

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

Date 4-29-68

JOHN DE LEONARDO, Credit Manager, General Motors Acceptance Corporation (GMAC), 8961 Page Boulevard, furnished the following information to SA EARL F. BROWN:

Contract number 3239 was signed by JOHN RAY, 1982 Arsenal, St. Louis, Missouri, as principal mortgagor on February 7, 1968, for an Ideal Draft Beer Cooler for a cash sale price of \$658 with a down payment of \$58. The terms of the chattel mortgage provide that payments of \$38 and one payment of \$34.94 are to be made, payable \$1.25 per day in the meter. The cooler is to be located at the Grape Vine, 1982 Arsenal. The seller was Frigid Sales and Service Corporation, 7589 Olive Boulevard, St. Louis. The signer as co-mortgagor was CAROL PEPPER, 2025 Bellevue, Maplewood, Missouri.

GMAC records reflect that CAROL PEPPER has a checking and savings account at Manufacturer's Bank, St. Louis, Missouri.

Since JOHN RAY is first signer of the mortgage, GMAC looks to him as being legally liable for payments on this cooler, which was sold by MIKE BURK of Frigid Sales, and who is said to be well acquainted with JOHN RAY.

GMAC records further reflect that CAROL PEPPER's husband is a plumber employed by New Market Hardware, Sarah and Laclede.

A Xerox copy of the chattel mortgage in question is attached.

On 4-26-68 at St. Louis, Missouri File # SL 44-775
by SA EARL E. BROWN /ral Date dictated 4-29-68
312

This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

CHattel MORTGAGE

Mortgage Number 35152

The undersigned mortgagor hereby purchases from the undersigned mortgagee, subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth below and upon the reverse side hereof, the property described below or in schedule attached hereto.

QUANTITY	NEW OR USED	MAKE	DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY, INCL. SERIAL NUMBER Attach Separate List, If Necessary
1	used	Ideal Draft Beer Cooler	DDR-2R #F429131 36700

For a TOTAL TIME SALE PRICE computed as follows:

1. CASH SALE PRICE	\$ 658.00 (1)
2. TOTAL DOWN PAYMENT (Consisting of \$ (Net Trade-In) \$ (Cash))	\$ 58.00 (2)
DESCRIPTION OF TRADE-IN: Make _____ Model _____ Year _____	
3. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ITEMS 1 and 2	\$ 600.00 (3)
* 4a. CHARGE FOR CREDITOR INSURANCE ON LIFE OF MORTGAGOR (Include this item if mortgagor has authorized mortgagee to apply for the insurance)	\$ 3.73 (4a)
4b. CHARGE FOR INSURANCE ON THE PROPERTY as described in Paragraph 11 on reverse hereof. (Include this item if mortgagor has authorized mortgagee to apply for the insurance)	\$ 4.32 (4b)
5. OFFICIAL FEES	\$ - (5)
6. PRINCIPAL BALANCE (Add items 3, 4a, 4b and 5)	\$ 608.05 (6)
7. TIME CHARGE	\$ 72.89 (7)
8. TIME BALANCE (Add items 6 and 7)	\$ 680.94 (8)
9. TOTAL TIME SALE PRICE (Add items 2 and 8)	\$ 738.94 (9)

The Time Balance is payable at the mortgagee's office designated below or at such office or any assignee as may be hereafter designated, in _____ instalments of \$ _____ each, commencing one month after delivery of the above property and on the same day of each successive month, or as indicated in space below. The final instalment payable hereunder shall equal the amount of the time balance remaining due.

Delivery Instructions and Description of Real Estate pursuant to Uniform Commercial Code.

Payable \$1.25 per day in the meter

- (a) Said property is to be delivered on or about Feb. 7, 19 68, to and on the premises located (or to be erected) at Street and Number 1982 Arsenal Known as Grape Vine Section _____ Block Number _____ City St. Louis County _____ State Mo. Name of record owner of premises _____
- (b) Mortgagee shall not be responsible for failure to deliver said property, or for any delay in delivering same, caused by the manufacturer thereof or due to strikes, fires or any other causes beyond seller's control.
- (c) Upon delivery of said property, mortgagor shall sign a delivery receipt, a form copy of which is herewith furnished to mortgagor, showing the date thereof and further identification of said property and the due date of the first instalment payable hereunder.
- (d) Special delivery instructions, if any: _____

Said property shall remain strictly personal property. Mortgagee (mortgagor) ★ agrees to put said property in place in the premises hereinabove mentioned and in connection therewith to couple said property with any pipes, tubing, conduits or wiring necessary for the use of same, in such manner as shall not interfere with ready inspection, service or repair of said property and as shall permit said property to be readily disconnected from such pipes, conduits, tubing or wiring and to be removed without injury to the premises. ★ (Strike out as applicable).

* According to terms and conditions set forth in policy or certificate of insurance issued by the insurer as checked below. If the insurance becomes effective, the term thereof shall commence on the date of this contract and continue until the date, but not later than the 15th () day after the date provided above for payment of the final instalment hereunder, on which the unpaid balance of the obligation hereunder is or becomes paid in full, unless the insurance is automatically terminated on an earlier date in certain other events. Reference is hereby made to the further statement of such insurance, including the further statement concerning the below designated maximum amounts of insurance, contained in Paragraph 10 on the reverse side hereof and hereby incorporated in this item.

Mortgagor Proposed For Life Insurance: The person whose name appears on line A below (co-mortgagor, if any, on line B, when mortgagor is a corporation or partnership).

☐ The Prudential Insurance Company of America, Newark, New Jersey, under its Group Policy No. GL-360. Under said group policy, maximum amount of insurance under this contract is \$7,500 and maximum aggregate amount of insurance under this and any other instalment contract of the mortgagor is \$15,000.

☐ _____ (If Other Policy, Name Insurer)

MORTGAGOR'S DECLARATION OF GOOD HEALTH (Applicable Where a Charge Has Been Authorized in 4a Above and Insurance Under Prudential Group Policy GL-360 is Proposed)—I, the mortgagor proposed for life insurance, in order to induce Prudential to effect such insurance, do hereby declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief I am now in good health. I hereby authorize any physician or hospital to disclose to Prudential all information concerning my medical history prior to the date of this contract.

(Home Office Address)
Under policy of above designated insurer, maximum amount of insurance under this contract is \$ _____ and maximum aggregate amount of insurance under this and any other instalment contract of the mortgagor is \$ _____

Notice to the Buyer: 1. Do not sign this contract before you read it or if it contains any blank spaces. 2. You are entitled to an exact copy of the contract you sign. 3. Under the law you have the right to pay off in advance the full amount due and under certain circumstances to obtain a partial refund of the time charge. Executed in Quadruplicate, copy of which was delivered to, and receipt is hereby acknowledged by, mortgagor, this 7th day of Feb., 1968.

A Mortgagor Signs in Ink

Contract includes Good Health Declaration where applicable.

1982 Arsenal St. Louis, Mo. 63104

(Street) (Town) (State) (Postal Code)

B Co-Mortgagor Signs in Ink

Contract includes Good Health Declaration where applicable.

2025 Bellevue Maplewood, Mo. 63143

(Street) (Town) (State) (Postal Code)

Seller Signs in Ink

FRIGID SALES & SERV. CORP.

7589 Olive Blvd. St. Louis, Mo. 63130

(Street) (Town) (State) (Postal Code)

MORTGAGEE'S RECOMMENDATION, ASSIGNMENT AND GUARANTY

For value received, the undersigned does hereby sell, assign, and transfer to the General Motors Acceptance Corporation his, its, or their right, title and interest in and to the within chattel mortgage, herewith submitted for purchase by it, and the property covered thereby and authorizes said General Motors Acceptance Corporation to do every act and thing necessary to collect and discharge the same.

The undersigned certifies that said chattel mortgage arose from the sale of the within described property, warranting that title to said property was at time of sale and is now vested in the undersigned free of all liens and encumbrances; that said property is as represented to the mortgagor of said property by the undersigned and that statements made by the mortgagor of said property on the statement form attached hereto are true to the best of the knowledge and belief of the undersigned.

