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On 4-19-68, attempts were made to interview MELBA MARIE RYAN; however, she was in a hysterical state and it was impossible to conduct an interview on that date. She advised that she would be available for an interview on 4-20-68 and that she was willing to consent to an interview with the FBI. She did stated during a short period of time an interview was attempted to be conducted that she had no idea as to the whereabouts of her brother JAMES EARL RAY.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date MAY 1, 1968

On April 19, 1968, WALTER TERRY RIFE, home address 214 Lind Street, Quincy, Illinois, was interviewed at his place of business, Virginia Hotel, 534 North Second Street, Quincy, Illinois. Before the interview, RIFE was advised of his rights by SA ELYON H. DAVIS and a Waiver of Rights Form was read to RIFE. RIFE advised he would not sign the Waiver of Rights Form but that he was willing to discuss anything with FBI Agents.

RIFE furnished the following information:

RIFE advised that he last saw JAMES EARL RAY, FBI #306 443 A, in 1957 when WALTER TERRY RIFE was released from the United States Prison at Leavenworth, Kansas.

RIFE advised that he had been arrested in 1955 with JAMES EARL RAY at Hannibal, Missouri, and both had been charged with the possession of stolen money orders from a Post Office. He advised that these had been taken from a Post Office at Kellerville, Illinois, in a burglary and that he and JAMES EARL RAY had then traveled throughout the United States cashing these postal money orders. He advised that they had traveled to New Orleans, Florida, Kansas City and California, cashing the stolen money orders before being arrested at Hannibal, Missouri.

Both were then sentenced to the United States Penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kansas.

RIFE advised that he had seen JAMES EARL RAY almost on a daily basis at the penitentiary at Leavenworth from 1955 until RIFE was released from the penitentiary in 1957. RIFE later learned that RAY was not released from the penitentiary at Leavenworth until 1958. He stated that he had not been in contact with RAY since that date and had no knowledge of RAY's activities other than he had heard that RAY was sentenced to the Missouri State Penitentiary in the early 1960's. He had no idea as to the charge concerning RAY at that time; however, he thought it was some type of armed robbery.

On 4-19-68 at Quincy, Illinois File # SI 44-561
by SA THOMAS M. SCHOENHOEFER
SA ELYON H. DAVIS /ras Date dictated 4-25-68

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money and he knew that during that time that RAY broke into houses and stole money or goods he could sell. RAY also pulled stick-ups with a gun and that RAY committed burglaries in which safes were involved. RIFE advised that he does not want to talk about any particular job that he might have been involved in with RAY. He stated that RAY would also roll drunks to obtain money and would obtain money any way that a thief could obtain money. He stated that RAY was a roamer and a loaner and did not seem to have any close friends.

RIFE felt that in the event that JAMES EARL RAY ever returns to the Quincy, Illinois, area, RAY will contact RIFE. RIFE stated, however, that he has no knowledge that RAY has returned to Quincy since 1955 and does not believe RAY has returned to Quincy or he would have known something concerning the return of RAY.

RIFE advised that he would not hide JAMES EARL RAY and would immediately notify the FBI of any information he receives concerning RAY's whereabouts.

RIFE advised that he personally knew nothing concerning the shooting of Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING in Memphis, Tennessee and that he most certainly himself was not in the Memphis area during the period of March 27, 1968 through April 4, 1968. He advised that this could be verified from all people connected with the Virginia Hotel as well as members of the Police Department of Quincy, Illinois. He stated that night policemen cruise by his restaurant at the Virginia Hotel practically every hour of each night and that the night detectives and also patrolman LARRY COLLINS could verify that he had not left the Quincy, Illinois, area.

RIFE advised that he knew that JAMES EARL RAY's uncle EARL RAY had moved to California from the Quincy, Illinois, area ten to fifteen years before and that he thought the uncle had died with a heart attack. He knew that somewhere he had understood that EARL RAY was dead.

RIFE advised that he could furnish no information concerning possible contacts of JAMES EARL RAY.

The Harboring Statute was explained to RIFE by SA ELYON H. DAVIS.

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RIFE advised that he first met JAMES EARL RAY around 1942 when apparently RAY and his family moved to Quincy, Illinois, from some small town in Missouri. He stated that RAY had close connections in Quincy and that during the period of time that he had known RAY, RAY had resided with his Uncle, EARL RAY, in Quincy and at the time he and RAY were arrested in Hannibla, Missouri, RAY was living at the Victor Hotel on North Sixth Street in Quincy, Illinois. He advised that the Victor Hotel has been closed for many years and that he understands the operator of the Victor Hotel is now deceased.

RIFE advised that he had never heard RAY mention his father or talk very much concerning his relatives and RIFE advised that he did not know that MELBA RYAN, who resides at the Virginia Hotel was RAY's sister until learning on that date that RAY was charged with the shooting of MARTIN LUTHER KING.

RIFE advised that when he and RAY were apprehended in Hannibal, Missouri, they were accompanied by KATHERINE DORIS BUSKIRK. He advised that he is certain that RAY had never met BUSKIRK until the date of their arrest in Hannibal and that he (RIFE) had picked up BUSKIRK in a tavern in Quincy and took her to Hannibal on a date. He advised that BUSKIRK is presently married to WILBUR CONNORS in Quincy, Illinois.

