

5/18/68

AIRTEL

AIRMAIL

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (44-38861)  
FROM: SAC, NEW ORLEANS (157-10073) (P)  
SUBJECT: MURKIN 44-561

26-2900  
26-22413

Re Springfield airtel to Bureau, 5/1/68.

INVESTIGATION CONCERNING ROBERT REED STARKS WHO ALLEGED KKK  
ASSASSINATION PLOT IN BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA, AREA SUMMER OF 1967.

Investigation was conducted at Baton Rouge and New Orleans, La., during the period of 5/7 - 9/68, to locate RAYMOND HENRY STARKS. STARKS was located and interviewed on 5/8/68, in New Orleans, La., at which time he furnished the following information:

STARKS is a native of Denham Springs, La., and is currently associated in a business partnership with BARRETT C. DONNELLY, Owner of the Barrett C. Donnelly Construction Co., at Denham Springs, La. Denham Springs is located nine miles distant from Baton Rouge, La.

STARKS is well acquainted in Denham Springs and knows nearly all of the businessmen in that community including those who are reportedly members of the Ku Klux Klan and who are considered to be strong segregationists.

STARKS was in Denham Springs in the Summer of 1967, at which time there was considerable racial strife taking place, including marches by Negro groups and opposition

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2 - Memphis  
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44-561-488

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A. H. Woods  
Roberts

NO 157-10873

being presented to these marches by those individuals with strong segregation beliefs. STARKS stated that he himself is a liberal in his view towards Negroes and that he did not participate in any of the activities that took place in Denham Springs in the Summer of 1967. He stated, however, that he did frequently converse with individuals whom he considered to be members of the Ku Klux Klan, these persons having been individuals that he grew up with in Denham Springs.

STARKS stated that at no time during this period did any information come to his attention that there were businessmen in Denham Springs, La., or in Baton Rouge, La., who were taking up a collection to obtain money to have MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., assassinated. STARKS does not recall of having heard the name of KING even mentioned during the Summer of 1967, nor does he recall any information which would indicate there was a plot to kill any particular Negro or any individual of any race for that matter.

STARKS is against violence and if any information such as a plot to kill anyone had come to his attention, he would promptly notify an appropriate law enforcement agency.

During the Fall of 1967, STARKS recalls that an individual subsequently known to him as ROBERT STRAKER appeared at the Raymond C. Donnell Construction Company in Denham Springs asking claim to ROBERT DONNELL that he could obtain considerable financing from a SHAPIRO family in Miami, Fla. DONNELL became interested in STRAKER's proposition and ordered STARKS to accompany STRAKER to Miami, Fla., which he did and at which time he and STRAKER met with a Mr. and Mrs. SHAPIRO. It developed, however, that STRAKER did not previously know the SHAPIRO family and further that STRAKER actually had no contacts or was not in a position to obtain financing for the Donnell Construction Company.

It was during the trip to Miami, Fla., that STARKS realized that STRAKER had an apparent mental problem.

NO 157-10673

STARKS recalled that while staying in motels in Fla, STRAHER at times became most irrational and convinced that he was being followed by Federal Agents.

After the Florida trip, STRAHER continued to hang around the Donnell Company in Boston Springs, Ia., at which time STRAHER's wife was also present. In STARKS' opinion, STRAHER's wife is also an irrational person.

On one occasion, STRAHER who was doing some work for the Donnell Company, took STARKS' personally owned vehicle with the permission of STARKS on a business trip. STRAHER's wife accompanied STRAHER on this trip and they did not return as scheduled. The vehicle was subsequently located in Mississippi in an abandoned position. Also at this same time, STARKS and HARVEST DONNELL discovered that STRAHER had stolen some property from the company, such as a portable electric typewriter, a brief case full of valuable engineering fittings, a telephone credit card and other miscellaneous items. Also taken from the STARKS vehicle was a .38 Police Special Revolver which was a sentimental keepsake which had been given to STARKS by his father.

The theft of these items was reported to law enforcement agencies but DONNELL subsequently decided not to press charges. The revolver has never been recovered by STARKS and he does not presently know its whereabouts.

STARKS heard from some unrecalled source several months ago that STRAHER either was or is presently confined to a mental institution. He has not seen STRAHER since late Fall of 1967.

STRAHER was a braggart by nature, frequently announced his animosity towards Negroes but was never known to STARKS to have specifically mentioned MARTIN LUTHER KING or any other particular Negro. STRAHER frequently bragged that he had contacts with the underworld but never specifically mentioned anyone by name.

STARKS concluded that he is at a loss to explain why it is alleged that he possessed information concerning

NO 157-10273

a plot to raise money to kill MARTIN LUTHER KING. He stated that he wanted to cooperate fully with the FBI, which agency he admires considerably and that if any further recollection concerning the Summer of 1967 in Benton Springs came to him, he would promptly advise the New Orleans Office.

