

U. S. Department of Justice

(MATERIAL MUST NOT BE REMOVED FROM OR ADDED TO THIS FILE)

FIELD OFFICE FILE
FOIPA PROCESSED

FEDERAL BUREAU

INVESTIGATION

Bureau File Number **44-38861**

"DO NOT DESTROY
HISTORICAL VALUE
NATIONAL ARCHIVES"

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE **10/30/00** BY **SP1220/jde**

See also Nos.

SEE INSIDE
FOR LITIGATION

ENTIRE FILE REVIEWED
FOR HISTORICAL
DECLASSIFICATION

See Next Section

SHAW-WALKER 18-92850

CLASSIFICATION NO.

44-1987-Sub-K

Serials

1-87

Volume Number

1

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DO NOT DESTROY

X DO NOT DESTROY
HISTORICAL VALUE
NATIONAL ARCHIVES *of*

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3223	7/86				
2370		Cancel 1/87			
3433	4/87	cancel 2/88			

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IO 4182
WF #412-A

44-1987
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WM
age 40 DOB [redacted] Quincy or Alton, Ill.
5'10" 163 to 174 44-1987-SUB-G-315
hair brown, possibly cut short -384
eyes blue -385
Scars & Marks: small scar on center of forehead
and small scar on palm of right hand
FBI 405 942 G 44-1987-SUB-B-245
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Petros, Tennessee 37845

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DO NOT DESTROY
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RAY, JAMES EARL

ALLEGED PLOT AGAINST AND TENNESSEE STATE SENATOR
AVON N. WILLIAMS.

DO NOT DESTROY

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Section

KC 44-760

WCM:WSA

1

The following investigation was conducted by
IC WILLIAM C. MC DONALD:

AT JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI

On May 6, 1968, Missouri State Penitentiary (MSP) records were checked for information on inmates released with California addresses since April 1, 1967. The following information was obtained:

DAVID DON MCFARLIN, MSP #12241, was received June 10, 1966 and discharged October 24, 1967.

Relatives listed on his mailing list are:

Wife: JUDITH LEA MCFARLIN, 8111 Stanford Drive, Garden Grove, California;
Mother: CHRISTINE DAVIS, Senath, Missouri;
Stepfather: O.L. DAVIS, same address.
MARIE and JOHN SLAUGHTER, 2333 Park Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri.

MICHAEL P. CLARK, MSP #12155, was received at the MSP May 27, 1966, and discharged May 10, 1967.

Relatives listed in this file are:

Mother: J.L. CLEVELAND, % DOROTHY RAUCH, P.O. Box 238, Dumas, Texas, or Box 431, Cactus, Texas;
Stepfather: JAMES CLEVELAND, same address;
Girlfriend: ELIZABETH ALEXANDER, 1771 Ellwell, Milipitas, California.

CLARK indicated that he would be employed in California by BUD RAU, 445 Laurel Avenue, Hayward, California.

JIMMIE LEE HIES, aka, MSP #12765, was received October 12, 1966 and discharged March 1, 1968.

Relatives listed in this file are:

Wife: ELIZABETH ANN HILL, % 72- East Compton Blvd., Compton, California;
Father: BILL HILL, General Delivery, DeWitt, Arkansas.

44-1987-Sub K-1

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
MAY 10 1968	
FBI - MEMPHIS	

Hester

KC 44-760

2

Records reflects that on March 5, 1968, HILL was incarcerated in the Correctional Training Facility, North Soledad, California, #93960.

GALR FRANKLIN FISHER, MSP #03439, was received September 18, 1961 and discharged July 3, 1967.

Relatives listed in this file are:

Mother: MARVEL FISHER, 3185th Street, Aurora, Illinois;
Sister: CAROL SMITH, 272 Beach Street, Aurora, Illinois;
Sister: SHIRLEY FOREMAN, RFD #1, Box 107, Plainfield, Illinois.

JOHN RAY LESTER, aka, MSP #76041, was received September 25, 1959 and paroled October 31, 1967. In California he was to live at 19250 Hickory, El Verano, California.

