

SL: 88-7447

subject's brother, JERRY RAY, for more detailed information concerning various members of subject's family, including the individual referred to by CAROL as "DADDY", who recently moved to Poplar Bluff, Mo.

Will determine from JERRY RAY whether or not subject's mother prior to her death was married to an individual by the name of RYAN and whether this person might presently be located if he is still living.

ST. LOUIS DIVISION:

AT ST. LOUIS, MO.:

Will attempt to locate the JAY (ROSEMARY) SHIRLEY family and interview them for available information concerning possible whereabouts of subject and identify the other members of the family who might be in possession of information of value.

Will consider the advisability of interviewing ALBERT S. PEPPER after additional background information on the PEPPER family has been developed.

ARMED AND DANGEROUS.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : SAC, ST. LOUIS (44-775)

FROM : SA CLETIS B. BIDEWELL

SUBJECT: MURKIN

DATE: 5/9/68

JAMES EARL RAY, aka -
FUGITIVE
UFAC - ROBBERY FIRST
(OO: KC)
88-7447

Re Memphis tel to St. Louis, 4/25/68.

Referenced communication reflected that the Bureau by tel dated 4/24/68 to Memphis and Kansas City indicated Memphis as OO in the entire matter involving efforts to locate subject JAMES EARL RAY. Kansas City, which had been OO in the 88 case, was requested to forward appropriate copies of all communications in its file to Memphis.

In view of the above, it is believed logical that a similar consolidation of the 88 and 44 case files should be made by the St. Louis Office.

In view of the above, it is suggested that the 88 file in this matter be closed.

① - 44-775
1 - 88-7447
CBB:pdp
(2)

*CCO. fac sayook to
consolidate 88 & 44
into murkin 44-775
Done
Jes*

44-775-565

SEARCHED.....	INDEXED.....
SERIALIZED.....	FILED.....
MAY 9 1968	
FBI - SAINT LOUIS	

Dolson *LD*
See in re P2



5010-106

Buy U.S. Savings Bonds Regularly on the Payroll Savings Plan

FBI ST LOUIS

FBI BIRMGHAM

157 PM URGENT 5-10-68 JGA

TO DIRECTOR, ATLANTA, MEMPHIS, KANSAS CITY, ST. LOUIS
FROM BIRMINGHAM 44-1740

MURKIN.

REMYTEL MAY ONE LAST.

JAMES W. BROWN REINTERVIEWED MAY NINE LAST AND FURNISHED FOLLOWING:

BROWN MET RAY THROUGH RAY'S "PERSONAL FRIEND," JOHNNIE VALENTI,
SHORTLY AFTER ASSASSINATION OF JOHN F. KENNEDY. BROWN WAS DOING
TWENTY YEAR SENTENCE FOR MURDER AFTER CONVICTION IN KANSAS CITY, MO.,
VALENTI WAS DOING TWENTY YEAR SENTENCE FOR ROBBERY AFTER CONVICTION
IN KANSAS CITY. ACCORDING TO BROWN, VALENTI AND BROWN WERE IN KANSAS
CITY JAIL AT SAME TIME (BUT DIFFERENT TANKS), PRIOR TO BEING SENT TO
JEFFERSON CITY, MO. AT TIME OF FIRST MEETING, RAY WAS INVOLVED IN
POKER GAME IN THE PRISON YARD. BROWN CLAIMS HE OBSERVED RAY ON MORE
THAN ONE OCCASION DEAL CARDS LEFT-HANDED. VALENTI INTRODUCED RAY TO
BROWN AS "JAMES RAY" BUT EVERYONE CALLED HIM "RAY". AT LATER TIME
VALENTI TOLD BROWN THAT HE, VALENTI, AND RAY HAD COMMITTED A ROBBERY
END PAGE ONE

44-775-566
566
SEARCHED INDEXED
SERIALIZED FILED
MAY 10 1968
FBI - ST. LOUIS

Bidwell
with Warfield

PAGE TWO

1
OF AN OIL COMPANY IN ATLANTA, GA., PRIOR TO VALENTI'S ARREST IN KANSAS CITY ON ANOTHER ROBBERY CHARGE. VALENTI CLAIMED HE AND RAY HAD WATCHED AN OIL COMPANY FOR A WEEK BEFORE COMMITTING THE ROBBERY ABOUT MIDNIGHT. BROWN BELIEVES VALENTI SAID IT WAS A ROBBERY, BUT THAT IT COULD HAVE BEEN A BURGLARY. BROWN SAID HE WAS SURE VALENTI IDENTIFIED ATLANTA AS THE PLACE OF THE ROBBERY BECAUSE LATER VALENTI TOLD BROWN THAT VALENTI'S WIFE WAS THEN (LATE SIXTYTHREE AND EARLY SIXTYFOUR) LIVING IN ATLANTA, WITH THEIR THREE CHILDREN, THE OLDEST OF WHOM WAS KILLED IN AN AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENT IN SIXTYFOUR. ABOUT SAME TIME VALENTI'S WIFE QUIT WRITING TO VALENTI AND EFFORTS OF VALENTI THROUGH THE CATHOLIC CHAPLAIN TO HAVE WIFE RESUME WRITING, WERE NEGATIVE. AT TIME OF MEETING RAY, RAY WAS LIVING IN C HALL, WHILE VALENTI AND BROWN WERE LIVING IN G HALL. VALENTI ALSO CLAIMED TO BROWN THAT AT TIME OF ARREST IN KANSAS CITY, VALENTI HAD THE NAME OF A KANSAS CITY GANGSTER (NAME NOT GIVEN BY VALENTI), IN HIS POSSESSION WHICH HAD BEEN GIVEN TO HIM BY AN ASSOCIATE, UNNAMED, IN NEW ORLEANS, AND VALENTI WAS QUESTIONED EXTENSIVELY BY KCPD AS TO HIS CONNECTIONS WITH THIS GANGSTER. VALENTI TOLD BROWN HE HAD RELATIVES IN BATON ROUGE, LA.

IN ALL HIS CONTACTS WITH RAY, BROWN WAS WITH VALENTI, AND
END PAGE TWO

PAGE THREE

SOMETIMES OTHER PRISONERS WERE PRESENT, NAMES UNRECALLED, OTHER THAN POSSIBLY "NOONEY" EDEN OR EATON (PH), FROM C HALL. RAY AND BROWN NEVER HAD ANY INVOLVED CONVERSATIONS, BUT BROWN WAS PRESENT ON ABOUT FOUR OCCASIONS WHEN RAY AND VALENTI WOULD DISCUSS THINGS. AMONG ITEMS DISCUSSED WAS ESCAPE BY EACH. RAY SAID HE WOULD RUNNEL OUT OF THE PRISON IF NECESSARY AND GO TO LIBERIA WHERE HE HAD A BROTHER-IN-LAW MAKING GOOD MONEY. NO OTHER INFORMATION RECALLED ABOUT ALLEGED BROTHER-IN-LAW. ON ANOTHER OCCASION RAY SAID HE KNEW A CAVE IN VIRGINIA WHERE HE COULD HIDE ONCE HE ESCAPED. CONCERNING THE KENNEDY ASSASSINATION, VALENTI ONCE SAID TO RAY THAT VALENTI DID NOT BELIEVE ANYONE SHOULD KILL THE PRESIDENT, BUT RAY SAID HE, RAY, WOULD HAVE DONE IT HIMSELF, IF HE WOULD HAVE HAD THE CHANCE, AND THAT KENNEDY WAS "NOTHING BUT A DAMN CATHOLIC." ACCORDING TO BROWN, RAY WAS VERY ANTI-CATHOLIC AND ANTI-NEGRO. ON ANOTHER OCCASION IN LATE SIXTYTHREE, BROWN CLAIMED HE OVERHEARD RAY SAY TO VALENTI THAT HE, RAY, WAS GOING TO GET OUT OF THE PEN, AND THAT RAY KNEW A GUY NAMED "COOLEY" (PH) WHO WOULD HIDE RAY WHERE NO ONE WOULD FIND HIM. ALSO THIS COOLEY WOULD PAY TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS TO ANYONE WHO WOULD KILL MARTIN LUTHER KING. RAY WAS AWARE THAT BROWN CAME FROM ALABAMA, BUT DID NOT TALKE TO HIM

END PAGE THREE

PAGE FOUR

ABOUT ANY TOWNS IN ALABAMA, EXCEPT THAT BIRMINGHAM WAS A GOOD TOWN TO STEAL IN, AND THAT RAY HAD STOLEN A CAR IN BIRMINGHAM, BEFORE GETTING SENT TO THE MISSOURI PEN.

