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SL 44-775
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

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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.

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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.

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 0237 0831 1309 9516. 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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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

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 at 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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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. *V.P. Webbe*

On May 20, 1968, ^{deceased} 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 CARL 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 CARL 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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TLB: pdp

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

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.

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 SCHAFFER was at that time the Chaplain but understands that Father SCHAFFER 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 ZELWAH). 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.

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.

Johnny P. Velanti
 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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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

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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.

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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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AJR:ral
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. *Born [redacted] St. Louis, Missouri*

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.

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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SL 44-775

With respect to associates of GAWRON, MC CORMICK advised that GAWRON drinks frequently at Peanut's Bar, 1601 Park, St. Louis, Missouri. GAWRON associates with the owner of this bar, known only as PEANUTS to MC CORMICK. GAWRON also associates with one ORVILLE "WHITEY" KILLION, who resides at 1617a Park. KILLION often runs poker games at his residence, and GAWRON frequents the poker games held there. According to MC CORMICK, KILLION is presently at Koch Hospital suffering from tuberculosis. KILLION reports to the hospital at given intervals for treatment.

Last Monday, two ex-convicts came to GAWRON's home. One of these men was a JIMMY (last name unknown) who MC CORMICK described as a white male, 65, 5'8", wearing a felt hat. The other man, name unknown, MC CORMICK described as a white male, 40s, 5'7", 160 pounds, short and thin with black hair. This man is from Louisiana. JIMMY at one time robbed a bar at Grand and Chouteau.

Last night, May 14, 1968, the same two men returned to GAWRON's residence. GAWRON gave the man from Louisiana a "silver plated" .38 caliber, snubnose revolver. The man had requested this revolver from GAWRON on the preceding Monday night. Although GAWRON did not specifically state so, MC CORMICK believes this gun was obtained by GAWRON in Madison, Illinois. GAWRON has spoken to him of connections that he has at a bar in Madison, Illinois. Something was wrong with this gun because when held up the bullet would fall out of it. GAWRON and the man from Louisiana taped the bullets in the gun. According to MC CORMICK this man wanted the gun to hold up a couple of places.

The man from Louisiana offered him, MC CORMICK, \$250 to kill a man. The man from Louisiana did not mention the prospective victim's name or why he wanted the man killed. MC CORMICK advised that he declined this offer and would not kill a man for \$1,000 much less \$250.

MC CORMICK said he is convinced that GAWRON saw subject, RAY, in St. Louis. He pointed out that GAWRON has not left the St. Louis area to his knowledge, and that he visits GAWRON daily.

Approximately one week ago, GAWRON told him that RAY is presently in Algiers. MC CORMICK understood him to mean

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that RAY was out of the continental United States. GAWRON did not say, and MC CORMICK has no idea of the source of this information.

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Date May 22, 1968

JOSEPH H. MC CORMICK, 2115a Park, Apartment #5, was re-interviewed at the St. Louis Federal Bureau of Investigation office and furnished the following information:

He has known JACK GAWRON for approximately 15 years. He met JACK GAWRON when the two of them were working out of Manpower, Incorporated, St. Louis, Missouri. He has associated with JACK since that time, but has been very close to JACK for only the past five years. When he first met JACK, JACK was residing in the vicinity of Mississippi and Hickory, St. Louis, Missouri. JACK's home was near Homer Townsley's Neighborhood Bar. He and JACK often drank at this bar. MC CORMICK pointed out that TOWNSLEY is no longer in business and he is presently a bondsman at the St. Louis area.

MC CORMICK again viewed photographs of RAY as depicted on Federal Bureau of Investigation wanted flyer number 442-A. He advised that he does not recall ever having seen this man. Although he associated with JACK GAWRON in 1958 and 1959, he does not recall subject RAY having lived or associated with GAWRON.

MC CORMICK was shown a standup photograph of subject, RAY, taken by the St. Louis Police Department, at the time of RAY's arrest in 1959. MC CORMICK advised that he knows this man and recalls having drank with him at TOWNSLEY's at Mississippi and Hickory. MC CORMICK was then quite sure he knew the man and insisted that he had seen him before, however, he advised that he has not seen RAY since GAWRON moved from the vicinity of Mississippi and Hickory.

MC CORMICK pointed out that he visits GAWRON at GAWRON's residence practically every evening after work. He has never seen the subject, RAY, at GAWRON's place.