Relatives and friends listed are:

Mother: EUNA F. LESTER, 111 Napa Street, Sonoma, California;
Father: JOHN W. LESTER, same address;
Brother-in-law: HERB COHN, P.O. Box 808, Boyes Springs, California;
Sister: Mrs. HERB COHN, same address;
Aunt: NOLA HEAD, 2012 Franklin, Santa Rosa, California;
Brother-in-law: JAMES BARRY, Rt. 22, Box 213, Parkville, Missouri;
Friend: DONNIE RISLER, 3622 A McRee, St. Louis, Missouri;
Friend: Mrs. JOHN A. KEHOE, 1822 Morris, Lincoln Park, Michigan;
Friend: Mrs. T. PINCH, 125 Taft Avenue, Hempstead, New York.

LAWRENCE ALBERT GRIDER, MSP #10214, was received May 5, 1965 and discharged January 12, 1968.

Relatives listed are:

Wife: ROSELEE GRIDER, % PAULINE COMBS, 4676 W. 133rd Street, Hawthorne, California.
Daughter: PATSY KAY and RITA JUDY GRIDER, 1015 1/2 N. Lane, Springfield, Missouri.

CHARLES AMOS STEWART, MSP #08716, was received June 18, 1964 and discharged February 7, 1968.

KC 44-760

3

Relatives are listed:

Sister: CHERRI PICO, 1278 East 126th, Los Angeles, California;
Brother: JOSEPH M. STEWART, Herculaneum, Missouri;
Sister: NANCY STEWART, Rt. 2, Bonne Terre, Missouri.

5/8/68

AIRTEL

AIRMAIL

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (44-38861)
FROM: SAC, KANSAS CITY (44-760) P
SUBJECT: MURKIN

Enclosed herewith is additional background information obtained from the Missouri State Penitentiary (MSP) on individuals released since 4/1/67 residing in the Los Angeles area.

In view of the fact subject spent much of his time in Los Angeles under the name ERIC GALT after his escape from MSP, it is felt the following former inmates should be contacted in the event they can furnish any information regarding him. The following is a list of these individuals and their most recent address as furnished by MSP records:

DAVID DON MC FARLIN, MSP #12241, Garden Grove, California, paroled 3/21/67.

MICHAEL KEY CLARK, MSP #12153, Los Angeles, California.

JIMMY LEE HILL, MSP #12766, Compton, California.

GALE FRANKLIN FISHER, MSP #03439, Santa Ana, California.

JOHN LESTER, MSP #76041, Los Angeles, California.

LAWRENCE ALBERT GRIDER, MSP #10214, Hawthorne, California.

CHARLES AMOS STEWART, MSP #08716, Los Angeles, California.

3 - Bureau (Enc. 1)
2 - Memphis
2 - Los Angeles (Enc. 1)
2 - Kansas City
RBH:WHA
(9)

Joe - Shouldn't we start with file on former prisoners' associates?

44-1987-Sub K-2

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
MAY 10 1968	
FBI - MEMPHIS	

Hester

KC 44-760

The list attached hereto contains more complete background information obtained from the MSP records. It is noted that all these individuals list relatives in areas other than Los Angeles and if investigation fails to locate them in the Los Angeles area, it is requested that that office set out additional leads to locate them for interview.

KC 44-769

The list attached hereto contains more complete background information obtained from the MSP records. It is noted that all these individuals list relatives in areas other than Los Angeles and if investigation fails to locate them in the Los Angeles area, it is requested that that office set out additional leads to locate them for interview.

F B I

Date:

5/8/68

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

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (44-38861)

FROM: SAC, SAN FRANCISCO (173-65) -P-

SUBJECT: MURKIN

CR

OO: Memphis

RE: KENNETH LEE WADE
MISSOURI STATE PENITENTIARY

Re Los Angeles airtel, 5/3/68.