RIFE stated that he remembered distinctly that BUSKIRK and RAY did not know each other until he introduced them on the date the three were arrested in Hannibal. He stated that BUSKIRK was not actually arrested but was released and that she had nothing to do with the passing of the stolen postal money orders.

RIFE advised that he had never visited in the RAY home in Quincy, Illinois, and had no idea as to the address of RAY's people or the number of relatives that RAY had in Quincy. He stated that he and RAY as a normal thing, did not actually run around together but would meet each other in taverns at which time they would talk and decide to do something together.

RIFE advised that during the period of time that he had known JAMES EARL RAY, RAY had been "a thief". He stated that RAY would do anything during that period of time to make

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The following investigation was conducted by SA
ELYON H. DAVIS:

On April 23, 1968, MARY JAN RIFE, 214 Lind Street, Quincy, Illinois, advised she is certain her husband, WALTER TERRY RIFE, has no knowledge of the present activities or whereabouts of JAMES EARL RAY.

She stated also that MELBA MARIE RYAN, sister of RAY, still resides at the Virginia Hotel and eats almost all of her meals at RIFE's restaurant in the hotel. She stated that MELBA MARIE RYAN has told her on several occasions during the last three or four days that she has no information or knowledge of the whereabouts of JAMES EARL RAY.

She advised that MELBA MARIE RYAN has been highly emotional during the past few days and she felt that this was due to numerous reporters attempting to interview MELBA MARIE RYAN.

She advised that MELBA MARIE RYAN is a mental case and no reliance can be placed on any statement made by MELBA RYAN.

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The following investigation was conducted by SA
ELYON H. DAVIS:

On April 23, 1968, WALTER TERRY RIFE, 214 Lind Street, was reinterviewed at his place of business, the Virginia Hotel Restaurant, Quincy, Illinois.

RIFE advised that once when he was fingerprinted after his arrest on a possession of stolen postal money orders with JAMES EARL RAY in 1955, he was booked under the name of VERNON ELMO RIFE. He stated that VERNON ELMO RIFE has never been an associate of JAMES EARL RAY and has never been in jail with RAY and this is the reason records in Missouri would show RAY was arrested with VERNON ELMO RIFE instead of WALTER TERRY RIFE.

RIFE advised that when he and JAMES EARL RAY were passing the stolen money orders throughout the United States after their arrest in Hannibal, Missouri, they claimed they had purchased these money orders from a wino named WILLARD J. MC BRIDE. He advised that this information is not correct and they did not purchase the money orders from any WILLARD J. MC BRIDE. He advised that he has never known a WILLARD J. MC BRIDE and that he and RAY obtained the money orders in Adams County, Illinois. He said that the Post Office at Kellerville, Illinois, is located in Adams County, Illinois, and that he did not intend to admit to any burglary but that neither RAY nor RIFE obtained the money orders outside of Adams County.

RIFE advised that during the period of time that he and RAY were passing the money orders, they traveled extensively throughout the United States to towns in Florida, New Orleans, Louisiana, St. Louis, Missouri, Kansas City, Missouri, across the United States to California and back to the Quincy, Illinois, Hannibal, Missouri, area, where they were arrested. He stated that there was no particular place that RAY seemed fond of during that trip more than anywhere else and that they traveled from town to town on a spur of the moment deal and no plan or scheme was involved in their travels.

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He advised that during these travels he and RAY did not contact anyone named COIN and did not contact anyone to his knowledge, in New Orleans, Louisiana.

He advised that they did contact a COHEN in Kansas City, Missouri, and sold COHEN some of the money orders. RIFE was not certain as to the description of COHEN but thought that he would now be an old man. RIFE personally did not know COHEN or anything concerning his whereabouts or activities. He stated that COHEN was a man that they contacted in a tavern and sold him some of the stolen money orders. He stated that they contact COHEN by just asking questions in taverns as to who would buy money orders.

RIFE advised that he knew that JAMES EARL RAY disliked Negroes immensely ; however, he had no idea as to the reason why. He advised that he had never known any incident involving RAY and Negroes.

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The following investigation was conducted by
SA ELYON H. DAVIS at Quincy, Illinois.

WALTER TERRY RIFE, operator, Virginia Restaurant, Virginia Hotel, 534 North Second Street, Quincy, Illinois, was recontacted on April 30, 1968, May 3, 1968, May 10, 1968, and May 13, 1968, and on each date advised that he could furnish no additional information concerning JAMES EARL RAY. He also advised on those dates that definitely JAMES EARL RAY has not contacted MELBA MARIE RYAN at the Virginia Hotel.

SAMUEL EDWARD HARPER, desk clerk, Virginia Hotel, 534 North Second Street, Quincy, Illinois, was recontacted by SA ELYON H. DAVIS on April 25, 1968, April 30, 1968, May 3, 1968, and May 9, 1968, and on each date advised that he could furnish no additional information concerning JAMES EARL RAY. On each date, he advised that MELBA MARIE RYAN, RAY's sister, still resides at the Virginia Hotel and that the restaurant of the Virginia Hotel is operated by WALTER TERRY RIFE.

On May 3, 1968 and May 9, 1968, ART CONNORS whose wife owns the Virginia Hotel, 534 North Second Street, Quincy, Illinois, was recontacted on each date and advised that he had no information concerning the whereabouts or activities of JAMES EARL RAY not previously furnished.