SWANER described SWANER as a white male, 6'2" tall, 36 years of age and possessing blond wavy hair. During the Summer of 1967, SWANER personally owned a 1967 Oldsmobile, white over black, bearing Texas license KLA or KLN 401.

New Orleans indices contained no identifiable information in the name of RAYMOND HENRY SWANER or ROBERT WOOD SWANER.

5/10/68

AIRTEL

AIRMAIL

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (44-38861)  
FROM: SAC, NEW ORLEANS (157-10873) (P)  
SUBJECT: MURKIN

Re Springfield airtel to Bureau, 5/1/68.

INVESTIGATION CONCERNING ROBERT HOOD STRADER WHO ALLEGED KING  
ASSASSINATION PLOT IN BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA, AREA SUMMER OF 1967.

Investigation was conducted at Baton Rouge and New Orleans, La., during the period of 5/7 - 5/8/68, to locate RAYMOND HENRY STARNES. STARNES was located and interviewed on 5/9/68, in New Orleans, La., at which time he furnished the following information:

STARNES is a native of Denham Springs, La., and is currently associated in a business partnership with HARRIS C. DONNELL, Owner of the Harris C. Donnell Construction Co., at Denham Springs, La. Denham Springs is located nine miles distant from Baton Rouge, La.

STARNES is well acquainted in Denham Springs and knows nearly all of the businessmen in that community including those who are reportedly members of the Ku Klux Klan and who are considered to be strong segregationists.

STARNES was in Denham Springs in the Summer of 1967, at which time there was considerable racial strife taking place, including marches by Negro groups and opposition

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44-561-48/8

ME 157-10073

being presented to these marches by these individuals with strong segregation beliefs. STARKS stated that he himself is a liberal in his view towards Negroes and that he did not participate in any of the activities that took place in Denham Springs in the Summer of 1967. He stated, however, that he did frequently converse with individuals whom he considered to be members of the Ku Klux Klan, these persons having been individuals that he grew up with in Denham Springs.

STARKS stated that at no time during this period did any information come to his attention that there were businessmen in Denham Springs, La., or in Baton Rouge, La., who were taking up a collection to obtain money to have MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., assassinated. STARKS does not recall of having heard the name of KING even mentioned during the Summer of 1967, nor does he recall any information which would indicate there was a plot to kill any particular Negro or any individual of any race for that matter.

STARKS is against violence and if any information such as a plot to kill anyone had come to his attention, he would promptly notify an appropriate law enforcement agency.

During the Fall of 1967, STARKS recalls that an individual subsequently known to him as ROBERT STRAKER appeared at the Ernest C. Donnell Construction Company in Denham Springs asking again to HARMONY DONNELL that he could obtain considerable financing from a SHAPIRO family in Miami, Fla. DONNELL became interested in STRAKER's proposition and ordered STARKS to accompany STRAKER to Miami, Fla., which he did and at which time he and STRAKER met with a Mr. and Mrs. SHAPIRO. It developed, however, that STRAKER did not previously know the SHAPIRO family and further that STRAKER actually had no contacts or was not in a position to obtain financing for the Donnell Construction Company.

It was during the trip to Miami, Fla., that STARKS realized that STRAKER had an apparent mental problem.

ME 157-10873

STARNES recalled that while staying in motels in Fla, STRADER at times became most irrational and envisioned that he was being followed by Federal Agents.

After the Florida trip, STRADER continued to hang around the Bonnell Company in Benson Springs, La., at which time STRADER's wife was also present. In STARNES' opinion, STRADER's wife is also an irrational person.

On one occasion, STRADER who was doing some work for the Bonnell Company, took STARNES' personally owned vehicle with the permission of STARNES on a business trip. STRADER's wife accompanied STRADER on this trip and they did not return as scheduled. The vehicle was subsequently located in Mississippi in an abandoned position. Also at this same time, STARNES and ELMER DONNELL discovered that STRADER had stolen some property from the company, such as a portable electric typewriter, a brief case full of valuable engineering fittings, a telephone credit card and other miscellaneous items. Also taken from the STRADER vehicle was a .38 Police Special Revolver which was a sentimental keepsake which had been given to STARNES by his father.

The theft of these items was reported to law enforcement agencies but DONNELL subsequently decided not to press charges. The revolver has never been recovered by STARNES and he does not presently know its whereabouts.

STARNES heard from some unrecalled source several months ago that STRADER either was or is presently confined to a mental institution. He has not seen STRADER since late Fall of 1967.

