

SL: 44-775

OWENS learned that RAY was an excellent shot and that RAY sometimes went to secluded spots for target shooting. OWENS once went with RAY somewhere in Illinois for target shooting, at which time RAY had with him two .38 caliber pistols. OWENS shot with RAY on this occasion and observed that RAY was extremely expert and could shoot at a can and keep it bouncing by firing at it and hitting it repeatedly before it stopped rolling.

In association with RAY in 1959 OWENS learned that RAY was a moderate drinker, who did not drink beer and whose favorite drink appeared to be Bourbon highballs. OWENS knows of no particular tavern where RAY frequented but observed that RAY usually drank at taverns in the vicinity of Sarah and Olive Street in St. Louis, which was in the vicinity of the Mission where OWENS usually saw RAY when the latter came by the Mission.

OWENS observed that RAY had no employment during this time but was obviously a professional thief who apparently pulled mainly robberies and occasionally some burglaries.

OWENS characterizes RAY as a "pistol man." RAY was definitely a "loner."

In conversations, OWENS learned from RAY that RAY had served a Federal sentence following a theft of money orders with another man and it appeared from comments made by RAY that he mistrusted other people and would not go on jobs with another person.

RAY impressed OWENS as having sympathy for common people and for the working man and RAY expressed a philosophy that he would only hit places of businesses such as would probably be covered by insurance.

SL: 44-775

On two or three occasions RAY came to the Mission with an older man, about sixty years of age, whose first name was JACK and whose surname was something like GOAN (phonetic). OWENS learned that this man JACK was on parole out of Menard and was considered by RAY as an old friend. OWENS cut this old man's hair once or twice at the Mission. He gained the impression that this old man, JACK, was an old professional burglar and that he was "kinky" (still pulling burglaries) even then. OWENS has no definite information as to whether RAY and JACK ever went on any jobs together but observed that they were obviously very friendly.

During this period in 1959 RAY always appeared to have money and to be "well-heeled," although he never worked. It was obvious to OWENS that RAY was obtaining his money from robberies and burglaries. RAY was thrifty and appeared to save his money. On one occasion, at RAY's request, OWENS drove RAY to a bank in St. Louis located on South Broadway near the Anheuser-Busch Brewery and RAY told OWENS on this occasion that he had an account at that bank. OWENS waited in the car outside while RAY went in the bank and RAY then returned to the car and showed OWENS \$1,000.00 worth of Travelers Checks, which OWENS understood had been purchased by RAY in the bank. OWENS did not positively know whether RAY had taken cash into the bank to purchase these Travelers Checks or had withdrawn the necessary funds for the purchase from the account which RAY said he had in the same bank. RAY told OWENS that he had purchased these Travelers Checks for the purpose of taking a trip to Canada.

It was about a month later when OWENS next saw RAY, at which time RAY said he had been to Canada. RAY did not at any time explain to OWENS why he had gone to Canada. This was characteristic of RAY, however, who was always extremely closed-mouth and did not generally explain his activities to anyone.

With regard to the possibility of any other money that RAY might have had in a bank, OWENS has some vague recollection in the back of his mind that RAY might have at some time mentioned having money in a bank other than the one referred to

SL: 44-775

above, but OWENS can recall no specific information in this regard.

OWENS can recall only one additional associate or acquaintance of RAY during the 1959 period and that person was "BLACKIE" DE CORE, who was from Chicago and who was a gambler and former professional prize fighter. DE CORE was then about forty years of age and was on a life parole out of Menard and was staying at the St. Louis Rescue Mission at the time. DE CORE did not appear to be nearly as close or as friendly with RAY as did "BLACKIE" AUSTIN and the old man named JACK.

RAY did not gamble and did not fool with narcotics or "junk" of any kind. He seemed to have the attitude regarding women that they were something to use and forget. Actually he appeared to prefer a girl who was a "bum" and was not known to have had any girlfriend as such or any continuing association with any girl or woman.

On the one or two occasions when OWENS was at the rooming house on Hickory Street operated by RAY's mother and grandmother, OWENS also learned that RAY had a young kid brother named "BUZZY," who resided with the mother and grandmother. OWENS has never known or heard specifically of any other relatives of RAY.

RAY always appeared absolutely to have no dislike for Negroes. On the contrary, he always seemed to take a man for what he was, regardless of color. In OWENS' opinion, if RAY killed MARTIN LUTHER KING, as alleged, he did not do so out of any kind of racial hatred and such an act in OWENS' opinion would have had to be for money.

During the period of their association in 1959 RAY used various names, always with the first name JIM. The only three surnames which OWENS can recall as having been used by RAY were the names O'CONNOR, RYAN and RAY. When OWENS initially became acquainted with RAY at the St. Louis Rescue Mission

SL: 44-775

RAY was using the name JIM O'CONNOR. The name ERIC STARVO GALT is completely unknown to OWENS and he has no idea where RAY might have obtained or thought of such a name.

Regarding the robbery of the Kroger Store in St. Louis by OWENS and RAY in 1959, OWENS furnished the following information:

Contrary to what OWENS regards as RAY's usual characteristic of carefully planning anything he did, the robbery of the Kroger Store was a stupid job which occurred "at the tail-end of a drunk." Although RAY did not normally drink to excess at all, RAY and OWENS on this occasion had been drunk and were still under the effects of that when the robbery was pulled, and it was merely an effort to get additional money to continue their drinking. RAY informed OWENS that somebody had spotted this supermarket which should be good for several thousand dollars. RAY had already cased it. RAY had with him the same two .38 caliber guns which OWENS and RAY had previously used in target shooting and RAY furnished one of these guns to OWENS for this robbery.

RAY had stolen an old Ford automobile which was their first get-away car and they then switched to OWENS' automobile, at which time some witness apparently obtained the license number on OWENS' car. OWENS and RAY, immediately following the robbery, went to a rooming house on Park Avenue near Mississippi Avenue in St. Louis where RAY then had a room. They went to RAY's room and a few minutes later, when OWENS came out to his car, he found the car surrounded with police who arrested OWENS.

The police then went into the house and arrested RAY also. Neither RAY nor OWENS were ever released on bond following their arrest. OWENS entered a plea of guilty to the robbery charge and received a sentence of seven years. RAY, however, insisted on going to trial and was sentenced to twenty years.