On May 9, 1968, ART CONNORS, Virginia Hotel, Quincy, Illinois, advised that to his knowledge, no telephone calls have been charged to the Virginia Hotel that were made by MELBA MARIE RYAN. He advised that he remembers his wife placing a call or else accepting a telephone call in April, 1967 from his son Sergeant ARTHUR A. CONNORS, JR. who is stationed in New Jersey and was coming home to visit his parents before being transferred to Vietnam. CONNORS advised that his son Sergeant ARTHUR A. CONNORS, JR. was presently at the CONNORS home, Rural Route 5, Quincy, Illinois.

On May 9, 1968, Sergeant ARTHUR A. CONNORS, JR. Rural Route 5, Quincy, Illinois, advised SA ELYON H. DAVIS that he placed a collect telephone call to the Virginia Hotel from Long Branch, New Jersey on April 9, 1968. He

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advised that this was of a personal nature to his mother concerning his transfer to Vietnam.

Sergeant CONNORS advised that the name JAMES EARL RAY is completely unfamiliar to him and that he could not recognize any photographs of JAMES EARL RAY as anyone he had ever seen.

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B. JOSEPH ELMER "BLACKIE" AUSTIN

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The following investigation was conducted by SA EDWARD A. CARPENTER, at the Menard Branch, Illinois State Penitentiary, on April 26, 1968:

A record was located for JOSEPH ELMER AUSTIN who has FBI #821733 whose date of birth is [redacted] and who originally was received at the Menard Branch, on December 21, 1925, and he remained at the penitentiary until July 22, 1949, when he was released and was returned to the penitentiary on December 22, 1950, where he remained until April 8, 1954, when he was released on parole and again returned to the penitentiary on February 8, 1955, where he remained until April 27, 1956, when he was again released on parole and then returned to the penitentiary on September 17, 1957, where he remained until May 7, 1959, when he was again released on parole until September 23, 1959, when he was returned until his ultimate discharge on February 23, 1965.

According to penitentiary records, AUSTIN when he was dismissed from Menard went to St. Leonard's House located at 2100 West Warren Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, and he received a final parole on discharge on July 11, 1967, through the Parole Office located at 160 North LaSalle, Chicago, Illinois.

According to the records, AUSTIN at one time, was transferred to the state penitentiary at Joliet, from August 2, 1934, until August 15, 1936, when he was returned from Menard. According to the records, AUSTIN used the names JAMES FREELEY, SHARKEY AUSTIN and BLACKKEY.

AUSTIN was originally received on a 25-year sentence for murder and a 10 to life sentence for armed robbery from Morgan County, Illinois. According to the records, AUSTIN has a nephew by the name of RALPH whose full name is RALPH TANNEHILL, 1432 - 4th Street, Madison, Illinois, a niece, Mrs. JOE REESE, 316 North Hoosier, Brazil, Indiana; a brother, CHARLES, residing in Waverly, Illinois; a brother, BERT, residing in Springfield, Illinois.

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AUSTIN is described as:

Race	White
Sex	Male
DOB	
Height	5' 10½"
Weight	129 pounds
Eyes	Blue
Complexion	Dark
Hair	Gray
Occupation	Farmer
	Has cut scar on center of forehead

A review of his correspondence file reflects correspondence with Mrs. DOROTHY SEYMOUR, at Franklin, Illinois, a sister;

ROBERT REED, a case worker from St. Leonard House, 2100 Warren Avenue, Chicago, Illinois;

Father DOUGLAS WOLFE,
St. Leonards House,

Attorney J. EDWARD JONES
1432 West Harrison Street,
Chicago, Illinois;

A. A. Farris Company, Inc.
122 West Lincoln Avenue
Goshen, Indiana

St. Anthony's Inn Inc.
29 South LaSalle Street,
Chicago, Illinois

Mr. GEARD LETTMAN
Warren Clinic
2449 West Washington Boulevard,
Chicago, Illinois

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Mr. and Mrs. MYRICK
Caseyville Nursing Home
Caseyville, Illinois;

A. B. ROBERTSON
2011 Road Street,
Madison, Illinois

Waukegan Rescue Mission
Waukegan, Illinois

Friend WILLIE MAE MORGAN
Waverly, Illinois;

MYRTLE COOK
Acme Hotel
St. Louis, Missouri

Cousin GERTRUDE WALLING
904 Lind Street,
Quincy, Illinois

No other information of value noted in file
for AUSTIN.

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On May 9, 1968, AUSTIN's brother, CHARLES, was located and interviewed at Waverly, Illinois and advised he was in receipt of a letter, dated May 7, 1968, from AUSTIN with a return address of 2023 Warren Boulevard, Chicago, Illinois. CHARLES AUSTIN was not sure if his brother was employed or not.

CHARLES AUSTIN was interviewed re subject RAY and shown photographs of RAY but advised he was not acquainted with the subject nor had he ever heard his brother mention the subject.