CREDIBILITY OF BROWN HAS NOT BEEN ESTABLISHED TO DATE, AND IT HAS BEEN NOTED HE HAS FURNISHED CONFLICTING INFORMATION ABOUT THE PERSONAL HABITS OF RAY, SUCH AS RAY BEING LEFT-HANDED, WALKING PIGEON-TOED AND SMOKING WINSTON CIGARETTES. IT IS ALSO NOTED THAT IN FIRST INTERVIEW, BROWN CLAIMED RAY HATED KENNEDY BECAUSE HE WAS A "NIGGER-LOVING SOB," WHEREAS THIS TIME BROWN CLAIMED RAY HATED KENNEDY BECAUSE HE WAS A CATHOLIC. BROWN CLAIMED HE DID NOT KNOW RAY'S RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION. BROWN CLAIMS HE KNEW NOTHING OF ANY LOTTERIES BEING OPERATED IN THE PRISON, NOR OF ANY ORGANIZATION OF PRISONERS WHO WOULD COLLECT DEBTS, AND ACT AS A PROTECTIVE AGENCY FOR THE PRISONERS. HE CLAIMED COOLEY WAS AN INDIVIDUAL WHOSE NAME WAS MENTIONED ONLY BY RAY AND HE NEVER HEARD THIS NAME MENTIONED BY ANY OTHER PRISONER. BROWN ALSO STATES THAT "A" HALL WAS FOR NEGRO PRISONERS, WHEREAS THOMAS BRITTON (SEE MYTEL OF MAY NINE LAST) HAD CLAIMED "A" HALL WAS FOR TRUSTEES.

ALL RECEIVING OFFICES ADVISE BIRMINGHAM IF JOHNNIE VALENTI HAS BEEN LOCATED AND INTERVIEWED. IF SO, SUTEL BIRMINGHAM RESULTS OF THIS INTERVIEW.

KANSAS CITY, AT JEFFERSON CITY, MO., FROM PRISON RECORDS, FURNISH FOLLOWING:

END PAGE FOUR

PAGE FIVE

IDENTITY OF PRISONER "NOONEY" EDEN PH OR EATON, WHO, IN LATE SIXTYTHREE, WAS DOING FIVE YAEAR SENTENCE. IF IDENTIFIED, SET OUT LEAD TO HAVE HIM INTERVIEWED FOR HIS KNOWLEDTGE OF RAY AND VERIFICATION OF INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM THOMAS BRITTON AND/OR JAMES W. BROWN. ASCERTAIN FROM RECORDS RE VALENTI, IF HE, OR HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN, EVER LIVED IN ATLANTA, AND IF HIS OLDEST CHILD WAS KILLED, AS CLAIMED BY BROWN. IF THIS INFORMATION VERIFIED, SET OUT LEADS TO HAVE WIFE LOCATED AND INTERVIEWED FOR ANY INFORMATION SHE HAS RE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN HER HUSBAND, JOHNNIE VALENTI, AND RAY, AND IF THEY WERE INVOLVED IN ROBBERY OF OIL COMPANY IN ATLANTA, PRIOR TO VALENTI'S IMPRISONMENT IN JEFFERSON CITY. IN EFFORT TO VERIFY BROWN'S INFORMATION, ASCERTAIN IF RAY RESIDED IN "C" HALL IN LATE SIXTYTHREE, AND IF AT THAT TIME, RAY WAS WORKING IN THE LICENSE PLATE FACTORY. FROM RECORDS OF KANSAS CITY PD, ASCERTAIN IF BROWN AND VALENTI WERE IN CUSTODY AT SAME TIME, AND IF AT TIME OF VALENTI'S ARREST, THERE WAS SOME INFORMATION HE HAD CONNECTION WITH WELL KNOWN KANSAS CITY "GANGSTER." KANSAS CITY ALSO FURNISH BIRMINGHAM PHOTOS AND DESCRIPTION OF VALENTI.

ATLANTA ATTEMPT TO IDENTIFY ROBBERY REFERRED TO BY BROWN.

ABOVE BEING FURNISHED ST. LOUIS, AS BIRMINGHAM'S LAST INFORMATION AS TO WHEREABOUTS OF VALENTI, WAS THAT HE WAS IN ST. LOUIS.

CORRECTION:PG 3 LN 5 WD 9 IS "TUNNEL" PG 4 LN 8 WD 7 IS "KENNEDY"

PG 5 LN 2 WD 5 IS "YEAR"

END MPB

FBI ST LOUIS

P

FBI ST LOUIS

FBI LOS ANG.

2:55PM URGENT 5-10-68 LLR
TO ST. LOUIS (44-775)
FROM LOS ANGELES (44-1574)

SUBJECT: MURKIN

REURTEL 5/9/68

RE ITINERARY OF RAY.

INVESTIGATION IN CAPTIONED MATTER REVEALS SUBJECT
IN MONTREAL, CANADA MID JULY SIXTY SEVEN TO LATE AUGUST SIXTY
SEVEN; BIRMINGHAM FROM AUGUST TWENTY SIX TO OCTOBER SEVEN
SIXTY SEVEN, PUERTO VALLARTA, MEXICO OCTOBER NINETEEN
TO NOVEMBER SEVEN SIXTY SEVEN AND LOS ANGELES NOVEMBER
NINETEEN SIXTY SEVEN TO MARCH SEVENTEEN SIXTY EIGHT.

END

MPB

FBI ST LOUIS

X

44-775-567

SEARCHED.....	INDEXED.....
SERIALIZED.....	FILED.....
MAY 10 1968	
FBI - SAINT LOUIS	

Dolson
Rushing
info & Bradley

TO DIRECTOR, MEMPHIS BIRMINGHAM
FROM ST. LOUIS (44-775)

MURKIN

RE BH TEL THIS DATE RE JAMES W. BROWN

JOHN PAUL VELANTI, ONE SIX THREE TWO SOUTH EIGHTEENTH SLMO,
EMPLOYED AS RADIO ANNOUNCER, WMRY DASH FM, BELLEVILLE, ILL., INTER-
VIEWED MAY FOURTH. NAME AS GIVEN, NOT VALENTI. BELIEVED SLPD
FIFTY NINE PHOTO OF RAY BETTER LIKENESS THAN WF FOUR FOUR TWO A.
RECOGNIZED NEWSPAPER PHOTO AS BEING FORMER FELLOW PRISONER. RAY
QUIET TYPE SELDOM NOTICED. NO PARTICIPATION IN SPORTS OR ANY-
THING WHICH WOULD ATTRACT ATTENTION. UNABLE TO RECALL EVER HAVING
SPOKEN TO RAY OR EVER LIVING IN SAME DORM. RAY ESCAPE ATTEMPTS
ATTRACTED NO ATTENTION AS NUMEROUS INMATES ATTEMPTED FREQUENTLY
VELANTI IN MSP FEB THIRTEEN FIFTY TO DECMBER NINETTEEN SIXTYFOUR
TRANSFER TO MOBERLY PRISON. PAROLED MARCH SIXTY SEVEN. WAS
SERVING TWENTY YEAR SENTENCE FOLLOWING FIFTY NINE ARMED ROBBERY.
NEVER HEARD OF OFFER TO KILL KING, BUT SAID WAS COMMON KNOWLEDGE
ANYONE COULD PICK UP A QUOTE FEW BUCKS BY KILLING GUYS LIKE THAT.
END QUOTE. SUGGESTED KLAN OR SIMILAR ORGANIZATIONS MIGHT PAY.
NAME COOLEY OR COOLEY ORGANIZATION UNKNOWN TO HIM BUT
MIGHT BE NAME OF NEGRO PRISONER. VELANTI IS CATHOLIC.

44-775-50

END PAGE ONE

SEARCHED

F B I

Date:

5-10-68

Transmit the following in _____

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Via _____

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URGENT

(Priority)

HRD/g

Approved: _____

ECW/g

Special Agent in Charge

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*WA 732
ME -724
BH -801*

M

FILED

Per _____

[Signature]

PAGE TWO

SL 44-775

REMEMBERED ORVILLE GANN, JOHNNY JOHNSON, FRANK MAYBERRY, KENNY HURT
AND JAMES EDEN, AKA NONEY AS FELLOW PRISONERS.

SL WILL REINTERVIEW VELANTI CONCERNING MATTERS MENTIONED BY
BROWN WITHOUT DISCLOSING BROWN.

SUBJECT ARMED AND DANGEROUS

END

F B I

Date:

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(Type in plaintext or code)

Via _____
(Priority)

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Approved: _____ Sent _____ M Per _____
Special Agent in Charge

F B I

Date: 5/11/68

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plaintext or code)Via TELETYPE URGENT
(Priority)

TO: DIRECTOR, ATLANTA, BIRMINGHAM, MEMPHIS
KANSAS CITY AND NEW ORLEANS
FROM: ST. LOUIS (44-775)

MURKIN

RE BIRMINGHAM TEL TO BUREAU, MAY TEN, LAST.

JOHN PAUL VELANTI, ONE SIX THREE TWO SOUTH EIGHTEENTH STREET, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, INTERVIEWED MAY FOUR, LAST. DENIED KNOWING OR ASSOCIATING WITH SUBJECT RAY AT MISSOURI STATE PENITENTIARY OR ANY OTHER TIME. DID NOT RECALL EVER HAVING SPOKEN TO RAY.