Records of the San Quentin Penitentiary reflect that KENNETH LEE WADE, FBI #56 81 23 B, was received at San Quentin Penitentiary on 9/19/67 to serve a five year to life sentence for armed robbery committed in the Los Angeles, California area.

The following interview of KENNETH LEE WADE was conducted by SAs DALE F. NORTON and MICHAEL T. GEARY:

KENNETH LEE WADE advised that he served a sentence in the Missouri State Penitentiary (MSP) at Jefferson City, Missouri from 1958 through 1965, where he was confined as a result of having been convicted of a robbery charge in St. Louis, Missouri. He advised that he knew RAY from about 1960 until 1965.

WADE advised that he served about one year of his sentence and then escaped, and after being recaptured, was

- 3 - Bureau (RM)
- 2 - Los Angeles (44-1574) (RM)
- ② - Memphis (44-1987) (RM)
- 2 - Seattle (RM)
- 2 - Sacramento (RM)
- 2 - Kansas City (RM)
- 2 - San Francisco

Approved: MTG: bja

Sent _____ M Per _____

(15)

Special Agent in Charge

44-1987-Sub K-3

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
MAY 10 1968	
FBI - MEMPHIS	

Hester RB

SF 173-65

MTG:bja

returned to MSP and served from 1962 to 1965. He advised that RAY came to MSP with a man by the name of RAY PRUITT. WADE stated that he and PRUITT were fall partners. He advised that both he and PRUITT were convicted at the same time but that PRUITT fought the conviction and did not enter MSP at the same time that he, WADE, did.

WADE advised that PRUITT and RAY may have met while both were in the City Jail in St. Louis, Missouri. WADE stated PRUITT knows RAY better than he does.

He advised that when PRUITT and RAY arrived at the penitentiary, that he, PRUITT and RAY all lived in "K Hall", and that because RAY and PRUITT were friends, he and his friends accepted the two of them and that PRUITT in effect, was RAY's sponsor. WADE advised that he and RAY worked in the bakery. WADE was a pastry cook and was fairly good.

WADE examined the photographs and drawings of RAY and stated that the drawing of RAY in which his eyes were open is not a good likeness in that it completely changes the appearance of RAY's eyes which are smaller and more slanted. WADE advised that his group in the prison consisted of the following individuals:

- (1) JAMES EARL RAY
- (2) RAY PRUITT
- (3) BOBBY BURNS
- (4) GLEN SHURNICK or SHERNICK (PH)
- (5) WADE

He advised that they, the five of them, had "a little thing going for them" in that they were selling amphetamine pills and other stimulants to inmates at the prison.

He stated that while he was confined to the penitentiary, that they had a semi-riot at the jail as prison authorities sought to integrate the prison and as a result, a few Negroes were stabbed and that the jail was not integrated while he was there.

SF 173-65
MTG:bj

WADE stated, "I had a beef with a Negro over a debt about amphetamine powder. This beef was in 1962. I 'piped him', that is I hit him with a pipe a few times. He was hospitalized. This beef wasn't over RAY. This clique had a thing going for it."

He advised that he figures that they made about \$1,000 a month or more selling these pills each month. He advised they paid a guard \$100 to bring the jar in and after expenses, cleared about \$1,000 a month.

WADE stated that RAY is a very quiet individual. He stated he did not know what RAY's opinions were of Negroes.

He advised RAY had a friend who sent him some narcotics. He advised he did not know any more than this about that matter.

WADE advised that RAY was close-mouthed and never discussed anything with anyone, particularly he would not discuss any ideas or plans he had about escaping.

He described RAY as having a quick temper and a violent temper, but believed that RAY was in sufficient control of himself not to let his quick and violent temper unmask him. He said it was his opinion that if somebody got into an argument with RAY about something that RAY would control his emotions so as not to attract attention to himself, but he stated RAY was the type that would and could lay for the guy and later give him a good working over.

WADE stated, "I do not believe RAY would go to booze." He advised it was his belief that RAY liked narcotics but not hard stuff, and that he would probably just use the stimulant type. He advised that RAY could handle narcotics "real good."