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The following investigation was conducted by SA ELYON D. DAVIS at Quincy, Illinois, on May 10, 1968:

GERTRUDE WALLING, 1120 College Street, Quincy, Illinois, advised that she formerly resided at 904 Lind Street, Quincy, Illinois. She advised that when she lived on Lind Street she occasionally rented rooms in her home and sometime around 1956 she rented a room to JOSEPH ELMER AUSTIN. She advised that she remembered AUSTIN'S date of birth to be 1898 inasmuch as her year of birth was the same and that was the only person she had ever lived in a house with who was born the same year as her. She stated that AUSTIN when he came to Quincy, Illinois, came to Quincy through some contact with a Catholic priest in either Quincy or Chicago. She advised that AUSTIN had been in the Illinois State Penitentiary and came to Quincy in an effort to obtain a job and that apparently this unknown Catholic priest had obtained AUSTIN a job in Quincy. However, AUSTIN lived at her home less than one month when he left and she heard shortly thereafter that he had been arrested and was returned to prison. She stated that she could not remember the name of the town in which he was arrested and had not seen AUSTIN since 1956. She stated as far as she knew AUSTIN did not have any relatives or associates in Quincy, Illinois, and that AUSTIN was not related to her. He simply lived in her home for a period of less than one month and that was as a border.

She advised that she did not know JAMES EARL RAY and had never known AUSTIN to speak concerning RAY under RAY'S true name or known aliases.

She stated that she is certain JOSEPH ELMER AUSTIN was not a Quincy resident and that he knew nothing concerning Quincy at the time he moved to Quincy.

Photographs of JAMES EARL RAY were exhibited to GERTRUDE WALLING and she advised that she had never seen this individual before.

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On May 10, 1968, ELIZABETH ROTH, Credit Bureau of Quincy, Inc., 528 North Fifth Street, advised that her file contains very little information concerning JOSEPH ELMER AUSTIN other than a newspaper clipping which showed that JOSEPH ELMER AUSTIN, age 59; had been arrested on August 4, 1957, in Robertson County, Tennessee, with JOHN GEWIN SCROGGINS, age 38, and a DORRIS CALVIN MEACHAM of Elkton, Kentucky. The three had been arrested for the alleged kidnapping of a Guthrie, Kentucky, motel clerk and had allegedly taken him across the state line into Robertson County, Tennessee, where they robbed him of \$139.00 and set him free. The trio was stopped for speeding near Ashland City, Tennessee, and the \$139.00 believed stolen from the Guthrie, Kentucky, motel clerk was found scattered along the highway near the scene of arrest.

AUSTIN was then committed to the Central State Hospital in Nashville, Tennessee, after Government attorneys said they believed he might not be mentally capable of advising with council.

The article showed that AUSTIN came to Quincy, Illinois, in April, 1956, and previous to that he had been sent back to prison three times for violation of parole and had spent three months in a tuberculosis sanitarium in Jacksonville, Illinois.

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C. MILTON DEAN "BUCKY" BATCHELDER

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On April 25, 1968, investigation at Springfield, Illinois, revealed MILTON DEAN BATCHELDER, also known as Bucky, FBI #548 312 B, white male, dob [REDACTED] at Quincy, Illinois, was the individual to whom a Hannibal, Missouri, policeman sold a car from RAY and forwarded the proceeds to. Checks at Menard State Prison, Menard, Illinois revealed BATCHELDER was transferred to Joliet Brancy, Illinois State Penitentiary on September 7, 1966.

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D. PAUL ALVIN LAIL, JR.

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A review of the Springfield files regarding PAUL ALVIN LAIL, JR. reflected him as subject of a 1963 Unlawful Flight to Avoid Confinement case, in which he was described as follows:

Name	PAUL ARTHUR LAIL, JR., Aka Paul Alvin Lail, Jr. Paul Lail, Jr. Paul Arthur Carter
FBI #	754 483 A
Race	White
Sex	Male
Nationality	American
DOB	
POB	Marion, North Carolina
Height	6' 5"
Weight	170 pounds
Hair	Red
Blue	Eyes
Occupation	Sign painter electrician truck driver radio repair man
Social Security #	
Teeth	No upper
Scars	Scar on left knee

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E. HILLIARD ALLEN SANDERS

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On 5-1-68, SA's FRANK E. CORN, SR., and ROBERT C. HAINES, interviewed HILLIARD ALLEN SANDERS, at 137 East Acton Street, Wood River, Illinois.

SANDERS stated that he was incarcerated in the Missouri State Penitentiary, Jefferson City, Missouri, on 1-20-52, upon conviction of an armed robbery charge at St. Joseph, Missouri. He said he was released on parole on 9-1-64.

SANDERS advised that he never became acquainted with or had knowledge of JAMES EARL RAY during the time he was incarcerated in the Missouri State Penitentiary. He said that while he was in the penitentiary, he worked at several trades and that the last two jobs he had in the penitentiary had to do with the sewing machine mechanical section and that the last job he had was a halltender from 1963 to 1964.

SANDERS said that upon parole he went to Gadsden, Alabama, where he lived and worked for approximately 18 months; that he then went to Camden, South Carolina, where he was employed by the firm of E. I. DUPONT for 9 months. SANDERS said that he then came to Wood River, Illinois, where he has been working on construction at the Shell Oil Company Plant in Wood River. He said that he arrived in Wood River in 7-67 and has resided in Wood River since that time.

SANDERS concluded by stating that when national publicity was released concerning the identification of JAMES EARL RAY, he viewed photographs appearing on television and in the news media and determined that he had never known RAY while both were at the Missouri State Penitentiary.