VELANTI EMPLOYED AS NEWSCASTER AND STATES HE BROADCASTED INFORMATION CONCERNING RAY FOR SOMETIME. DID NOT RECOGNIZE NAME OR PHOTOGRAPH AS FELLOW INMATE, MSP, UNTIL RECENTLY. ASSOCIATES FACE WITH INMATE AT MSP, BUT NO PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF RAY.

1 - ST. LOUIS

WHW/ral
(1)

44-775-569

SEARCHED	_____
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Approved: THW
Special Agent in Charge

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Per

DIA - 3:28PM
AT - 3:38PM
BH - 3:48PM
ME - 3:58PM
KC - 4:08PM
NO - 4:18PM

F B I

Date:

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(Priority)

PAGE TWO

SL 44-775

VELANTI RE-INTERVIEWED TODAY IN REGARD TO INFORMATION FURNISHED BY JAMES W. BROWN, BIRMINGHAM. DESCRIBES BROWN AS GOOD FRIEND WITH WHOM HE "CELLED" AND "TOOK CARE OF". ALTHOUGH VELANTI UNAWARE OF BROWN INTERVIEW OR SUBSTANCE THEREOF, HE STATES BROWN IS A FRIEND AND WOULD HAVE NO REASON TO LIE ABOUT HIM.

WAS WITH BROWN KANSAS CITY JAIL, BUT DIFFERENT TANKS AND DID NOT KNOW BROWN THERE. ALSO WITH BROWN MSP, JEFFERSON CITY AND MOBERLY.

VELANTI DENIES ANY AND ALL CONVERSATIONS WITH RAY AS ATTRIBUTED TO HIM BY BROWN. STILL INSISTS HE DID NOT KNOW RAY.

ADMITS HE RAN POKER GAME AND LOTTERY AT MSP. HAD NUMEROUS INMATES WORKING FOR HIM IN VARIOUS HALLS IN CONNECTION WITH THIS OPERATION, BUT KNEW ALL OF THEM PERSONALLY AND RECALLS THEIR NAMES. SUBJECT RAY NEVER WORKED FOR HIM. RECALLS NO INMATE MSP, FIRST OR LAST NAME RAY, WITH WHOM HE ASSOCIATED OR CONVERSED AT LENGTH.

DENIES EXECUTING OR PLANNING ROBBERY OR BURGLARY OF OIL

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Special Agent in Charge

F B I

Date:

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(Priority)

PAGE THREE

SL 44-775

COMPANY OR ANYTHING ELSE IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA. ADVISED IF HE DID PLAN SUCH A JOB, HE WOULD DO IT ALONE.

WIFE, BETTYE ^{VELANTI} NEE PRITCHARD, MARRIED NINETEEN FIFTYFIVE, JUAREZ, MEXICO, LAST KNOWN TO BE RESIDING ONE TWO SEVEN ZERO CHANEY DRIVE, BOSIER CITY, LOUISIANA. NO IDEA OF PRESENT WHEREABOUTS. VELANTI DENIES EVER HAVING RESIDED IN ATLANTA. HIS SON, JAMES ^{VELANTI}, BY PREVIOUS MARRIAGE TO SHIRLEY HOLSTIEN, WAS KILLED IN AUTO ACCIDENT, ATLANTA, NINETEEN SIXTYTWO, AT AGE FIFTEEN. SON JAMES DID NOT LIVE WITH BETTYE, NEE PRITCHARD. ADVISES HE, VELANTI, HAS ONLY PASSED THROUGH ATLANTA STAYING OVER NIGHT.

DENIED BEING QUESTIONED RE KANSAS CITY GANSTER WHEN ARRESTED KANSAS CITY. ADVISED HE WAS QUESTIONED BY DETECTIVE HATFIELD, KANSAS CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT, ONLY IN REGARD TO OFFENSE FOR WHICH HE WAS CONVICTED WHICH WAS ARMED ROBBERY OF JOHN RINGO, OPERATOR OF DRAKE HOTEL, KANSAS CITY.

HOWEVER, VELANTI ADVISED HE TOOK "BUM RAP" OF ROBBERY OF RINGO IN ORDER TO AVOID DIVULGING HIS WHEREABOUTS AND PERSON

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Special Agent in Charge

F B I

Date:

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PAGE FOUR

SL 44-775

ACCOMPANYING HIM AT TIME OF RINGO ROBBERY. STATED EITHER WAY HE HAD TO GO TO PRISON IN EITHER MISSOURI OR KANSAS. WOULD HAVE GOTTEN MORE TIME IN KANSAS.

REFUSED TO DISCUSS WHEREABOUTS, OFFENSE, OR ASSOCIATES ACCOMPANYING HIM ON THAT DATE BECAUSE OF NATURE OF OFFENSE AND PERSON, OR PERSONS, INVOLVED. ADVISED THAT ANY INVESTIGATION INTO THIS MATTER COULD JEOPARDIZE HIS PRESENT PAROLE STATUS EVEN THOUGH STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS HAS RUN ON THAT CRIME.

DENIES HAVING RELATIVES BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA. DENIES KNOWLEDGE OF ANY CONNECTION BETWEEN NEW ORLEANS GANGSTERS AND GANGSTERS IN KANSAS CITY.

IN PREVIOUS INTERVIEW, VELANTI ADVISED "NOONEY" EDEN IS ^{aka Nooney} JAMES EDEN. EDEN IS TONGUE-TIED AND NICKNAMED NOONEY BECAUSE OF HIS INABILITY TO PRONOUNCE BOLONEY.

ADMITS HAVING PLANNED ESCAPES FROM MSP, BUT NEVER WITH ACCOMPLICE. NEVER HEARD OF PRISONERS' PLAN TO ESCAPE TO LIBERIA OR HIDE OUT IN A VIRGINIA CAVE.

SUBSEQUENT TO ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY, VELANTI ADMITS FIGHTING WITH FELLOW PRISONER OUTSIDE CATHOLIC CHAPEL

Approved: _____ Sent _____ M Per _____
Special Agent in Charge

F B I

Date:

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PAGE FIVE

SL 44-775

MSP BECAUSE OF DEROGATORY STATEMENT MADE BY PRISONER CONCERNING PRESIDENT KENNEDY AS A CATHOLIC. DOES NOT RECALL NAME OF PRISONER, AND NO CHARGES FILED.

RECALLS MANY PRISONERS DEGRADING NEGROES, BUT STATES THAT DEROGATORY STATEMENTS CONCERNING CATHOLICS NOT MADE IN HIS PRESENCE, INASMUCH AS HE IS CATHOLIC.

IN BOTH INTERVIEWS VELANTI DENIED KNOWLEDGE OF "COOLEY" (PHONETIC), BUT ASSOCIATES NAME WITH NEGRO INMATE MSP. NEVER HEARD OF MONEY OFFERED FOR DEATH OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING.

NEW ORLEANS, AT BOSIER CITY, LOUISIANA, ATTEMPT TO LOCATE AND INTERVIEW BETTYE VELANTI, NEE PRITCHARD, LAST KNOWN ADDRESS ONE TWO SEVEN ZERO CHANEY DRIVE, REGARDING ASSOCIATION BETWEEN VELANTI AND SUBJECT RAY; AND IF THEY WERE INVOLVED IN OIL

COMPANY ROBBERY IN ATLANTA PRIOR TO VELANTI'S IMPRISONMENT

MSP. *advise Birmingham results, as needed to evaluate credibility of Brown, who has been interviewed and made allegations of Ray - Velanti association and oil robbery.*

ARMED AND DANGEROUS. P

Approved: _____ Sent _____ M Per _____
Special Agent in Charge

FBI ST LOUIS

FBI NEW ORLS

115XX 1115PM URGENT 5/11/68 OLP
TO DIRECTOR, ST. LOUIS AND BIRMINGHAM
FROM NEW ORLEANS (157-10673)

MURKIN

RE ST. LOUIS TEL FOUR EIGHTEEN PM, FIVE ELEVEN INSTANT.

RE: JOHN PAUL VELANTI

INVESTIGATION BOSSIER CITY, LOUISIANA REVEALS CHANEY DRIVE HAS BEEN NON-EXISTENT FOR THREE YEARS. CHANEY DRIVE CONSISTED OF A FEW APARTMENTS WHICH WERE TORN DOWN THREE YEARS AGO AND REPLACED BY A HOLIDAY INN MOTEL.

GEORGE DEMANT, MANAGER, HOLIDAY INN, BOSSIER CITY, ADVISED FIVE ELEVEN INSTANT THAT MOTEL HAS ADDRESS OF HAMILTON ROAD AND NEVER USED CHANEY DRIVE AS AN ADDRESS. DEMANT SAID HE HAS NEVER HEARD OF BETTYE VELANTI NEE PRITCHARD.