SL: 44-775

OWENS, after his plea of guilty, preceded RAY to the Penitentiary at Jefferson City, Missouri, and had already been there several months when RAY arrived to serve the twenty-year sentence.

OWENS was released from the Missouri State Penitentiary in 1963 upon completion of his sentence and was immediately thereafter returned to the Illinois State Penitentiary at Menard as a Parole Violator on the robbery conviction. OWENS owed twenty-three months on that parole violation. He completed all of that term and received his outright release in May, 1965, from Menard.

OWENS thereafter returned to St. Louis and was briefly employed as a Fuller Brush Salesman in St. Louis, following which he was employed from October, 1965, to February, 1966, as a maintenance man at Washington University in St. Louis. In February, 1966, OWENS went to California, where he resided with his mother and brother and he was employed there with White Heat Company, 2508 Randolph Street, Huntington Park, California, for about ten months as a maintenance man. He was then employed by the W. W. Henry Company, Beckett Street, Huntington Park, California, until he returned to St. Louis, Missouri, in December, 1966.

Upon his return to St. Louis in December, 1966, OWENS took a vacation for about a month and was in Las Vegas and Arizona during that time. He was thereafter employed by the Lindell Plaza Hotel, St. Louis, as a maintenance man. Thereafter, he was employed as the chief engineer at the Liggett and Meyers Tobacco Company in St. Louis until he began his present employment, about five weeks ago, as an automobile salesman with the Arnold Chevrolet Company, Crystal City, Missouri.

OWENS has resided at his present address in Jefferson County, Missouri, since July 23, 1967. His last previous address

SL: 44-775

was the Missouri Apartments, Delmar Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri, across the street from St. Luke's Hospital, where he lived for about five months until he moved to his present address.

While in the Missouri State Penitentiary, OWENS and RAY were never assigned in the same residence hall, nor were they assigned in the same working area at any time. OWENS worked the entire time in the plumbing shop in the Penitentiary. RAY worked in the prison cleaning shop and in the bakery during the time OWENS was in the Penitentiary. However, OWENS did see RAY from time to time outside on the Penitentiary yard and occasionally talked to RAY there.

There has never been any animosity of any kind between OWENS and RAY and the latter has never indicated any resentment or any cause of resentment toward OWENS in connection with the Kroger Store robbery or for any other reason. RAY has always appeared to be entirely friendly toward OWENS and has never indicated in any way that he felt OWENS did anything wrong in connection with the robbery or at the time of their arrest in St. Louis.

While in the Missouri State Penitentiary, OWENS became aware that RAY was apparently dealing in pills, such as Benzedrine and amphetamine, which RAY was in some manner obtaining outside the Penitentiary and was selling to inmates in the Penitentiary. OWENS occasionally saw exchange of money to RAY from other inmates. OWENS never knew the manner in which these pills were being conveyed to RAY in the penitentiary but was aware that this type of practice was being carried on by other prisoners in addition to RAY and that there were various means wherein such items could be brought into the penitentiary. It has been OWENS' general understanding for example that sometimes guards have been used to bring in such items, as well as relatives of the inmates on the occasions of their visits, or such items have been brought in by prisoners who work on the Honor Farm and who are not carefully searched when returned inside the walls.

SL: 44-775

OWENS did not acquire any knowledge as to how much money RAY made in this practice but would estimate that he might earn as much as \$500.00 or \$1,000.00 in the course of a year or two. OWENS does not know how RAY may have gotten his money outside the penitentiary but again is aware that there are various means by which inmates have been able to accomplish this.

OWENS also became aware while in the penitentiary that RAY was apparently engaged in making small loans to inmates. Although RAY himself did not ever comment to OWENS concerning this business, OWENS at one time had a cellmate who OWENS understood had borrowed money from RAY. OWENS understood that it was the general practice for inmates such as RAY who made loans to receive repayment at the rate of \$3.00 for \$2.00. OWENS does not believe on the basis of his general knowledge and information that RAY might have accumulated an amount such as several thousand dollars as a result of his handling pills and loans in the penitentiary.

OWENS was still an inmate in the penitentiary on the occasion when RAY, while working in the cleaning plant, attempted to escape by putting two old ladders on the wall behind the cleaning plant. According to what OWENS heard immediately after this attempted escape, the ladders broke with RAY, as a result of which he was injured, knocked out and discovered by the prison guards.

Subsequent to OWENS release from the penitentiary, he heard of the incident in which RAY allegedly hid out for a few days inside the penitentiary. OWENS recalls that on one occasion, while in the penitentiary, RAY mentioned to him that he was too young to remain in the penitentiary and serve his entire sentence and RAY spoke in general terms of the possibility that he might some day attempt to escape. RAY referred to no specific plans in this regard, however.

During OWENS association with RAY, he learned from RAY that prior to OWENS becoming acquainted with RAY in 1959 RAY had

SL: 44-775

made several trips, apparently at least a dozen trips, to Mexico. RAY spoke of having been in various places and the only specific places OWENS can recall which were mentioned by RAY were Mexico City, Veracruz, Acapulco and Nogales. RAY did not at any time discuss with OWENS the details of his trips to Mexico, although RAY did mention in at least one instance that he had gone to Mexico to "cool off." RAY did not discuss with OWENS the details of his activities in Mexico or who he knew there, but did briefly mention on one occasion that one time when he was in Mexico City he had become involved in an altercation with a man in an alley, who came at RAY with a knife, at which time RAY struck the man in the head with a pistol and thereafter had to leave Mexico City.

OWENS is of the belief that RAY could not speak Spanish, despite his trips to Mexico. In that regard, OWENS said he knows a few words of Spanish but RAY did not know any Spanish.

OWENS believes that on the basis of RAY's having made trips to Mexico in the past, RAY might have conceivably gone to Mexico after his escape in 1967. OWENS has also been aware from RAY that the latter was a military policeman in Germany while in military service and OWENS would assume that RAY might, therefore, also go to Germany.

OWENS characterizes RAY as very smart, a thinker and not a talker. RAY plans every angle before he makes a move. OWENS feels that upon RAY's having escaped from the penitentiary and even before the incident involving the killing of MARTIN LUTHER KING, RAY would not be expected to be in contact with relatives or previous acquaintances at any time after the escape.