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F. WILBUR CONNORS

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On 4/20/68 WILBUR CONNORS, aka MANNY CONNORS, 825 South Fifth Street, Quincy, Illinois, was interviewed by ASAC DONALD T. SULLIVAN and SA ELYON H. DAVIS and furnished the following information:

On that date was the first he had learned of his wife, KATHERINE DORIS BUSKIRK, had been arrested with WALTER RIFE and JAMES EARL RAY in Hannibal, Missouri, in 1955. He advised that he had never heard his wife mention JAMES EARL RAY and is quite certain that she did not know RAY or have much of any contact with him. He pointed out in 1955 his wife was only seventeen years of age and that she did not have a criminal record and for this reason he did not believe she had been involved with RAY and RIFE in any crime.

WILBUR CONNORS advised that his sister-in-law, LAURA CONNORS, owns the Virginia Hotel, 534 North Second Street, Quincy, Illinois. CONNORS advised that he is in this hotel on almost a daily basis and can state that WALTER RIFE was certainly working each day at the restaurant and the Virginia Hotel from the period 3/27/68 through 4/4/68.

CONNORS advised that he personally does not know JAMES EARL RAY and does not have any information concerning RAY's activities or whereabouts.

On 4/20/68 LAURA CONNORS, owner, Virginia Hotel, 534 North Second Street, Quincy, Illinois, was interviewed by SA ELYON H. DAVIS and ASAC DONALD T. SULLIVAN and furnished the following information.

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Around 2/6/68 she had leased the restaurant in the Virginia Hotel to WALTER TERRY RIFE. She advised since that date the restaurant has been operated by RIFE and that RIFE has been working in the restaurant every day. She advised that RIFE's wife, JAN RIFE, gave birth to a baby in late 2/68 and for this reason WALTER RIFE had worked from approximately 7:00 each morning until 11:00 at night operating the restaurant. She stated that certainly WALTER RIFE was working during the period 3/27/68 until 4/4/68.

She advised that she does not know JAMES EARL RAY, FBI No. 306443A, and after viewing five different photographs of RAY advised that this is not an individual who she has ever known. She stated that MELBA MARIE RYAN does live at the Virginia Hotel and that she had learned on the previous night that MELBA MARIE RYAN was a sister to JAMES EARL RAY. She stated, however, in her conversations with MELBA MARIE RYAN, MELBA MARIE RYAN had denied any knowledge of the whereabouts of RAY and she does not believe that RAY has contacted the sister since his escape from the Missouri State Penitentiary.

On 4/20/68 ARTHUR CONNORS advised that he is the husband of LAURA CONNORS, owner of the Virginia Hotel, 534 North Second Street, Quincy, Illinois. ARTHUR CONNORS advised that he can verify that WALTER RIFE was working at the restaurant in the Virginia Hotel during the period of 3/27/68 through 4/4/68.

ARTHUR CONNORS also viewed photographs of JAMES EARL RAY, FBI #306443A. CONNORS advised that this individual was completely unknown to him and he has never seen him at the Virginia Hotel.

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G. KATHERINE DORIS BUSKIRK CONNORS

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On 4/20/68 KATHERINE DORIS BUSKIRK, presently married to WILBUR CONNORS and residing 825 South Fifth Street, Quincy, Illinois, was interviewed by ASAC DONALD T. SULLIVAN and SA DAVIS.

She advised that she had never met JAMES EARL RAY, FBI #306443A, until one night during 1955 when WALTER RIFE, an acquaintance of her, approached her in a tavern in Quincy, Illinois, and asked her if she wanted to go with RIFE to Hannibal, Missouri. While in the automobile, she was introduced to JAMES EARL RAY and after arrival in Hannibal, Missouri, WALTER RIFE and JAMES EARL RAY were arrested concerning some postal money orders that had been stolen. She advised that she had never seen RAY before that date and has never seen him since. She stated that she had no information concerning the whereabouts of RAY or any information concerning the background of RAY.

She advised that her husband did not know RAY and had never heard of her being arrested with RAY and RIFE in Hannibal, Missouri.

She advised that she is acquainted with MELBA MARIE RYAN since MELBA MARIE RYAN resides at the Virginia Hotel but that she did not know that this was a sister of JAMES EARL RAY.

She advised that she would furnish any information of value that she might learn to the FBI concerning RAY or the RAY and RYAN family; however, she had none to furnish at the present time.

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The following investigation was conducted by SA
ELYON H. DAVIS:

On April 24, 1968, ART CONNORS, whose wife LAURA CONNORS, owns the Virginia Hotel in Quincy, Illinois, advised that he had received no information concerning JAMES EARL RAY. He advised that he intends to cooperate in every way with the FBI in this matter and will immediately advise the FBI of anything concerning RAY's whereabouts.

He advised that RAY's sister, MELBA MARIE RYAN, has stated numerous times she has no information as to RAY's whereabouts. He advised that KATHERINE BUSKIRK, now married to CONNORS' brother, WILBUR CONNORS, known as MANNY CONNORS, has told him that she knew nothing concerning RAY other than she was arrested with RAY and WALTER RIFE at Hannibal, Missouri, in 1955. Inasmuch as she was not involved and knew nothing concerning the passing of the stolen money orders, she was released on the same day of the arrest and no charges pressed against her.

CONNORS advised he is certain in his own mind that neither MELBA MARIE RYAN or WALTER TERRY RIFE has any information concerning the whereabouts of RAY.