VIRGIL HUFF, POST OFFICE EMPLOYEE, BOSSIER CITY, ADVISED FIVE ELEVEN INSTANT HE HAS NO ADDRESS OR FORWARDING ADDRESS FOR BETTYE VELANTI NEE PRITCHARD.

WILLIAM THORTON, BOSSIER CITY PD, AND DEPUTY SHERIFF
END PAGE ONE

44-775-570
SEARCHED.....INDEXED.....
SERIALIZED.....FILED.....
MAY 11 1968
FBI - SAINT LOUIS
Dobson
Bedemund
C.B.J.

PAGE TWO

WOL DOOLEY ADVISED FIVE ELEVEN INSTANT THEIR RECORDS
ARE NEGATIVE ON BETTYE VELANTI NEE PRITCHARD.

CREDIT BUREAU AT SHERVEPORT, LA., WHICH COVERS
BOSSIER CITY IS CLOSED AND WILL NOT BE OPENED UNTIL
MONDAY A.M. A REVIEW OF CURRENT AND PAST CITY, TELEPHONE,
AND CRISS-CROSS DIRECTORIES NEGATIVE ON BETTYE VELANTI
NEE PRITCHARD.

ST. LOUIS AT ST. LOUIS WILL REINTERVIEW JOHN PAUL
VELANTI FOR IDENTITY AND WHEREABOUTS OF PARENTS OR OTHER
RELATIVES OF HIS EX-WIFE BETTYE VELANTI NEE PRITCHARD AND
HAVE THESE RELATIVES INTERVIEWED AS TO HER PRESENT WHEREABOUTS.

ARMED AND DANGEROUS.

END

REM

FBI ST LOUIS

x *Airmail copies to Memphis, KC, and Atlanta.*

F B I

Date: 5/9/68

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plain text or code)Via AIRTEL AM
(Priority or Method of Mailing)TO: SAC, ATLANTA
FROM: SAC, MEMPHIS (44-1987) PMURKIN

In connection with investigation conducted to date in instant case, the Memphis Office has prepared a listing of pertinent dates, activity, and residences as known to Memphis concerning subject JAMES EARL RAY. This information may be subject to amplification as additional information becomes known.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Miscellaneous</u>	<u>Place</u>
4/23/67	Escape	Missouri State Penitentiary Jefferson City, Missouri
7/18/67	Harkay Apts. / \$450 lease, 7/18/67 - 1/18/68 H. ROTHMAN, owner, \$75 per month. GALT skipped out.	Montreal, Canada
7/26/67	Canadian Postal Money Order	Montreal, Canada
8/26/67	2608 Highland Avenue (Rented room.)	Birmingham, Alabama
8/28/67	Birmingham Trust Nat'l Bank (Rented safety deposit box.)	Birmingham, Alabama

ALL COPIES AIRMAIL:

2 ATLANTA	2 LOS ANGELES
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2 CHICAGO	2 MOBILE
2 DALLAS	2 NEW ORLEANS
2 JACKSON	2 SPRINGFIELD
2 KANSAS CITY	2 ST. LOUIS

RGJ:BN
(24)

Approved: RG Jensen Sent _____ M Per _____
Special Agent in Charge

44-775-571

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
MAY 11 1968	
FBI - ST. LOUIS	

Info
Bradley

ME 44-1987

<u>Date</u>	<u>Miscellaneous</u>	<u>Place</u>
8/29-30/67	Bought Mustang from <u>WILLIAM D. PAISLEY</u>	Birmingham
9/12/67	<u>Continental Dance Club Studio</u> <u>Aka. Friendship Club</u>	Birmingham
10/3/67	Photographic Equipment to Galt (Per records Superior Bulk Film Co., Chicago)	Birmingham
10/4/67	Operator rooming house (P. CHERPES) signed for package for GALT	Birmingham
10/5/67	GALT typed letter from Birmingham Highland Avenue address returning camera to Chicago	Birmingham
10/7/67	Approximate departure	Birmingham
10/18/67	Letter from Film Company (above) returned to Chicago from Birmingham address	--
10/19 - 11/16/67	<u>Room 212 Motel Rio, Morelos 86</u>	<u>Puerto Villarta</u> <u>Jalisco, Mexico</u>
10/22/67	Superior Bulk Film Co., Chicago records show typed letter from GALT asking refund be sent Hotel Rio, Puerto Villarta, Jalisco, Mexico	
11/7-13/67	<u>Hotel "Tropicana" (Rm. 417)</u>	<u>Puerto Villarta</u>
11/17/67 - 1/18/68	<u>1535 North Serrano (Apt. 6)</u>	<u>Los Angeles, Calif.</u>
11/20/67	Records Chicago Film Co. (above) show GALT asked refund be sent 1535 North Serrano	Los Angeles, Calif.

ME 44-1987

12/1-19/67	Provincial Motel (GALT)	New Orleans, La.
1/2 - 3/17/68	St. Francis Hotel 5533 North Hollywood Boulevard	Los Angeles
12/1 - 2/12/68	National Dance Studios	Los Angeles
1/1/68 - 3/2/68	International School of Bar- tendering	Los Angeles
3/24/68	113 14th St. N. E. (Rooming House) GALT last seen by landlord approximately 3/31/68	Atlanta, Georgia
3/29-30/68	Purchase of Weapon (HARVEY LOWMEYER), Aero-Marine Supply	Birmingham
4/1/68	Piedmont Laundry (GALT) No starch in clothes	Atlanta
4/3/68	Rebel Motel (ERIC S. GALT) Departed prior to 1 PM, 4/4/68	Memphis
4/4/68	Rooming House (JOHN WILLARD) South Main St., in about 3 PM	Memphis
4/5/68	Last seen A.M. of 4/5/68, Piedmont Laundry, parking Mustang	Atlanta

TO DIRECTOR, ATLANTA, BIRMINGHAM, KANSAS CITY, MEMPHIS, AND NEW
ORLEANS.

FROM ST. LOUIS (44-775)

MURKIN

RE NO TEL TO BU AND SL TEL TO BU, BOTH MAY ELEVEN LAST.

RE JOHN PAUL VELANTI - JAMES W. BROWN

VELANTI REINTERVIEWED TODAY. NOW RECALLS ONE JIMMY RAYE
(PHONETIC) WM, TWENTY-SEVEN, SIX FOOT ONE, ONE FIFTY LBS, LEFT
HANDED GAMBLER AND BASKET BALL PLAYER WHO WAS INVOLVED WITH VELANTI
IN GAMBLING AT MSP. RAYE STILL AT MSP ACCORDING TO VELANTI. RAYE
HAD OLDER BROTHER, LARRY RAYE, FORMER INMATE MSP. BELIEVES JIMMY
RAYE CONFUSED WITH SUBJECT RAY BY JAMES W. BROWN.

BELANTI ADVISES WIFE, BETTYE PITTARD, AKA PRITCHARD, PETERSON,
(PROBABLY MAIDEN NAME) AND VELANTI, EMPLOYED FOR SEVERAL YEARS AS
KEY PUNCH OPERATOR FOR LOUISIANA - ARKANSAS RAILROAD AT BOTH
SHREVEPORT AND ATLANTA. PARENTS AND REALTIVES BELIEVED TO RESIDE
ATLANTA. BETTYE MEMBER OF DOWNTOWN BRANCH ALCOHOLICS ANNONYMOUS
CLUB, SHREVEPORT, LA. MAY HAVE BEEN AA MEMBER IN ATLANTA.

FRIEND OF VELANTI, JAMES, "JIMMY" H. CARPENTER, FORMER MSP
INMATE, ZERO ONE SEVEN SIX ONE ADVISES SUBJECT RAY WELL KNOWN TO
END PAGE ONE

44-775-572
SEARCHED

F B I

Date: 5-12-68

Transmit the following in PLAINTEXT
(Type in plaintext or code)Via Teletype URGENT
(Priority)

WHL/JP

Approved: ECW/JP

Special Agent in Charge

Sent

WA 610
AT 616
BN 630
KC 634
ME 642
NU 645

SERIALIZED

INDEXED

FILED

Per

PAGE TWO

44-775

HIM MSP. CARPENTER RELEASED ON PAROLE FROM MSP FIVE ONE SIXTY-
SEVEN. SAW SUBJECT RAY ON SOUTH ELEVENTH ST., SLMO ON THREE
OCCASSIONS BETWEEN MAY TEN AND SEVENTEENTH, SIXTYSEVEN. SUBJECT
RAY POORLY DRESSED, WEARING MUSTACHE. BORROWED TEN DOLLARS FROM
CARPENTER. STATED HE NEEDED GUN TO MAKE A SCORE SO HE COULD
LEAVE ST. LOUIS. CARPENTER GOT IMPRESSION RAY WAS THEN GOING TO
ILLINOIS.