He stated he did not believe that RAY at this time would engage in the sell of narcotics in view of the fact that he is an escaped convict.

WADE later stated, "RAY doesn't like Negroes. I believe

SF 173-65
MTG:bj

RAY is capable of killing KING. RAY could plan it." He added it was his speculation "he must have had help." He stated, "I don't believe RAY killed KING. I couldn't see RAY getting into that bag as he was an escapee."

WADE advised that he never met any of RAY's family or friends from the outside while they were in jail and RAY never met any of his family or friends from the outside either. He stated, "I have no idea where RAY may be. I have no knowledge of RAY's outside connections. I believe RAY could have saved about a good sum of money from his share of the profits of the sale of amphetamine." He advised in the event RAY was going to escape he believes the other people in the clique would loan or give RAY as much money as they had available to them. He advised that RAY used to read about foreign countries in his cell. He advised that PRUITT, who was a cell block mate, worked in the library and would bring the books to RAY. He advised that BURNS and SHURNICK each got 75 years so they are still in MSP. He advised he does not know where PRUITT is.

He advised that he is presently confined as a result of some robberies which he committed in the Los Angeles area with HAROLD KLEMP, DONALD BUSSMEYER and SAM MASSY.

He advised that all four of them had been in MSP at one time or another and he believed that KLEMP, BUSSMEYER and MASSY might know RAY. He advised that KLEMP is in Folsom Prison, BUSSMEYER is in Mc Neil Island and SAM MASSY went insane and is confined in some mental hospital in the State of California.

SF 173-65
MTG:bj

LEADS

KANSAS CITY

AT MISSOURI STATE PENITENTIARY, JEFFERSON CITY, MO.
Will review appropriate records to determine present whereabouts of RAY PRUITT, BOBBY BURNS and GLEN SHURNICK or SHERNICK (Ph), who were inmates of the prison at the time RAY was confined.

(2) Will set out leads to have PRUITT, BURNS and SHURNICK interviewed if not already done.

LOS ANGELES

AT LOS ANGELES, CALIF. Will review appropriate records of the Los Angeles County Courts to determine the present location of SAM MASSY who was arrested and convicted with KENNETH LEE WADE of robberies in the Los Angeles area in 1965 or 1966.

SACRAMENTO

AT FOLSOM PENITENTIARY, CALIF. Will interview HAROLD KLEMP who was arrested with WADE in a series of Los Angeles robberies and who was reported to be an inmate of the Missouri State Penitentiary at the time RAY was confined there.

SEATTLE

AT MC NEIL ISLAND PENITENTIARY, WASHINGTON. Will interview DONALD BUSSMEYER who was arrested with WADE in a series of Los Angeles robberies and who was reported to have been in the Missouri State Penitentiary with RAY.

Will interview BUSSMEYER to determine if he has any knowledge of RAY's present whereabouts.

FBI MEMPHIS

FBI KAN CITY

1126 AM URGENT 5/10/68 PHM
TO DIRECTOR 44-38861, MEMPHIS, LITTLE ROCK
FROM KANSAS CITY 44-760 1P

Prisoner

MURKIN

RE LITTLE ROCK TEL MAY SEVEN LAST.

WARDEN, MO. STATE PENITENTIARY, ADVISED NO PSYCHIATRIC
EVALUATION OF RUSSELL LEE MARTIN WAS MADE AT MSP. HOWEVER, HE
REMEMBERS THE INDIVIDUAL AND HAD A NOTATION ON HIS FILE WHICH READ
AS FOLLOWS: "THIS INDIVIDUAL HAS NO INTEGRITY WHATSOEVER, TOLD
TRUTH ONLY WHEN IT WOULD SERVE HIS PURPOSES. HE IS COMPLETELY
UNRELIABLE." THE WARDEN STATED HE DID AT ONE TIME FURNISH HIM
INFO RE ANOTHER PRISONER USING AMPHETAMINES, HOWEVER, THIS DID
NO RESULT IN BREAKING UP A NARCOTICS RING, AND THE WARDEN AGAIN
STATED THAT HE WOULD PUT NO RELIABILITY IN ANYTHING MARTIN TOLD
HIM.