STRADER was a braggart by nature, frequently announced his animosity towards Negroes but was never known to STARNES to have specifically mentioned MARTIN LUTHER KING or any other particular Negro. STRADER frequently bragged that he had contacts with the underworld but never specifically mentioned anyone by name.

STARNES concluded that he is at a loss to explain why it is alleged that he possessed information concerning

NO 157-10673

a plot to raise money to kill MARTIN KING. He stated that he wanted to cooperate fully with the FBI, which agency he admires considerably and that if any further recollection concerning the Summer of 1967 in Benham Springs came to him, he would promptly advise the New Orleans Office.

STARNS described STRADER as a white male, 6'2" tall, 36 years of age and possessing blond wavy hair. During the Summer of 1967, STARNES personally owned a 1967 Oldsmobile, white over black, bearing Texas license KLY or KLV 491.

New Orleans indices contained no identifiable information in the name of RAYMOND HENRY STARNES or ROBERT HOOD STRADER.



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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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*Roberts*

44-561-489

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

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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

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.

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BH 44-1740  
WAS:gas

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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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44-561-489 *RTS*



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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

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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.

FBI

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 *44-561*  
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.

*44-561-24*  
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) *copy received*

WAS:gas  
(11)

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
MAY 13 1968	
FBI - SPRINGFIELD	

*Robert*

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Special Agent in Charge

Sent \_\_\_\_\_ M Per \_\_\_\_\_

*w/end.*  
**44-561-490**

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.

44-561-369-3



SAC, BIRMINGHAM (44-1740)

5/13/68

SAC, SPRINGFIELD (44-561)

MURKIN  
CR

OO: ME

Re: Birmingham airtel to Bureau, 5/9/68

Springfield received only one copy of  
investigative insert forwarded via reairtel.

Birmingham requested to forward additional  
copy of enclosure.

2 - Birmingham (44-1740)

1 - Springfield (44-561)

JVR  
(3)

SEARCHED \_\_\_\_\_  
SERIALIZED \_\_\_\_\_  
INDEXED \_\_\_\_\_  
FILED \_\_\_\_\_

44-561-491

F B I

Date: 5-13-68

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

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

FROM: SAC, SPRINGFIELD (44-561) (P 2)

MURKIN.

RE KANSAS CITY TELETYPE TO BUREAU DATED MAY NINE LAST.

ON (THIS DATE), MELVINA TYLER, AKA RUSTY, MRS. RAY M. TYLER,

TWO ONE THREE FRANKLIN STREET, BARTONVILLE, ILLINOIS, WAS INTERVIEWED AND EXHIBITED VARIOUS PHOTOGRAPHS OF JAMES EARL RAY, FBI #FOUR ZERO FIVE NINE FOUR TWO G. SHE ADVISED THIS INDIVIDUAL IS UNKNOWN TO HER AND SHE COULD FURNISH NO INFORMATION WHATSOEVER REGARDING HIM. SHE WAS FORMERLY THE OWNER OF THE M & M TAVERN, ONE ZERO SIX REAR FIFTH STREET, PEORIA, ILLINOIS, DURING NINETEEN FIFTYEIGHT AND FIFTYNINE. SHE MARRIED RAY M. TYLER IN NINETEEN SIXTY AND IS THE MOTHER OF TWO CHILDREN. FOR THE PAST SIX YEARS SHE HAS BEEN STEADILY EMPLOYED AS A WAITRESS AT THE PIERRE MARQUETTE HOTEL, PEORIA, ILLINOIS.

MRS. DEAN AYLER, FOUR ZERO TWO MELBOURNE, PEORIA, ILLINOIS, ADVISED SHE DIVORCED ROBERT BLOOD FOUR YEARS AGO AND HIS WHERE-

SEARCHED  
SERIALIZED  
INDEXED  
FILED

- 1 - Bureau (44-38861) (AM)
- 1 - Springfield (44-561)
- 1 - Chicago (AM)
- 1 - Memphis (AM)

QPS:ras  
(4)

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Agent in Charge

Sent \_\_\_\_\_

M

Per \_\_\_\_\_

F B I

Date:

Transmit the following in \_\_\_\_\_  
(Type in plaintext or code)

Via \_\_\_\_\_  
(Priority)

**PAGE TWO**

**ABOUTS IS UNKNOWN TO HER. SHE IS OF THE OPINION HE HAS BEEN  
RESIDING SOME PLACE IN CALIFORNIA FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS.**

**MAIL COPIES BUREAU, CHICAGO, AND MEMPHIS. P.**

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Sent \_\_\_\_\_ M Per \_\_\_\_\_  
Special Agent in Charge

FBI KAN CITY

FBI SPRNGFLD

552PM URGENT 5-13-68 DJK

TO DIRECTOR (MAIL) AND KANSAS CITY (44-760)  
FROM SPRINGFIELD (44-561) 2PP

MURKIN.