CARPENTER RECALLS INMATE MSP KNOWN AS (FNU) COOLEY (PH)
DESCRIBES AS WM, FORTY-FIVE YEARS OLD AT PRESENT, SIX FEET,
ONE FIFTY LBS, SLENDER, BLACK HAIR, WALKS WITH LIMP. IN MSP ON
TWO OCCASSIONS. LAST RELEASED PRIOR TO NINETEEN SIXTY WHEN SUBJECT
RAY ENTERED MSP. THIS PERSON TRIED TO BE AN INTELLECTUAL. READ
SCIENCE AND SEX BOOKS CONTINUALLY. WORKED IN KITCHEN MSP.

ATLANTA ATTEMPT TO IDENTIFY AND LOCATE WIFE OF VELANTI,
BETTYE PITTARD, AND INTERVIEW REGARDING ANY ASSOCIATION OF VELANTI
WITH SUBJECT RAY. VERIFY AND FIX DATE OF ALLEDGED ROBBERY OR
BURGLARY OF ATLANTA OIL COMPANY BY RAY AND VELANTI.

KANSAS CITY AT JEFFERSON CITY WILL ATTEMPT TO IDENTIFY JIMMY
RAYE (PH) MENTIONED BY VELANTI AS PERSON PROBABLY REFERRED TO BY
JAMES A. BROWN OF BIRMINGHAM.
ATTEMPT TO IDENTIFY COOLEY AS DESCRIBED.

NEW ORLEANS AT SHREVEPORT WILL CONDUCT INVESTIGATION TO LOCATE
AND INTERVIEW BETTYE PITTARD, RE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN SUBJECT RAY
AND BELANTI.

ARMED AND DANGEROUS. P.

END

F B I

Date:

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plaintext or code)

Via _____
(Priority)

Approved: _____ Sent _____ M Per _____
Special Agent in Charge

TO DIRECTOR, BIRMINGHAM, MEMPHIS, AND KANSAS CITY
FROM ST. LOUIS (44-775)

MURKIN

JOHN PAUL VELANTI ON FIVE FOURTEEN SIXTYEIGHT ADVISED THAT
FOLLOWING PERSONS CAN FURNISH INFORMATION AS TO WHETHER OR NOT HE
WAS ASSOCIATE OF SUBJECT RAY IN MSP.

ONE. MAJOR POIRY - FORMERLY IN CHARGE OF SECURITY MSP.

TWO. MARION "DITTY" JANSEN - FORMER CLERK-PRISONER MSP AND
NOW ON PAROLE IN KC.

THREE. MSP INMATE (FNU) BAGBY, NM, AGE ABOUT SIXTY DOING
THIRTY YEARS FOR MURDER AND FOR YEARS IN CHARGE OF
MATTRESS FACTORY IN MSP.

KC INTERVIEW THESE INDIVIDUALS RE ASSOCIATION WITH SUBJECT RAY
AND ADVISE BIRMINGHAM.

ARMED AND DANGEROUS.

END

44-775-583

F B I

Date: 5-14-68

Transmit the following in _____

Maintext
(Type in plaintext or code)

Via _____

Teletype

URGENT
(Priority)

CBB/j

SEARCHED _____
SERIALIZED _____
INDEXED _____
FILED _____

Approved: _____

ECW/j
Special Agent in Charge

Sent _____

WA 542
BA 545
ME 620
AC 610

P M

Per _____

J

FBI ST LOUIS

FBI CHICAGO

615PM URGENT 5-14-68 RMF

TO DIRECTOR /44-38861/ ST. LOUIS /44-775/ SPRINGFIELD /44-561/
FROM CHICAGO /44-1114/

MURKIN.

RE SPRINGFIELD TEL MAY NINE LAST.

RE JOSEPH ELMER AUSTIN AKA; FORMER ASSOCIATE OF SUBJECT.

AUSTIN LOCATED AND INTERVIEWED THIS DATE. RESIDES IN CHICAGO'S WEST SIDE COLORED AREA. STATES LAST SAW SUBJECT IN ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, IN NINETEEN FIFTY NINE, HAD NO IDEA SUBJECT ESCAPED FROM PRISON AND WAS NOT AWARE RAY WAS BEING SOUGHT FOR MURKIN.

ONLY KNEW RAY FOR ABOUT SIX MONTHS DURING FIFTYNINE, ROBBERY OF SUPERMARKET ALTON, ILLINOIS, WAS ONLY SCORE HE PULLED WITH SUBJECT, DID NOT KNOW ANY MALE OR FEMALE FRIENDS AND STATES NO POSSIBILITY OF SUBJECT KNOWING WHERE HE IS.

WHEN FIRST SHOWN SUBJECT'S PHOTOGRAPHS STATED INDIVIDUAL NOT KNOWN TO HIM. WHEN TOLD PHOTOS WERE OF SUBJECT STATED NEWEST PHOTO IN BUSINESS SUIT LOOKS A LITTLE LIKE RAY BUT HEAVIER THAN HE RECALLS.

END PAGE ONE

44-775-584

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
MAY 14 1968	
FBI - ST. LOUIS	

PAGE TWO

CLAIMS NEVER MET SUBJECT'S BROTHERS. STATES IF HE EVER SEE SUBJECT OR DEVELOPS ANY INFORMATION RE WHEREABOUTS WILL IMMEDIATELY CONTACT FBI SINCE RAY CHEATED AUSTIN OF HIS PART OF THE LOOT FROM ABOVE ROBBERY. NOTE AUSTIN SIXTYNINE YEARS OLD, APPEARS TO BE ALCOHOLIC.

DAILY CONTACT BEING MAINTAINED WITH BROTHER *Ray* JERRY. HAS FURNISHED NO ADDITIONAL PERTINENT INFORMATION. STILL STATES SUBJECT HAD NO DEEP RACIAL HATRED FOR NEGROES. CONSIDERING MOVE FROM PRESENT RESIDENCE SINCE LOCATION KNOWN TO EX-WIFE AND POSSIBLY PRESS.

AMCC'S MEMPHIS AND INDIANAPOLIS.

ARMED AND DANGEROUS.

END

JLS

FBI ST LOUIS

FBI ST LOUIS

FBI KAN CITY

630PM URGENT 5-14-68 DJB

TO DIRECTOR, FBI (44-3 886 1), HONOLULU (VIA WASHIBGTON), MEMPHIS, ST. LOU
& SPRINGFIELD
FROM KANSAS CITY (44-760) 3P

MURKIN.

FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RE JAMES LAOMA OWENS,
NUMBER ZERO ZERO ONE EIGHT FOUR, WAS OBTAINED FROM THE MSP
RECORDS. HE WAS RECEIVED MSP FEB FIVE NINETEEN-SIXTY FROM
ST. LOUIS TO SERVE A SEVEN YEAR SENTENCE ON CHARGE OF ROBBERY
FIRST. HE WAS DISCHARGED IN JAN TWO NINETEEN-SIXTYFOUR. A
DETAINER IN FAVOR OF DIV OF SUPERVISION OF PAROLES,
SPRINGFIELD, ILL., WAS FILED FEB TWENTYTHREE NINETEEN-SIXTY.

OWENS DESCRIBED WM, DOB [REDACTED]
ELVINS, MO., FIVE FEET FOUR INCHES, ONE HUNDRED FORTYNINE
POUNDS, BROWN HAIR, BLUE EYES, MEDIUM COMPLEXION, STOCKY
BUILD, OCCUPATION BARBER, TATOO OF SHIP ON LEFT FOREARM.
RELATIVES MOTHER IDA OWENS, FIVE ONE SEVEN FIFTH ST.,
HONOLULU, HAWAII; BROTHER ERNIST OWENS, SAME ADDRESS; WIFE
END PAGE ONE

44-775-585

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
MAY 14 1968	
FBI - ST. LOUIS	

Ruehling

KC 44-760

PAGE TWO

BETTY OWENS, NINE FOUR FOUR SEVEN ROSEMARY, BERKELEY, MO.
WIFE REPORTEDLY DIVORCED AND REMARRIED. AUNT ANNA MERRITT,
RURAL ROUTE ONE, ELVINS, MO.; COUSIN RHONDA MERRITT, SAME
ADDRESS.

*recontacted
each
Prev covered*

*Recontacted
St. Francis
County
11/15
a 5-150*

JIMMIE OWENS COMPLETED TEN GRADES AT THE BRIAN HILL
SCHOOL, BRIAN HILL, MO. HAD NO VISITORS AND NO CORRESPONDENCE
WHILE INCARCERATED. LISTED FORMER EMPLOYMENT AS A BOILER
MAKER FOR THE COMBUSTION ENGINEERING CO., ST. LOUIS, IN
NINETEEN-FORTYSEVEN.

Shumway

SPRINGFIELD ATTEMPT TO DETERMINE LOCATION OF OWENS AT
DIV OF SUPERVISION OF PAROLES.

HONOLULU CONTACT MOTHER AND BROTHER FOR LOCATION OF
OWENS OR THE SUBJECT.

ST. LOUIS CONTINUE EFFORTS TO CONTACT RELATIVES AND
FORMER EMPLOYER RE LOCATION OF JIMMIE OWENS.