OWENS felt, however, in the event RAY had an outside contact who was assisting him in his illicit traffic within the penitentiary and who might owe either money or a favor to RAY in connection with this business, RAY might quite logically contact this party after his escape.

SL: 44-775

With regard to the old man named JACK, who was friendly with RAY in 1959, as previously referred to, OWENS has never seen or heard of that man again since 1959 with the exception that OWENS did hear somewhere afterward that JACK had gone back to Menard as a Parole Violator.

OWENS has had checking accounts at the following banks in St. Louis, since his release from the Illinois State Penitentiary at Menard, in May, 1965:

The Jefferson-Gravois Bank, where OWENS opened a checking account in 1965, which was closed in about February, 1966, when OWENS went to California;

The Manchester Bank, where OWENS opened an account in January, 1967, and where there is still a balance in the account of about \$3.00 or \$4.00, the account having been inactive in recent months.

Since October, 1967, OWENS has had a checking account at the American Bank, DeSoto, Missouri, where he currently has an account.

Except for the above, OWENS has had no banking business, including accounts of any kind, loans or safe deposit boxes, at any other bank in St. Louis since his release from Menard in 1965.

Since OWENS' release from the Missouri State Penitentiary at Jefferson City, Missouri, he has had no contact of any kind, either direct or indirect, with RAY and they have never had any correspondence. OWENS has also had no contact whatsoever with any of RAY's relatives, since OWENS was released from the Missouri State Penitentiary. The last contact OWENS has had with anyone known to him to be an associate or acquaintance of RAY, was "BLACKIE" AUSTIN, who was in the Illinois State Penitentiary

SL: 44-775

at Menard, while OWENS was there 1963 to 1965. "BLACKIE" AUSTIN was still at Menard when OWENS was released there.

Since about February, 1966, OWENS has not on any occasion been inside the Jefferson-Gravois Bank, nor has he been on foot outside that bank on any occasion during that period. At the very most, he may have passed by the bank in an automobile on one or two occasions.

While OWENS was at the Missouri State Penitentiary, he became acquainted with JAMES WALLACE, who was an inmate there. He did not know JAMES WALLACE at all until he became acquainted with him in the penitentiary. OWENS definitely was not raised with WALLACE.

In 1965, during which time OWENS had a checking account at the Jefferson Gravois Bank in St. Louis, he recalls an occasion when he parked his car on the bank parking lot to go to the bank. As he started in the door of the bank for the purpose of making a deposit to his account, he saw JAMES WALLACE, who was standing on the street corner outside the bank, with a girl. As OWENS was going into the bank, WALLACE stated to the effect, "Are you taking some out or putting some in?" OWENS replied to the effect, "I'm putting some in." They had no further conversation.

OWENS was definitely alone on this occasion. OWENS never on any other occasion saw or knew the girl who was with WALLACE and he paid very little attention to her, as a result of which he cannot describe her, except he had impression that she was a white girl, who was rather heavy-set and "was no raving beauty." OWENS is certain that this encounter at the Jefferson-Gravois Bank occurred in the summer time, because he recalls that the girl was not wearing a coat and that both he and WALLACE were wearing short-sleeve shirts and warm weather clothing.

The checking account of OWENS at the Jefferson-Gravois Bank, as previously referred to, was a joint checking account held by OWENS and his mother and was in the names of JAMES and IDA OWENS.

SL: 44-775

OWENS denied that he was ever in the company of JAMES EARL RAY at the Jefferson-Gravois Bank on the occasion referred to above or on any other occasions, since OWEN's release from the Penitentiary.

He repeatedly reiterated his denial that he has seen RAY or had any kind of contact with him or any knowledge of his whereabouts since RAY escaped from the penitentiary in 1965.

OWENS cannot recall ever having known anyone by the name of "COOLEY," either in the Missouri State Penitentiary or elsewhere and that name has no meaning or significance to OWENS.

OWENS, without hesitation, stated he would be entirely willing to notify the Federal Bureau of Investigation if he should at any time receive any information which might be of assistance in locating JAMES EARL RAY and stated he would certainly do so.

Date June 6, 1968

A source, 1807 S. Eleventh Street, St. Louis, Missouri, was recontacted May 31, 1968.

Source advised that no further information whatever had come to his attention bearing on the possible whereabouts of JAMES EARL RAY. Source said he had not seen JOHN RAY or CAROL PEPPER during the preceding week but he thought he might see CAROL PEPPER within the following day or two since he owed her \$40 he had borrowed from her and he expected she might come by to see him in order to collect.

A photograph of JAMES H. CARPENTER, Federal Bureau of Investigation #30243, was exhibited to source. He identified this photograph as being a photograph of the person he had referred to in the previous interview who visited source in about July, 1967, and told source at that time that he and JAMES EARL RAY had robbed the bank at Alton, Illinois. He identified the photograph as being of the person previously referred to by source as JIMMY who gave source \$250 on the occasion referred to above. He further identified the photograph as being of the person he referred to as JIMMY who visited source on May 13, 1968, and May 14, 1968, with JOHNNY (last name unknown), and to whom source had provided a .38 caliber revolver.

Source was then advised that it had been determined that the person depicted in the photograph was actually in the St. Louis City Jail at the time of his alleged visits to source in 1967, and at the time of the robbery of the bank at Alton, Illinois. It was pointed out to him that the information he had provided in that regard was, therefore, false. Source then said he had realized for the past eight days that he had given the Federal Bureau of Investigation

On 5/31/68 at St. Louis, Missouri File # SL 44-775 - 949  
by SA PATRICK W. BRADLEY  
SA ALBERT J. RUSHING AJR:bam Date dictated 6/3/68

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.



SL 44-775

"a bum steer" and that the information he had previously furnished was a "bum beef" concerning JIMMY with regard to the Alton bank robbery. In referring to JIMMY at this time source referred to him as JIMMY CARPENTER saying he now recalled that CARPENTER was the last name of the JIMMY he had been referring to.

Source said that during the past eight days he had been thinking about this matter and had decided it was actually some other JIMMY who had given him the \$250 and told him he had robbed the bank with JAMES EARL RAY.

