missouri State Penitentiary

Result of examination:

It was concluded that the questioned hand printing appearing on items attributed to Eric S. Galt was prepared by JAMES EARL RAY, K171 and K211.

Because of the presence of characteristics which cannot be explained on the basis of the known handwriting of JAMES EARL RAY, it cannot be definitely determined whether the "Harvey Lowmyer" signature on Q72 was prepared by this individual; however, significant handwriting similarities were noted.

Specimen K211 has been photographed and is temporarily retained.

REPORT
of theFEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20535

To: FBI, Memphis (44-1987)

Date: May 9, 1968

Re: MURKIN
CR

FBI File No. 44-38861

Lab. No. D-562610 JK

Specimens received 5/7/68

- K257 Twenty-one sheets of paper and one copy of a form dated 4/4/58, bearing known handwriting and hand printing of JAMES EARL RAY

ALSO SUBMITTED: One "Inmate Request To Staff Member" form for JACK M. RAY, No. 59602

Result of examination:

The additional known handwriting of JAMES EARL RAY, represented by K257, does not sufficiently augment the known handwriting of this individual previously received to permit the identification of the "Harvey Lowmyer" signature on Q72 with this individual.

K257 is temporarily retained.

KC 44-760

INTERVIEWS WITH FELLOW INMATES AND OFFICIALS
AT MISSOURI STATE PENITENTIARY,
JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 4/24/681

Mr. BEN GOODIN, Salesman, Schantzmeier Ford, Southwest Blvd., Jefferson City, Missouri, advised that he formerly was chef at the Missouri State Penitentiary and knew JIMMY RAY well, actually being his boss for about six years. He said RAY was a good friend of a blond inmate by the name of DOWDA. He said DOWDA hated Negroes. He said that sometime about a year ago, DOWDA came through Jefferson City driving a Volkswagen. He stopped to see GOODIN and had a female with him he introduced as his wife. He told GOODIN he had a Mustang and his father operated a resort in Florida and he was manager of a chicken fry cafe in either Atlanta, Georgia, or Montgomery, Alabama. He asked GOODIN not to indicate to his wife that he had been in the "pen".

GOODIN said that sometime later DOWDA telephoned him from California, and said that he needed money and asked GOODIN to send him some. He refused, and DOWDA called a second time and GOODIN refused. He said he has not heard from him since.

GOODIN stated that since DOWDA was a "racist" that he might be an accomplice of RAY in the murder of Doctor KING. He also thought that both RAY and DOWDA were mixed up in "peddling dope" in the penitentiary, but he could never prove it. He said DOWDA had a detainer from Florida which was dropped. He said he knew RAY wanted to escape and he "killed" a request by RAY for a transfer to a farm because of this. He said RAY was "strictly a loner" and very quiet. He knew of no personal feelings on the part of RAY in connection with Negroes. He knew of no other close friends RAY may have had.

On 4/21/68 at Jefferson City, Missouri File # KC 44-760

by SA ROWEN B. AYERS : pe Date dictated 4/23/68

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 4/24/681

On April 22, 1968, RAY PRUETT, number 2195, Clerk, K Hall, said that he knew JAMES RAY well and visited him on occasion in the hall. He said he considered RAY as a "neighbor". He said that RAY never used any type of drugs except for medicine, had no ill feelings toward the Negro race and had no abnormal sexual habits. He said he first met RAY in jail in St. Louis about 1959 and knew him all of the time they were in the penitentiary except for a brief period he, PRUETT, was on parole.

He said that RAY is the type of person who has no enemies. He never said anything bad about anyone and minded his own business. He was very quiet; interested all the time in escaping and caused no one any trouble. He said RAY had no friends as such, but talked to a few persons. His primary interest was baseball. He did not mention his family and was very conservative in regards to spending money. He did not gamble, according to PRUETT. PRUETT said that if RAY would say he killed Dr. KING that he, PRUETT, would not believe him. He said that RAY is just not the type. He said he could furnish no information regarding the possible whereabouts of RAY and had no information concerning who might have aided in his escape from prison.

He said RAY is not the type of person to have committed the crime of killing Dr. KING, in his opinion.

On 4/22/68 at Jefferson City, Missouri File # KC 44-760
by SA ROWEN B. AYERS : SS Date dictated 4/22/68

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 4/24/681

On April 22, 1968, BILLY EDWARD MILES, number 02185, serving life in the Missouri State Penitentiary said he was interviewed by reporters with the permission of Warden SWENSON and he has been quoted, without the use of his name, about his knowledge of RAY. He said he has known RAY since February of 1961, and knew nothing of his family or background although RAY mentioned having a brother and sister. He said he celled in K-Hall four cells away from RAY and worked in the bakery with him. He said no one is actually a "friend" of RAY's as he had no close friends. He said the person nearest to being his friend is an ex-convict from St. Louis, Missouri, discharged about 1965 by the name of CARL DRAKE. He said RAY and DRAKE got along well. He said he believed he was as close to RAY as anyone else, but he could not say he was a good friend. He said he attended baseball games with RAY and RAY was interested in following games on T.V. and in the papers. He did not use drugs and MILES denied that he knew RAY as a homosexual or possessed of abnormal sexual behavior otherwise. He said RAY was always looking for means to escape, but did not discuss his plans. He never mentioned where he would go should he escape. MILES believed RAY was above average, for a convict, in mentality. He said some of the inmates believed he was "crazy" for his escape attempts. He said, for a time, he and RAY operated a book shop together. He said they made some money off of this. This shop consisted of obtaining various paper back books and selling and trading them for small amounts. He denied that RAY was in any way connected with the sale or use of dope and did not know of his doing any gambling. He said RAY talked to Negroes, but did not associate with them and expressed no animosity towards them. He said RAY was very retiring and self conscious. He could not imagine RAY taking dancing lessons, or spending money foolishly.