RE KANSAS CITY TELETYPE TO BUREAU DATED MAY NINE LAST.

ON THIS DATE, MELVINA TYLER, AKA RUSTY, MRS. RAY M. TYLER, TWO ONE THREE FRANKLIN STREET, BARTONVILLE, ILLINOIS, WAS INTERVIEWED AND EXHIBITED VARIOUS PHOTOGRAPHS OF JAMES EARL RAY, FBI NUMBER FOUR ZERO FIVE NINE FOUR TWO G. SHE ADVISED THIS INDIVIDUAL IS UNKNOWN TO HER AND SHE COULD FURNISH NO INFORMATION WHATSOEVER REGARDING HIM. SHE WAS FORMERLY THE OWNER OF THE M AND M TAVERN, ONE ZERO SIX REAR FIFTH STREET, PEORIA, ILLINOIS, DURING NINETEEN FIFTYEIGHT AND FIFTYNINE. SHE MARRIED RAY M. TYLER IN NINETEEN SIXTY AND THE MOTHER OF TWO CHILDREN. FOR THE PAST SIX YEARS SHE HAS BEEN STEADILY EMPLOYED AS A WAITRESS AT THE PERE MARQUETTE HOTEL, PEORIA, ILLINOIS.

MRS. DEAN AYLER, FOUR ZERO TWO MELBOURNE, PEORIA, ILLINOIS, ADVISED SHE DIVORCED ROBERT BLOOD FOUR YEARS AGO AND HIS WHEREABOUTS  
END PAGE ONE

SEARCHED \_\_\_\_\_  
SERIALIZED \_\_\_\_\_  
INDEXED \_\_\_\_\_  
FILED \_\_\_\_\_

44-561-492

PAGE TWO

IS UNKNOWN TO HER. SHE IS OF THE OPINION HE HAS BEEN RESIDING  
SOME PLACE IN CALIFORNIA FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS.

MAIL COPIES BUREAU, CHICAGO AND MEMPHIS. P.

ARMED AND DANGEROUS.

END

DJB

FBI KAN CITY

X

5/14/68

AIRTEL

AIR MAIL

TO: SAC, ST. LOUIS (44-775)  
FROM: SAC, SPRINGFIELD (44-561) - P -  
SUBJECT: MURKIN  
CR  
(OO: MEMPHIS)

Re: Subject's brother, JOHN LARRY RAY, aka

Re St. Louis teletype to the Bureau dated 5/10/68  
and Springfield airtel to St. Louis dated 5/9/68.

Enclosed for St. Louis is a copy of Menard State  
Prison report re JOHN LARRY RAY (23401) furnished by BILL  
BARTMAN, Illinois Parole and Pardon Board, Springfield, Illinois.  
It has previously been determined by Springfield Division that  
subject's brother, under the name JOHN LARRY RYAN, was  
incarcerated at the Menard State Penitentiary on a charge of  
larceny of a motor vehicle and was released from that  
institution on 2/1/68. RYAN left Menard on a full discharge  
and immediately, thereafter, made application to the State of  
Illinois for restitution of his civil rights. He requested  
the results of this application be sent to 1728 North 18th  
Street, St. Louis, Missouri. Additional information of  
interest from RYAN's Menard file was furnished to St. Louis  
in referenced airtel.

3 - St. Louis (44-775) (Enc. 1)  
1 - Chicago (44-1114) (Info)  
1 - Memphis (44-1987) (Info)  
2 - Springfield (44-561)

VB:jah  
(5)

SEARCHED \_\_\_\_\_  
SERIALIZED \_\_\_\_\_  
INDEXED \_\_\_\_\_  
FILED \_\_\_\_\_

44-561-493

Reprints *WR*

5/11/68

**AIRTEL**

**AIR MAIL**

**TO: SAC, ST. LOUIS (44-775)**  
**FROM: SAC, SPRINGFIELD (44-561) - P -**  
**SUBJECT: MURKIN**  
**CR**  
**(OO: MEMPHIS)**

**Re: Subject's brother, JOHN LARRY RAY, aka**

**Re St. Louis teletype to the Bureau dated 5/10/68**  
**and Springfield airtel to St. Louis dated 5/9/68.**

Enclosed for St. Louis is a copy of Menard State Prison report re JOHN LARRY RAY (23461) furnished by BILL KAUFMAN, Illinois Pardon and Pardon Board, Springfield, Illinois. It has previously been determined by Springfield Division that subject's brother, under the name JOHN LARRY RYAN, was incarcerated at the Menard State Penitentiary on a charge of larceny of a motor vehicle and was released from that institution on 2/1/68. RYAN left Menard on a full discharge and immediately, thereafter, made application to the State of Illinois for restitution of his civil rights. He requested the results of this application be sent to 1728 North 18th Street, St. Louis, Missouri. Additional information of interest from RYAN's Menard file was furnished to St. Louis in referenced airtel.