Source reiterated that JIMMY CARPENTER was the person who visited source with JOHNNY on May 13 and 14, 1968, and to whom source gave the gun. Source said he now realized he actually became acquainted with JIMMY CARPENTER for the first time in June, 1967, when they were in jail together in St. Louis. He said the other JIMMY he had referred to, the one who gave source \$250 and told source he had robbed the bank at Alton with RAY was a person with whom source had become acquainted in 1959 in St. Louis. He insisted he did not know the last name of this JIMMY and said he could not think of anyone at all who might know this JIMMY except JAMES EARL RAY. Source insisted that it was his recollection he had introduced JIMMY and RAY in 1959.

It was pointed out to source that since the information he had furnished about JIMMY CARPENTER and the bank robbery now appeared to be false, source might also be lying about the participation of RAY in the bank robbery. Source insisted that the otherwise unknown JIMMY (last name unknown) had visited him in 1967, as previously stated and told him of RAY's participation with JIMMY in the robbery.

## FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 5-21-68

Source was recontacted May 9, 1968, by SA PATRICK W. BRADLEY and SA ALBERT J. RUSHING, at which time he furnished the following additional information.

From about 10:00 p.m. on the night of May 8, 1968, until 1:00 a.m. that night, source was at the Grapevine Tavern, at which time JOHN RAY was also there. JOHN RAY drove source home at about 1:00 a.m. On this occasion JOHN RAY told source that JERRY RAY was still in the St. Louis area but had been at the residence of their father in north Missouri. JOHN RAY expressed expectation that JERRY would be coming in during the course of the evening while source was at the tavern. JERRY did not appear there, however, and at the time of this interview, source has not seen JERRY. On this occasion source had no conversation with JOHN RAY regarding subject JAMES EARL RAY. Source has not seen nor talked with CAROL PEPPER since the time source was previously contacted.

Interviewing Agents made reference to source during this interview of the information he had previously furnished to the effect that JOHN RAY and CAROL PEPPER had indicated to source in about the latter part of June, 1967, that they had knowledge of the subject's whereabouts at that time in Omaha and Los Angeles. Source was advised that this had not been corroborated in interviews with JOHN RAY and CAROL PEPPER, who had denied to the FBI that they had any knowledge regarding subject's whereabouts since subject's escape from the Missouri State Penitentiary (MSP). It was explained to source that it was very important to resolve this conflict and inquiry was made of him as to whether he was quite certain that the information he had furnished in this regard previously was absolutely true and accurate. He stated that he was quite certain in this regard and that the information he had furnished was positively true but that he could add no further details regarding the information he had furnished, since this was all the information that had been provided him. It

On 5-9-68 at St. Louis, Missouri File # SL 44-775 - 950  
by SA PATRICK W. BRADLEY  
SA ALBERT J. RUSHING AJR:paw/ral Date dictated 5-15-68

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.

SL 44-775

was pointed out to source that under the circumstances it appeared that either he or JOHN RAY and CAROL PEPPER had lied to the FBI, and he was specifically asked whether he had in any manner lied to us concerning this information, and it was pointed out to him that if he had lied in any way, it would be much better for him to correct such falsification now than at a later date. Source said he had positively not lied. He reluctantly acknowledged that if JOHN RAY and CAROL PEPPER had denied any knowledge of subject's whereabouts after his escape from the penitentiary, then they had lied in that regard, although he added in that connection that he could not say that JOHN RAY and CAROL PEPPER had had direct contact with the subject, but their information may have come to them indirectly so far as source was aware.

With regard to the information source claimed to have received indicating that subject had been in Omaha or Los Angeles as previously referred to, inquiry was made of source as to whether it was JOHN RAY or CAROL PEPPER who had made the specific statements and furnished the specific information to source. He stated it was his recollection that although JOHN RAY was the one who did most of the talking in the conversations referred to, CAROL PEPPER also indicated by her comments that she and JOHN RAY both had the same information regarding the alleged presence of subject in Omaha and Los Angeles.

Source commented that he had read in the papers that subject, under the name GALT, had apparently had considerable amount of money and had been able to peel off \$20 bills from a large roll of money when he purchased an automobile. In that regard source said he had some idea as to what might have been the source of that money and he hoped and expected that within a week or so he would be able to furnish his ideas in that regard. When pressed for further details at this time, the following information was elicited from source.

After source was released on bail from the St. Louis City Jail on June 23 or 24, 1967, he read in the Chicago "Tribune" newspaper a few days later, possibly only a day or two after his release from jail, of a bank robbery which had occurred in a southern state. He recognized this bank and

SL 44-775

its location as a bank which he and subject RAY had cased on two Fridays during the period in 1959 when source and subject were closely associated. They traveled by automobile from St. Louis on those occasions in casing the bank, and on two or three subsequent occasions when subject and source were in the same vicinity they again looked the bank over. They had planned to hit the bank in a robbery on a Friday as they were aware that that was a payroll day when the bank handled considerable amounts of money. When they initially cased the bank they observed several police officers in uniform who were around the bank, but on later occasions they did not observe the presence of police officers. At that period of time, when they were casing the bank and planning a possible robbery, source was suffering a physical disability because of injuries to his legs and feet which had occurred earlier in the course of the commission of a burglary in northern Missouri when source was almost caught and had to drop from an upper story window, causing his legs and feet to be seriously injured, resulting in his hospitalization for a time. Because of this, source concluded that he was not physically able to go on the robbery at the time they were casing the bank and the job never came off, and subject was thereafter apprehended at St. Louis in a robbery and sentenced to the penitentiary.

A few days after source read in the Chicago "Tribune" of the robbery of this bank, he was visited at his residence by an unnamed middle-aged man, whom source had previously known in St. Louis in 1959, and whom he thinks he probably introduced to subject in 1959. This man, whom source declined to name, told source he had been on a bank robbery and he displayed a valise full of money. Source, during the visit, had told his visitor that he was hard up and broke at that time and the man took \$250 from the valise and gave it to source, which source assumed was in the nature of a loan. Information furnished by the man to source was to the effect that the money in the valise was the loot from the bank robbery. Either from what the man told source or from the news article previously referred to, source learned that the amount of loot obtained in the robbery was approximately \$50,000, and that an additional sizeable amount of money had been missed in the robbery, which money was in the bank vault. The \$250 given to source by the man consisted of one \$50 bill, according to source's recollection,

SL 44-775

and other smaller bills. Source is uncertain in his recollection, but either from what the man told him or from what source had read in the newspaper he understood that the bank referred to by the man was the bank referred to in the news article.