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H. JOSEPH ADAMS

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The following investigation was conducted at the Menard Branch, Illinois State Penitentiary, on April 26, 1968:

On April 26, 1968, MAX FRYE, Warden, Menard Branch, Illinois State Penitentiary, advised that one of the inmates by the name of JOSEPH ADAMS, who works in the Office rs Mess at the Penitentiary, indicated to him recently that he was acquainted with JAMES EARL RAY having been with him at the Missouri State Penitentiary in Jefferson City, Missouri.

Warden FRYE stated that he did not question him concerning his contacts or knowledge of RAY but thought it might be of value to interview him.

On April 26, 1968, JOSEPH ADAMS, also known as Shorty, who has Menard #11745 was interviewed at the penitentiary and advised after viewing a photograph of RAY that he was acquainted with RAY when RAY was at the Missouri State Penitentiary.

ADAMS advised that he left the penitentiary for Menard last October, 1967, and that when he got there, RAY was already there.

ADAMS advised that his only knowledge of RAY was that RAY brought food over to the hospital where ADAMS was working and he assumed that RAY apparently worked in the prison kitchen.

ADAMS advised that he never talked directly to RAY at any time nor did he ever observe him with any other inmates. He described RAY as a very quiet individual and this is all the information he had concerning him.

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I. JOHN EUGENE GAWRON

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The following investigation was conducted at Menard, Illinois, on May 1, 1968, by SA JEROLD W. DONALDSON:

Warden MAX FRYE, Illinois State Penitentiary, Menard Branch, made available the prison records of JOHN EUGENE GAWRON, Illinois State Police #25261 (Joliet Penitentiary #489F). The file reflected the following background data:

NAME	JOHN EUGENE GAWRON
ALIASES	JOHN GAWRON JACK DAWSON JOHN GAWDGS JACK MORLEY
RACE	White
SEX	Male
DATE OF BIRTH	
PLACE OF BIRTH	Chicago, Illinois
HEIGHT	5'8"
WEIGHT	170 pounds
HAIR	Gray
EYES	Hazel
RELIGION	Catholic
EDUCATION	8th Grade, Chicago
NATIONALITY	Polish
MILITARY SERVICE	U. S. Marine Corps from May 6, 1916, to May 24, 1917. Marine Corps Serial No. 73366
PARENTS	Deceased, father died 1931, mother died 1931.
FBI NUMBER	134934
OCCUPATION	Cook and baker
CHARACTERISTICS	Smokes, chews tobacco, and drinks heavily

The file revealed that GAWRON was originally received at Joliet, Illinois, Penitentiary on November 2, 1934, under sentence of one to life for burglary. GAWRON received Menard Branch, Illinois State Penitentiary on July 25, 1958, from Adams County, Illinois, as a parole violator. GAWRON paroled from Menard on March 21, 1959, to Veterans Administration Hospital,

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Wood, Wisconsin. He remained there three days and left without permission. GAWRON carried at that time in an absconder status until November 18, 1961, when he was returned to Menard Penitentiary. He was paroled on April 11, 1963, to the Soldiers and Sailors Home, Quincy, Illinois, but was never received at this home. GAWRON's address as of April, 1963, was shown as 1807 South 11th, St. Louis, Missouri.

The following individuals were listed as correspondents in GAWRON's file:

Miss MARY MCMICHOLES, cousin, 1010 Park Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri

Miss CAROL MAHER, later shown as Mrs. CAROL PEPPER, a friend, 1913 Hickory Street, St. Louis, Missouri, and ALBERT PEPPER, 1713 Lafayette Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri.

Questionnaires were filled out by the following individuals:

Date of questionnaire not shown on file. LUCILLE MARY RYAN (friend), who lists an address of 701 1/2 Washington (date not shown) and 527 York, Quincy, Illinois, in July, 1967.

CAROL ANN MAHER (Second cousin), later shown as CAROL ANN PEPPER, 1913 Henry, St. Louis, Missouri

ALBERT BENNY PEPPER (friend), 1015 Allen, St. Louis, Missouri

JOHN LARRY RAY (friend), 1915 Hickory, St. Louis, Missouri

Also included in the file were 3 re-classification reports dated June 10, 1940; December 2, 1961; and September 2, 1966, which would be of pertinent background value.

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J. MELVINA "RUSTY" TYLER

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On May 9, 1968, BERNICE DUCKAN and ELIZABETH ZIMMERMAN, owners of the Jewel Lounge, 106 (rear) - 5th Street, Peoria, Illinois, advised that they have owned that tavern for approximately one year. Both are from the State of California and they advised that the Jewel Lounge was formerly known as the m & n Tavern and that the tavern is still commonly referred to as the "Old M & N". They advised that the former tavern owner (1959) called "Rusty" was unknown to them and they could furnish no information concerning her identity or whereabouts.

On May 10, 1968, LARRY ENNIGER, 1800 North Knoxville, Peoria, Illinois, former tavern operator, advised that "Rusty" was widely known in the Peoria, Illinois area inasmuch as during the 1950s she had tended bar at two or three different establishments.

On May 13, 1968, BETTY MEYERS, owner of the Beer Barrel Tavern, suggested "Rusty" whose name she did not know may be employed at the Piere Marquette Hotel in Peoria, Illinois.