ARMED AND DANGEROUS.

P

END

SAB

44-1987-Sub K-4

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FBI — MEMPHIS	

Hester
Ronan

5/8/68

AIRTEL

AIRMAIL

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (44-33816)
FROM: SAC, KANSAS CITY (44-760) P
SUBJECT: MURKIN

Prisoner

Re Kansas City airtel to Director, 5/1/68.

Reference communication furnished complete results of interview with CECIL CLAYTON LILLIBRIDGE (Conceal), which took place on 4/29/68, in the Cole County Jail, Jefferson City, Missouri, where LILLIBRIDGE was at that time incarcerated.

The following information is being set forth in the event the Bureau wished to put emphasis on this phase of the investigation. During interview LILLIBRIDGE stated he was a cell mate of subject at Missouri State Penitentiary (MSP) in the latter part of 1966.

MSP record reveal LILLIBRIDGE in cell C-17 from 4/28/65 through 11/2/67. EARL JAMES RAY was in cell C-17 from 11/17/66 until 1/18/67. It is to be noted this is one of the few occasions RAY was not in a single cell.

LILLIBRIDGE recalled another inmate, KENNY HURTT, sent out \$15 for subject once purportedly for the purchase of stationery. LILLIBRIDGE said this money was sent to a stationery company in St. Louis, the name he could not recall but no stationery was ever received and RAY later told him it was just a method of getting money out of prison without the warden's knowledge.

Prison record reveals KENNY HURTT, MSP #75507, on 1/20/67, sent a money order in the amount of \$15.25 to the Albert J. Pepper Stationery Company, 712A Shanendoah, St. Louis, Missouri. A review of the file reflects that

3 - Bureau
2 - Memphis
2 - Kansas City
RBH:WSA
(7)

Leads for us
Airtel sent
Q

44-1987-Sub K-5

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FBI - MEMPHIS	

Hester *Q*

KC 44-760

ALBERT J. PEPPER is a relative of the subject.

LILLIBRIDGE advised that subject also had aspirations of making a big haul and retiring to Mexico. RAY had replied he had stayed with peasants in Mexico before on the outskirts of a town called Campeche, located on Campeche Bay near the Yucatan Peninsula. RAY had advised to LILLIBRIDGE he had gone to this location in Mexico at least twice in the past to cool off from robberies. Subject also stated to LILLIBRIDGE that he had earned money by smuggling in small appliances such as TVs, washing machines in fishing boats, which he sold to peasants, for a profit, who did not want to pay import duty. These appliances were smuggled in from Brownsville, Texas.

Teletype from San Antonio to Director, 5/6/68, advised that approximately 500 shrimp fishing vessels operate out of the Brownsville, Texas area, all of which fish southern Gulf area, including Bay of Campeche. Such boats usually rendezvous in shallow water area commonly known as Campeche Flats within sight of Campeche, Mexico. American seamen are not allowed in port of Campeche except on emergency basis but fishermen desiring to visit places of amusement can usually arrange so clandestinely through Mexicans operating small vessels, known as "bum boats" or "Cayuqueros", which bring women, liquor, marijuana, etc. out to shrimp boats from Campeche, Mexico in exchange for cash, shrimp boat equipment or anyother desired articles in possession of such fishermen.

LILLIBRIDGE also stated he had heard RAY refer to Dr. KING as "MARTIN LUTHER COON".

Reporter LEWIS LOMAX, North American Newspaper Alliance in press release dated 4/29/68, stated a phone booth used by RAY in the lobby of the St. Francis Hotel had written on the wall "down with Mexicans, niggers and MARTIN LUTHER COON".

In view of the above and in view as much as the information furnished by LILLIBRIDGE, that could be checked, was found to be truthful, it is felt that an additional interview with LILLIBRIDGE should be conducted and the Bureau and Memphis are requested to send any suggestions or questions they feel would be pertinent during this interview. It is to be noted that LILLIBRIDGE will continue to be confined in the Cole County Jail until at least 5/16/68.