It is source's recollection that the visit from this man who gave source \$250 occurred a few days prior to his conversations with JOHN RAY and CAROL PEPPER, in which they indicated to source that they had knowledge of subject's whereabouts, including his alleged presence in Omaha and Los Angeles.

Source has had contact with the man who visited him as referred to on only one subsequent occasion, and he estimates this was about six weeks ago, at which time the man again stopped by source's residence for a short visit. Although source had originally assumed that the \$250 was a loan from this man, the matter of the \$250 was not brought up by either of them at the time of this latter visit. From his conversation with this man, source learned that the man's accomplice in the bank robbery previously referred to was subject, JAMES EARL RAY, and source gained the impression from the man that there were probably one or more additional accomplices who were not identified to source.

Source stated he was not ready at this time to furnish further details regarding the exact location of the bank or the identity of the man who gave him \$250. He was pressed for information pertaining to the identity and location of the bank, and it was elicited from him that the bank was in a southern state. He acknowledged that by a southern state he meant a state far south, such as Louisiana or Alabama, and he added "or Mississippi" but denied that the state was actually Mississippi. He said the place where the bank was located was not just a small town and that the city or town was located near a river which constitutes a state boundary. Source learned from the unnamed man that the persons who robbed the bank were in the bank for only a minute or two and made a getaway in which they crossed the river on a bridge into an adjoining state. Source said that it was entirely possible that they could have been across this bridge and in another state within five minutes from the time they left the bank.

SL 44-775

Source said he wanted to wait at least a few days before he furnished further information, implying that within that period of time he might again be in touch with the unnamed man and would endeavor to ascertain the identities of any additional accomplices. He said he was not sure he was ready at this time to reveal the identity of the unnamed man and wanted to defer this decision. It was discussed with source the possibility of whether he might immediately reveal all details in his possession if a payment of money could be made to him for such, and he indicated he would be receptive to such payment, but concluded after some apparent consideration that he felt it would have to wait for at least a few days. He made a comment to the effect that he wanted to make sure he was "clear" himself. It was elicited from source that the unnamed man he referred to has not been a resident of St. Louis but is believed by source to be from the "southwest part of the country", and source believes he has served time in a penitentiary, possibly in Arkansas. Source also indicated he has gained an impression that the man has probably spent some time in Mexico.

Source said the reason he had not mentioned the matter of the bank robbery earlier was because he had felt that there was already enough of a rap against subject RAY, and he did not believe that there would be any great interest in the additional charge involving the robbery. Source said that he hoped to be able within a few days or a week or so to furnish additional details and that he would do so at a later time if possible.

## FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 5-24-68

Source was recontacted on May 14, 1968, by SA GEORGE M. PEET and ALBERT J. RUSHING. Inquiry was made of source at this time regarding other occupants of the two buildings at 1805-1807 South Eleventh Street of which source is the caretaker. It was ascertained that source is currently the only occupant of the 4-unit building facing the street and numbered 1805-1807 South Eleventh Street. Source's unit which he occupies is on the first floor at 1807 South Eleventh. The last previous occupant of the unit on the first floor numbered 1805 South Eleventh was JAMES H. RAMSEY who, according to source, moved in there about the first of May, 1967. Source and RAMSEY were both arrested on June 2, 1967, by the St. Louis Police Department on a burglary charge for which source was thereafter confined in the city jail as has been previously referred to.

Both source and RAMSEY were released on bond from the city jail on about June 23 or June 24, 1967, and RAMSEY at that time stayed for a couple of days with source at 1807 South Eleventh. RAMSEY then went back to Weiner, Arkansas, where his parents reside for a time but came back to St. Louis in the latter part of September, 1967, and again lived at 1805 South Eleventh on the first floor. Both source and RAMSEY were sentenced on the burglary charge in St. Louis in October, 1967, source receiving six months probation and RAMSEY receiving a sentence of nine months probation which source believes expires in July, 1968. In February, 1968, RAMSEY left 1805 South Eleventh Street, St. Louis, and returned to his home and the home of his parents at Weiner, Arkansas, with the permission of his probation officer.

With regard to the building at the rear of the building referred to above source advised the rear building bears only the number 1805 South Eleventh. It also is a 2-story 4-family unit but neither of the two units on the first floor is occupied at this time. The second floor front is currently occupied by a woman named JUANITA HERNANDEZ (phonetic) and the second floor rear is occupied by a woman named MURIEL MC NICKOLS.

On 5-14-68 at St. Louis, Missouri File # SL 44-775 - 951  
by SA GEORGE M. PEET  
SA ALBERT J. RUSHING AJP:amb/ral Date dictated 5-20-68

SL 44-775

Source advised no further mail has been received at his residence for JOHN RAY.

Inquiry was made of source regarding the manner in which he first learned that subject RAY had escaped in April, 1967, from the Missouri State Penitentiary (MSP) and he furnished the following information in that regard:

After source's arrest in St. Louis on June 2, 1967, and while he was thereafter in the St. Louis City Jail in June, 1967, there were also confined in the jail three other persons all of whom had apparently been confined previously at the MSP and it was one or all of these three persons, according to source's recollection, who first informed him that subject RAY had escaped. One of these persons was DANNY GRINDSTAFF (DANIEL GEORGE GRINDSTAFF, FBI #443 4963, St. Louis Police Department #56472). Another was CHARLIE HAGERMAN (phonetic). Source cannot recall the identity of the third person and has never seen this third man again and does not know anything else about him.

Inquiry was made of source as to who it was that had come to his residence on the night of May 13, 1968, in an automobile and visited him there. He said that JIMMIE CRAWFORD (he was uncertain regarding the last name of this person but believed it was CRAWFORD or something like that) and another man had come to source's residence at about 8:00 p.m. or 8:30 p.m., May 13, 1968. Source had become acquainted with CRAWFORD following source's arrest on June 2, 1967, when source was first held for three or four days in the Central District Holdover of the Police Department before being transferred to the city jail. Source and CRAWFORD were cellmates during those few days in the holdover. Later while at the city jail in June, 1967, source also saw CRAWFORD a few times in the jail but they were on different tiers in the jail and they did not actually converse while in the jail. While they were celled together in the holdover, however, source learned from CRAWFORD that he had served sentences previously in the MSP.