MILES said RAYMOND LEWIS CURTIS was not known to him.

On 4/22/68 at Jefferson City, Missouri File # KC 44-760

by SA ROWEN B. AYERS : SS Date dictated 4/22/68

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 4/24/681

On April 22, 1968, JIMMY Z. BRADLEY, in the Missouri State Penitentiary as JAMES Z. BRADLEY, number 71844, said he has been serving a life sentence since December of 1956. He said he knew RAY as an employee in J Hall for a time and knew he lived in K Hall. He said he spoke to RAY on occasion and observed his activities in K Hall. He said RAY lived in K Hall for at least two years and always desired to cell alone. He said he, BRADLEY, was in solitary when RAY escaped and knew nothing of it.

He said that RAY was exceptionally quiet and rather an "odd person". He said he knows that RAY took mild drugs such as amphetamine and had very small veins and it was difficult for RAY to "mainline" his shots. He said RAY always believed he was ill, and used drugs on occasion as a matter of medicine. However, whenever he could he purchased amphetamine and barbituates. BRADLEY said RAY probably had a source within the penitentiary for these drugs, but he declined to discuss the matter further. He said RAY never sold such.

BRADLEY said that RAY is very quiet and would be very hard to locate. He said he would not know where to locate him and could furnish no information as to who might. He said he did not believe RAY would kill anyone unless his life was in jeopardy. He said that no one could say he is a friend of RAY's because RAY had no associates who he would consider as "friends". He said RAY is the type of person who might find employment on a ranch, a chicken farm, or a lumber camp or similar. He said if RAY took dancing lessons this would be completely out of character for him. He said RAY spent money only when he had to and "did not mess around with anyone".

BRADLEY said RAYMOND LEWIS CURTIS is unknown to him.

The following is the mailing list for JIM Z. BRADLEY, number 71844, as obtained from his file on April 23, 1968:

On 4/22/68 at Jefferson City, Missouri File # KC 44-760
by SA ROWEN B. AYERS : SS Date dictated 4/22/68

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Wife

MAXINE BRADLEY, 135 St. George,
St. Louis, Missouri, age 23.

Mother

PHIE BRADLEY, 1724 A. So. 14th,
St. Louis, Missouri, age 49.

Father

JOHN B. BRADLEY, 1023 Lafayette
Street, St. Louis, Missouri,
age 58.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

4/24/68

Date

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JEROME (NMN) CARPENTER, Missouri State Penitentiary (MSP) #0304, serving life for murder from June 15, 1961, stated he has been confined and has worked in the psychiatric section of the prison. He said he has known JAMES EARL RAY in prison since about 1963, but does not know him well. He said he used to live in Quincy, Illinois and attended school with JERRY RAY, brother of JAMES. He said he knew the father of the RAY boys as JERRY RAY. He recalled that when he was about 15 years of age, his mother ran away with JERRY RAY and went to St. Louis, Missouri. He said they separated about two years ago and his mother moved back to Quincy and lives at 630 North 6th Street. He did not know what happened to JERRY RAY. He said his mother also wrote to him from 1818 South 12th Street in St. Louis, Missouri. She used the name of RUBY CARPENTER and RUBY RAY and worked as an inspectress at various hotels such as the Jefferson, Coronado and the Park Plaza in St. Louis.

He said he knew JIMMY CARPENTER who left the penitentiary some time ago. He said he did not know if this CARPENTER knew JAMES RAY or not. JEROME CARPENTER said he only saw the mother of JAMES RAY once and that was when she came to the home of his grandmother to find out what happened to her husband and his mother.

He said he heard of RAY escaping from the penitentiary but did not know the details. He said RAY was a quiet, meek person who was very soft spoken. He said he rarely saw RAY in the penitentiary and did not know him in Quincy, Illinois. He said he could furnish no information as to the whereabouts of RAY.

On 4/22/68 at Jefferson City, Missouri File # KC 44-760

by SA ROWEN B. AYERS : SSC Date dictated 4/23/68

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

Date 4/24/68

ORLAN EUGENE ROSE, Inmate No. 73723, Missouri State Penitentiary, said he first came to the Missouri State Penitentiary in 1958. He said he first met RAY in jail at Kansas City, Missouri in 1955, and celled with him and WALTER RIFE prior to the time that all three went to Leavenworth, Kansas. He said RIFE may have been a homosexual as he liked to fool around with young boys, but he said at the Jackson County Jail, Leavenworth, and Jefferson City, Missouri, RAY gave no indication of abnormal sexual behavior.