In consideration of the purchase of the above obligation by the General Motors Acceptance Corporation, the undersigned does hereby guarantee the payment of all deferred payments at the time and in the manner therein specified and covenants in default of the payment of any instalment thereof or performance of any requirement by the mortgagor to pay the full amount then remaining unpaid to the said General Motors Acceptance Corporation upon demand except as otherwise provided by the terms of the present General Motors Acceptance Corporation Retail Plan. Liability of the undersigned shall not be affected by any indulgence, compromise, settlement, extensions, or variation of terms of the within chattel mortgage effected with, or by the discharge or release of the obligation of the mortgagor or any other person interested, by operation of law or otherwise. The undersigned hereby does expressly waive and dispense with notice of acceptance of this guaranty, notices of non-payment and non-performance, notices of amount of indebtedness outstanding at any time, protests, demands, and prosecution of collection, foreclosure and possessory remedies, and the right to remove any legal action from the court originally acquiring jurisdiction.

Mortgagee Signs

FRIGID SALES & SERV. CORP.

By

(If Corp. or Part.)

(Title)

313

1

SL 44-775
PWB/leh

RE: RAY'S RELATIVE
JOHN LARRY RAY

AT ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

The following investigation was conducted by SA
PATRICK W. BRADLEY:

On April 26, 1968, DEAN FERRY, Manager, Customer Service, Union Electric Company, advised that their company furnishes service to CAROL A. PEPPER, doing business as Jack's Place, 1982 Arsenal Street, however records of their company do not reflect how the monthly bill is paid. Mr. FERRY noted, however that the bill is current but could not actually establish whether or not it was paid by check or cash.

On April 26, 1968, HERMAN SCHAEFER, Beer Sales Manager, Joseph Schlitz Brewing Company, 1350 South Kings-highway, advised that their records reflect that Jack's Place, 1982 Arsenal Street is a cash on delivery stop, meaning that the driver assigned that route for a given day will pull up in front of the tavern, walk in and inquire of anybody that appears to be in control of the bar whether or not any delivery of beer is desired and if so, will deliver same and accept payment in cash from whoever appears to be behind the bar without any knowledge as to whether or not this is the owner of or operator of the tavern.

314

1

SL 44-775
PWB/leh

RE: RAY'S RELATIVE
JOHN LARRY RAY

AT ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

The following investigation was conducted on
April 29, 1968, by SA PATRICK W. BRADLEY:

Mr. FRANK A. MILLER, JR., Vice President and Treasurer, and FRANK J. LESYNA, President, Miller-Scheer Realty and Insurance Company, 2846 California Street, St. Louis, Missouri, advised that this company owns the building where the Grapevine Tavern is located at 1982 Arsenal Street, St. Louis, Missouri, although this is leased in the name of SHARON M. STOCKMANN, as party of the first part, inasmuch as she is the secretary of this company and the property was held in her name. They pointed out that she is no longer employed with this company, however they have the records regarding the lease of the Grapevine Tavern.

Mr. LESYNA stated that he recalls JOHN RAY coming to the office with CAROL PEPPER to fill out the lease and although CAROL PEPPER's name was utilized in the lease and she signed the lease that it was actually JOHN RAY who was giving the orders. He pointed out that at this time and because of this he questioned JOHN RAY whether or not the individual had a police record because the lease was contingent on successfully obtaining a full liquor license. For this question JOHN RAY indicated he did not have a police record however, they wanted to put the building in CAROL PEPPER's name because there would be less problems that way, not further explained.

At the time of signing this lease they paid \$75 in the form of a check on the Manufacturers Trust Company signed by CAROL PEPPER and to the best of his recollection he believes that some \$245 in cash in advance payments was made by JOHN RAY although he could not definitely state this.

A notation in the file reflects JOHN RAY's telephone number as 771-2447, and he claimed he had previously worked as a caretaker on a golfing course, location not known.

3/5

SL 44-775

In addition to the above business located in this particular building, they also lease other parts of the building which includes address of 1978a Arsenal, 1976 Arsenal, 1982a Arsenal and 1978-80 Arsenal.

Mr. LESYNA advised that one EDWARD BAY rents 1978a Arsenal as a residence at the rate of \$35 a month; LOUIS CANGEMI rents 1976 Arsenal where he conducts a shoe repair business at the rate of \$25 per month; GEORGE HUHN rents 1982a Arsenal Street as a residence at \$35 a month; and ELEANOR OGLESBY rents 1978-80 Arsenal Street as a combination residence and 3-2 tavern which is only open on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights.

Mr. LESYNA made available copies of the lease and application for tenancy which reflects as follows:

Commercial Lease indicates it was entered into the first day of October, 1967, between SHARON M. STOCKMANN and CAROL A. PEPPER, for the premises of the first floor store including the basement known as 1982 Arsenal Street, St. Louis, Missouri. This Commercial Lease indicates that the use of the premises is to be a business of a tavern having a full liquor license. The terms of the lease were for two years commencing the first day of October, 1967, and ending the 30th day of September, 1969, for a monthly rental of \$80 due on the first day of each month.

The leasee was granted a three year option of renewal under the same terms and conditions provided the leasee gives 60 days written notice regarding this, prior to the expiration of the current lease. This lease was contingent upon leasees ability to secure a full liquor license.

This lease is signed SHARON M. STOCKMANN as lessor and CAROL PEPPER as leasee.

The application for tenancy for the Grapevine Tavern, telephone number PR 6-9417 reflects that the premises are to be used as a full liquor tavern.

This application reflects the name CAROL A. PEPPER, 2025 Bellevue, Maplewood, Missouri, phone 645-2948 with the

316

SL 44-775

notation, new address September 22, 1967. Her husband's name is shown as ALBERT PEPPER with present address 1805 South 11th Street, St. Louis, Missouri, renting from one JOHN GAWON at a monthly rental of \$45. Character references shown as ALENA SUTTON, 7129 Leona Drive, and credit reference is reflected as Biederman Furniture Company, 11940 Manchester Road. The bank reference is shown as Manufacturers Bank and Trust Company, 1731 South Broadway. Place of employment of the husband, New Market Hardware Company, 4064 Laclede, for the past three years as a maintenance man. Number of members of the family is shown as four with a notation two boys, ages 5 and 3. This application reflects that they own a 1961 Plymouth automobile and have lived in St. Louis for the past ten years.

Notation at the bottom of the first page of this application for tenancy has written, JOHN RAY, 1912 California Avenue, however this is not written in specific answer to a given question merely written in the margin of this page. This application for tenancy is signed CAROL A. PEPPER and dated September 20, 1967.

At 4:03 p.m. on April 29, 1968, the white over light blue Thunderbird automobile, bearing Missouri license AE2-558 was observed parked on the west side of Illinois Avenue facing south approximately three car lengths south of Arsenal Street.

On April 29, 1968, ROBERT FOWLER, Security Department, Laclede Gas Company, advised that their records reflect that as of November 29, 1967, they agreed to furnish service to 1982 Arsenal Street, to new tenant, CAROL PEPPER.

He pointed out that they have no way of showing from their records how the monthly bill is paid, other than the fact that it is paid and is current.

317

1

SL: 44-775

HRD:jfb

RE: PEPPER LIQUOR LICENSE

On May 7, 1968, St. Louis United States Attorney VERYL L. RIDDLE advised Special Agent HAROLD R. DOBSON that pursuant to a current project undertaken by his office to determine the nature and extent of criminal ownership of liquor dispensing establishments in the St. Louis Metropolitan area, which project has no relationship to this case, he had secured the cooperation of the United States Post Office and State Liquor Control Officials. The State Liquor Control Office has mailed extensive questionnaires to all liquor licensees located in St. Louis, St. Louis County and Jefferson County, Missouri, in which detailed information is requested as to ownership and other matters. The deadline for the return of such questionnaires was originally scheduled for May 1, 1968, but returns to date have been sparse which necessitated setting up a new dead-line of June 1, 1968.

Mr. RIDDLE stated that returns are to be forwarded to the State Liquor Control Office by mail and that false answers in such returns by certain target owners may cause presentation of the matter to a Federal Grand Jury to determine if furnishing false answers to the Liquor Control Office through the mail constitutes a scheme for use of the mail in furtherance of a scheme to defraud.

Mr. RIDDLE emphasized that questionnaires had been sent to all tavern owners in the area and that no individual owner would thereby feel he had been singled out for any special attention.