5/16/68

AIRTEL

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (44-38861)
FROM: SAC, MEMPHIS (44-1987) (P)

MURKIN
CR

Re Kansas City airtel to Bureau 5/8/68 regarding
the interview with CECIL CLAYTON LILLIBRIDGE.

Memphis desires that your interviews with LILLIBRIDGE develop all possible background information concerning the subject, with particular attention to any plans he might have had to leave this country to go either to Mexico or Canada, and any plans he might have had to leave either of these countries in order to migrate to still a third country. As you are aware, subject left the U. S. following his escape from the Missouri State Penitentiary, and for a time was known to be at Montreal, Canada. Investigation has discovered that subject corresponded with an individual at Washington, D. C., regarding the possibility of migrating to Rhodesia. Your interview should develop all possible information regarding any prison rumors regarding escape routes through Canada to Rhodesia or to other countries where extradition might be resisted.

You are requested to obtain any possible information regarding subject's smuggling activities while in Mexico and to determine whether or not LILLIBRIDGE thinks the subject was truthful or was merely engaging in conversation when discussing the possibility of smuggling.

Airtel _____

Teletype 3 - Bureau
2 - Kansas City
A.M. 2 - Memphis

A.M.S.D. JCH/acp
(7)

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Hester

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In view of the fact that the subject is known to have had at least \$2,000 during late August 1967, you should fully explore any knowledge the subject might have had regarding narcotics smuggling or any plans he might have had for pulling an armed robbery of a place that might have on hand a considerable sum of money, such as a supermarket, loan company, payroll, etc.

You should keep in mind that we have no idea at present where this subject may be hiding and any information in the possession of LILLIBRIDGE, no matter how trivial, may be of extreme importance. Consequently you should not limit your investigation to these items listed above, but should fully explore LILLIBRIDGE's knowledge and memory concerning the subject.

ARMED AND DANGEROUS.

FBI MEMPHIS

FBI BIRMGHAM

145 PM URGENT 5-10-68 JGA

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

Prisoners

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

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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 "COLLEY" (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 MNNEDY 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.

ECORRECTION: 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 MEN

FBI MEMPHIS

FBI MEMPHIS

FBI ST LOUIS

HOLD FOR TWO MSG

724PM URGENT 5-10-68 JLS

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.

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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

DND

FBI MEMPHIS

Z

FBI MEMPHIS

FBI ST LOUIS

358 PM URGENT 5-11-68 GMC

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 BROADCAST
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.
END PAGE ONE

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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 CONVERSATION 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
END PAGE TWO

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, 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, 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 GANGSTER 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
END PAGE THREE

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 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 AD GANGSTERS IN KANSAS CITY.

IN PREVIOUS INTERVIEW, VELANTI ADVISED "NOONEY" EDEN IS 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
END PAGE FOUR

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 STATEMENT CONCERNING CATHOLICS NOT MADE IN HIS PRESENCE, INASMUCH AS HE IS CATHOLIC.

IN BOTH INTERVIEWS VELANTI DENIED KNOWLEDGE OF "COOLEY" (PHONETIC), BUT ASSOCIATES NAME AND 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 ATLANT 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

END

DND

FBI MEMPHIS

FBI MEMPHIS

FBI ST LOUIS

7:44 PM 5-11-68 URGENT REM

TO: DIRECTOR AND MEMPHIS

FROM: ST. LOUIS (44-775) 2P

MURKIN - SUMMARY

RE RAY RELATIVES: NO SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITY.

RE JAMES W. BROWN, FELLOW PRISONER (BIRMINGHAM).