He described RAY as quiet, a loner, and "not a loud mouth". He could not picture RAY, he said, as being vicious. He said RAY liked to follow baseball. He said they both lived in K Hall and associated together. He said they talked every day. He said RAY "did not fool" with as many as five men in the penitentiary. He said RAY used amphetamines when he could get them. He paid from \$2.00 to \$5.00 a shot. He did not get into debt and did not gamble.

He said he was in maximum security when RAY escaped and knew nothing of the details. He said the rumor inside is that RAY did not escape in a bread truck, but he had no information as to how he did escape.

He said RAY has a half-sister in St. Louis, Missouri with his mother. He said RAY did not like his mother as she left him and started living with an ex-convict out of Illinois. He said RAY has a brother and some half brothers. He believed his mother is living and re-married after the ex-convict died. She may have had some property "which she lived up".

ROSE said the inmates call him "The Jew" in the penitentiary, but he said RAY was "tighter" with his money than ROSE. He said he could not imagine RAY spending any money for dancing lessons or leaving a gun behind him someplace because of this characteristic.

ROSE said he did not know any RAYMOND LEWIS CURTIS, nor did he know of this person as an associate of RAY's.

On 4/22/68 at Jefferson City, Missouri File # KC 44-760

by SA ROWEN B. AYERS - lw Date dictated 4/23/68

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On April 22, 1968, Warden HAROLD SWENSON, in addition to furnishing a copy of the entire files of the Missouri State Penitentiary, furnished an article handed to him on April 22, 1968 by ORLAN ROSE which is:

Warden Swenson:

Would you look the attached article over and consider turning it over to a reporter of the Kansas City Star newspaper. I have a feeling that Jimmy Ray might give himself up if he happens to read what I have written. If you do release the article I give you full permission to reword it as you see fit as long as it contains the same line of thought.

There is a possibility that he might get killed before it is ever learned whether or not he is actually guilty of ~~shaking~~ shooting Doctor King. If this would happen, it would be another Oswald case in the eyes of the world.

If you do not think it appropriate to release this article to the news media, just tear it up, however, knowing Jimmy as I do there is a very faint possibility that he would give himself up if he were to read what I have written. I am sure that he will be reading either the K.C. Star or the St. Louis papers wherever he is.

The above & the attached ⁴¹⁻²²⁻⁶⁸ 4-page statement handed to Capt. Wyzick by Orlean Rose-73723, then to me - JRS

"IF JAMES EARL RAY IS GUILTY, WHO IS REALLY TO BLAME?"

"For quite a number of years I have been one of the very few close friends of James Earl Ray. Because of this I would like to say a few things about him since everyone else who discusses him reveals that he is either anti-social, a loner, an escape artist, seeks recognition, etc. If this sort of unfavorable publicity continues to be brought out against him there is a very good chance that he might end up like Lee Harvey Oswald without ever having been given a chance to prove his innocence or guilt before a trial court. If this happens it will be a disgrace in the eyes of the world and bring about the same amount of doubt and criticism that arose after Oswald was killed in cold blood by a fanatic who decided to take the law into his own hands.

I first met Jimmy in the Kansas City jail during 1955 where he was being held on a forgery charge. His accomplice on the forgery charge was another man named Walter Rife and we all three lived in the same cell together and passed many hours shooting the breeze while playing three-handed card games for candy bars. Jimmy loved candy bars and always managed to win his share.

On one of our several trips to the federal courthouse, prior to our sentencing, we were taken in the same group. Jimmy's fall partner, Rife, was facing a parole violation or detainer of some sort from the state of Illinois and planned to escape if the proper situation arose. On our trip to the courthouse, a chance did come up by means of a unlocked door in the holdover room which led to a hallway or stairs. Rife begged Jimmy to leave with him through the unlocked door, but Jimmy quashed the deal by saying that all he wanted to do was to plead guilty to the forgery and get his sentence served. I mention this reluctance to escape on Jimmy's part because everyone always brings up that he was continually trying to escape custody. This is not so. I will explain what I think to be the real reason behind his later escape attempts while he was serving the twenty year sentence, but first I would like to point out a few things about Jimmy Ray's personality that have never been mentioned by anyone up to the present time.

Eventually, we all three ended up in the federal prison at Leavenworth, Kansas where our friendship continued. Rife went to work in the

prison hospital and lifted weights during his off duty hours while Jimmy and I either walked the yard or watched the ball games together. It is true that Jimmy is sort of a loner, but this is not unusual in a penitentiary. Being a loner doesn't mean that he didn't have many friends. Jimmy always wore a smile and laughed softly at the various occurrences during our time together in jail and while we were at Leavenworth. His friendly smile alone made him many friends and got him many greetings, but he just wasn't one to mix or join a group bull session as is most usually the case in jail or prison. He would rather stroll around the yard with one or two persons and discuss clothes, travel, baseball, or the enjoyment he got while working as a painter just prior to his arrest. It must have been one of the best paying jobs he ever had because he was always talking about it. If I remember correctly, I believe him and Rife lived in the Pickwick Hotel during the time they both worked for the painting contractor. He liked nice clothes and was always very neatly dressed during his court appearances. He would sometimes mention his brother, but I never heard him ever mention his mother or father in any of our conversations. I took it for granted that he had not been blessed with many luxuries while growing up. He was very saving with the few dollars he was able to obtain while serving time, in fact, I often accused him of being a miser. Somehow he was able to smuggle a wristwatch into the jail at Kansas City and he was so proud of it that I actually believe it was the first wristwatch he ever owned. He did not want to part with it for anything, however, he finally did so because he learned that he could not possibly take it into the prison at Leavenworth with him. I ended up with the watch and passed it on to my brother, but only after having paid Jimmy a much higher price than is usual in jail. Up until I left him at Leavenworth, he was one of my best friends and he was always a very enjoyable person to be around.