Mr. RIDDLE stated that he wanted to be sure that his project would not interfere with our investigation of this case in any way. He was confidentially advised of the identities of subject's brother and sister, JOHN RAY and CAROL PEPPER, as well as the name and location of the Grape Vine Tavern. He was further advised it does not appear his project would interfere with the investigation of this case.

318

2

SL: 44-775

He stated that he would take care to see that any return concerning the Grape Vine Tavern received would be placed aside and that no action would be taken regarding it without first checking with this Office. Mr. RIDDLE emphasized his desire to be of any assistance possible in our investigation of this case.

319

SL:

44-775

PREVIOUS THREATS TO DR. KING

320

1

SL: 44-775

HRD:jfb

RE: PREVIOUS THREATS TO KING -
DELANO ELMER WALKER

AT ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

A review of the files of the St. Louis Division concerning DELANO ELMER WALKER on April 26, 1968, by Special Agent HAROLD R. DOBSON, disclosed that during 1965 WALKER reported that while drinking in a bar in St. Louis on November 9, 1965, he was approached by a single unidentified white male who talked about the racial situation and the possibility of his assassinating Reverend KING. He alleged that the individual gave him \$50.00 and indicated that he would contact him in a few days to make more definite plans. He stated that thereafter the same man contacted him on November 11, 1965, at his residence at Elvins, Missouri, and that he told the individual that he was not interested. The Chief of Police, Elvins, Missouri, interviewed WALKER's wife and neighbors on November 11, 1965, and they advised that no one had visited the WALKER residence on that date.

AT MOBERLY, MISSOURI

The following investigation was conducted by Special Agent WILLIAM R. DUNCAN:

WALKER was located at the Missouri Training School for Men, Moberly, Missouri, where he is serving a three-year sentence for assault. He was originally sentenced October 2, 1967, and was received at the Training School on November 14, 1967. The record indicated that during interview by prison officials on November 20, 1967, he mentioned several "bizarre incidents" including an allegation that he had been contacted to assassinate KING. Prison records indicate that WALKER has a history of mental illness.

He was interviewed on April 26, 1968, by Special Agent DUNCAN, at which time he advised that several months ago, while

321

2

SL: 44-775

drinking in a bar in St. Louis two men talked to him about the racial situation and that one of them gave him \$50.00 and stated they would see him in a few days concerning the possibility of assassinating KING. Three or four days later three men in a new Buick automobile drove to his home at Elvins, Missouri, and he told them that he was not interested in their proposition. He claimed that his wife had also seen these men. He stated that shortly after the incident he had been taken to a State Mental Hospital at Farmington, Missouri.

322

1
SL: 44-775
HRD:jfb

RE: PREVIOUS THREATS TO DR. KING -
BENNY K. PINKSTON, FBI NUMBER
314 743 1

AT ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

A review of St. Louis file on April 27, 1968, by Special Agent HAROLD R. DOBSON disclosed receipt of information October 9, 1964, from the St. Louis, Missouri, Police Department, that captioned individual had been reported by the Police Department of Cairo, Illinois, to have threatened Dr. KING's life and to have consulted Attorney DAVID V. LANSDEN, Cairo, Illinois, as to what would happen to him if he killed KING. The Cairo, Illinois, Police Department indicated PINKSTON was reported to be in Sikeston, Missouri, when foregoing information was received.

The Little Rock, Arkansas, Division advised on August 18, 1967, that captioned individual, who is also known as B. K. PINKSTON, "HARDWALKER," "PREACHER," and "PROFESSOR," was described as a Negro male, born October 11, 1925, at Forrest City, Arkansas, height - 5 feet 5 inches, weight - 140 pounds, brown eyes, black hair, medium build, with a two inch vertical scar on his forehead. His listed residence was given as Forrest City, Arkansas, but it was indicated he made frequent trips from there and that he had claimed to have traveled in Mexico extensively.

Files of the St. Louis, Missouri, Police Department, as examined on April 26, 1968, by Investigative Clerk JOHN D. DYER, JR., disclosed that BENNY J. PINKSTON, FBI Number 314 743 1, had been arrested by that Department on February 14, 1968, and charged with the possession of marijuana. The record indicated he had been released on bail March 13, 1968. At the time of the arrest he gave no St. Louis address but listed residences at 143 West Scott Street, Forrest City, Arkansas, and 143 West or South Cotton Street, Kansas City, Missouri.

1

SL: 44-775
WCJ:jfb

AT ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

PREVIOUS THREATS TO DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

By communication dated April 26, 1968, Indianapolis Office requested the St. Louis Office to furnish San Francisco a photograph of LAWRENCE DONALD STOUT, a subject of a former Bureau case, and possible co-conspirator in this case.

On April 27, 1968, Special Agent WALTER C. JOHNSON forwarded a 1953 photograph of LAWRENCE D. STOUT, Federal Bureau of Investigation Number 49 59 380, to San Francisco for their investigative assistance in determining if STOUT is a possible co-conspirator.

324

SL: 44-775

MISCELLANEOUS

325

1

SL: 44-775

WCJ:jfb

AT ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

BACKGROUND - JAMES EARL RAY

By communication dated April 25, 1968, Kansas City Office advised St. Louis that Mrs. JEAN PRANGER, Columbia, Missouri, knew an ex-convict by the name of JOHN RAY, whose wife was named LINDA. RAY at the time was under the supervision of State Parole Officer LEMUEL HARRY at Belleville, Illinois. HARRY currently employed at Brown Shoe Company, St. Louis, Missouri.

On April 27, 1968, LEMUEL HARRY, 112 South Eighth Street, Belleville, Illinois, employed at Brown Shoe Company, St. Louis, Missouri, advised Special Agent WALTER C. JOHNSON that he was a former State Parole Officer at Belleville, Illinois, from 1951 to 1953. He recalled LINDA RAY, a German war bride, worked under his supervision at Wohl Shoe Company, St. Louis, Missouri, about fourteen years ago but he did not know her husband or recall that he was a parolee under his supervision. He pointed out that fifteen years had elapsed since he was a Parole Officer and the names of parolees under his supervision had been forgotten.

JAMES EARL RAY was unknown to LEMUEL HARRY.

326

1
SL 44-775
HRD:pjh

TRANSPORTATION CHECK

AT ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI:

On April 11, 1968, Mr. DAVID LEIGH, Manager, St. Louis -
Lambert Airport, advised SA HAROLD R. DOBSON no international
flights originate or terminate at the St. Louis Airport.

327

1

SL 44-775
HRD:paw

POSSIBILITY OF RAY'S RELATIVES
IN ELSBERRY, MISSOURI

On April 24, 1968, the Bureau advised of receipt of information from one RAY RATLIFF, Washington, D. C., to the effect he had distant cousins named RAY in the Elsberry, Missouri, area, who might be related to the subject RAY. He suggested his brother, SAM RATLIFF, would know the identities and locations of these cousins.

The following investigation was conducted by SA WILLIAM R. DUNCAN, on April 24, 1968.

Mr. SAM RATLIFF, Route 3, Box 277, Butler, Missouri, advised that the only three cousins named RAY known to him in the Elsberry, Missouri, area are GUY RAY, operator of the R & B Quarry; EARL RAY, superintendent of the Elsberry Drainage District; and, LEO RAY, a retired mechanic. He had no information that they were in any way related to the subject.

Chief of Police JOHN E. STEWARD, Elsberry, Missouri, and Sheriff IRL ELLIOTT, Troy, Missouri, advised on the same date that GUY, EARL, and LEO RAY of Elsberry, Missouri, are individuals of good character and reputation. They stated further that there have been no indications that subject was in the Elsberry area.

328

1
SL: 44-775
WRB:klr

Re: JAMES EARL RAY
FAMILY

On Saturday, April 20, 1968, HARRY NAETER, part owner of the Southeast Missourian newspaper, Cape Girardeau, Missouri, telephonically contacted the Cape Girardeau Resident Agent, DOUGLAS ROSENBERGER, and advised that their employee, GENE ORR, had reported to him that he, ORR, had been in the Last Chance Pizza Parlor in Cape Girardeau, on Friday, April 19, 1968. While there, he overheard a person named MELVIN DECK, who stated he lived on a farm between Advance and Zalma, Missouri, state that he knew the father of JAMES EARL RAY, who was being sought for the killing of Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING.