Regarding a conversation between he and GAWRON concerning the subject, MC CORMICK advised that approximately six weeks ago, the first part of April, 1968, GAWRON started talking about RAY. MC CORMICK does not recall GAWRON mentioning RAY prior to this time. MC CORMICK recalls that this was approximately the time that subject, RAY's, photograph

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

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was published in the newspaper. He advised that just he and GAWRON were drinking at GAWRON's house when GAWRON mentioned RAY.

GAWRON refers to subject, RAY, as JIMMY, and told MC CORMICK that RAY was his "foster son." GAWRON stated that he and RAY "took a couple of joints together." MC CORMICK understood him to mean that they had pulled armed robberies together. GAWRON did not state when and where these holdups occurred. GAWRON also stated that RAY had escaped from the penitentiary.

MC CORMICK at first advised that GAWRON stated he had seen RAY approximately six weeks before RAY's picture was published in the paper. Later in the interview, MC CORMICK advised GAWRON had stated he saw RAY six weeks ago. This would have been around the first of April according to MC CORMICK. The discrepancy in the dates on which GAWRON supposedly saw RAY were brought to MC CORMICK's attention. He stated he was confused as to exactly when this meet was supposed to have occurred and does not recall if it was six weeks prior to RAY's photograph appearing in the paper, or simply six weeks ago. He did state that the meet supposedly occurred near the intersection of 18th and Lafayette, St. Louis, Missouri. MC CORMICK pointed out that there is a drug store and a couple of bars at this location, and assumes that the meet took place in a bar. At this point, MC CORMICK advised that it was at this time that GAWRON and RAY supposedly pulled the armed robberies together. MC CORMICK advised that this was the impression that he got from JACK. However, he advised that it was equally possible that JACK was referring to armed robberies pulled by him, GAWRON, and RAY in 1959 or earlier.

GAWRON has advised him that he, GAWRON, has been talking to the FBI about RAY. GAWRON did not state whether or not he was telling the truth to the FBI. GAWRON stated he was scared and that he did not like to be bothered by the FBI.

MC CORMICK advised that he was arrested last September for the theft of a television set. He is now on nine months probation for this offense. He was in the city jail, cell number 22 with a JIMMY (last name unknown). JIMMY has within the past week, began coming to GAWRON's home. At the time that he and JIMMY were in jail, GAWRON and JAMES RAMSEY were also in jail. MC CORMICK was in jail approximately

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two months. GAWRON was released before him, and JIMMY was released only recently. While in jail, he overheard no conversation between JIMMY and GAWRON regarding RAY. He advised at that time GAWRON and RAMSEY were in jail for the burglary of Art's Tavern, Soulard and South 11th Streets.

He recalls that sometime ago, the exact date unknown to him, RAMSEY, GAWRON and someone else went to Arkansas to rob a variety store. They had previously cased this store. MC CORMICK recalled that they did not rob this store as they had planned for some reason unknown to him.

Regarding the financial status of GAWRON, MC CORMICK advised that GAWRON generally has a couple of hundred dollars with him all the time. He stated that GAWRON receives a Government check and plays cards frequently. He advised that GAWRON also has an account at Manufacturer's Bank on South Broadway.

MC CORMICK advised that GAWRON has no telephone, but frequently goes out to make telephone calls at a pay phone located in front of a Catholic church at 12th and Lafayette, St. Louis.

It is his opinion that GAWRON would not tell the FBI where RAY is, even if he knew. He stated that GAWRON is "a little nuts." He stated he believes this because of the fact that GAWRON keeps approximately fifteen cats in his home and one dog. GAWRON kisses the cats and refers to them as "baby." He stated that GAWRON sleeps with all the cats and his dog.

MC CORMICK advised that he lived next door to JACK at 1805 South 11th Street downstairs with JIM RAMSEY for approximately two months. He recalls that he lived there at the time JACK was arrested in June, 1967. He did not see the subject, RAY, in the vicinity of JACK's home at that time.

MC CORMICK described RAMSEY as a "loud mouth, who would come in on anybody." He stated that he is sure that RAMSEY would tell the FBI if he had any knowledge of RAY. MC CORMICK pointed out that he would certainly tell the FBI if he knew where RAY was at present. He pointed out that he will immediately contact the FBI should any information concerning RAY become known to him.