When I again met him in 1960 at the Missouri State Penitentiary, he had aged a great deal, he lacked his usual smile, and his whole demeanor seemed to be changed. He was very withdrawn and it took quite a number of conversations before he finally opened up to me and told me why he felt so bad. We were both assigned jobs in the Food Service Department. He worked upstairs in the Bakery and I worked on the bottom

floor where he would deliver bread each weekday for outside delivery. We both lived on the same tier in K Cellhouse and would often talk with each other after our jobs were over. It was during these conversations that I finally learned what I think to be the main reason behind his personality change. He told me that two police officers had framed him on the robbery charge he was serving the twenty years on. He swore up and down that he was innocent of the crime, but that he did not have the money to hire lawyers to prove his innocence or carry his case into the United States Supreme Court. I later learned that the two police officers were not above planting evidence in order to convict an exconvict, and that their conscience must have bothered them because they both resigned from the police force shortly after Jimmy was convicted. Anyway, Jimmy made several attempts to get his case reopened without making any headway. Escape was continually on his mind and after four different attempts, he finally made it.

As far as him being prejudice toward any person or race, I have never heard him ever mention one thing against anyone in all our time spent together. If he couldn't say something good about someone, he just wouldn't say anything. In fact, there was no outward showing of animosity ever revealed by him toward the two police officers who he accused of framing him. If there was he just kept such things to himself.

As far as him being the person who shot Martin Luther King, I just can't believe it is possible. However, if he is guilty of it I am wondering whether or not it all leads back to the fact that he was actually sent to prison on a trumped up charge which in turn caused him to do so as a means of retaliation against society for the twenty year sentence he swears he didn't deserve.

I hope Jimmy is innocent of killing Doctor King. I also hope that he doesn't become a scapegoat simply because he drove a white mustang and happened to favor the alleged assassinator of Doctor King

For the benefit of you persons with hate in your heart toward Jimmy before he has been proven guilty or given the benefit of a fair trial I ask you to withhold your opinions. Instead I would ask you to think of him as being innocent until proven guilty. In the meantime, put

yourselves in his place, on the run from 200 million persons, without a known friend or voice raised in your behalf, and a hundred thousand dollar reward placed on your head. If you were innocent, how would you feel?

In closing, I would like to say that if this article reaches a newspaper and is published and read by Jimmy, I would like to advise you, Jimmy, as a friend to make immediate arrangements for your personal protection by contacting a Judge or Lawyer and give yourself up so that you can be given a fair trial. Don't put it off until you are recognized by some trigger ~~happy~~ happy nut like Jack Ruby who wants to make a name for himself. You realize that you are on the top wanted list with a large reward on your head. You know that the odds are against you because of this. You can't win. In the meantime, while you are thinking this over, if you happen to be cornered by police officers, for Christs sake don't hold a shootout. Grab a phonebook and call a judge or lawyer.

There's no need for me to mention my name because you know who I am. You do have some friends. Turn yourself in, but use discretion in doing so.

KC 44-760

WNO:ss

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The following investigation was conducted at the United States Penitentiary, Leavenworth, Kansas, by SA WILLIAM N. OUSELEY:

JAMES HARVEY BRADLEY, Jr., an inmate of the Penitentiary, number 84515, stated he was presently serving a 15 year sentence stemming from charges against him for violation of United States Postal laws. BRADLEY's cooperation was solicited relative to his knowledge of JAMES EARL RAY and FBI wanted Flyer 442-A was displayed to BRADLEY. BRADLEY immediately stated that RAY was unknown to him by name or face.

It was pointed out to BRADLEY that the FBI was in possession of reliable information that RAY had criminal contacts in Kansas City, including contacts with fences of stolen merchandise. BRADLEY admitted that over the years he has met and dealt with many thieves, burglars and ex-convicts, and possibly at sometime he did meet RAY, however, he has absolutely no recollection of RAY and he feels he has never even met the man.

BRADLEY indicated that in view of the nature of the crime RAY is alleged to have committed, and the resulting disorder that it brought about, he would not hesitate in cooperating if he had any knowledge whatsoever concerning RAY. BRADLEY stated he has followed newspaper accounts of this case and saw the pictures of RAY when RAY was first identified, however, none of it meant anything to him as regards RAY being anyone he has ever known. BRADLEY indicated that he personally has heard no talk among other inmates concerning RAY, that is, talk to the effect that RAY was known to inmates BRADLEY has been in contact with the short time BRADLEY has been at the Penitentiary.