On the same date, PHIL BUSSMAN, Sales Representative, Piere Marquette Hotel, identified "Rusy" as Mrs. RAY M. TYLER, also known as MELVINA TYLER, 408 Bryan Street, Peoria, Illinois and 213 Franklin Street, Bartonville, Illinois. He advised she has been employed as waitress in the lounge of the hotel for the past 6 years.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date May 16, 1968

MELVINA TYLER, also known as "Rusty", and "Mrs. Ray M. Tyler, 213 Franklin Street, Bartonville, Illinois, was interviewed at her residence regarding her knowledge or any prior association with JAMES EARL RAY, FBI # 405 942 G. She viewed photographs of RAY and advised that this individual is unknown to her and that she could furnish absolutely no information regarding this man.

She advised that she was the owner on record, and operated the M & N Tavern, 106 (rear) -5th Street, Peoria, Illinois, during 1958 and 1959. She said she purchased the tavern from MILLIE and MAC BURDIN who now operate the "Galley" a basement night club at the Hotel Jefferson, Peoria, Illinois. She said prior to 1958, she had operated bars at the Beer Barrel, 1034 Northeast Adams Street, Peoria, Illinois, and also the Pour House, 800 North Main Street, Peoria, Illinois. She advised she was born in Norfolk, Virginia, and came to Peoria, Illinois, at the age of 16. She advised that she married SAM ALLEN in early 1950 and she and ALLEN had had business interests in the above taverns between 1953 and 1959.

She stated she divorced ALLEN in 1958 and married RAY M. TYLER, a brick layer by trade, in 1960. She advised she is the mother of two children, ages 7 and 8. She stated she has been steadily employed as a waitress at the Piere Marquette Hotel, Peoria, Illinois, for the past six years.

She was advised that it had been reported that she may have associated socially with RAY and that she had been termed "a girl friend of RAY" about 1959. She stated that due to her association with the general public for the past several years as a waitress, she had become widely known in the Peoria, Illinois area due to her natural red hair, however, she advised that in many instances she would not know or recall customers who may have remembered her by name. She advised she is positive that she has never known RAY socially and has never corresponded with him. She advised that she would immediately notify the FBI should any information con-

On 5/13/68 at Bartonville, Illinois File # SI 44-561

by SA ELIAS WILLIAMS, JR. & SA QUENTIN P. STINSON skt Date dictated 5/15/68

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cerning this individual come to her attention.

The following physical description was obtained from observation and interview and comments made by Mrs. TYLER:

Name:	MELVINA TYLER
Aliases:	"RUSTY"
	Mrs. RAY M. TYLER
Address:	213 Franklin Street Bartonville, Illinois
Sex:	Female
Race:	White
Age:	40
Height:	5'5"
Weight:	130 lbs.
Hair:	Red (shoulder length)
Complexion:	Fair, freckled
Marital Status:	Married (1960)
Husband:	RAY M. TYLER
Occupation:	Brick layer
Previous addresses:	408 Bryan Street Peoria, Illinois
Telephone number:	Unlisted 697-0122
Occupation:	Waitress

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K. JAMES LAOMA OWENS

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RLW:skr

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The following investigation was conducted by
SA ROY LEE WILKERSON, JR. at Springfield, Illinois:

On May 15, 1968, WILLIAM KAUFFMAN, Division of Supervision of Paroles, 103 National Guard Armory Building, Springfield, Illinois, advised that his office has a file concerning JAMES LAOMA OWENS and OWENS has been incarcerated at the State Prison in Menard, Illinois, and the Missouri State Penitentiary, Jefferson City, Missouri. KAUFFMAN advised that JAMES OWENS has a prison registry number for the State Prison of Menard, Illinois, being 20208. OWENS' registry number for Missouri State Penitentiary at Jefferson City, Missouri, is 69846. KAUFFMAN advised that the only description that he has in his file is as follows:

NAME:	JAMES LAOMA OWENS
RACE:	White
SEX:	Male
FBI NUMBER:	1-397-707
AGE:	27 on
HEIGHT:	5'2½"
WEIGHT:	129
HAIR:	Charcoal medium
EYES:	Dark Black
COMPLEXION:	Fair
OCCUPATION:	Clerk
CHARACTERISTICS:	Top of head bald.

OWENS was incarcerated at the Illinois State Penitentiary, Menard Branch, Menard, Illinois, having number 20208, received from St. Clair County, Illinois, March 12, 1947, on the crime of robbery.

KAUFFMAN advised that the most current address that his files reveal is an address of 3904 Folsom Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri, and this address was current as of August 15, 1965, as a communication sent to OWENS on this date was not returned. KAUFFMAN stated that on August 15, 1965, OWENS was issued a Certificate of Restoration of the Rights of Citizenship. KAUFFMAN stated that JAMES OWENS was discharged on June 27, 1965, at the expiration of his sentence from the State Prison, Menard Branch, SEARCHED INDEXED
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RLW:skr

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Illinois. KAUFFMAN advised that he has not had any further communication or correspondence with OWENS since August 15, 1965.

KAUFFMAN stated that any additional information needed concerning OWENS could be obtained from the Missouri State Penitentiary at Jefferson City, Missouri, or the State Penitentiary of Menard, Illinois, and this information at the penitentiaries would be more current than the information that he has, especially information concerning description and background information.