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Regarding any trips that GAWRON may have taken recently, MC CORMICK advised that he knows of no trips with the exception of the preceding Monday and Tuesday nights when JACK did not come home until two or three a.m. He knows that JACK came home this late, only because JACK told him so. He advised that this is not like JACK and he assumes that JACK may have gone to Madison, Illinois, on these nights to pick up a pistol for JIMMY (last name unknown) and a man from Louisiana, who have recently been frequenting JACK's residence.

MC CORMICK advised that JACK has never mentioned to him anyone ever having given him \$250 or any bank loot.

MC CORMICK advised that it was not possible for RAY to have stayed with JACK when he, MC CORMICK, resided at 1805 South 11th Street. He pointed out that at that time he and JACK were so closely associated that he would have surely seen RAY had he been in the area.

The following description of MC CORMICK was obtained through observation and interview:

Name	JOSEPH M. MC CORMICK
Address	2115a Park, Apartment 5
Telephone	None
Date of Birth	
Place of Birth	Sioux City, Iowa
Height	5'9"
Weight	170 pounds
Hair	Black-gray
Eyes	Hazel, wears glasses, left eye noticeably crossed
Employed	Bee Line Trucking Company, Incorporated, 718 South 7th Street, as mechanic's helper.
Health	Suffered nervous breakdown, 1955, spent one month in Malcolm Bliss Hospital, St. Louis
Characteristics	Throughout the interview it was noticed that MC CORMICK is very nervous, easily becomes confused, and often contradicts himself.

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Criminal Record

Admits no felonies,
has served time in work-
house, now on probation
to THOMAS MANGOGNA, St.
Louis Municipal Courts
Building.

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SL 44-775

RE: JOSEPH H. MC CORMICK

The following investigation was conducted by SA WILLIAM H. WARFIELD on May 16, 1968:

AT ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

Miss SHERIDA MC QUEEN, Probation Officer, City of St. Louis, Missouri, advised that THOMAS MANGOGNA is no longer employed as a probation officer. MANGOGNA left approximately one month ago and is presently employed at Magdella House, which is a halfway house for girls located near Missouri and Whitmore in St. Louis, Missouri. Miss MC QUEEN advised that JOSEPH H. MC CORMICK is a probationer currently assigned to her. She pointed out that since she has had MC CORMICK for only one month, she has never spoken with him. She made available the probation file of MC CORMICK which reflects the following information:

MC CORMICK was convicted October 24, 1967, of stealing from a dwelling. He was sentenced to nine months in the Missouri Medium Security Institution but was granted one year probation. The file indicates that MC CORMICK and one JOHN VINCE BOROWSKI entered the home of MARY CHROMOGO, 1809a Allen, St. Louis, Missouri, and stole a television valued at \$25 on August 17, 1967. MC CORMICK admitted his implication in this theft but stated that it was actually BOROWSKI who carried the television from the house and subsequently sold it.

The file reflects that on October 26, 1967, MC CORMICK was residing at 1805 South 11th Street, with one JIM RAMSEY. On December 6, 1967, MC CORMICK was residing at 2109a Menard with his mother, THERESA MC CORMICK.

On March 15, 1968, through April 29, 1968, MC CORMICK's address was again listed as 1805 South 11th Street. MC CORMICK has a grade school education, having terminated his schooling at St. Louis, Missouri, in 1934. MC CORMICK is syphilitic and has experienced deterioration of his condition in recent years. He is very nervous, drinks, and has a problem holding jobs. The file notes that MC CORMICK probably will not get into any more trouble, but that he will not function adequately either.

According to MC CORMICK, he drinks heavily and because of this drinking he and his wife, ROSE T. WALDRON, 2845a

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Lafayette or 3214a South Grand are separated.

In 1955 MC CORMICK was admitted to Malcolm Bliss Hospital where he stayed for one month suffering from a nervous breakdown. A check of the hospital records by the probation officer indicates that MC CORMICK has syphilis which has affected his brain. His condition is chronic brain syndrome due to Meningocephalitic Lues, chronic inflammation of the brain and brain membrane due to syphilis. This condition produces excessive nervousness and motor activity.

MC CORMICK has an IQ of 72 which is in the mentally defective range. MC CORMICK has three prior misdemeanors, one in 1941 for vagrancy and two in 1962 and 1963 for stealing over \$50. The file indicates MC CORMICK had a brother, VICTOR V. MC CORMICK, who was shot approximately three years ago. The file indicates that VICTOR apparently associated with an unsavory element.