AT FREDERICKTOWN, MISSOURI

The following investigation was conducted on April 23, 1968, by Special Agent WILLIAM R. BURTON:

MELVIN E. DECK, Route 2, Box 200, Fredericktown, Missouri, advised that he was in Cape Girardeau on Friday, April 19, 1968, at a pizza parlor and tavern and saw a photograph of the man wanted for killing Dr. KING on television, and mentioned to the bartender that he knew the father of this man. DECK then related as follows:

He used to be acquainted with BILL RAY, who he claimed to be the father of JAMES EARL RAY, and that he last saw BILL RAY about five years ago at an auction in Cottage Hills, Illinois, which is a suburb of Alton, Illinois. BILL RAY was then living at Alton and had moved to there from the Zalma, Missouri, vicinity in about 1940. BILL RAY originally married VESTA MEADORS, who he claimed to be the mother of JAMES EARL RAY. VESTA MEADORS moved to Alton with BILL RAY but then moved back to Zalma, where she lives with her mother. He did not know if VESTA MEADORS and BILL RAY were divorced or separated. The father of VESTA MEADORS was TONY MEADORS, who is now deceased. He stated that BILL RAY had two sons and two daughters that he knows of; the youngest son being named COTTON, and whom he thought was identical

329

2
SL: 44-775

with JAMES EARL RAY, and an older son, named JOE, present location not known. In addition, the two daughters' names he could not furnish, but stated that they were married and lived in the Alton, Illinois, vicinity. Mr. DECK made his identification from the photographs contained on Identification Order number 4182. He stated that the profile photograph of JAMES EARL RAY, the one on the left, was almost an exact likeness of the son COTTON, who is the son of BILL RAY, now residing at Alton, Illinois. Further, he stated that he saw this COTTON RAY about four or five years ago with his father at the auction in Cottage Hills, Illinois.

Based on information already developed in this matter concerning the relatives of the subject, JAMES EARL RAY, and the fact that JAMES EARL RAY was in the Missouri State Penitentiary four to five years ago, no further investigation was undertaken to identify or interview any other relatives of BILL RAY or BILL RAY himself, as outlined above by Mr. MELVIN E. DECK.

330

1

SL 44-775
HRD/leh

RE: REVEREND FLOYD BROWER

The Little Rock Division advised on April 8, 1968, of receipt of information from DOROTHY JONES, Route 1, Senath, Missouri, an employee in the Commissary at Blytheville, Air Force Base, Arkansas, on that date, that she had attended services at the First Methodist Church, Senath, Missouri, on April 7, 1968, during which a Brother BROWER, a visiting minister, who is District Superintendent of the Methodist Church, residing at Poplar Bluff, Missouri, made the statement from the pulpit that he was sorry to hear of KING's death but would be even sorrier when the announcement was made identifying the person responsible. He stated this was because the assassin was from Pemiscot County, Missouri. She stated she interpreted this statement to mean that the assassin was from Pemiscot County, Missouri, but was not presently residing there.

AT POPLAR BLUFF, MISSOURI

On April 9, 1968, Reverend FLOYD BROWER, 1709 Big Bend, Poplar Bluff, Missouri, advised SA WILLIAM R. BURTON that the basis for his statement from the pulpit at the Senath, Missouri, Methodist Church the previous Sunday that he was sorry to hear of KING's death but would be even sorrier when the announcement was made identifying the assassin had been based on an article appearing in either the St. Louis Globe Democrat, a St. Louis Metropolitan daily newspaper, or one of the Southeast Missouri papers, which stated that the search for KING's assassin had spread to the Boot Heel area of Missouri, and that he was possibly from Pemiscot County. Reverend BROWER stated he had also heard several rumors that the assassin was from Pemiscot County. He advised he had no other basis for making the statement; had never heard anyone mention names of a possible assassin; and was now sorry he had made such a statement, from the pulpit.

331

SL: 44-775

INVESTIGATIONS OF PERSONS BEARING
PHYSICAL RESEMBLANCE TO SUBJECT,
ORIGINATING IN OTHER DIVISIONS, AND
RESOLVED BY ST. LOUIS, OR ORIGINATING
IN ST. LOUIS, AND REFERRED TO OTHER
DIVISIONS FOR RESOLUTION.

332

1
SL 44-775
HRD:amb

RE: WILLARD BENFIELD, JR., FBI #495 21 C

Information was received April 8, 1968, from the Detroit Division that captioned individual, an extreme racist with a deep hatred for Negroes, and his father, WILLIAM BENFIELD, SR., had left Benton Harbor, Michigan, by automobile during the early morning hours of April 4, 1968, and later returned on April 7, 1968. The purpose of their trip was alleged to be the funeral of BENFIELD, JR.'s brother and it was indicated he had gone to Hayti, Missouri.

The following investigation was conducted by SA WILLIAM R. BURTON at Kennett, Missouri, on April 9, 1968:

The April 4, 1968, edition of the "Daily Dunklin Democrat", the only daily newspaper in Kennett, Missouri, disclosed that funeral services for MAYFORD CLINTON BENFIELD were to be held on Friday, April 5, 1968, at 2:30 p.m. This article stated that MAYFORD CLINTON BENFIELD was the son of WILLARD BENFIELD and GLADYS BENFIELD. Relatives were listed as the mother, residing in Kennett, Missouri; the father, in Benton Harbor, Michigan; a brother, WILLARD BENFIELD, JR., of Benton Harbor, Michigan; a brother, CHARLES R. BENFIELD, of Phoenix, Arizona; and a brother, DONALD L. BENFIELD, of Kennett, Missouri. The pallbearers for the funeral were JOE CHESIRE, BILL BRADSHAW, HERSHEL WAYNE, and three other individuals, all of Kennett, Missouri.

JOE CHESIRE, 1509 Wimberly, employed by the Kennett Outboard Motor Service, and BILL BRADSHAW, 804 Court, owner of the Kennett Outboard Motor Service, advised that WILLARD BENFIELD, SR. and WILLARD BENFIELD, JR. had arrived in Kennett as they best recalled on Tuesday or Wednesday, April 2 or 3, 1968. BRADSHAW was positive he had seen WILLARD BENFIELD, SR. and JR. at the funeral home in Kennett on Thursday evening, April 4, 1968, as well as Friday, April 5, 1968. He believed that they had left Kennett to return to Benton Harbor, Michigan, on Saturday, April 6, 1968.

333

1

RE: SUSPECT ROBERT BOSHERS
(Bob Bossier, phonetic)

SL 44-775

JEL/leh On April 24, 1968, the Jackson Division advised of receipt of information that BOB BOSSIER (phonetic) of De Soto, Missouri, might have information concerning RAY.

AT DE SOTO, MISSOURI

The following investigation was conducted by SA JAMES E. LINDSAY:

On April 25, 1968, Mrs. ROBERT BOSHERS, 403 Wine Street, advised that approximately a week ago her husband deserted her and is also believed to have stolen some checks from his employer, JOHN WESLEY ANDERSON, and cashed several of these checks.

She advised BOSHERS is an alcoholic. She also advised that BOSHERS did not mention that he had known JAMES EARL RAY who was identified as the killer of MARTIN LUTHER KING.

She stated BOSHERS has served time at the Federal Penitentiary, El Reno, Oklahoma, and at the Missouri State Penitentiary, Jefferson City, Missouri.

She has no knowledge of his receiving a sentence in the State of Michigan and has no knowledge of his being wanted in that state.

She related BOSHERS has left her on several occasions and been gone for a month or so at a time. She believes he will probably keep going now that he stole the check from his employer.

Chief of Police LLOYD DAVIS, DeSoto, Missouri, Police Department, advised that sometime on the weekend of April 20, 1968, ROBERT BOSHERS cashed two checks both for over \$100.00 in the DeSoto, Missouri, area and JOHN ANDERSON claims they were stolen from his checkbook and other checks maybe missing.

Chief DAVIS described BOSHERS as a confirmed alcoholic, that he spent the majority of his time, when not working, drinking.

334

2

SL 44-775

He advised he had no record on BOSHERS but understands he did time for cashing stolen Federal money orders or bonds. He believes the state's charges were for forgery.

He advised he would be alert for BOSHERS return.