2 - St. Louis (44-775) (Enc. 1)  
1 - Chicago (44-1114) (Info)  
1 - Memphis (44-1987) (Info)  
2 - Springfield (44-561)  
WR:jah  
(6)

SEARCHED \_\_\_\_\_  
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FILED \_\_\_\_\_

44-561-493

## DECODED COPY

☒ Radio☐ Teletype

URGENT 5-14-68

TO: ALL FIELD DIVISIONS

FROM: DIRECTOR

MURKIN.

IN VIEW OF FACT THAT SUBJECT SPENT A CONSIDERABLE SUM OF MONEY FROM APRIL 23, 1967 TO APRIL 4, 1968, AND THE SOURCE OF HIS MONEY HAS NOT BEEN DETERMINED, HIS PHOTOGRAPH SHOULD BE DISPLAYED TO APPROPRIATE WITNESSES IN UNSOLVED BANK ROBBERIES AND BANK BURGLARIES IN THOSE INSTANCES WHERE WITNESSES ARE AVAILABLE. YOU SHOULD ALSO CONSIDER THE REQUESTING OF POLICE DEPARTMENTS TO DISPLAY PHOTOGRAPH OF RAY TO WITNESSES IN THEIR UNSOLVED ROBBERIES.

ARMED AND DANGEROUS.

(2)  
WCMGIGLIO *[Signature]*

SEARCHED <i>[initials]</i>	INDEXED <i>[initials]</i>
SERIALIZED <i>[initials]</i>	FILED <i>[initials]</i>
MAY 14 1968	
FBI - SPRINGFIELD	

*[Signature]*

TC

ASAC *[Signature]*

If the intelligence contained in the above message is to be disseminated outside the Bureau, it is suggested that it be suitably paraphrased in order to protect the Bureau's cryptographic systems.

44-561-494



## DECODED COPY

☒ Radio☐ Teletype

URGENT 5-14-68

TO: ALL FIELD DIVISIONS

FROM: DIRECTOR

MURKIN.

IN VIEW OF FACT THAT SUBJECT SPENT A CONSIDERABLE SUM OF MONEY FROM APRIL 23, 1967 TO APRIL 4, 1968, AND THE SOURCE OF HIS MONEY HAS NOT BEEN DETERMINED, HIS PHOTOGRAPH SHOULD BE DISPLAYED TO APPROPRIATE WITNESSES IN UNSOLVED BANK ROBBERIES AND BANK BURGLARIES IN THOSE INSTANCES WHERE WITNESSES ARE AVAILABLE. YOU SHOULD ALSO CONSIDER THE REQUESTING OF POLICE DEPARTMENTS TO DISPLAY PHOTOGRAPH OF RAY TO WITNESSES IN THEIR UNSOLVED ROBBERIES.

ARMED AND DANGEROUS.

(2)  
WCM

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
MAY 14 1968	
FBI - SPRINGFIELD	

44-561-494

If the intelligence contained in the above message is to be disseminated outside the Bureau, it is suggested that it be suitably paraphrased in order to protect the Bureau's cryptographic systems.

Routing Slip  
0-7 (Rev. 9-25-67)

(Copies to Offices Checked)