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SL 44-775
WHW/leh

RE: NEIGHBORHOOD - VICINITY
1800 South 11th Street
St. Louis, Missouri

On May 15, 1968, a neighborhood investigation was conducted in the vicinity of 1807 South 11th Street, by SA WILLIAM H. WARFIELD and SA F. JACK WILLIAMS. The following persons were contacted and interviewed and viewed photographs of JAMES EARL RAY as depicted on wanted flyer 442-A dated April 19, 1968, and their comments are as indicated:

ROSALIE SMITH, 1813a South 11th Street, advised she has resided in this address since 1962. She has never seen subject, RAY. She advised that she is acquainted with a JACK (last name unknown), who resides 1807 South 11th Street. She stated JACK lives at this address alone most of the time. She has never seen subject, RAY, at JACK's house.

MARY (last name unknown) who resides at 1805 South 11th Street, rear, (this is a house separate and apart from the house at 1805-1807 South 11th Street), often stays with JACK (last name unknown). It was noted that an elderly male and female were at that time seated on the rear porch at 1807a South 11th Street. She pointed to these two individuals as the persons known to her as JACK and MARY. SMITH occupies both apartments upstairs at 1813 South 11th. It should be noted that the two apartments located downstairs in this same building bear the address 1815 and 1815a South 11th.

According to LINDA SMITH, 1813a South 11th Street, daughter to ROSALIE SMITH, one FRED POWERS resides at 1815a South 11th.

FRED also maintains a residence somewhere in the "country" and comes to St. Louis only the first part of each month to pick up his check.

LINDA SMITH advised that a MARY (last name unknown) resides at 1815 South 11th. The mailbox for this address indicates the resident is one MURIEL JORDAN.

LINDA SMITH pointed out that the residence at 1809 South 11th is presently vacant. She advised that this residence was previously occupied by a Mexican lady, who now resides at an unknown address with her son. LINDA SMITH pointed out that a second Mexican woman formerly resided at 1805 South 11th. This lady died recently.

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LINDA SMITH stated that residents of the neighborhood frequent Art's Bar which is open only on Sunday's at the corner of 11th and Soulard and Eddie Sang's Bar on the corner of 12th and Soulard. LINDA SMITH advised that she will immediately notify the FBI should she receive any information concerning RAY. It was noted that the apartment house at 1809 South 11th and the apartment house at 1809 rear South 11th were both vacant.

EDDIE SANG, 1800 South 12th Street, owner of Eddie Sang's Tavern at the same address advised that the photograph of RAY looks familiar and he believes he has seen this man before. SANG pointed out that he first noted the familiarity of RAY's face when he saw RAY's photograph in the newspaper. He stated that he associated the face with a customer at his tavern but cannot associate the name with the face. He advised that several ex-convicts of the neighboring area used to frequent his tavern. He recalled one as a JACK (last name unknown) white, male, 45 believed to be from Arkansas. He advised that this JACK was suspected of a shooting in the neighborhood approximately six to eight months ago and that he was also involved in the burglary of Art's Tavern, 11th and Soulard. He barred JACK (last name unknown) from his place of business and does not know where he could be located at present.

MILDRED LAKAS, 1118 Soulard, could furnish no information regarding the subject.

ALBERT JOBE, 1116 Soulard has resided at this address since July, 1967. Prior to that time he resided at 1821a South 11th. He does not recall ever having seen the subject in the neighborhood and pointed out that he frequently visits nearby taverns.

Mr. and Mrs. RICHARD GRAYBILL, 1107a Soulard, could furnish no information concerning the subject. They have resided at this address for approximately four years.

CHRISTINE GREENWAY, 1107 Soulard, has resided at this address approximately two years. She could furnish no information concerning the subject.

SHIRLEY HURST, 1107 Soulard, advised that the center photograph of the subject looks familiar, but she cannot associate the face with a name or place. Mrs. HURST pointed

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out she operated a grocery at 1110 Souldard for a few months during 1965.

Mrs. EDWIN BLASE, 1817 South 11th Street, could furnish no information concerning subject.

Mrs. WILLIAM M. DUDA, 1819 South 11th Street, could furnish no information concerning the subject but pointed out that she is new in the neighborhood.