It is noted that JAMES HARVEY BRADLEY, JR., more commonly known as JUNIOR BRADLEY, is now 41 years old and has been engaged in criminal activity since he was 16 years old. For the past 15 to 20 years BRADLEY has had the reputation of being the biggest fence of stolen merchandise in the Kansas City area, having contacts in many other states in connection

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with his fencing operation. In addition reliable information has been received that BRADLEY's operation was intimately connected with the illegal operations of the organized Italian criminal element in Kansas City better known as the "outfit".

KC 44-760

THW:nks

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The following investigation was conducted by SA
THOMAS H. WEAVER:

At Jefferson City, Missouri:

On April 23, 1968, Captain DON WYRICK, Assistant to the Warden, Missouri State Penitentiary, advised a review of RAY's file with regard to a June, 1965 violation involving taking prohibited items into the hospital at the MSP, the name of the patient he was supposedly taking the items to was not given in the violation report, prepared by Captain DANTON STEELE, MSP, following RAY's search by Guard HOMER BELL. MSP records show HOMER BELL resigned in July, 1967, and his address was Box 275, Dixon, Missouri, telephone SK 9-6401.

On April 23, 1968, in interview with inmate FRANK JOSEPH GUINAN, #09297, MSP, GUINAN advised that RAY was addicted to "bennies" and amphetamine, and RAY and NEAL AEBY, another inmate, were receiving this material at the MSP through a guard named STOUT, who was later transferred to one of the farms and later fired for smuggling a watch into the prison farm. GUINAN said that STOUT's wife operates a beauty parlor in Jefferson City.

GUINAN said he believes there was an elderly con, about 65 or 70, named JIMMY CARPENTER who would have known RAY, but he never knew them to cell together. He said he believes he read in the St. Louis newspapers that CARPENTER is presently confined in the St. Louis County Jail. He stated that all the time he knew RAY, the latter was always in a single cell.

On April 23, 1968, ABBIE LOOTEN, Secretary, Associate Warden of Custody, advised that her records show JOHN LEWIS STOUT, 812 East High, Jefferson City, who was last assigned at the Renz Farm as a MSP guard resigned on March 4, 1966. It was noted that the Jefferson City telephone directory listed Marvelle Beauty Shop at 812 E. High Street.

On April 23, 1968, JOHN L. STOUT, 1020 East High Street, advised that he was formerly a guard at the MSP, and he knew JAMES EARL RAY as just another inmate there. He said he did not know RAY or NEAL AEBY any better than the other inmates under his control at the MSP. He stated that RAY worked in the bakery and AEBY in the kitchen at the MSP, and would have

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had the opportunity to associate together in their work, but he never saw RAY associating with anyone in particular, as RAY was a "loner" in his opinion. STOUT stated that he was transferred from the walls to a farm in about 1966, and has not seen either RAY or AEBY since that time. He advised that he had heard rumors about RAY and AEBY taking "dope", but he has no personal knowledge that they were in fact taking "dope" and he never saw either one of them acting as if they were under the influence of any "dope". He was accused of bringing "dope" into the MSP by prison officials while he was there, but he steadfastly denied having been involved in smuggling "dope" or anything else into the prison and would continue to do so. Neither RAY nor AEBY have contacted him since they left the MSP and he has not seen nor heard from either of them since about 1966.

On April 23, 1968, Captain DANTON STEELE, MSP, advised that he vaguely recalls RAY and the incident wherein he had a violation through attempting to take prohibited items to the hospital to some patient, allegedly. He made no record of the name of the supposed patient RAY was taking the items to, and he cannot recall if any name of a patient was ever given.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 4/26/68

1

CARLOS LEE BILLINGS, inmate, Medical Center for Federal Prisoners, Springfield, Missouri, was advised of the identity of JAMES A. MITCHELL as a Special Agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. He was told the purpose of the interview concerned a report he had made sometime ago to the FBI that he had been offered \$50,000. to kill MARTIN LUTHER KING by two individuals identified only as JAMES and EDDIE. This took place in Columbia, South Carolina, in about March, 1965. He was furnished a warning and waiver form, which he read and executed. He then furnished the following oral information:

In early 1965, in Columbia, South Carolina, he met a soldier stationed at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, who was to be discharged within a few days. His name was JIM or GLENN BARBER, but he is not sure of the first name or the spelling of the last name. He had just returned from Panama, and he believes he held the rank of Corporal. BARBER had marijuana and pep pills in his possession and was a very convincing talker. BARBER had met a female in Columbia named JOHNNIE BLACKWELL. She worked as a waitress at a lounge he believes was called the "Downtown," located near Chubby's Steak House in Columbia. She was from a little town twenty miles south of Columbia, name unknown. BLACKWELL roomed with a girl named JUNE TAYLOR, somewhere on Bull Street in Columbia. Both girls were prostitutes, and BILLINGS lived part of the time with TAYLOR. TAYLOR worked at a night club there called the "Red Rooster."

BLACKWELL had met two men known as JAMES and EDDIE and had filled a prostitution date with JAMES for \$50. The initial meeting took place in some club, name unknown, located near Chubby's Steak House, possibly the "Downtown." BLACKWELL told JIM she had to leave because she had a date with a soldier from Fort Jackson, South Carolina, named BARBER. JAMES asked her to ask BARBER if he could get ahold of any weapons, whereupon she told him BARBER had a machine gun.