FOR INFORMATION OF ALL OFFICES, SUBJECT WAS REPORTEDLY
SEEN WITH JIMMIE OWENS IN ST. LOUIS DURING SUMMER OF NINETEEN
SIXTYSEVEN AND OWENS WAS WITH HIM AT THE TIME OF HIS ARREST
IN ST. LOUIS FOR ROBBERY WHICH RESULTED IN THEIR

END PAGE TWO

KC 44-760

PAGE THREE

INCARCERATION AT MSP.

ARMED AND DANGEROUS.

P.

END

JLS

FBI ST LOUIS

F B I

Date: 5-14-68

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plaintext or code)Via TELETYPE URGENT _____
(Priority)

TO: DIRECTOR, MEMPHIS AND ATLANTA

FROM: ST. LOUIS (44-775)

MURKIN.

RE ATLANTA SUMMARY MAY THIRTEEN, LAST.

known to SL
ONLY INFO ^{known to SL} ALLEGED ROBBERY OF OIL CO. IN ATLANTA BY RAY AND
JOHN PAUL VELANTI IS BASED ON BIRMINGHAM INTERVIEW OF EX-CON
JAMES W. BROWN, OF DOUBTFUL CREDIBILITY, AS SET FORTH IN BIRMINGHAM
TEL MAY TEN LAST, ONE FIVE SEVEN PM, OF WHICH ATLANTA RECEIVED
COPY.

VELANTI HAS DENIED ASSOCIATION WITH RAY. VELANTI STATES
SENTENCED TWENTY YEARS ON FEB. ELEVEN, FIFTYNINE, FOR ARMED
ROBBERY, RECEIVED MSP, FEB. THIRTEEN, SIXTY, TRANSFERRED TO MOBERLY,
MO., PRISON, DEC. SIXTYFOUR, AND PAROLED MARCH TWENTYONE,
SIXTYSEVEN.

NOTE RAY ARRESTED ST. LOUIS, OCTOBER, FIFTYNINE, FOR ARMED

HRB: yma
SL

44-775-586
SEARCHED _____
SERIALIZED _____
INDEXED _____
FILED _____

Approved: *CCW/p*
Special Agent in ChargeSent *WA 1110
ME 1113
AT 1115* p MPer *J*

F B I

Date:

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plaintext or code)

Via _____
(Priority)

SL: 44-775

PAGE TWO:

ROBBERY.

WOULD APPEAR ATLANTA OIL ROBBERY, IF OCCURRED, WAS EARLY
FIFTYNINE, OR PRIOR.

SUBJECT ARMED AND DANGEROUS. P

END

Approved: _____ Sent _____ M Per _____
Special Agent in Charge

F B I

Date: 5-14-68

Transmit the following in PLAINTEXT
(Type in plaintext or code)Via TELETYPE URGENT
(Priority)

TO DIRECTOR, MEMPHIS, (KANSAS CITY - AIRMAIL COPY)
FROM ST. LOUIS (44-775)

MURKIN

RE KC TEL ^{this date} TO BU, BH, ME, AND SL FIVE FOURTEEN SIXTYEIGHT
~~RE: FELLOW PRISONER~~ ^{RE:} ~~OF~~ *Melvin Oliver Gridley and Milton ZAVALCOFSKI*

MELVIN OLIVER GRIDLEY, MISSOURI TRAINING CENTER FOR MEN
NUMBER ZERO TWO FIVE ZERO THREE AND MILTON ZAVALCOFSKI (MTCM)
NO. ZERO ONE SIX FIVE EIGHT, INTERVIEWED MOBERLY MISSOURI,
THIS DATE. GRIDLEY IN CUSTODY JEFFERSON CITY, FOUR TWENTY-
THREE SIXTY ON CHARGE OF BURGLARY UNTIL TRANSFERRED TO MOBERLY
SEVEN SIXT SEVEN. HE WAS "HALL TENDER" IN J HALL WHEN RAY
HID IN PENITENTIARY FOR ONE WEEK IN SIXTYFOUR OR SIXTYFIVE.
RAY WORKED UNDER GRIDLEY IN RECREATION SECTION. HE WAS CLOSE
MOUTH, HAD FEW FRIENDS AND DIDN'T TALK MUCH TO ANYONE. GRID-
LEY LOST CONTACT WITH RAY IN SIXTYFIVE OR SIXTYSIX WHEN RAY
PLACED IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT.

1 - ST. LOUIS
1 - KANSAS CITY
WRD;jls

44-775-587

SEARCHED	_____
SERIALIZED	_____
INDEXED	_____
FILED	_____

Approved: TJK
Special Agent in Charge

Sent WA 1118
ME 1122 PM

Per J

F B I

Date:

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plaintext or code)Via _____
(Priority)

PAGE TWO

SL 44-775

GRIDLEY HAS NO INFORMATION REGARDING RAY OR COOLEY.
(MILTON) ZAVALCOFSKI SERVING TWENTY YEARS FOR ARMED ROBBERY.
SENTENCED BEGAN ELEVEN NINE SIXTY. HE HAS SERVED ALL HIS
TIME FROM THEN UNTIL FOUR EIGHT SIXTYEIGHT WHEN HE TRANS-
FERRED TO MOBERLY. KNEW WHO RAY WAS AS AN INMATE. HE
REMEMBERS HIM HIDING IN PENITENTIARY AND REMEMBERS HIS
ESCAPE. SOMEONE MENTIONED HE ALSO WORKED IN RECREATION
SECTION AT JEFFERSON CITY. AFTER RAY'S PICTURE HAD BEEN
ON T.V. HE HAS NO INFORMATION REGARDING RAY OR COOLEY.

ARMED AND DANGEROUS

END

Approved: _____ Sent _____ M Per _____
Special Agent in Charge

1

BH 44-1740

WAS:gas

Confidential source, whose reliability has not been established, advised that he was received in the Missouri State Penitentiary during September, 1965, and was immediately placed in quarantine for a thirty-day observation period which is required of all new prisoners and thereafter he was assigned to Cell 188, Tier #8, J. Hall, and scheduled to work in the carpenter shop. In this connection, the source stated that there is only one inmate to a cell and that the Missouri State Penitentiary has five halls within the prison wall which house prisoners.

The source said that while in J. Hall, during November, 1965, he first became acquainted with JAMES EARL RAY, who was already assigned to J Hall and who worked daily in J Hall as a "Walk Boy." The source explained that the duties of JAMES EARL RAY as a "Walk Boy" were to take orders for cigarettes, gum, candy, etc., which could be purchased within the prison and to bring hot water for shaving and instant coffee to the inmates. The source added that JAMES EARL RAY was the only "Walk Boy" in J Hall and further that he was free to contact any inmate and could move throughout the hall freely. He pointed out that this was RAY's only duty in the hall and that he could remain inside during working hours, having no other assignments.

The source said that his first conversation with RAY took place when RAY observed him reading a Birmingham, Alabama "Post-Herald" newspaper which he had a subscription to while in prison. The source advised that RAY asked him on this occasion if he was from the State of Alabama to which he replied he was from Walker County, Alabama. RAY said to the source that he knew where Walker County, Alabama, was located and further that this was a dry county, serving no alcoholic beverages, which gave the source the impression that RAY knew what he was talking about, especially since he mentioned beer joints like the All State Tavern, another beer joint which source believed was Rose's Place and Riverview Cafe.

44-775-573

SEARCHED.....	INDEXED.....
SERIALIZED.....	FILED.....
MAY 12 1968	
FBI - SAINT LOUIS	

Dutton
Bidwell

RAY said that he had visited or stayed in the Birmingham, Alabama, area in the past; however, RAY never mentioned any associates, acquaintances, friends, relatives or employments in the State of Alabama. The source advised that this conversation ended with RAY asking him if he could have his Birmingham, Alabama, "Post-Herald" newspaper when he finished reading them each day, which was agreeable to source. The source advised thereafter RAY would come by his cell each evening and pick up his newspaper which he would place between the cell bars.

The source said that RAY never discussed his family nor did he ever indicate from which part of the United States he came from, but the source believed that RAY was from the southern part of the United States only because RAY never indicated where he was from, coupled with his interest in a southern newspaper.

The source stated that he personally gave RAY his present home address and telephone number on one occasion, telling RAY to stop by his home sometime if and when he ever got released from prison and they would have a drink or two together. The source pointed out that RAY did not ask him for his address or telephone number and that he merely furnished this to RAY knowing that he was doing a 20 year prison sentence and more than likely he would never again see RAY after he left prison. He stated that when he gave RAY his address and telephone number, RAY replied "Don't be surprised if I call you up sometime" and thereafter placed this piece of paper in his pocket.

The source said that RAY was a very quiet individual, soft spoken, calm, clean, never laughed or enjoyed a good story, solemn face, and remained to himself most of the time. The source advised that he would often see RAY in the prison yard and on occasion attempted to strike up a conversation with RAY, but he never appeared interested so the source gave up trying to make conversation with RAY.