IDA BIELLER, 1821 South 11th Street, stated that she has resided in this neighborhood 21 years but could furnish no information, concerning the subject.

MELZO COURTWAY, 1114 Souldard, could furnish no information concerning the subject.

DALLAS FRILLMAN was interviewed at Sang's Tavern, 1800 South 12th Street, and could furnish no information concerning subject.

EMERY HARRISON, 1112 Souldard and MARGARET YZBROCK, 1114 Souldard could furnish no information concerning subject.

WILLIE MANNING was interviewed at V.P. Drug Store 1731 South 11th Street. He advised that he has been interviewed by agents in the past and knows nothing.

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CBB:mjb

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

ARTHUR FORLOW, Missouri State Probation and Parole Officer,
1500 South Big Bend, advised that RUSSELL P. BRANNEN, FBI 279 653 6,
Missouri State Penitentiary (MSP)#65816J, is presently on parole
under supervision by that office. He advised that on April 1, 1952,
BRANNEN received a 25 year sentence under the Habitual Criminal Act
and that his parole supervision is scheduled to terminate on September
10, 1968. According to FORLOW, BRANNEN presently resides at 1633
Dolman, St. Louis, and is employed at the Modern Jacket Company.

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Date 6/5/68

St. Louis, Mo.

RUSSELL PERRY BRANNEN was interviewed at his place of residence 1633 Dolman. He is employed at the Modern Jacket Company, 1000 Washington Avenue. BRANNEN was released from the Missouri State Penitentiary September 10, 1964. He had been sentenced to this institution on April 1, 1952, from Bethany, Missouri, in connection with an auto theft at which time he received a 25 year sentence under the Habitual Criminal Act.

Russell P. BRANNEN stated during his last several years at the Missouri State Penitentiary, he worked under the immediate supervision of Major POIRY (phonetic), Deputy Warden, and was in charge of transfers, cell changes and classification of prisoners. In this capacity he felt that he undoubtedly came in contact with subject JAMES EARL RAY but he had no specific recollection of subject's contact. After viewing subject's photograph, he stated that the face looked familiar but he still had no specific recollection of subject RAY. He denied having any contact with subject RAY subsequent to RAY's escape from the Missouri State Penitentiary. He mentioned he recalled discussing subject RAY with one JOHNNY VELANTI after VELANTI brought up the subject and asked him if he, BRANNEN, had any recollection of subject RAY in the Missouri State Penitentiary and if he, BRANNEN, recalled any contact between VELANTI and RAY while in the Penitentiary.

BRANNEN advised when questioned concerning one JIMMY CARPENTER, that he knew CARPENTER and had seen him occasionally in the recent past. He did not recall having discussed subject RAY on any occasion with CARPENTER and stated CARPENTER was entering the St. Louis City Hospital in the near future for an eye operation. It was his understanding that arrangements had been made for CARPENTER to enter the hospital by a southside St. Louis politician known only to him as "LEISURE" (phonetic).

BRANNEN advised that he was born [redacted] at Gallatin, Missouri, and that he is presently on parole from the Missouri State Penitentiary and that his parole is up in September of 1968. He promised to be alert for anyone with whom he came in contact for any information which might be of value in trying to ascertain the present whereabouts of subject RAY or any known associates of RAY who might be in a position to furnish such information.

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On 5/31/68 at St. Louis, Missouri File # SL 44-775

by SA CLETIS B. BIDEWELL:hcv Date dictated 6/3/68

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BRANNEN advised upon questioning that he had not heard any discussion concerning the method of subject RAY's escape as to whether or not he left in a bread truck or walked out of the prison with a group of visitors.

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HRD:wma

NEIGHBORHOOD - MISSISSIPPI AVENUE

The following was conducted by SAs PATRICK W. BRADLEY and ROBERT A. HESS on June 3, 1968:

JOHN PAUL VELANTI indicated an un-named convict allegedly told him he had observed subject in the 1800 block of Mississippi Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri, approximately two weeks following subject's escape from the Missouri State Penitentiary, April 23, 1967.

Observation disclosed there is no 1800 block of Mississippi Avenue in St. Louis, Missouri. At the point where Mississippi is intersected by Geyer Avenue, the numbers jump from 1779 to 1915.