JOHN PAUL VELANTI REINTERVIEWED. REITERATED DOES NOT KNOW RAY. DENIED CONVERSATIONS WITH, PLANNING ANY ATLANTA ROBBERY, BEING QUESTIONED RE GANGSTER IN KC, RELATIVES BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA, KNOWLEDGE OF COOLEY. ADMITTED RAN POKER GAME AND LOTTERY MSP, DEATH OF SON IN ACCIDENT SIXTYTWO, PLANNING OWN ESCAPE, AND FIGHT WITH PRISONER RE REMARK DEROGATORY TO KENNEDY AND CATHOLICISM. ALLEGED ROBBERY SENTENCE BUM RAP TO AVOID DISCLOSING OWN ACTUAL WHEREABOUTS AND ASSOCIATE AT TIME. NEW ORLEANS REQUESTED TO INTERVIEW VELANTI'S WIFE AND BIRMINGHAM ADVISED BY SEPERATE TELETYPE.

RE ROBERT WAYNE PHILLIPS: SL FILES SHOW CARL MURPHY, JR., FCI OF JACKSON SIXTYFIVE. JACKSON REQUESTED TO ADVISE CG BY SEPERATE TEL.

END PAGE ONE

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RE JUDGE JOHN C. CASEY: BASED ON INFO AVAILABLE TO SL, SL
INCLINED TO FAVOR SECOND METHOD SUGGESTED BY CASEY OF HANDLING
RAY MOTION BY PUBLIC COURT ORDER TO APPEAR AND PROSECUTE MOTION
OR SUFFER ITS DISMISSAL, AS BUREAU SHOULD NOT BE IN POSITION OF
FAILING TO EXPLOIT FULLY EVEN REMOTE POSSIBILITY OF LOCATING RAY.
SEPERATE TEL SENT.

SUBJECT ARMED AND DANGEROUS.

END

DND

FBI MEMPHIS

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FBI MEMPHIS

K'NFBI ST LOUIS

642PM URGENT 5-12-68 JLS

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

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Bayle BB

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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

DND

FBI MEMPHIS

FBI MEMPHIS

FBI ST LOUIS

1053PM URGENT 5-12-68 JLS

TO DIRECTOR AND MEMPHIS

FROM ST. LOUIS (44-775)

MURKIN - SUMMARY

RE JOHN PAUL VELANTI - JAMES W. BROWN, FELLOW PRISONERS.

VELANTI REINTERVIEWED. RECALLS JIMMIE RAYE AND BROTHER LARRY, BOTH INMATES MSP, DIFFERENT DESCRIPTION THAN SUBJECT. TRUE SPELLING OF NAME OF VELANTI'S EXWIFE, EMPLOYMENT AND MEMBERSHIP ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS OBTAINED. INTERESTED OFFICES ADVISED BY SEPARATE TELETYPE. VELANTI ASSOCIATE, JAMES H. CARPENTER, FORMER MSP INMATE KNEW SUBJECT WELL IN PRISON. CLAIMED SAW RAY THREE TIMES BETWEEN MAY TENTH AND SEVENTEENTH, SIXTYSEVEN, SUBSEQUENT TO ESCAPE, IN VICINITY SOUTH ELEVENTH ST. SL. NOTE THIS IS AREA OF JOHN GAWRON RESIDENCE. RAY

POORLY DRESSED. HAD MOUSTACHEE.. BORROWED TEN DOLLARS. SAID NEEDED GUN. CARPENTER IMPRESSION HE WAS GOING TO ILLINOIS. NOT SEEN SINCE.

NO PERTINENT DEVELOPMENTS IN OTHER PHASES OF INVESTIGATION TODAY.

SUBJECT ARMED AND DANGEROUS.

END

DND

FBI MEMPHIS

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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.

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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

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

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."

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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

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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)

Prisoner

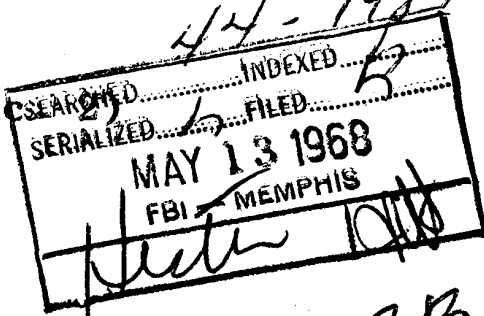
Re Birmingham teletype to Bureau, Memphis and
 Kansas City, 5/8/68.