When CRAWFORD came to source's residence on the evening of May 13, 1968, CRAWFORD was accompanied by another man and source believes CRAWFORD mentioned the other man's



SL 44-775

first name but source did not pay attention and does not remember the name. CRAWFORD and this other man were at source's residence about 10 or 15 minutes. When they first arrived CRAWFORD asked source whether there was anything doing and source understood from this that CRAWFORD meant did source have any burglary jobs going. Source told him there was nothing doing at this time.

During the conversation CRAWFORD indicated he was down on his luck and asked source for money for meals. Source gave him either \$3 or \$4 in cash. Also during this visit CRAWFORD asked source whether he knew JIMMIE RAY and source replied, "Hell yes, I know him well." CRAWFORD asked source whether the latter knew RAY was out and source replied to the effect that he knew RAY was out and heard it also that RAY was "red hot" and that they were really looking for him. Source said there was no further conversation that he could recall and that CRAWFORD and the other man left after they had been there about 10 or 15 minutes.

During the time that CRAWFORD and the other man visited source on the evening of May 13, 1968, a friend of source named J. H. MC CORMICK was present inasmuch as MC CORMICK was there visiting with source before CRAWFORD and the other man arrived. MC CORMICK had formerly stayed part of the time with JAMES H. RAMSEY while RAMSEY was occupying the residence on the first floor at 1805 South Eleventh Street. MC CORMICK now lives at 2753a Park, St. Louis, and is employed by the Bee Line Truck Company in St. Louis where he cleans up trucks. MC CORMICK very often visits source at the latter's residence in the evening after MC CORMICK gets off from work.

Inquiry was made of source concerning the bank robbery matter referred to by him in a previous interview and he was strongly advised and urged to furnish further details in that regard at this time. Source insisted he was not yet ready to furnish further details. He was advised that a review of the "Chicago Tribune" newspaper for the latter part of June and entire month of July, 1967, disclosed no reference to a bank robbery such as he had described. Source insisted that he had nevertheless read the news article concerning the robbery in the "Chicago Tribune" as he had previously stated, describing

SL 44-775

the news article as being a small article, either from the Associated Press or the United Press.

In reviewing with source the information he had previously furnished concerning the alleged bank robbery he referred at this time to the amount of the loot as having been \$48,000. He said that he had read of the robbery in the "Chicago Tribune" a short time after his release from jail on June 23 or 24, 1967, and when pressed for a more precise estimate of the time interval he said that it was within a few days or perhaps several weeks after his release from jail and could have been as much as a month after he was released from jail.

Source said it was either a few days or a few weeks after he had read of the robbery in the "Chicago Tribune" that the unnamed man gave him \$250. It was at the time of this man's first visit and on the occasion when the man gave source \$250 that the man told source the identity of the bank that the money in the valise had come out of and it was at the time of this same first visit that the man told source that JIMMIE RAY had been with him on the robbery.

Regarding the identity of the unnamed man source said he was not yet ready to reveal the identity of the man. He added that he does not actually know the man's name but had always known him only by a first name which he had always thought was probably a phony name and he said that he cannot now recall even this first name.

When inquiry was made of source as to how the man could have known where source lived and could have found source there, source said he assumed that the man learned that information from JIMMIE and he guessed that JIMMIE might have obtained that information from some of JIMMIE's relatives. Source, however, said he did not know specifically at all how the man might have found him.

Concerning the second and last visit of the man to source, source on this occasion said that this second visit occurred three or four weeks after the man's first visit to source. At that time the man indicated he was just coming through St. Louis and had merely stopped in briefly to see source. The man had a cup of coffee with source and subject

SL 44-775

RAY was not mentioned on the occasion of this second visit nor was the fact that the man had previously given source \$250 mentioned on the occasion of this visit.

Various inconsistencies in the foregoing information furnished by source on this occasion were pointed out to him, including the fact that source now said the man's second visit occurred three or four weeks after the first visit whereas he had previously said the second visit had occurred about six weeks ago. Source said he could not be sure and that "as I've told you, my brain doesn't always work right."

During the rather lengthy interview with source, efforts were made to identify the town in which this alleged bank robbery occurred during the summer of 1967. He indicated the bank was about eight blocks from the central business section of town in a city of about 50,000 to 60,000 population, that there was a residential area near the bank which was a new building in 1959, and was located on a corner with a parking lot adjacent to the bank. He indicated that it was not far from a bridge across the Mississippi River. During the getaway the individual who gave him the \$250 got out of the car and walked maybe one-fourth or one-half mile north of the bridge and with the loot walked across a railroad bridge while apparently subject RAY reportedly drove across the bridge. He indicated the police department was on the road leading from the bank to the bridge. At one time he indicated the city was Memphis. On another occasion he said that it could have been Memphis or was close to Memphis or was laid out like Memphis. At the conclusion of this extended inquiry concerning the location of the bank he again indicated that he would wait until he thought the time was right to tell us because he wanted a few more days to determine if someone else was also aware of the robbery in order that source might not be necessarily fingered as a source of the information. He said that he thought in a few days he might be able to work it out so that someone else might actually be blamed in that regard. He did say that the bank was on the east side of the Mississippi River. When pressed as to whether the story of the bank robbery which he had related and in which he had now furnished various conflicting details was

SL 44-775

actually true he insisted that the basic facts as he had related them were the truth.

Source was advised that information had been received to the effect that in about May, 1967, subject RAY had been reportedly seen on various occasions in the immediate vicinity of source's residence on South Eleventh Street, such information indicating that RAY was actually very possibly with source and that source may have been keeping him at that time. Source emphatically denied this and also denied that he had any contact with RAY since the latter's escape from the penitentiary in April, 1967. Source said that if RAY had in fact been seen near source's residence he certainly never contacted source or came in source's residence. He said that any information to the contrary was positively a "bum steer".

During the course of this interview it was ascertained from source that he had in the previous interview erroneously referred to the name of the bar in St. Louis which he and subject RAY frequented in 1959. He said this bar was not Ruby's Bar but at that time had the name Opal's Bar and was later known as the Haven Bar.