335

1

SL 44-775
HRD/leh

RE: SUSPECT RICHARD L. BREY

AT ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

On May 3, 1968, JOSEPHINE JONES, Clerk, One-Hour Martinizing Cleaners, 5631 Delmar, St. Louis, Missouri, telephonically advised SA PEMBROKE WASHINGTON that a customer had entered the shop on that date who met the description of the subject in this case. She stated he was wearing a dark suit with a white or light blue shirt with a necktie. She stated he gave the name "BREY" and was driving a 1964 Chevrolet, bearing 1968 Missouri license PS0-326.

A license check disclosed that license was issued to RICHARD L. BREY, 1505 West Worley, Columbia, Missouri.

336

1

SL 44-775
HRD:paw

Suspects: ANNIE COLEMAN
OLLIE OLTELO

On April 26, 1968, the Bureau furnished a copy of a letter received from ANNA DAWSON, Ellington, Missouri, in which she stated she had seen the slayers of Dr. KING and that they were two women named ANNIE COLEMAN, of Oakland, California, and OLLIE OLTELO, of Overland, California.

AT ELLINGTON, MISSOURI

Mrs. ANNA DAWSON, Ellington, Missouri, was contacted on May 1, 1968, by SA WILLIAM R. BURTON. Mrs. DAWSON stated she had a direct communication with God and He had told her the killers of Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING were ANNIE COLEMAN, of Oakland, California, and OLLIE OLTELO, of Overland, California, and that she should notify the FBI. She stated she had never heard of these two individuals before; that she knows nothing of their backgrounds or occupations; and, that she was unable to furnish any additional information concerning them.

337

1

RE: LOOK ALIKE
JAMES EUGENE GAULT

SL: 44-775

HCJ:klr

AT ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

The following investigation was conducted by Special Agent HARRY C. JUNG at St. Louis, Missouri:

On April 17, 1968, the Kansas City Division advised that a check of Missouri driver's license records, Jefferson City, Missouri, disclosed that one JAMES EUGENE GAULT, born July 21, 1931, which is the same date of birth given by suspect ERIC STARVO GALT, has been issued a Missouri driver's license. This individual listed his residence as RFD #2, Box 157a, High Ridge, Missouri, and his employer as G. L. Tarlton General Contracting Company, 5500 West Park Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri.

On April 17, 1968, JOHN W. HALE, Assistant Office Manager, G. L. Tarlton Contracting Company, advised that JAMES E. GAULT, Social Security number [REDACTED] residing at the McKinley Hotel, Twelfth and Delmar Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri, was employed intermittently from 1959 to February 1, 1967. HALE stated that he mailed the W-2 form of GAULT for his 1967 earnings to 3476 Macklind Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri.

On April 17, 1968, Mrs. IRVIN GOZA, 3476 Macklind Avenue, advised that she is the aunt of JAMES EUGENE GAULT. She stated that her nephew moved to Florida in February, 1967, but she did not know his address. She did, however, furnish the address of GAULT's mother, who resides in St. Louis, Missouri. Mrs. GOZA stated that her nephew does not, in any way, resemble photographs of ERIC GALT, which she had previously viewed in local newspapers.

On April 17, 1968, Mrs. FRANK (IDA DOROTHY) DAECH, 6904 Hampton Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri, advised that she is the mother of JAMES EUGENE GAULT. She stated that her son resides in Miami, Florida, and exhibited a letter from him postmarked April 4, 1968, at Miami, bearing a return address of General Delivery, Ludlon Branch, Miami, Florida. Mrs. DAECH stated that her son was not identical with ERIC STARVO GALT, whose photograph has appeared in local newspapers.

338

2
SL: 44-775

She described her son as follows:

Name	JAMES EUGENE GAULT
Race	White
Sex	Male
Height	6'1"
Weight	155 pounds
Build	Slender
Hair	Dark brown
Eyes	Brown
Complexion	Dark
Date of Birth	July 20, 1931
Place of Birth	St. Louis, Missouri
Education	Completed four years high school, Cleveland High School, St. Louis, Missouri
Occupation	Carpenter
Military Service	Served in U. S. Marine Corps, Receiving honorable discharge
Father	JAMES H. GAULT 21165 Hesterides Tampa, Florida.

339

1
SL: 44-775
HRD:jfb

SUSPECT - BENJAMIN FRANKLIN GIBSON

AT ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

The following investigation was conducted by SA RICHARD T. HRADSKY:

On April 7, 1968, Mr. ROBERT HODGINS, Sinclair Service Station Operator, 8260 Forsyth Avenue, Clayton, Missouri, who stated he had observed an artist's conception of the killer of Dr. KING in one of the St. Louis newspapers and was of the opinion that the artist's conception resembled BENJAMIN FRANKLIN GIBSON, Imperial Wizard of the Ozark Klan, National Knights of the Klu Klux Klan. He stated that another employee of the service station, JIM (LAST NAME UNKNOWN), of High Ridge, Missouri, was of the opinion he might have rented a car to GIBSON the previous week. HODGINS stated he did not know how to get hold of this employee, as he was off duty but that he would be at work in the service station on Monday, April 8, 1968.

The following investigation was conducted by Special Agent JACK A. FRENCH:

Mr. ARTHUR ROWOLD, Maintenance Supervisor, Motor Transportation Leasing Company, St. Louis, Missouri, who resides at 220 Borchester, Belleville, Illinois, telephonically advised that his foreman on the mid-watch at the company, BENJAMIN FRANKLIN GIBSON had been at work every day, Monday through Friday, during the previous week (April 1 through April 5, 1968). He stated that GIBSON's normal hours are from 11:30 p.m. to 8:00 a.m.

Copies of GIBSON's photographs were furnished the Memphis Division on April 7, 1968.

The Identification Division, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington, D. C., advised on April 7, 1968, that the remaining unidentified latent fingerprints in this case were not identical with fingerprints of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN GIBSON, FBI Number 107 109 C.

340

1
SL: 44-775
JOT: pdp

AT ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

RE: LOOK-ALIKE
INDIVIDUAL ON GREYHOUND BUS
COLUMBUS, OHIO TO ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

The following investigation was conducted by
SA JOHN O. TRETHEWEY, JR.:

The Cincinnati Division advised telephonically and by teletype to the Director, April 19, 1968, that an individual resembling JAMES EARL RAY should be arriving at St. Louis Greyhound Bus Depot at 2:20 p.m. on bus 4472 arriving from Columbus, Ohio, same date.

SAs JOSEPH A. DUBYAK, DEAN R. SHUMWAY and JOHN O. TRETHEWEY, JR. were dispatched to meet bus 4472 at the Greyhound Bus Depot where all passengers alighting from the bus were carefully observed and the interior of the bus immediately inspected. However, no person identifiable with individual described by Cincinnati was observed departing bus or on empty bus. The bus terminal was checked before and after departure of the bus without success.

The only male person on the bus remotely resembling subject's appearance and the description furnished by Cincinnati was CHARLES WARREN HALE, date of birth February 27, 1928, at Anson, Texas, who was en route from Holyoke, Massachusetts, to a Veterans Hospital near Abilene, Texas. However, HALE is definitely not identical to the subject. The driver of bus 4472, WAYNE LESTER WILLIAMS, Greyhound Bus Lines, 801 North Broadway, residence 4508 Northeastern Avenue, Wanamaker, Indiana, advised SA KENNETH N. DELANOY that he drove bus 4472 from Indianapolis to St. Louis arriving at 2:20 p.m. on April 19, 1968. He stated that he had only 12 passengers from Indianapolis to St. Louis, several of whom were Negroes and females, but that he does not know the destination of any of the passengers nor is it normal procedure to check their tickets. WILLIAMS viewed a photograph of JAMES EARL RAY and stated that no one of that description was among his passengers. He did, however, recall one individual who sat in the right front seat of the bus who was about 30 years of age, 5'8" to 5'9" tall, weighing

341

2

SL: 44-775

150 pounds, who appeared to be intoxicated and who was en route from Massachusetts to Texas. He recalled that he had observed FBI Agents interviewing this individual. He could recall no other person in any way meeting the description in question and did not believe this individual was identical with the subject.