On 4/26/68 at Springfield, Missouri File # KC 44-760
by SA JAMES A. MITCHELL - LAC Date dictated 4/26/68

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JAMES expressed an interest in buying it from BARBER and told her to pass this on to him, which she agreed to do. The prostitution date was filled in a motel in town, name unknown.

The following night, at the V.F.W., he, JAMES, EDDY and BARBER met. TAYLOR and BLACKWELL were present, as well as two other girls who worked at the "Red Rooster," but this was their night off. He does not recall their names. This was the first time he had met JAMES and EDDY. The men went outside and BARBER gave them each a stick of marijuana which he had brought back from Panama. They all sat in JAMES's white 1964-65 Lincoln Continental and smoked marijuana. The Lincoln had a Tennessee license plate beginning with the number 2, which designates Memphis. JAMES was always smoking big cigars and wore a large diamond ring. He understood JAMES has money in Mississippi and Tennessee. He owns land in Clarksdale, Mississippi, has a big car lot in Memphis and a night club. In the old days he was a bootlegger. JAMES despises the Negro race and, particularly, any with Communist leanings.

While in the car, JAMES told BARBER he understood he had a .50-caliber machine gun and BARBER said he did. JAMES asked if he wanted to sell it and he said, "Yes." Either JAMES or EDDIE asked where the machine gun was and how long it would take to get it. BARBER said three days because it was in Westwego, Louisiana, in care of a friend who ran a night club, The Canal Bank Inn. He never heard this man's name. JAMES or EDDIE asked BARBER if he had any ammunition for it, and he said he had a whole belt. One of the men then offered him a thousand dollars for the machine gun.

They all met again the next night at the largest drive-in restaurant in Columbia, name unrecalled. JAMES or EDDIE asked him if he had ever used the machine gun before, and he said he used one while in military service. It was agreed that BILLINGS would take BARBER to Westwego, Louisiana, which is on the west bank of New Orleans, to get the machine gun. They were to meet JAMES and EDDIE on a certain unrecalled date in Columbia and collect \$1,000. for the machine gun. The meet was to be at some unrecalled motel. BILLINGS stated he has trouble remembering things that happened this long ago.

He drove BARBER to get the machine gun at the Canal Bank Inn, and BARBER contacted some man outside of his presence who reportedly told him the weapon had not arrived. He and BARBER stayed in an apartment house at the rear of the Canal Bank Inn for two days waiting for the weapon to arrive, but it never did. He became irritated with BARBER and then felt BARBER never had such a weapon. BILLINGS returned alone to Columbia, South Carolina, and he understood BARBER was going to his home in Fort Myers, Florida. BARBER's parents reportedly lived in and operated a trailer park at Fort Myers. BILLINGS stated that at the time all this was going on he had and was driving a 1959 Chevrolet convertible, maroon in color, bearing a Maryland Temporary Tag. He bought the car under his true name from Luby's Chevrolet in Baltimore, Maryland.

Upon his return to Columbia he met with JAMES and EDDIE and informed them he did not get the weapon. He was told the plan was for him and BARBER to kill MARTIN LUTHER KING for \$50,000. \$5,000. was to be in advance, with the remaining \$45,000. to be paid to them in Greenville, South Carolina. JAMES said KING had to be "wiped out" because J. EDGAR HOOVER had reported KING to be a confirmed Communist and the most notorious liar of our day. The killing was to take place along a scheduled march from Selma, Alabama, to Montgomery, Alabama. The machine gun was to be placed in the back of a paneled truck and driven to a spot on the Selma-to-Montgomery route. When the front line of marchers, including Dr. KING, approached the spot, the rear doors of the truck would be opened and the marchers machine-gunned. The truck was to come from some other state and purchased legally in the name of a deceased person. They would then drive the paneled truck away from the line of march to a country road where a passenger car would be parked. The truck would be abandoned and then they would travel into Montgomery, Alabama, by a devious back-roads route. They would then travel to Greenville, South Carolina, where they would meet JAMES and EDDIE. JAMES would tell them how to get to Sydney, Australia, via Mexico, on a freighter.

JAMES has a friend who formerly lived in Mississippi but now has a sheep ranch in Broken Bow, Australia. This man would help set them up in a bar or some other type of legitimate business.

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When he told JAMES and EDDIE that BARBER could not produce the machine gun, they said the plan had been dropped because MARTIN LUTHER KING announced he was not going to participate in the march.

He described JAMES as white male American, age 40; 5 feet, 10 inches; 210 pounds; blue eyes; brown hair, graying on the sides. JAMES lives on a farm eight miles from Memphis, in Mississippi.

EDDIE described as white male American; 6 feet, 1 inch; 180 pounds; brown hair; age 38, good dresser, residence Memphis, Tennessee.

BARBER described white male American, 22; 5 feet, 8 inches; 170 pounds; black hair; husky build, and good looking. He believes BARBER a psychiatric case and believes this was the reason he was discharged from the military.