Date 5-24-68

Source was recontacted on May 22, 1968. Source advised that no additional information regarding the possible whereabouts of JAMES EARL RAY had come to his attention. He advised that within the past several days he had not had occasion to talk with CAROL PEPPER, although during that period he had talked a couple of times with JOHN RAY, but the latter mentioned nothing concerning JAMES EARL RAY on those occasions.

Source stated he was not aware that JOHN RAY may have made a trip to California or elsewhere in the summer of 1967.

With regard to a bank robbery to which source had referred in previous interviews, source at this time furnished the following information. The bank which was robbed was a bank in Alton, Illinois, but source does not remember the name of the bank. The amount of loot obtained in the robbery was approximately \$28,000. In previous interviews source had intentionally furnished incorrect information regarding the location of the bank and the amount of the loot in order that the bank robbery to which he had referred might not be identified. However, the other information which he furnished regarding the bank robbery in previous interviews was correct.

Source was released from the St. Louis City Jail on about June 23 or 24, 1967. About a couple of weeks later he read in the "Chicago Tribune" and in one of the St. Louis newspapers about the robbery of the bank in Alton in which approximately \$28,000 in cash had been obtained. The news article indicated that the robbers had missed an additional \$20,000 because they ducked out too quickly while a teller went to the vault to get additional money.

Upon reading in the newspaper of this bank robbery, source recognized the bank as one which he and JAMES EARL RAY had cased in 1959.

A few days after reading in the newspaper about this bank robbery, a man came to see source at the latter's

On 5-22-68 at St. Louis, Missouri File # SL 44-775 - 952  
by SA WILLIAM H. WARFIELD  
SA ALBERT J. RUSSELL AJR/kal Date dictated 5-23-68

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.

SL 44-775

home. This man's first name is JIMMIE, and source cannot remember his last name. Source had originally become acquainted with JIMMIE in 1959 in the vicinity of Sarah and Olive Streets in St. Louis, and he believes he introduced RAY to JIMMIE in 1959. The name CRAWFORD, which source had furnished in a previous interview as the possible name of this man JIMMIE, was in error, and source now is certain that the man's first name is not CRAWFORD. When JIMMIE came to source's home a few days after source had read of the robbery in a newspaper, he came by himself and was carrying a valise or briefcase, which he opened and which contained a lot of money which was strapped. JIMMIE told source this money was from the bank robbery in Alton, the same robbery of which source had read in the newspaper. JIMMIE told source that JIMMIE and RAY had pulled this robbery. Source inquired of JIMMIE as to how they got by any road blocks. JIMMIE told source that one of them had crossed the Mississippi River in an automobile via the Lewis and Clark Bridge into Missouri, and the other one walked across a railroad bridge over the Mississippi River, these two bridges being within view of each other. JIMMIE did not tell source whether it was he or RAY who drove across the river in the automobile and did not say which one of them carried the loot. In talking to source, JIMMIE did not indicate that more persons than JIMMIE and RAY were involved in the robbery, but source assumed that there might well have been a "wheel man" to drive the car, and he would have been in addition to JIMMIE and RAY. JIMMIE told source that he and RAY were not masked during the robbery but wore "tips", which source understood to mean they wore tips on their fingers which had been cut from rubber gloves. JIMMIE told source that when they left the bank the police were already on the way there. During this visit JIMMIE asked source how he was fixed financially, and source told him "not too good". JIMMIE then gave source \$250 from the valise or briefcase. This money consisted of two packages of \$1 bills totaling \$100 each, these two packages being strapped, and one \$50 bill. When JIMMIE left source on this occasion, JIMMIE commented that he would see source later. During this visit and their conversation, JIMMIE did not indicate to source any further information regarding the whereabouts of RAY, either at this time or any other time.

SL 44-775

At a time which source estimates to be two or three months after the above visit, JIMMIE again came to source's residence. JIMMIE was alone and came in an automobile, but source did not observe this car sufficiently to be able to describe it at all. On the occasion of this visit, JIMMIE merely passed the time of day with source and had a cup of coffee with him. JIMMIE commented that he was "going down south" but did not specify where or why he was going. There was no mention made during this visit of the bank robbery or of RAY or of the \$250 JIMMIE previously gave source.

Source believes he did not see JIMMIE again on any other occasion until Monday, May 13, 1968, when JIMMIE came to source's residence at about 9:00 p.m., after dark. Another man whom source never had seen before came with JIMMIE. JIMMIE introduced the other man by the first name JOHNNIE. JOHNNIE told source he was from New Orleans and mentioned that he had "taken a pinch" in Kansas City but did not say when this occurred; source believes JOHNNIE said it was a murder rap. JIMMIE asked source if the latter had any money and stated he and JOHNNIE needed something to eat on. Source thereupon gave JIMMIE \$2. JIMMIE asked source whether the latter had a "heater" (gun). Source told JIMMIE he did not have a heater right now but could have one the next day. JIMMIE then told source he and JOHNNIE would come back later. JIMMIE and JOHNNIE then left after having been at source's residence about ten or fifteen minutes.

Later that same night, May 13, 1968, source went out and saw a friend in St. Louis from whom he borrowed a .38 caliber revolver, make unknown, which was nickel plated, had a six-inch barrel and had a regular brown-colored grip. This was a five-shot revolver, and when source obtained it from his friend, one chamber was empty and the other four chambers were loaded with live ammunition. Source does not desire to reveal the identity of the friend from whom he borrowed this gun stating, however, that the friend is in St. Louis.

The next evening, May 14, 1968, at about 9:00 p.m., JIMMIE and JOHNNIE both came back to source's residence, and after they had a couple of beers with source in the latter's

SL 44-775

backyard, they went inside source's residence. Source at that time gave JIMMIE the gun he had borrowed from his friend. During their conversation at this time, JIMMIE commented to the effect, "I'm on the north side this time", by which source understood JIMMIE was living in the north part of St. Louis. Neither JIMMIE nor JOHNNIE specified to source the purpose for which they desired the gun, but source understood from their remarks that they wanted it for some unspecified robbery. JIMMIE commented to source to the effect that "I'll have to skip. I've about \$1,000 worth of clothes which I'll bring here for you to hold for me." Source expressed to JIMMIE his willingness to hold the clothing for JIMMIE.