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L. ANDREW WILSON "BLACKIE" DE CORE

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Menard Prison records reflect on May 17, 1968, ANDREW WILSON DE CORE, also known as De Cora and Blackie De Core, Menard #23415 received Menard Prison, June 15, 1953, on a transfer from Joliet, Illinois prison to serve a sentence of 1 to 20 years for robbery.

DE CORE was paroled June 15, 1959 to Rev. JAMES WINENEGAR, St. Louis Rescue Mission, St. Louis, Missouri, and was returned as a parole violator to Menard, July 19, 1960. He was paroled January 15, 1965 to Baptist Rescue Mission, Collinsville, Avenue, East St. Louis, Illinois. He was returned to Menard as parole violator, May 28, 1965. He was discharged upon expiration of sentence, December 20, 1966. Upon discharge, he expressed intention of going to his sister's residence, Mrs. YALANDA DI CASOLA and her husband, VINCENT, 37555 Glenmore Drive, Freemont, California. Other friends and relatives contained in prison records are as follows:

Brother

ANTHONY DE CORE
713 South Claremont,
Chicago, Illinois or
1938 North 70th
Melrose Park, Illinois ;

Sister

Mrs. MARTHA BUTTITTO,
husband - BENNIE
9241 North Maple Court,
Morton Grove, Illinois;

Sister

NANCY COSENTINO
502 East Memorial
Bensonville, Illinois;

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Niece

Mrs. GEORGE ROGERS
2020 North Le Clare
Chicago, Illinois;

Cousin

PAT COLLESE
1641 North Latrobe,
Chicago, Illinois

Fiance

Miss HELEN HARE
3020 West Madison,
Chicago, Illinois;

Brothers

HARRY DE CORE and NICK DE CORE
addresses unknown

Friend

Miss MARY SAWYER
City Hospital Number 1
1515 Lafayette Street
St. Louis, Missouri.

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MWO:mpb

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The following investigation was conducted by SA
EDWARD A. CARPENTER:

At East St. Louis, Illinois

On May 22, 1968, Reverend DAVID BLISS, Pastor of the Baptist Rescue Mission, located in East St. Louis, Illinois, was contacted and advised that ANDREW WILSON DE CORE is unknown to him, and according to his records, he could not identify him in the East St. Louis, Illinois area and could not identify him as having given any service at the Rescue Mission.

Reverend BLISS advised that in the event that DE CORE should contact the mission, that he would make this fact known to the FBI.

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V. INVESTIGATION AT ILLINOIS STATE PENITENTIARY
PONTIAC BRANCH

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A. RECORDS RE JAMES EARL RAY

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STOW E. SYMON, Supervising Sociologist, Illinois State Penitentiary, Pontiac, Illinois on April 25, 1968, advised his file contains little information concerning RAY who was a model prisoner while incarcerated Pontiac, July 7, 1952 until discharged March 12, 1954. He stated RAY was confined on a charge of robbery under Criminal Court, Cook County, Illinois case 52-1155 which sets forth in statement of facts subject at time of arrest, in Chicago, Illinois was wounded in both arms by police bullets. No information was located at Pontiac describing wounds or location of scars. Subject RAY at Pontiac assigned Honor Farm, August 12, 1952 until discharge. This is dormitory type housing rather than cell type. Subject was assigned to the kitchen as a cook and also on officers quarters detail.

The following inmates were identified and are set forth with their last known addresses furnished the prison at their time of release:

LEE MILLER
Pontiac Number 19200
6538 North Talman Street and
3542 SouthPort
Chicago, Illinois;

EDWARD PAUL RIVERA,
Pontiac Number 19294
515 West 63rd Street,
Chicago, Illinois;

GUS MARZAHN
Pontiac Number 19095
1620 West Nelson Street,
Chicago, Illinois;

CHARLES REED
Pontiac Number 18492
2286 Street
Madison, Illinois

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FRED M. PETRAKIS
Pontiac Number 18516
Route 1
Peoria, Illinois
518 Sanford Street,
Peoria, Illinois;

KENNETH D. FOSDYCK,
Pontiac Number 19218
Route 1
Bushnell, Illinois;

DWIGHT ROWE
Pontiac Number 19086
432 $\frac{1}{2}$ South Vine,
Kewanee, Illinois.

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**B. INTERVIEWS WITH POSSIBLE INMATES
OF JAMES EARL RAY**

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On 4/28/67, FRED PETRAKIS, 2904 North Avalon Place, Peoria, Illinois, a former inmate at Pontiac Penitentiary, was shown a 1955 photograph of JAMES EARL RAY without effecting an identification.

PETRAKIS advised that for about one and one-half months in late 1953, he served as a barber at the Pontiac Honor Farm in the penitentiary, however, he does not recall RAY. Prior to this, he cut inmates' hair at the main prison and served thirty-three months at Pontiac from 1950 to early 1953 before being paroled. PETRAKIS advised that he took inmate NORMAN DEAN's place as a barber and that DEAN may recall RAY.

On 5/1/68, NORMAN DEAN, barber, 927 Court Street, Pekin, Illinois, a former inmate at Pontiac Penitentiary, was shown a 1955 photograph of JAMES EARL RAY without effecting an identification. DEAN advised that he was discharged from Pontiac during the winter of 1952 and never cut hair on the Honor Farm. He possessed no information regarding RAY and was not aware that RAY was confined at Pontiac during the time of his incarceration.