He has seen JAMES and EDDIE since the above incident; however, he is not going to say more unless the Government dismisses an Interstate Transportation of Stolen Motor Vehicle charge against him. He has two detainers against him, and one is a State detainer. The federal detainer is from U. S. District Court, Montgomery, Alabama, and this detainer prevents him from making parole. He is eligible for parole on his current 5-year sentence in September 1968. He might get a parole to a State detainer, but parole would not be favorably acted upon with a federal detainer on file. If this detainer were removed he would furnish the full names of JAMES and EDDIE and where they could be located, in addition to subsequent contacts he has had with these men. He was told that no promises of any kind could be made in this regard.

A photograph of JAMES EARLY RAY, FBI # 306443A, taken at the Missouri Department of Corrections, Jefferson City, Missouri, on March 17, 1960, was shown to BILLINGS. and he stated that he does not know this individual either by name or photograph.

BILLINGS admitted he was at the Medical Center for psychiatric treatment. He has a writ in federal court under the provisions of Title 18, Section 2255, U. S. Code,

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trying to get his original Interstate Transportation of Stolen Motor Vehicle conviction set aside on the grounds he was incompetent at the time. He was at the U. S. Penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kansas, but was recently transferred to the Medical Center because he has been seeing a red man with a green coat and alligator shoes. This red man is responsible for all his troubles. He is not visible to him now, but he does see him when he is alone, but not since he arrived here in February 1968.

The following is a description of BILLINGS as obtained through observation and interview:

Race	White
Sex	Male
Nationality	American
Height	6'
Weight	190 lbs.
Hair	Brown
Eyes	Blue
Born	July 15, 1932, in North Carolina (no town)
FBI #	368794A
Wife	OMA BILLINGS Box 214, Toughkenamon, Pennsylvania
Mother	VIRGINIA BILLINGS
Father	P. B. BILLINGS (Address same as above)

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 4/26/681

MELVIN LEMONS, Secretary to the Director, Medical Center for Federal Prisoners, Springfield, Missouri, advised CARLOS LEE BILLINGS, FBI # 368794A, is at the Medical Center for psychiatric treatment with the long-term goal of an eventual return to the U. S. Penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kansas.

He stated on April 2, 1968, the Medical Center directed a letter to the U. S. Probation Office at Little Rock, Arkansas, stating that although BILLINGS now appears to be competent, several months ago he was too psychiatrically disturbed to participate in any court here. A plan is to examine him again in a month to determine whether or not he is competent to participate in legal proceedings.

LEMONS stated that while BILLINGS was at the Medical Center on a previous occasion a psychiatric report prepared April 17, 1967, by Dr. ANDREW F. GUSCHWAN, M.D., Staff Psychiatrist, contained the following diagnosis:

"Schizophrenic Reaction, chronic undifferentiated type, sociopathic personality disturbance, anti-social type, migraine headaches, with possible brain damage."

On 4/26/68 at Springfield, Missouri File # KC 44-760
by SA JAMES A. MITCHELL - LAC Date dictated 4/26/68

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

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Date 4/27/68

LEO HOLDEN PARKER, No. 15254, Missouri State Penitentiary, received April 19, 1968, to serve 15 years for Armed Robbery-1st said he was released on parole to Dismas House in St. Louis, Missouri, on June 1, 1967, after serving 13 years for murder in Illinois. He said he was arrested on July 18, 1968, for having kidnaped a boy and girl and robbing them of money and their car. The car was recovered in St. Louis, Missouri. He said this crime was committed on July 11, 1967, and he was arrested on July 18, 1968, and subsequently tried.

He noted the newspaper articles stated that the kidnaper had mentioned being recently escaped from prison and among other things had blue eyes. He has brown eyes. He said, while in jail, he talked to everyone he could to find out what prisoners had escaped from Illinois and Missouri. He was told be a prisoner at the St. Louis Jail that JAMES RAY had escaped. This was in September of 1967. He said this prisoner, whose name he could not recall if he ever knew it, said that RAY had been in St. Louis all summer; had a car; was using or pushing narcotics and was living and eating in a garage and had been making money by various hold-ups. PARKER said he tried to get his attorney to send for a photograph of RAY, but this was not done.

PARKER said that he did not see a photograph of RAY until this last week when pictures were published of him in newspapers in connection with the murder of Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING. He noted the close resemblance between him and RAY. He said he thinks RAY is responsible for the crime for which he is serving time and he is therefore desirous of doing everything he can to help locate RAY.

PARKER said a large blow-up picture of him was used in his trial, but the picture had been "touched up" to remove facial scars. He noted he has tattoos on his arms that would show and yet the witnesses did not recall them. He said he believed the victims had been influenced in identifying him by the St. Louis Police. He claims he had a good alibi and did not commit the crime, but was convicted on his record and from biased testimony based on faulty identification of

On 4/26/68 at Jefferson City, Missouri File # KC 44-760
by SA ROWEN B. AYERS/rl Date dictated 4/26/68

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photograph, although the record indicates it was a court room identification.

PARKER said the victims were RITA BROCKELMAN, 1502 A Montgomery, St. Louis, Missouri, and GEORGE MC QUADE, JR., 4708 Plover, St. Louis, Missouri. He said the case was investigated by JOHN LEPPING and EDWARD ALLERS, Fifth District, St. Louis Police Department.