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)
- 1 - Springfield (Enc. 2)

WAS:gas
 (11)



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.

5/10/68

AIRTEL

TO: SAC, BALTIMORE (44-669)

FROM: SAC, WFO (44-703) (P)

MURKIN

Re WFO telephone call to Richmond (SA KENNETH W. NIMMICH, Alexandria RA) 5/10/68, and WFO telephone call to Baltimore (SA TRAVIS X. O'NEILL, Hyattsville RA) 5/10/68.

RE: BUBBLE-EYE MASON

On 5/10/68, WF 1651-C advised that the following information was obtained from a barroom conversation concerning JAMES EARL RAY:

BUBBLE-EYE MASON, a current inmate at Lorton Reformatory, who has done time with RAY and is allegedly a friend of RAY, has knowledge of a hideout used by RAY in Mexico. Furthermore, MASON reportedly said RAY was aware of a "contract" out on MARTIN LUTHER KING prior to the time RAY escaped prison and that RAY had talked of collecting this contract.

The CI advised there is absolutely no way to evaluate remarks attributed to MASON or to identify the source.

- 2 - Baltimore
- 2 - Richmond (44-651) (RM)
- ② - Memphis (44-1987) (RM)
- 1 - WFO

RWD:ses
(7)

AIRTEL

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Boyer

WFO 44-703

Officers of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) advised that BUBBLE-EYE MASON is WARDELL HICKS, 1112 60th Avenue, Fairmont Heights, Maryland, who was charged on 3/18/67, with ADW and was sentenced to 10 months on 10/13/67. HICKS was born [REDACTED], at Washington, D.C. (WDC), and is a Negro male assigned District of Columbia Department of Correction Number 99311, MPD Number 137889 and FBI Number 448038B.

On 5/10/68, SA KENNETH W. NIPPICH, Alexandria RA, Richmond Division telephonically advised WFO that WARDELL HICKS had been released from the D.C. Reformatory, Lorton, Virginia, on 5/8/68.

LEAD

BALTIMORE

AT FAIRMONT HEIGHTS, MARYLAND. Will interview HICKS for any information concerning RAY.

ARMED AND DANGEROUS.

5/10/68

PLAIN TEXT

TELETYPE

URGENT

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (44-38861)
FROM: SAC, KANSAS CITY (44-760)

MURKIN

DAILY SUMMARY

RECORDS BELSAW LOCKSMITH SCHOOL, KANSAS CITY,
MISSOURI, CONTAIN NO RECORD IN THE NAME OF THE SUBJECT.

REVIEW OF MISSOURI STATE PENITENTIARY (MSP)
RECORDS REVEAL COWBOY TO BE MELVIN O. GRIDLEY, MSP
ZERO TWO FIVE ZERO THREE. ALSO A CHESTER SPRATT,
MSP # ZERO FOUR TWO FIVE EIGHT WAS IN CELL J DISCHARGED
JUNE SIX SIXTYSEVEN. INMATE CARL CRAIG, MSP # ONE ONE
ONE TWO SEVEN DISCHARGED MAY ONE LAST. EFFORTS TO
LOCATE AND INTERVIEW THESE INDIVIDUALS UNDERWAY.

RECORDS TRANS WORLD AIRLINES, (TWA) KANSAS CITY
TICKET # FOUR ZERO FOUR ZERO ONE TWO NINE SIX FOUR ISSUED
TO RALPH BEAL, THREE TEN ONE-HALF HARRISON, DAVENPORT, IA.
FLIGHT WAS FROM ATLANTA TO CHICAGO TO MOLINE, ILL.

- ① - Memphis
 - 1 - Birmingham
 - 1 - Chicago (AM)
 - 1 - New York (AM)
- RBH:WSA
(5)

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Boyle 10