342

1

SL 44-775
JRM/leh

RE: SUSPECT MYRLE HAGGERTT
LOOK-ALIKE

The following investigation was conducted by SA J. ROBERT MEIGS on April 22, 1968:

JOHN MUELLER, owner and operator of the Meramec Motel, 458 South Highway 66, advised that according to his records an individual using the name of MYRLE HAGGERTT, 618 Broadway Avenue, Nashville, Tennessee, registered in cabin number 6 on April 16, 1968. He stated this individual stayed there on the night of April 16 and April 17 and left sometime during the day of April 18, 1968. MUELLER stated that although he did not see HAGGERTT, he understands that he was accompanied by a woman and a small child. MUELLER stated that he understands that MYRLE HAGGERTT is a well known western country star who sings in Nashville, Tennessee, and has made records and radio and television appearances. He stated that he doubts that the individual in cabin number 6 was actually MYRLE HAGGERTT but was probably someone impersonating him.

MUELLER stated that according to the registration card HAGGERTT was driving an automobile bearing Tennessee license plate MG 3013 or MS 3013.

GILBERT MC PEEK advised that he works at the Meramec Motel and also at the eating place located next door. He said that he recalls an individual using the name of MYRLE HAGGERTT registering at the motel on Tuesday, April 16, 1968.

He stated that this individual was driving a 1964 Chevrolet automobile painted dark green which had been hit on one side. He stated that HAGGERTT was accompanied by a woman who claimed to be BONNIE OWENS, who is a singer of western songs and known in Nashville, Tennessee. He stated that he doubts that the individual posing as MYRLE HAGGERTT or the individual posing as BONNIE OWENS were actually the well known singing stars from Nashville, Tennessee.

343

SL 44-775

He said that HAGGERTT was a white male, about 35-38 years of age, about 5'8 $\frac{1}{2}$ " tall, 180-190 pounds, husky build, blond wavy hair. He stated that the woman who represented herself to be BONNIE OWENS was about 45 and quite heavy. He said he understands that HAGGERTT could play the guitar and sing quite well and did sing one evening at the Red Pony Lounge located about a mile east of the motel on Highway 66. Photographs of JAMES EARL RAY were shown to Mr. MC PEEK and he stated that he does not resemble HAGGERTT in any way.

Mrs. GLADYS MC PEEK, wife of GILBERT MC PEEK, advised she also works at the Meramec Motel and had occasion to see the individual using the name of MYRLE HAGGERTT around the motel and eating place next door on April 16 and April 17, 1968. She stated that HAGGERTT was accompanied by a woman who claimed to be BONNIE OWENS and who appeared to be 40 years old and very heavy. Photographs of JAMES EARL RAY were shown to Mrs. MC PEEK and she stated that he does not resemble the individual using the name of MYRLE HAGGERTT.

NELDA DALTON, waitress at the Red Pony Lounge, 650 South Highway Drive advised that she recalls an individual giving the name of MYRLE HAGGERTT accompanied by a woman who sang and played the guitar at the Red Pony Lounge on the night of April 17, 1968. She said this individual claimed to be MYRLE HAGGERTT who is a well known country western star but she said that she and most of the other individuals in the lounge did not believe that he was actually this individual. She said, however, that he was a very good singer and guitar player and received excellent attention from the people in the lounge. She described HAGGERTT as a white male, around 38-39 years of age, 190 pounds, blond hair, husky build.

Photographs of JAMES EARL RAY were shown to her and she said that she is positive that the individual who sang in the Red Pony Lounge was not identical to RAY.

344

1
SL 44-775
HRD:amb

RE: DONNIE LEON HARDEN, Army Serial Number [REDACTED]

On April 9, 1968, the Bureau advised the Dallas Division had received an anonymous call from a female to the effect that the subject of this case had Army Serial Number [REDACTED] and that Army sources had advised that serial number was assigned to one DONNIE LEON HARDEN.

AT ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

A review on April 10, 1968, of the Army service record for DONNIE LEON HARDEN, Army Serial Number [REDACTED], on file at the Military Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, Missouri, by IC R. DOUGLAS KING, disclosed that HARDEN had served in the U. S. Army on active duty from May 1, 1958, at Montgomery, Alabama, to honorably discharged from active duty and transferred to the reserves at Oakland, California, March 31, 1961. He thereafter entered on active duty in the Army at Montgomery, Alabama, on May 22, 1963, and served until honorably discharged due to hardship at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, June 4, 1965. Rank at time of discharge was Specialist 4th Grade. He also had inactive service in the Alabama National Guard April 21, 1955, to April 30, 1958, and May 15, 1962, to December 17, 1962. He served in the inactive U. S. Army Reserve from April 1, 1961, to April 30, 1962.

His military occupation was listed as communications center specialist. His civilian occupation was listed as welder, farmer, and musician (singing and guitar).

The files failed to show any courts-martial or absence without official leave but did indicate a reduction in rank in December, 1962, while in the National Guard due to inefficiency. No details appeared.

Top Secret Clearance was granted him on September 30, 1958, based on background investigation completed September 24, 1958, by the Army Security Agency, Third Army Area, Dossier [REDACTED].

The following description appeared in the files:

345

2
SL 44-775

Race	White
Sex	Male
Height	6'2"
Weight	235
Hair	Brown
Eyes	Blue
Born	April 21, 1938, Conecuh County, Alabama
Relatives	VADA HARDEN, nee COLBURN, wife, born 1934, Texas, date and place of marriage not shown; Parents, LEON and ALICE HARDEN, Route C, Evergreen, Alabama; Brother, PAUL SAM HARDEN, Route C, Evergreen, Alabama; Brother, LARRY H. HARDEN, Route C, Evergreen, Alabama; Parents-in-law, SAM and SYBIL COLBURN, 701 Roxella, Houston, Texas
Social Security #	
Selective Service	registrant of Local Board 18, Evergreen, Alabama
Character references	All Evergreen, Alabama, J. C. JOHNSON, Sheriff's Department; DELMA BOWERS, Southern Coach and Body Company; ROBERT KENDALL, State Senator; WILEY SALTER, State Representa- tive; MABERY COOK, Cook Service Station June, 1956, to August, 1956, A. W. Williams Drilling Company, West Virginia Street, Mobile, Alabama, supervisor, SAM HAGERMAN; September, 1956, to November, 1956, Fletcher and King, Andalusia, Alabama, LEELAND FLETCHER, supervisor; November, 1956, to April, 1958, Southern Coach and Body Company, Evergreen, Alabama, supervisor, DELMA BOWERS;
Employments	

346

Employments
(continued)

April, 1961, to December, 1961,
Southern Coach and Body Company,
Evergreen, Alabama;
May, 1962, to August, 1962,
Conecuh County Survey Department,
Evergreen, Alabama,
supervisor, MARLON WILKINS;
September, 1962, to November,
1962, Brown and Root Construction
Company, Houston, Texas,
PAUL JAMES, supervisor;
November, 1962, to March, 1963,
Peden's Iron and Steel Company,
Houston, Texas, ARCHIE VERHAGEN,
supervisor;
April, 1963, to May, 1963, Southern
Coach and Body Company, Evergreen,
Alabama, supervisor,
CLEVE GARNLY.

Throughout his service his home address is listed as Route C, Evergreen, Alabama. In 1963, an address of 6125 Ridgemont Avenue, Houston, Texas, appeared and his address at the time of final discharge was listed as 701 Roxella, Houston, Texas.

He has blood group "O". He received an Expert's Badge in the M-1 carbine. He had foreign service of one year, eight months, and fifteen days in the Pacific Theater.

A letter from his wife appeared in the files dated April 2, 1965, addressed to Lieutenant General J. L. RICHARDSON, Fort Houston, Texas, which alleged that HARDEN had made false statements in applying for a hardship discharge. She stated HARDEN had indicated he was going to run his father's firm in Evergreen, Alabama, and that she was a nervous wreck worrying about him going overseas -- all of this was untrue. She stated that he had a job waiting for him at Brown and Root Construction Company as a heavy equipment operator. She further stated that he had been a different man since his service in Okinawa as he had beaten her several times and had spent one night in jail when arrested by the Alamo

347

4
SL 44-775

Heights Police Department in San Antonio, Texas, for having beaten her. She stated his temper and filthy language were terrible. She stated she had tried to leave him but had been told by him he would kill her and all three of their children if she did. She stated he purchased a rifle and cartridges the following day. She stated he had torn up several pieces of their furniture, half their clothing, broken her watch, and had choked her on several occasions. She further alleged mistreatment of their 15-month-old son.