PARKER said he was in jail at St. Louis for ten months, and all this time he talked to whoever he could to find out who might have been the real perpetrator of this crime. He said he was on the fourth floor to December of 1967, and thereafter on 23 on the main custodial floor. He said, however, that prisoners mingled pretty much throughout the whole building and he does not know the names of anyone he talked to. He said he would continue to search his memory for the name of the person who told him RAY had been in St. Louis during the Summer of 1967, and was there as late as September of 1967.

PARKER said there was publicity of this case in the St. Charles, Missouri, Daily Banner of July 12, 1967, which carried interviews with the victims, and he has a deposition in which Miss BROCKELMAN testified the kidnaper had blue eyes and was very positive of this fact. He also noted the victims were let out about two miles from Alton, Illinois, where he believes RAY formerly lived. He noted the descriptions of him and RAY are practically identical except for marks and eyes.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

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Date 4/29/68

GEORGE BEN EDMONDSON, Inmate, Missouri State Penitentiary, Jefferson City, Missouri, at first said he did not know JAMES RAY. He was shown various pictures of RAY and then said he recognized him as an associate of an inmate he knew as RAY CURTIS. He said he had served time with CURTIS both in the penitentiary and in jail at Springfield, Missouri, and read an article of an interview with CURTIS in regard to RAY within the past few days.

EDMONDSON said his wife did not know RAY and he personally had no dealings with RAY inside or outside of the penitentiary, and did not discuss escapes or anything else with him.

EDMONDSON said he obtained a Canadian passport in Montreal, Canada under the name of ALEXANDER PETER BORMANN for the reason he spoke German, and is going to adopt that name eventually. He said his wife is GINETTE BORMANN, nee La-Ferte, and she is residing with her parents at 11075 Blvd., Plaza, Montreal North, Quebec, Canada. He said she visits him on occasion, about every other month, but she does not plan to visit again as he expects to be released on a decision of the Missouri Supreme Court within a matter of about 30 days, and he will then go to Canada and join her.

EDMONDSON said it is very easy to get a Canadian passport and the procedure is probably known to every fugitive from the United States. He said all that is needed is \$5.00, plus someone to sign as a "guarantor", plus either a Baptismal Certificate or a Birth Certificate. He said he obtained his by sending in his marriage license and his wife's birth certificate. He said Baptismal records are available as are "guarantors" in the Rue Notre Dame area. He said most of the certificates emanate from the Saint Justin Parish and it costs about \$50.00 to obtain the necessary papers to back up the passport application.

He said there are a lot of "floaters", such as prostitutes and other "hustlers" in the Notre Dame area and they are the ones with whom to make contact. He said there

On 4/25/68 at Jefferson City, Missouri File # KC 44-760

by SA ROWEN B. AYERS:ENV Date dictated 4/26/68

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is a definite pipe line in this regard. He said it usually would take about a week or ten days to get the necessary papers, and within a few days the passport would be received.

He said it is important to evaluate the contacts to know if 2500 Rue Notre Dame is east or west. He said neither is a good section, but east is French and west is English. He said the English are working people, but the French are "hustlers". He said the address could be considered as "downtown". He also said, if the passport was obtained on a Baptismal record, he might be able to furnish further information which might be helpful.

EDMONDSON said he believed that it would be no problem for RAY to hide out from Police and officials, but he would have to hide from the "whole literate public", which he said he knew from personal experience is not easy. He said, in his opinion, since RAY has been connected with the assassination of Dr. KING, he has no place to go, and no place to hide.

KC 44-760

THW:rmb

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The following investigation was conducted by
Special Agent THOMAS H. WEAVER:

AT JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI:

JOHN KENNETH HURTT, Missouri Department of Corrections number 75502, an inmate at the Missouri State Penitentiary (MSP), advised that he celled in the same hall at the MSP as did JAMES EARL RAY for about two or three weeks in about 1966. He said that he was not close to RAY and that he knows of no close associates RAY had in the MSP. He stated that RAY was "always planning an escape", but he does not know who helped RAY escape in April, 1967, if anyone did help him, and he had no advance knowledge of RAY's escape in April, 1967. He advised that he has no information as to what RAY's plans were once he was able to escape, and he has no idea where he might go on escape or where he might try to hide. He said that he never heard of any bounty on the life of Dr. KING, and he never heard RAY mention such a bounty or say anything to indicate one way or the other his feelings regarding the Negro race.

RAY did say that he had a close friend who owned a paper company or office equipment company in Kansas City, Missouri, as HURTT recalled, and he said that RAY had him send a money order to this stationery company supposedly for ordering some paper. He said RAY gave him cigarettes in return for HURTT's sending about a \$15.00 money order to the stationery company, apparently because RAY did not want the records to show he was sending out the money. RAY was always talking about this same man who owned the stationery company, as RAY said, and it was this person who HURTT thought RAY said lived in Kansas City, and he thought that he sent his money order to Kansas City; however, he believes the name was PEPPER, and it is possible that he sent the money order to St. Louis, Missouri, rather than Kansas City, and he cannot recall the exact address. He advised that at any rate, the paper never came, and he asked RAY about delivery, and RAY told him that he had arranged for direct delivery to him and the paper would not be coming to HURTT. He said RAY never told him the money order had been sent to his brother-in-law. He added that this was the only time he ever sent any money out for RAY, and it was the only time RAY asked him to