TO: SAC,

<input type="checkbox"/> Albany	<input type="checkbox"/> Houston	<input type="checkbox"/> Norfolk	<input type="checkbox"/> Tampa
<input type="checkbox"/> Albuquerque	<input type="checkbox"/> Indianapolis	<input type="checkbox"/> Oklahoma City	<input type="checkbox"/> Washington Field
<input type="checkbox"/> Anchorage	<input type="checkbox"/> Jackson	<input type="checkbox"/> Omaha	<input type="checkbox"/> Quantico
<input type="checkbox"/> Atlanta	<input type="checkbox"/> Jacksonville	<input type="checkbox"/> Philadelphia	
<input type="checkbox"/> Baltimore	<input type="checkbox"/> Kansas City	<input type="checkbox"/> Phoenix	TO LEGAT:
<input type="checkbox"/> Birmingham	<input type="checkbox"/> Knoxville	<input type="checkbox"/> Pittsburgh	<input type="checkbox"/> Bern
<input type="checkbox"/> Boston	<input type="checkbox"/> Las Vegas	<input type="checkbox"/> Portland	<input type="checkbox"/> Bonn
<input type="checkbox"/> Buffalo	<input type="checkbox"/> Little Rock	<input type="checkbox"/> Richmond	<input type="checkbox"/> Buenos Aires
<input type="checkbox"/> Butte	<input type="checkbox"/> Los Angeles	<input type="checkbox"/> Sacramento	<input type="checkbox"/> Hong Kong
<input type="checkbox"/> Charlotte	<input type="checkbox"/> Louisville	<input type="checkbox"/> St. Louis	<input type="checkbox"/> London
<input type="checkbox"/> Chicago	<input type="checkbox"/> Memphis	<input type="checkbox"/> Salt Lake City	<input type="checkbox"/> Manila
<input type="checkbox"/> Cincinnati	<input type="checkbox"/> Miami	<input type="checkbox"/> San Antonio	<input type="checkbox"/> Mexico, D.F.
<input type="checkbox"/> Cleveland	<input type="checkbox"/> Milwaukee	<input type="checkbox"/> San Diego	<input type="checkbox"/> Ottawa
<input type="checkbox"/> Columbia	<input type="checkbox"/> Minneapolis	<input type="checkbox"/> San Francisco	<input type="checkbox"/> Paris
<input type="checkbox"/> Dallas	<input type="checkbox"/> Mobile	<input type="checkbox"/> San Juan	<input type="checkbox"/> Rome
<input type="checkbox"/> Denver	<input type="checkbox"/> Newark	<input type="checkbox"/> Savannah	<input type="checkbox"/> Santo Domingo
<input type="checkbox"/> Detroit	<input type="checkbox"/> New Haven	<input type="checkbox"/> Seattle	<input type="checkbox"/> Tokyo
<input type="checkbox"/> El Paso	<input type="checkbox"/> New Orleans	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Springfield	
<input type="checkbox"/> Honolulu	<input type="checkbox"/> New York City		

Date May 13, 1968

RE:

**MURKIN**

☒ For information      Retention ☐ optional      For appropriate ☐ action      ☐ Surep, by \_\_\_\_\_

☐ The enclosed is for your information. If used in a future report, ☐ conceal all sources, ☐ paraphrase contents.

☐ Enclosed are corrected pages from report of SA \_\_\_\_\_ dated \_\_\_\_\_

Remarks:

Enclosed for assistance of each office in connection with any laundry checks being made are photographs of laundry marks placed on shirt and bed linen for James Earl Ray while using the name of Eric Starvo Galt in the Los Angeles area.

Enc.  
Bufile  
Urfile

(4) *[Signature]*  
(44-38861)

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
MAY 14 1968	
FBI - SPRINGFIELD	

*Robert*  
*wjmel*

44-561-495

SI 44-561

FEG:blw

1

The following investigation was conducted by  
SA FREDERICK E. GRAPER;

AT WEST FRANKFORT, ILLINOIS:

Telephone listing 528-2815 is to JOE SWINKUNAS, 703 East Lindell, West Frankfort, Illinois. JOE SWINKUNAS employed at Coleman Chevrolet Co., East Main Street, advised on May 14, 1968, that he has been on vacation and was not available this past week. He said that his daughter is dating a TOM POLLACK, a college student at Beaumont, Texas, and any calls from there are from TOM POLLACK.

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED <i>MP</i>	FILED <i>MP</i>
MAY 16 1968	
FBI — SPRINGFIELD	

*44-561-496*

SI 44-561

RCH/epp

1

The following investigation was conducted by  
SA FRANK E. CORN, SR. and SA ROBERT C. HAINES:

AT ALTON, ILLINOIS

From May 2 through May 14, 1968, physical surveillance  
of the residence of WILLIAM MAHER, 712 Brown Street, was instituted  
on a daily basis at varying times of the day and evening hours.

No unusual activity was noted during these surveillances.

(V)

SEARCHED.....	INDEXED.....
SERIALIZED.....	FILED.....
MAY 16 1968	
FBI — SPRINGFIELD	

44-561-499

F B I

Date: May 9, 1968

Transmit the following in \_\_\_\_\_

(Type in plaintext or code)

Via Airtel \_\_\_\_\_

(Priority)

To: All SACS  
LEGATS, Mexico City  
Ottawa

From: Director, FBI (44-38861)

MURKIN  
OO: MEMPHIS (44-1987)

In order to cover the possibility that subject may have died since commission of the crime, the U. S. Census Bureau and Department of Health, Education and Welfare were contacted and they advised that no central records of unidentified deceased are maintained by those agencies. It was suggested that each state may maintain such a record in their Bureau of Vital Statistics or similar agency.

There is no known Federal law requiring the maintenance of such information; and it is possible that if any record of unidentified dead is maintained, it would only be maintained at local police departments, morgues, medical facilities, or the like.

Each office covering state capitals should check to ascertain if such records are maintained, and if so, should check records for the period from 4-5-68, to date, for any information which might possibly identify subject Ray with unidentified deceased person over that period.