The files further reflected the statement by HARDEN that his wife had previously suffered a complete nervous breakdown and that she apparently was approaching a similar breakdown at the time of his discharge.

A 1963 photograph of HARDEN appears in the file.

348

1

SL 44-775
EMR/leh

RE: SUSPECT DAVID ERNEST HAWKINS

The El Paso Office advised on April 18, 1968, of receipt of information from one Mrs. HARLEY HERRALD that the captioned individual called her on that date from New Orleans, indicating he was in trouble and was coming to see her. She believed he might be implicated in this case.

AT ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

A review on April 18, 1968, at Military Personnel Records Center, disclosed the following, by IC EARL M. RANEY:

DAVID ERNEST HAWKINS, Serial Number [REDACTED], served in the United States Army, January 26, 1951, to September 27, 1957. Honorably discharged by reason of early release of overseas returnee.

Tried and convicted by Summary Court-martial, July 24, 1957, for absence without proper authority. Sentenced to thirty days confinement at hard labor and forfeiture of \$50 of pay.

Army records for HAWKINS failed to disclose any treatment for mental or nervous disorders.

No record of specialized training in demolition or explosives was noted.

The following background and descriptive information was contained in the record:

Date of Birth	June 5, 1929
Place of Birth	Wellborn, Florida
Height	5'10 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
Weight	131 pounds
Hair	Brown
Eyes	Hazel
Addresses	100 West Oakland Boulevard, Oakland Park, Florida, (January, 1951, and October, 1951)

349

2

SL 44-775

Post Office Box 835,
Oakland Park, Florida
(September, 1957)

Relatives

Father, ERNEST ADAM HAWKINS,
same address as above
(March, 1955);

Mother, ENA MC KEITHEN
HAWKINS, (deceased - date
not shown);

Sister, JEAN HAWKINS WALTON,
Box 118, Oakland Park, Flo-
rida, (January, 1951)

Outstanding Characteristics. Wears glasses for
astigmatism and near-
sightedness

Photograph

None available

Selective Service Number

Local Draft Board

#441, Fort Lauderdale,
Florida

Employment

Gulf Oil Company, Everglades,
Florida, as secretary
(1947-1951)

Education

Florida Southern College,
Lakeland, Florida (1943-
(1947), majored in religion

Civilian Occupation

Religious director

Military Occupation

Personnel Management Special-
ist.

HAWKINS was assigned Headquarters Company 7811
AU SPO 757 (GERMANY) during 1955.

350

1
SL: 44-775
HRD:jfb

SUSPECT - THOMAS ROBERT HENDERSON

AT ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

The following investigation was conducted by Special Agent RICHARD BOYD SMITH:

On April 8, 1968, Reverend OLIVER W. GIBSON, Parish Temple, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, 800 North Union, St. Louis, Missouri, advised he had been Master of Ceremonies in a memorial to Dr. KING on that date and following the evening services in his church, at approximately 9:00 p.m., he was told a white man desired to see him. This individual gave his name only as 'COLLINS'. Reverend GIBSON described him as being 5 feet 8½ inches tall, 155 to 160 pounds, ruddy complexion, blond straight hair, scar on the right cheek and scar on the left hand. He was well dressed in a dark green business suit with a shirt and tie. He wore a watch with a black face on his left hand and there was a ring on his right ring finger with the initial "H."

At the conclusion of the interview the individual admitted to Reverend GIBSON his real name was THOMAS ROBERT HENDERSON. He then told Reverend GIBSON he was not a beggar but a thief and a murderer. He claimed to possess \$10,000.00 in counterfeit checks in an attache case he was carrying, together with several credit cards. He claimed he had come to St. Louis from Chicago on the morning of April 7, 1968, but did not indicate the method of his transportation. He stated that he desired to find peace and claimed that he had recently been in Atlant, Georgia, and had met with Dr. KING who had befriended him. He stated he had told KING he had but one year to live due to a brain tumor. He was in possession of a card bearing KING's name and his home and office telephone numbers.

HENDERSON did not so state but gave the impression to GIBSON he was the assassin of KING by stating he had ordered

351

2

SL: 44-775

someone killed. He wondered if he should turn himself in. He stated he had studied psychology, had been in the military and had won both bronze and silver stars. He admitted to having used narcotics. He wanted GIBSON to help him find peace. He had only \$.18 in cash and GIBSON gave him \$5.00. He stated he wanted GIBSON to help him and stated he would meet GIBSON at the church at 10:30 on the following morning (April 8, 1968).

He claimed that he was wanted both by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Mafia but stated "they can't catch me."

The files of the St. Louis Division disclose that THOMAS ROBERT HENDERSON, FBI Number 719 320 C, has suicidal tendencies, once was a narcotics user, is a mental case and a drifter and has numerous arrests.

Information was received from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington, D. C., telephonically on April 8, 1968, that THOMAS ROBERT HENDERSON was not wanted by the FBI.

On April 8, 1968, Reverend GIBSON stated that HENDERSON had failed to keep his appointment with him on that date and that HENDERSON's whereabouts were unknown.

Reverend GIBSON recalled that during the original contact by HENDERSON, HENDERSON had indicated he has always experienced trouble with his parents and that he had first noticed this difficulty at the age of ten when he has sworn at his mother, whose name was PEGGY. He had stated he rebelled against authority. He further claimed to have been in Atlanta, New Orleans, Texas, California, Colorado (where he had relatives) and that he had flown from Chicago to St. Louis. He stated that he had been in jail much of the time.

Reverend GIBSON stated he was confused as to the purpose of HENDERSON's visit and was fearful of being alone with him due to his alleged wanted status. He stated he did not desire to spend more time with HENDERSON due to the late hour and circumstances under which he had been originally contacted. He stated he could only account for the contact by assuming that HENDERSON had been in the crowd at the KING Memorial where the location of GIBSON's

352

3

SL: 44-775

church was announced. He felt this visitor was the same as THOMAS ROBERT HENDERSON, FBI Number 719 320 C.

On April 9, 1968, the Identification Division, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington, D. C., advised that the remaining unidentified latent prints in this case were not identical with the fingerprints of TOMMY ROBERT HENDERSON, FBI Number 719 320 C.

The following investigation was conducted by Special Agent EDWARD M. MORELAND:

On April 8, 1968, Reverend CLYDE OSTER, First Baptist Church, 6136 Garfield, Berkeley, Missouri, advised that at 12:55 p.m. on that date he had received a telephone call from a man who had identified himself as PHILLIP BANELLI (phonetic), who advised him he was at Lambert-St. Louis Airport and that he had a serious problem which he desired to discuss with a minister.

Reverend OSTER proceeded to the Airport to counsel BANELLI. He described BANELLI and the story BANELLI gave him the same as THOMAS ROBERT HENDERSON was described by Reverend GIBSON, as set out previously herein. At the conclusion of Reverend OSTER's conversation with BANELLI, BANELLI requested that he drive him into St. Louis. Reverend OSTER thereafter drove BANELLI to Ogden and Easton Avenues, where BANELLI left the automobile at 4:30 p.m.

353

1
SL: 44-775
HRD: pdp

AT ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

RE: LOOK-ALIKE
ROBERT DEAN JAMES, aka Jesse James, Jr.

On April 11, 1968, the Milwaukee Office advised that information had been received that Mrs. CANNON (ARLENE) MARTIN of Hayti, Missouri, had stated that one JESSE JAMES, JR. of that city had been out of town on April 4, 1968, but had returned on the evening of that date in the possession of a large unknown amount of cash. She had stated that his mother had asked him if he had killed Dr. KING but that he had not replied but had merely smiled.

AT HAYTI, MISSOURI

The following investigation was conducted by SA DOUGLAS ROSENBERGER:

On April 12, 1968, Mrs. ARLENE MARTIN advised that she is employed as a domestic by JESSE JAMES, SR. of Hayti, Missouri. ROBERT DEAN JAMES, sometimes known as JESSE JAMES, JR., is the son of her employer and resides at 26-1481 Netherland Wood, Apartment 5, Memphis, Tennessee, and is employed by the Memphis Light and Gas Company. He is a white male, 5'8" tall, 30 years of age, reddish-brown wavy hair, 160 pounds, stocky build.