The source said that the only topic which would arouse RAY's interest was the subject of money. The source

3
BH 44-1740

stated that on one occasion during a conversation with RAY, RAY said "One of these days if I ever get out of here I am going to make myself a bunch of money." When source asked how he intended doing this, RAY replied he had contacts and there are more ways of making money than robbing banks. Source then asked RAY what his plan was, to which RAY replied "The Businessmen's Association has offered \$100,000.00 for killing MARTIN LUTHER KING and he's five years past due." The source stated he then asked RAY what the Businessmen's Association was, to which RAY replied "I don't know but I will find out." The source added that this was the first and last time RAY ever mentioned MARTIN LUTHER KING nor did he ever again mention the Businessmen's Association in his presence.

The source said that RAY told him that he always worked alone and therefore limited the possibility of being caught and said "I have got a place picked out where I can hide," never mentioning where the place was located.

The source stated there was a prison cigarette lottery going on almost daily in J Hall and that RAY was involved in this lottery, delivering wagering tickets as well as picking these up and would deliver the winnings to inmates each night. He said there were two separate lotteries in J Hall. One lottery was run by two inmates named JOHNNY VALENTI and another individual from St. Louis, Missouri, name unknown. The source described this individual as a white male, Italian, age 43 to 46, dark complexion with gunshot wound in face and nicknamed "Dago." The source said the other lottery in J Hall was run by an individual nicknamed "Boston," who was doing a 20 year sentence and described him as a white male, 45 years of age, very short and occupied either cell 23, 24 or 25 on the flag in J Hall, meaning the first floor.

The source said that he did not like VALENTI's wagering odds so he always placed his wagers with the individual nicknamed "Boston." The source stated that

4
BH 44-1740

RAY would always handle the wagers since he could talk to any inmates in the cellblock and was reimbursed by JOHNNY VALENTI and "Boston" for this service. Source estimated that there were approximately two dozen lotteries being operated in the Missouri State Penitentiary, which consisted of five separate halls housing the prisoners.

The source advised that he never saw RAY run narcotics or handle contraband at any time and on one occasion RAY showed him his arms to prove that he had never been addicted to narcotics. The source added that he never observed RAY with any large sums of money.

The source advised that there was an organization being operated at the Missouri State Penitentiary by the inmates and this organization was called "Cooley's Organization." The source said that this was a protection and enforcer organization and that while en route to the Missouri State Penitentiary he first became aware that such an organization existed. The source advised that he was at one time lodged at the County Jail in Springfield, Missouri, for several months and became acquainted with a prisoner, (FNU) CRAIG, whom he described as a "four time loser." The source said that CRAIG has a brother who is a detective on the Springfield Police Department and that CRAIG had previously served time at Missouri State Penitentiary and was being returned to this penitentiary. The source said that when CRAIG learned that he also was en route to the Missouri State Penitentiary, CRAIG advised him to join the Cooley's Organization at the Missouri State Penitentiary since he would need to get along with other prisoners and be being a member of this organization, he would obtain "special favors." The source said that CRAIG informed him that the Cooley's Organization would settle any grievances he may have while at Missouri State Penitentiary against other prisoners and that this was a very powerful organization, having influence with guards and could even, for a price, arrange "a murder."

The source advised that after his release from quarantine, he again observed CRAIG, who was then working in the mess hall at the Missouri State Penitentiary. The source advised that he then approached CRAIG and told CRAIG that he desired to join the Cooley's Organization and at this time gave him a \$10.00 canteen book, pointing out that the membership fee to join the Cooley's Organization was \$10.00 and that this membership fee would make an inmate a paid up member as long as he was in prison. The source advised that CRAIG told him that he would obtain his membership for him and the same night JAMES EARL RAY came to his cell and gave him a card saying "Here is your card," and nothing else, and therefore he always felt that RAY was a member of the Cooley's Organization since he was so trusted. However, RAY never said to him that he was a member nor did he ever ask him.

The source said that his membership card was type written with his name on it and had the heading "Membership Cooley's Club." The source said that this membership card was like a credit card and it could get an inmate credit on purchases of candy and other sundries but could not be used for credit purposes on lotteries.

The source advised that he had two or three differences with prisoners over wagers while in J Hall and upon getting no satisfaction, he personally contacted CRAIG in the mess hall at which time he displayed to CRAIG his membership card and filed his grievance with CRAIG. The source stated that CRAIG informed him that he would handle this complaint; however, the fee for handling his grievance was 50% of what was due a prisoner. The source added that subsequently RAY appeared at his cell in J Hall with his share of the cigarettes collected from his grievance.

The source stated that CRAIG was later transferred from the mess hall to the Church Farm, which is located outside the prison wall at Missouri State Penitentiary. The source said that prior to CRAIG's departure, CRAIG

6
BH 44-1740

contacted him and instructed him who to see in the future to take complaints should he have any additional grievances. At this point, the source pointed out that most grievances would be placed either at the mess hall or the prison yard, noting that only during these periods of time all the inmates from different halls could talk with each other. The source added that he was unable to furnish any description of name of the individual he was instructed to contact in the mess hall after the departure of CRAIG since he had no further complaints and was subsequently transferred to the Renz Farm, which is also located outside the prison.

The source stated that the Cooley's Organization was operating when he arrived at the Missouri State Penitentiary and was still doing business when he departed and he felt that this operation had been started and maintained by old cons who are now trustees and who reside in A Hall, which is the trustees' barracks. He added that he personally feared the power of the Cooley's Organization as did other inmates and in his opinion, he personally felt they could render retaliation regarding him if they became aware that he gave information concerning their organization.

The source said that during the time RAY was assigned to J Hall, he had attempted an escape which was unsuccessful and thereafter he never saw RAY again since RAY was not returned to J Hall and he later went to Renz Farm. He said that while at Renz Farm he did hear that RAY successfully escaped from the Missouri State Penitentiary by hiding himself in a bread truck.

The source was asked if there ever circulated at Missouri State Penitentiary a rumor concerning the killing of three Negro inmates and if RAY's name was ever mentioned as a suspect or being involved in these killings. The source said that he did learn that when prison authorities first tried to integrate the prisoners, four white men with pillowcases over their heads waited

for five Negro prisoners to enter the shower room on one occasion and stabbed three of the Negroes to death, wounded a fourth and the fifth escaped. He said that at no time did he hear any rumor that RAY was involved in these killings.

The source said that the inmates located in J Hall at the time he was also lodged there and who could possibly furnish additional information concerning RAY were (FNU) SPRATT, cell 187, and GENE (LNU), cell 190, who escaped by overpowering a guard and taking his uniform; however, this individual was successfully apprehended and returned to Missouri State Penitentiary. Source advised that another inmate, name unknown, who occupied cell 190, was a lottery player. Another inmate, name unknown, nicknamed "Cowboy," was a hall tender in charge of convicts in J Hall.

This source was displayed numerous photographs of JAMES EARL RAY and advised that all photographs bear a close resemblance to RAY; however, he specifically identified the photograph of JAMES EARL RAY taken at the Missouri State Penitentiary during the time he was incarcerated. The source said that he would have no difficulty in identifying RAY should he ever see him again, even if he attempted to disguise his identity; giving as his reasons that RAY was definitely "slough-footed" and his toes pointed out noticeably when he walked causing his heels and soles to wear down on the outside edges. He has a prominent cleft on his chin, which is noticeable and remarked that RAY liked his booze and that he had the impression from talking with him that he was a heavy drinker. The source also added that in his opinion from his knowledge of RAY in prison that he thought RAY had a normal sex life.

The source advised that the only other person that he knew that RAY might have been closely associated when in prison was a full-blooded Indian prisoner who was the barber in J Hall but whose name he could not recall. The source stated that he definitely had not been contacted by RAY since he has been released from prison, which was May 3, 1967, and stated that he would notify the Birmingham FBI Office if RAY ever attempted to contact him in any way or manner in the future.

F B I

Date: 5/9/68

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plain text or code)Via AIRTEL AIRMAIL
(Priority or Method of Mailing)

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (44-38861)
 FROM: SAC, BIRMINGHAM (44-1740) (P)
 SUBJECT: MURKIN
 CR
 (OO: MEMPHIS)

Re Birmingham teletype to Bureau, Memphis and
 Kansas City, 5/8/68.

Enclosed for Bureau and all receiving offices
 are two copies of an investigative insert reflecting
 the results of interviews with THOMAS BRITTON, a former
 inmate of Missouri State Penitentiary who is acquainted
 with JAMES EARL RAY and who furnished considerable
 information relative to RAY's prison activities.