If there is no central record repository maintained in the various states or nationally in the case of Mexico and Canada, you should, in connection with your contacts with law enforcement agencies on this case or other Bureau matters, make appropriate inquiries.

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
MAY 15 1968	
FBI - SPRINGFIELD	

44-561-498

Sent Via \_\_\_\_\_

M

Per \_\_\_\_\_

Airtel to All SACS and LEGATS, Mexico City and Ottawa  
RE: MURKIN

unidentified dead for the period beginning 4-5-68; and if fingerprints on such dead are maintained, they should be compared with those on the Identification Order on Ray in order to effect identification or nonidentification. This should be handled in the normal course of business and only reasonable investigation should be pursued along these lines.

The Identification Division has placed an appropriate stop on unidentified deceased inquiries it may receive. If feasible, appropriate offices and Legats, Mexico City and Ottawa should place similar stops with appropriate state, local or national agencies in your territories.

Armed and Dangerous.

F B I

Date: May 9, 1968

Transmit the following in \_\_\_\_\_

(Type in plaintext or code)

Via Airtel \_\_\_\_\_

(Priority)

To: All SACS  
LEGATS, Mexico City  
Ottawa

From: Director, FBI (44-38861)

MURKIN  
OO: MEMPHIS (44-1987) 44-561

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If there is no central record repository maintained in the various states or nationally in the case of Mexico and Canada, you should, in connection with your contacts with law enforcement agencies on this case or other Bureau matters, make appropriate inquiries relative to

60 XEROX  
COPIES MADE

DATE

Sent Via

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SERIALIZED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	FILED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
MAY 15 1968	
FBI - SPRINGFIELD	

*Robert*

Per 44-561-498

Airtel to All SACS and LEGATS, Mexico City and Ottawa  
RE: MURKIN

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Armed and Dangerous.



F B I

Date: May 10, 1968

Transmit the following in \_\_\_\_\_  
(Type in plaintext or code)Via Airtel \_\_\_\_\_  
(Priority)

To: All SACS  
LEGATS, Mexico City  
Ottawa

*[Handwritten initials]*  
From: Director, FBI

MURKIN

For your information and investigative assistance, subject James Earl Ray took a bartending course in Los Angeles, California, during the early part of 1968, and prior to his departing Los Angeles, in March of 1968, he made several telephone calls to country clubs in an effort to obtain employment.

This should be borne in mind in covering leads in connection with this and other cases.

Armed and Dangerous.

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
MAY 15 1968	
FBI - SPRINGFIELD	

*[Handwritten signature]*  
44-561-499

Sent Via \_\_\_\_\_ M Per \_\_\_\_\_

F B I

Date: May 10, 1968

Transmit the following in \_\_\_\_\_  
(Type in plaintext or code)Via Airtel \_\_\_\_\_  
(Priority)

To: All SACS  
LEGATS, Mexico City  
Ottawa

*File*  
From: Director, FBI

MURKIN *44-54 \**

For your information and investigative assistance, subject James Earl Ray took a bartending course in Los Angeles, California, during the early part of 1968, and prior to his departing Los Angeles, in March of 1968, he made several telephone calls to country clubs in an effort to obtain employment.

This should be borne in mind in covering leads in connection with this and other cases.

Armed and Dangerous.

SEARCHED <i>ml</i>	INDEXED <i>ml</i>
SERIALIZED <i>ml</i>	FILED <i>ml</i>
MAY 15 1968	
FBI - SPRINGFIELD	

*Robert*

*44-361-499*

Sent Via \_\_\_\_\_ M Per \_\_\_\_\_

5/12/68

AIR TEL

AIR MAIL

TO : SAC, Chicago

FROM : SAC, Indianapolis (44-663)

MURKIN.

OO - ME

Re SI tel, 5/8/68, and IP tel, 5/8/68.

Re: JOSEPH ELMER AMSTIN

The following investigation was conducted by SA LEONARD A. WISNIAK on 5/8/68 at Goshen, Indiana:

There are no businesses located in 100 block of West Lincoln Avenue, Goshen, with the exception of the Salem Bank & Trust Company.

City Directory and Telephone Directory failed to reveal any company in existence as A. A. Farris Co., 122 West Lincoln.

BERNARDINE LOUIE, Manager, Goshen Credit Bureau, advised she could locate no information concerning A. A. Farris Co. Her records reflected an AA Farris Co., 111 West Lincoln Avenue, managed by Dr. J. C. AMUNDSON. The above was a mission to take care of transients and alcoholics. AMUNDSON in constant travel status and will return to Goshen in a few weeks.