Photographs of subject were displayed to the following individuals on Mississippi and Geyer Avenues, with the result that none of them were able to recall having observed anyone of subject's appearance in the area or ever having been acquainted with anyone of subject's name or aliases.

MISSISSIPPI AVENUE (SA BRADLEY)

1720 HERMAN BLACKWELL	1721 CARRIE B. DEWEY
1722 JOHN J. O'BRIEN	1725 TILLIE B. FULTON
1726 JAMES LACEY	1729 EBULIAH PIERCE
1730 OMA BANKS	1752 OPAL CONNOR
1779 WIBBS AUTO REPAIR (JAMES WIBBS - OWNER) Geyer Avenue Intersects	1915 BILLS BARBER SHOP - JOSEPH BURNS - Barber
1918a SHERMAN TOLLIVER Allen Avenue Intersects	1918 LOLA M. COFFMAN

GEYER AVENUE (SA HESS)

1916 EVERETT BOYER	1918 ANNA NAGY
1919 HENRY WILLARD	1920 GUY KIRK

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1924 MAY'S CONFECTIONERY EVERETT W. KOLB	1925 CARROLL E. BATTEN
1926 J AND S USED FURNITURE EDNA DAVIS	1927 HAZEL FISH
1928 EISELL'S BAR - JOSEPH EISELL (Mississippi Avenue Intersects)	
2000 Geyer Food Shop - WILLIAM KOENER	2005 JESSE RHYNE
2006 MAX AND GENE'S TAVERN MAX LABIAN	2007 ALLAN D. EARL
2009 ELIZABETH MERSEAL	2010 MARY WILSON
2013 VIRGIL SIMMONS	2014 LUKE FIELDS
2015 GRACE PAYNE	2016 JOSEPH OPERSCHALL
2017 FRANKLIN ANDERSON	2018 WILLIAM F. POLITTE
2020 ELIA SALEMIE.	

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Date May 22, 1968

OPAL HIGHLY, 1630 South 18th Street, was interviewed at her residence and furnished the following information:

She formerly was the operator of Opal's Bar, 1805 Lafayette. She advised that she ran Opal's Bar at this location from 1947 until 1961. From September, 1939, until 1945 she operated a bar, also known as Opal's Bar, at a different location near 18th and Lafayette, St. Louis, Missouri.

She viewed photographs of subject, JAMES EARL RAY, as depicted on Federal Bureau of Investigation wanted flyer number 442-A dated April 19, 1968. She advised that the two photographs appearing on the left side of the wanted flyer appear to be familiar but that she cannot associate the face with a name or place. She advised that she has read accounts of the MARTIN LUTHER KING slaying in the newspaper and advised that this picture may appear familiar to her inasmuch as she has previously seen it in the newspaper.

HIGHLY pointed out that she does not recall the names of patrons frequently visiting her bar. She did know some of her patrons by their first names. The name JAMES RAY means nothing to her.

She is acquainted with a JACK (last name unknown) who limps, and has been in and out of the penitentiary all of his life. She advised that JACK (last name unknown) would now be approximately 70 years old. He used to live around Kennett Place, or another nearby street. She advised that she did not recall this man until recently when the man spoke with an associate of her, TED RICHARDSON, who also works for her. This man advised that his name was JACK and told RICHARDSON to ask HIGHLY if she remembered him. HIGHLY pointed out that she did not remember him at that time. Later, JACK (last name unknown) again contacted RICHARDSON and told RICHARDSON to tell HIGHLY that he was the man who used to come in her place with a big woman and a boy who liked to dance. Upon receipt of this information, HIGHLY recalled JACK as a frequent patron at Opal's Bar. He always came in with a big woman who drank beer. This was approximately fifteen years ago. The woman who accompanied JACK had a boy

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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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about fifteen years old. The boy liked to dance and often danced at the bar.

HIGHLY does not believe that the dancing boy was subject, JAMES EARL RAY. She noted that the dancer would only be about 30 years of age at this time.

HIGHLY advised that she was always at the bar during its hours of operation and was well acquainted with the customers. She advised that a LESTER GUIBOR, presently employed at National Fixture, 7000 South Broadway, used to tend bar for her. She advised that MARIE MC MURTY, 1634 South 18th Street, was employed by her in Opal's Bar as a waitress.

HIGHLY advised that should she gain any information concerning JAMES EARL RAY, she would immediately contact the FBI.

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