The confidential source referred to in enclosed
 insert is THOMAS BRITTON, 1710 Alabama Avenue, Jasper,
 Alabama, who is presently employed as a cabinet maker at
 Foster's Cabinet Shop, Haleyville, Alabama. After giving
 this matter careful consideration, the identity of BRITTON
 is being concealed at this time in view of his cooperative
 attitude coupled with the fact that he desires his
 identity be protected as he fears retaliation from the
 Cooley's Organization, Missouri State Penitentiary, should
 they learn he is cooperating or furnishing information

- 3 - Bureau (Enc. 2)
- 2 - Kansas City (Enc. 2)
- 2 - Memphis (44-1987) (Enc. 2)
- 1 - Mobile (Enc. 2)
- 1 - New Orleans (Enc. 2)
- ① - St. Louis (Enc. 2) *only 1 Encl*
- 1 - Springfield (Enc. 2) *Received 5/12/68*

WAS:gas
 (11)

44-775-574
 SEARCHED.....INDEXED.....
 SERIALIZED.....FILED.....
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 FBI - SAINT LOUIS
Butterwell BB
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Approved: _____ Sent _____ M Per _____
 Special Agent in Charge

BH 44-1740

to the FBI. Also, Birmingham feels that additional information may be furnished by BRITTON, noting that JAMES EARL RAY presently has his home address and telephone number and could possibly contact him in the future. Disclosure of his identity could possibly alienate this potential source of information.

THOMAS BRITTON was interviewed on 5/6/68 by SA JOHN H. KRESEK and was again interviewed on 5/7/68 by SA's JOHN H. KRESEK, ROBERT M. BARRETT and WILLIAM A. SAUCIER.

Information copies of this investigative insert are being furnished to the New Orleans, Mobile, St. Louis and Springfield Divisions in view of their investigative interest in this matter, coupled with the fact the results of this interview may be valuable when and if JOHNNY VALENTI is located, noting that he has been alleged to be in the New Orleans or St. Louis, Missouri, area. Also, Springfield has several relatives of RAY residing within their division.

FBI ST LOUIS

FBI BIRMGHAM

211 PM URGENT 5-13-68 JGA

TO DIRECTOR, ATLANTA, MEMPHIS, KANSAS CITY AND ST. LOUIS.

FROM BIRMINGHAM 44-1740 4P

MURKIN.

RE BIRMINGHAM TELS TO BUREAU, MAY SEVEN, EIGHT AND TEN, LAST,
AND ST. LOUIS TELS TO BUREAU, MAY TEN, ELEVEN AND TWELVE, LAST.

KANSAS CITY IS REQUESTED TO EXPEDITE INVESTIGATION REQUESTED AT
MISSOURI STATE PENITENTIARY IN RE BIRMINGHAM TELS, IN ORDER THAT INFO
FROM EX-CONVICTS BEING OBTAINED BY ST. LOUIS, BIRMINGHAM AND ATLANTA,
MAY BE PROPERLY EVALUATED. KANSAS CITY IS REQUESTED TO SUTEL
SPECIFICALLY INFORMATION DEVELOPED RE "COOLEY ORGANIZATION" AND/OR
ANY PRISONER NAMED COOLEY; ALL INFO DEVELOPED RE PRISONERS NAMED
CRAIG AND "BOSTON" AS IDENTIFIED BY EX-CONVICT THOMAS BRITTON; ALL
INFO DEVELOPED RE ANY LOTTERIES OPERATED BY JOHN PAUL VELANTI AND HIS
ITALIAN PARTNER FROM ST. LOUIS WHO HAS GUNSHOT WOUND IN FACE. KANSAS
CITY ALSO SUTEL WHETHER SUBJECT RAY WAS EVER A "WALK BOY" IN "J HALL"
NOVEMBER, SIXTYSIX, THROUGH APRIL, SIXTYSEVEN, AND WHETHER RAY EVER
END PAGE ONE

44-775-575

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
MAY 13 1968	
FBI - ST. LOUIS	

Bidwell
Worfield

PAGE TWO

EMPLOYED IN LICENSE PLATE FACTORY, MSP, SIXTYTHREE OR SIXTYFOUR. KANSAS CITY WILL ASCERTAIN IF THERE WAS EVER A PRISONER NAMED JIMMY RAYE AS DESCRIBED BY VELANTI AND IF SO, FURNISH BIRMINGHAM AND RECEIVING OFFICES BACKGROUND AND PHOTO. KANSAS CITY ASCERTAIN EXACT DATES OF INCARCERATION FOR VELANTI, NOTING IN RE ST. LOUIS TEL, MAY TEN LAST, VELANTI CLAIMED HE WAS IN MSP, FEBRUARY THIRTEEN, FIFTY, UNTIL PAROLED MARCH, SIXTYSEVEN, AND WAS SERVING TWENTYYEAR SENTENCE FOR "NINETEEN FIFTYNINE" ARMED ROBBERY. KANSAS CITY ALSO ASCERTAIN IDENTITIES OF RESIDENCE HALLS AT MSP AND DATES OF RESIDENCE DURING THEIR IMPRISONMENT FOR SUBJECT RAY, AND VELANTI, THOMAS BRITTON, JAMES BROWN AND JAMES H. CARPENTER. ASCERTAIN IF RAY AND VELANTI EVER LIVEN IN SAME RESIDENCE HALL AT SAME TIME AT MSP.

KANSAS ALSO SUTEL RESULTS OF INQUIRY AT KANSAS CITY PD RE ARREST OF VELANTI.

FROM INFO AVAILABLE BIRMINGHAM AS RECEIVED FROM EX-CONVICTS AND THAT DEVELOPED BY ST. LOUIS AS RECEIVED FROM EX-CONVICTS CARPENTER AND VELANTI, IT APPEARS CARPENTER AND VELANTI POSSIBLY BOTH IN POSSESSION OF ADDITIONAL NECESSARY INFO RE RAY AND THEY SHOULD BE REINTERVIEWED IMMEDIATELY. ST. LOUIS ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN FROM CARPENTER

END PAGE TWO

PAGE THREE

HIS KNOWLEDGE OF ALL OF RAY'S ACTIVITIES DURING TIME CARPENTER KNEW RAY IN MSP. NOTING CARPENTER CLAIMS HE WAS ACQUAINTED WITH BOTH VELANTI AND RAY, ASCERTAIN IF VELANTI AND RAY WERE ASSOCIATED. DETERMINE IF CARPENTER KNOWS A "~~JIMMY RAYE~~" AS DESCRIBED BY VELANTI. ASCERTAIN CARPENTER'S KNOWLEDGE OF (FNU) CRAIG, "COOLEY ORGANIZATION" (OR ANY OTHER PRISONER ORGANIZATION WHICH OPERATED AS PROTECTIVE RACKET FOR PRISONERS), PRISONER NAMED "BOSTON2 AND ANY LOTTERIES OPERATED IN MSP. ASCERTAIN WHERE RAY WAS LIVING AND HANGING OUT IN ST. LOUIS, MAY TEN THROUGH SEVENTEEN, SIXTYSEVEN, WHILE HE WAS IN CONTACT WITH CARPENTER. DETERMINE HOW OFTEN CARPENTER HAS BEEN IN CONTACT WITH VELANTI IN ST. LOUIS SINCE HIS RELEASE FROM MSP AND DETAILS OF THESE CONTACTS, SPECIFICALLY IF CARPENTER EVER ADVISED VELANTI THAT CARPENTER HAD BEEN IN CONTACT WITH RAY IN MAY, SIXTYSEVEN. ST. LOUIS CIRCULARIZE WITH IO OF RAY LAUNDRIES AND CLEANERS IN AREA WHERE CARPENTER SAW RAY IN MAY, SIXTYSEVEN.

*Bullock
Hampshire*

*French
done*

Perkins? FROM VELANTI, OBTAIN COMPLETE BACKGROUND RE EACH OF HIS WIVES INCLUDING PAST AND PRESENT RESIDENCES. ASCERTAIN IDENTITY OF PRISONER WITH WHOM VELANTI HAD FIGHT OVER KENNEDY ASSASSINATION. IT IS NOTED BOTH EX-CONVICTS BRITTON AND BROWN STATE VELANTI AND RAY ACQUAINTED

END PAGE THREE

PAGE FOUR

Shapiro WITH EACH OTHER WHEREAS VELANTI DENIES THIS ASSOCIATION. DETERMINE
ALL TELEPHONES AVAILABLE TO VELANTI AND THEREAFTER OBTAIN
TOLL CALLS CHARGED TO THESE TELEPHONES FOR PAST SIX MONTH PERIOD. *Peterman*

ASCERTAIN FROM ST. LOUIS PD ANY ROBBERIES COMMITTED IN MAY OR
JUNE, SIXTYSEVEN, WHICH COULD POSSIBLY HAVE BEEN COMMITTED BY RAY,
NOTING HIS CONTACT WITH CARPENTER.

Burton ST. LOUIS AND KANSAS CITY ARE NOW IN POSSESSION OF RESULTS OF
ALL INTERVIEWS TO DATE BY BIRMINGHAM OF BROWN AND BRITTON AND THESE
SHOULD BE USED DURING REINTERVIEWS OF VELANTI AND CARPENTER AND
PRISON RECORDS CHECKS.

ARMED AND DANGEROUS.

END

LCR

FBI ST LOUIS

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