He was in Hayti, Missouri, on April 5, 1968, at which time he borrowed \$225 from his father in order to put his wife into a Memphis hospital. He was driving a yellow Ford Mustang automobile on this trip.

Mrs. MARTIN stated that she overheard some conversation between ROBERT DEAN JAMES and his mother on April 5, 1968, concerning Dr. KING. She was unable to recall the exact words but stated that Mrs. JAMES jokingly asked her son if he had been the one who killed Dr. KING. She had no reason to believe that ROBERT had anything to do with the assassination.

354

1
SL 44-775
HRD:amb

RE: DANCE SCHOOL PROJECT - SUSPECT, AARON ISAAC LOFTON

The Jackson Division telephonically requested review of captioned individual's Army service record on April 15, 1968:

AT ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI:

A review on April 17, 1968, by IC EARL M. RANEY of the Army service record on file at the Military Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, Missouri, for AARON ISAAC LOFTON, Army Serial Number [REDACTED] disclosed he enlisted in the U. S. Army on January 24, 1955, at Jackson, Mississippi. He was thereafter honorably discharged and transferred in the rank of SP3(T) from the U. S. Regular Army Signal Corps from active service to the U. S. Army Reserve, Mississippi Military District, on November 1, 1957, at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, D. C. Discharge was at the convenience of the Government. The terminal date of his reserve obligation was shown as February 8, 1962. He was promoted to the rank of SP4(E4) in the U. S. Army Reserve on June 1, 1958. It was further indicated he had previous service of 11 months 15 days in the 154th Infantry Battalion, Mississippi National Guard (no active Federal service). He had one year, 11 months, 21 days foreign service. He received the Sharpshooter Medal for the M-1 rifle and carbine.

His military occupation was listed as Morse interceptor. His civilian occupation was listed as student and interior decorator.

There was no record of courts-martial or absence without official leave.

His residence both at enlistment and discharge was listed as Post Office Box 64, Summit (Pike), Mississippi.

His date and place of birth were listed as October 28, 1934, at Brookhaven, Mississippi.

355

A background investigation was completed April 22, 1955, by the Third Army, Dossier # [REDACTED], and he was granted Top Secret Security Clearance at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, on May 12, 1955.

The following descriptive data appeared in the file:

Race	Caucasian
Sex	Male
Height	5'11"
Weight	145
Hair	Blond
Eyes	Gray (physical examination on enlistment showed right eye hazel and the left eye green, resulting from congenital heterochromic right iris)
Marital status	Single
Selective Service #	[REDACTED] a registrant of Board #62 at McComb (Pike), Mississippi.

It was indicated he had four years high school and one semester at Southwestern Mississippi Junior College, Summit, Mississippi, majoring in commerce.

His permanent address as of December 13, 1959, was 1164 Ogilvie Drive, Northeast, Atlanta, Georgia.

His parents were listed as AARON ALTON and AGNES NUNNERY LOFTON, Box 64, Summit, Mississippi. Mention was made in the file of a brother but no name was given. At the time of his separation it was noted he suffered a partial deafness, perceptive type, very mild, possibly due to acoustic trauma. He claimed he had suffered from whooping cough, running ears, hayfever, asthma, and frequent indigestion.

356

1.
SI44-775
WRB/pjh

RAY LOOK ALIKE

The following investigation was conducted by SA
WILLIAM R. BURTON, on May 2, 1968:

AT SENATH, MISSOURI:

After an unsuccessful attempt to contact Mrs. NOLA J. OSBORN on April 29, 1968, she was contacted at her home, Route 2, Box 175, Senath, Missouri, on May 2, 1968.

Mrs. OSBORN advised that the information furnished by her in her letter to J. EDGAR HOOVER, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, contained everything that she could possibly think of in regard to the incident which she related in the letter.

She stated that after arriving at her home in Senath on April 11, 1968, she and her daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. GERALD GENTRY, re-hashed the incident and the question of a license plate on the white Cadillac had come up. At that time none of them could remember having noted the license plate and she could think of nothing else concerning this car which would be of any assistance in identifying it. She again stated that the individual she saw driving this car bore a resemblance to the side photograph of JAMES EARL RAY, particularly the hair-line contour. She again stated that the individual was wearing dark glasses. After she and her daughter and son-in-law had pulled off of the highway at the pecan candy store, the Cadillac continued on down the road and once it was out of sight, they continued on their trip and saw it no longer.

357

1
SL: 44-775
HRD:jfb

SUSPECT - ROBERT L. PLUNK

On April 11, 1968, the Springfield Office advised that captioned individual was a passenger on Illinois Central Railroad Train Number 6, bound for St. Louis, as of that date and was in the opinion of railroad personnel of an appearance similar to an artist's conception of the assassin of KING. It was indicated that PLUNK was coming to St. Louis to be examined at the Veterans Administration Hospital.

AT ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

The following investigation was conducted by Special Agent HARRY C. JUNG:

Mr. CHARLES LYONS, Deputy Administrator, Veterans Administration Hospital, Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, advised on April 11, 1968, that ROBERT L. PLUNK had been examined as an out-patient and had departed the hospital prior to the time of interview. To the best of his knowledge, PLUNK had returned home.

Mr. LYONS stated that according to records of the Veterans Administration Hospital, PLUNK was born November 28, 1933, at Adamsville, Tennessee, and has served in the United States Air Force, Serial Number [REDACTED], from March 29, 1954, to January 15, 1955.

He was a patient at the Veterans Administration Hospital in St. Louis from May 27, 1958, to July 1, 1958, [REDACTED] He was transferred to the Veterans Administration Hospital at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, and thereafter to the Veterans Administration Hospital at Murfreesboro, Tennessee, on May 6, 1959. His current residence was listed as Route 2, Michie, Tennessee, and, according to Mr. LYONS' best knowledge, PLUNK is still under the supervision of the Veterans Administration Hospital at Murfreesboro.

358

1
SL: 44-775
HRD:jfb

SUSPECT - JOSEPH M. PRITCHET

On April 12, 1968, the Washington Field Division advised that PRITCHET had been suggested as a suspect in this case and requested that his Navy records be reviewed.

AT ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

The following review was conducted by Investigative Clerk EARL M. RANEY:

A review of the United States Navy records on file at the Military Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, Missouri, for JOSEPH MALLOY PRITCHETT, Navy Serial Number [REDACTED], on April 13, 1968, disclosed that he enlisted in the United States Navy on November 17, 1959, at Birmingham, Alabama, and served on active duty until August 27, 1963, when he was honorably released from active duty as a Radioman, Third Class, at Key West, Florida, and transferred to the United States Naval Reserve where he served inactively until November 16, 1965, when he was honorably discharged.

No record of mental or nervous disorders or specialized training in demolitions or explosives located in the file.

He was given three days confinement on bread and water on July 25, 1961, for being disrespectful toward his Superior Petty Officer.

He was convicted by a Summary Court-martial on August 23, 1961, for being disrespectful toward his Superior Petty Officer and was sentenced to perform hard labor without confinement for thirty days and restricted to his duty station for thirty days and to forfeit \$24.00 of his pay.

The records disclose PRITCHETT was arrested June, 1958, for disorderly conduct in Montgomery, Alabama. No further details appeared.

359

2

SL: 44-775

The following background appeared in the record:

Date of Birth	August 28, 1942
Place of Birth	Montgomery, Alabama
Height	5 feet 10 inches
Weight	150 pounds
Race	Caucasian
Hair	Blond
Eyes	Blue
Marks	Mole on left cheek; Tattoo of eagle and flag and "USN" on left forearm
Education	Two years high school
Military Occupation	Radioman
Civilian Occupation	Employed, Howard Johnson Restaurant, South Boulevard, Montgomery, Alabama, under the supervision of Mr. SULLIVAN, June to August, 1959
Addresses	157 Mobile Street (September, 1942, to August, 1948); 252 Wayne Street (August, 1948, to June, 1949); 261 South Boulevard, (June, 1955, to November, 1955), All in Montgomery, Alabama
Relatives	Father Mother
	JOSEPH A. PRITCHETT; MARTHA MALLORY, both of 261 South Boulevard, as of November, 1959
References	Mr. W. T. BINION, 1756 South Court Street;

360