2 - Chicago  
② - Springfield (44-661)  
2 - St. Louis  
2 - Indianapolis

PDJ/tjm  
(8)

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
MAY 15 1968	
FBI - SPRINGFIELD	

44-561-500

**IP 44-963**

**LEADS:**

**CHICAGO, at Chicago, Illinois, will advise Indianapolis if AUSTIN located.**

**INDIANAPOLIS, at Goshen, Indiana, will interview ANDERSON.**

5/13/68

AIR TEL

AIR MAIL

TO : SAC, Chicago  
FROM : SAC, Indianapolis (44-563)

MURKIN.

OO - MO

Re SI tel, 5/9/68, and IP tel, 5/9/68.

Re: JOSEPH ELMER AUSTIN

The following investigation was conducted by SA LEONARD A. WISSEMAN on 5/9/68 at Goshen, Indiana:

There are no businesses located in 100 block of West Lincoln Avenue, Goshen, with the exception of the Salem Bank & Trust Company.

City Directory and Telephone Directory failed to reveal any company in existence as A. A. Ferris Co., 122 West Lincoln.

ROSEMARINE LONG, Manager, Goshen Credit Bureau, advised she could locate no information concerning A. A. Ferris Co. Her records reflected an AA Farms Co., 111 East Lincoln Avenue, managed by Dr. J. C. ANDERSON. The above was a mission to take care of transients and alcoholics. ANDERSON in constant travel status and will return to Goshen in a few weeks.

2 - Chicago  
2 - Springfield (44-561)  
2 - St. Louis  
2 - Indianapolis

DJF/fjm  
(8)

SEARCHED INDEXED  
SERIALIZED FILED  
MAY 15 1968  
FBI - SPRINGFIELD

44-561-500

**IP 44-563**

**LEADS:**

**CHICAGO**, at Chicago, Illinois, will advise Indianapolis if **AUSTIN** located.

**INDIANAPOLIS**, at Goshen, Indiana, will interview **ANDERSON**.

5/14/68

**AIRTEL**

**AIRMAIL**

**TO SAC, ST. LOUIS**  
**FROM SAC, INDIANAPOLIS (44-563)**

**MURKIN**  
**CR**

**OO: ME**

**Re SI airtel to SL 5/9/68.**

**RALPH HOWARD, Indianapolis, Indiana, was member of State Department of Correction. Contact 5/14/68 with widow, MELVA B. HOWARD, reveals he has been dead four years.**

- 2 - St. Louis**
- 1 - Memphis (Info)**
- ① - Springfield (Info)**
- 1 - Chicago (Info)**
- 1 - Indianapolis**

**PJF/kmg**  
**(6)**

SEARCHED	INDEXED
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*[Handwritten signature]*

*44-561-561*

SI 44-561

EHD:skr

1

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

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

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

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

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

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44-561-502



SI 44-561

EHD:skr

2

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

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

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

SI 44-561

JLM/eab

1

The following investigation was conducted by SA  
JOSEPH L. MCKINSTRAY:

At Granite City, Illinois.

On April 25, 1968, THOMAS GAVIN, 2841 Fortune Drive, advised that he is employed at Granite City Steel Company, and that in 1963 or 1964 he testified for the company in a court hearing at Edwardsville, Illinois, for parole revocation of CARL HOFFMAN, employee of the Granite City Steel Company. GAVIN advised that to the best of his recollection, HOFFMAN was charged with shooting a man, and he believed he heard that HOGGMAN had previously been arrested by East Alton, Illinois, Police Department, along with one JIMMY RAY. Possibly identical with JAMES EARL RAY.

GAVIN continued that on the morning of April 25, while driving to work, he observed a man on the corner of 23rd and Washington Avenue, between 8:00 and 8:05 A.M., which he believed resembled the photo of JAMES EARL RAY which he had seen in the news media. He stated that all he can remember about this man was that he was wearing an old style hat with a turned down brim and was walking toward Monroe Street. He stated he could not furnish any further descriptive data such as age, height, weight, hair color, or other physical characteristics of the man.

GAVIN stated that in 1963 or 1964, CARL HOFFMAN had lived at 2251 Monroe Street in a house owned by DELMAR BELL, and that this house is located about two blocks from where he saw this man.

On April 26, 1968, Chief of Police RIGGINS, East Alton, Illinois, advised that he has no records of CARL HOFFMAN in the files of his department; and that his department arrested JAMES EARL RAY on only one occasion 13 or 14 years ago, at which time RAY was alone.

On April 26, 1968, GEORGE GOODIN, 2253 Monroe Street, advised that he has lived at that address for 38 years and that the property next door at 2251 is owned by DELMAR BELL who resided at 2211 Lee Street. Mr. GOODIN stated that he has no recollection of anyone named CARL HOFFMAN and after

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44-561-503