During their conversation at this time, JIMMIE or JOHNNIE noted that a piece of the gun located at the rear of the cylinder was broken off in such a manner that the bullets in the cylinder could fall out. Either JIMMIE or JOHNNIE asked source whether he had any adhesive tape, and source did then produce a roll of adhesive tape. JIMMIE and JOHNNIE then put tape on the gun behind the cylinder so that the bullets would not fall out.

It is the recollection of source that his friend, JOE MC CORMICK, arrived at source's residence, but not until after JIMMIE and JOHNNIE had departed, and he believes MC CORMICK did not see them there.

Source has not had any subsequent contact at all with JIMMIE or JOHNNIE, and they have not returned the gun. Source has been carefully watching the newspapers and listening to news reports, but has not heard of any job which he believes they might have pulled. Source recalls that on the occasion when he gave JIMMIE the gun, JIMMIE commented to the effect, "I'll see you tomorrow or the next day", and also to the effect, "We'll remember you for the heater."

Source describes JIMMIE as a white male, about 45 to 50 years of age, 5 feet 7 inches and of slender build. He does not recall a description of JIMMIE's hair. Source recalls that JIMMIE at sometime mentioned that he served time in Arkansas and spoke also of having served time in the Missouri State Penitentiary at Jefferson City.



SL 44-775

Source describes JOHNNIE as being about 30 to 35 years of age, clean cut in appearance, black hair, sharp dresser, somewhat shorter and heavier than JIMMIE.

JIMMIE is the same person who shared a cell with source in the St. Louis Police Department Holdover for two or three days after source was first arrested in early June, 1967, and JIMMIE is the same person whom source later saw during the month of June, 1967, in the St. Louis City Jail, although they were not on the same tier in the jail.

Source feels certain that the bank which was robbed as reflected in the newspaper and as referred to by JIMMIE is the same bank which source and JAMES EARL RAY cased in 1959. This bank is in Alton, Illinois. Source and RAY cased it on two or three occasions in 1959. They planned that in the robbery source would carry a sawed-off shotgun which he already had in his possession and would stand inside the bank door with the shotgun while RAY carrying a pistol would take the money from the bank tellers. It was planned that source would guard the door at the bank until RAY completed taking the money from the tellers, and then they would both leave the bank. They planned to use as their getaway automobile an old car of some sort which RAY then had and which they planned to park in the bank parking lot immediately adjacent to the bank. They planned to use a stolen license plate on the car. After the robbery they planned to go to a rooming house in Alton, where they would already have obtained a room and where they would already have stored food and necessary supplies. They planned to remain in this rooming house for at least a week after the robbery. Source had already spotted the particular rooming house where they expected to obtain a room, and he had located it because it had a sign in front showing there were rooms for rent there. Source and RAY planned to park their automobile in an area immediately behind the rooming house which is reached off a small street or alley behind the house, and by parking the car in this position immediately behind the house, it would be substantially concealed.

Source on May 22, 1968, accompanied interviewing Agents to Alton, Illinois. He directed Agents to a location



SL 44-775

where he pointed out the Bank of Alton, and he stated this was the bank to which he had referred. In the course of locating the bank, source commented that he had not been in Alton since 1959, but he remembered that there was a drugstore near the bank bearing in its name the word "Dick's". He also commented during the course of locating the bank that he remembered that a Washington Avenue bus passed on the main street in front of the bank. Upon locating the bank building and viewing it, source commented that the building had apparently been remodeled since he last saw it in 1959. He said that in addition to the present main front door there had been in 1959 a side door on the side of the bank where there are now located drive-in windows. He recalled that in 1959 the drive-in windows were not on the side of the building where they are now located, but were on the back wall of the building. Source then accompanied Agents and directed them to the rooming house to which he had referred. The house to which he directed Agents and which he then pointed out is a house bearing the address 1209 Fourth Street in Alton. Upon viewing this house at this time, source commented that there were steps going down from the front of the house to a basement level and it was the basement level in which he and RAY had hoped to obtain a room in 1959.

## FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 6/5/68

RUSSELL PERRY BRANNEN was interviewed at his place of residence 1633 Dolman. He is employed at the Modern Jacket Company, 1000 Washington Avenue. BRANNEN was released from the Missouri State Penitentiary September 10, 1964. He had been sentenced to this institution on April 1, 1952, from Bethany, Missouri, in connection with an auto theft at which time he received a 25 year sentence under the Habitual Criminal Act.

BRANNEN stated during his last several years at the Missouri State Penitentiary, he worked under the immediate supervision of Major POIRY (phonetic), Deputy Warden, and was in charge of transfers, cell changes and classification of prisoners. In this capacity he felt that he undoubtedly came in contact with subject JAMES EARL RAY but he had no specific recollection of subject's contact. After viewing subject's photograph, he stated that the face looked familiar but he still had no specific recollection of subject RAY. He denied having any contact with subject RAY subsequent to RAY's escape from the Missouri State Penitentiary. He mentioned he recalled discussing subject RAY with one JOHNNY VELANTI after VELANTI brought up the subject and asked him if he, BRANNEN, had any recollection of subject RAY in the Missouri State Penitentiary and if he, BRANNEN, recalled any contact between VELANTI and RAY while in the Penitentiary.

BRANNEN advised when questioned concerning one JIMMY CARPENTER that he knew CARPENTER and had seen him occasionally in the recent past. He did not recall having discussed subject RAY on any occasion with CARPENTER and stated CARPENTER was entering the St. Louis City Hospital in the near future for an eye operation. It was his understanding that arrangements had been made for CARPENTER to enter the hospital by a southside St. Louis politician known only to him as "LEISURE" (phonetic).

BRANNEN advised that he was born [redacted] at Gallatin, Missouri, and that he is presently on parole from the Missouri State Penitentiary and that his parole is up in September of 1968. He promised to be alert for anyone with whom he came in contact for any information which might be of value in trying to ascertain the present whereabouts of subject RAY or any known associates of RAY who might be in a position to furnish such information.

On 5/31/68 at St. Louis, Missouri File # SL 44-775 - 953  
by SA CLETIS B. BIDEWELL:hcv Date dictated 6/3/68

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.

SL 44-775

BRANNEN advised upon questioning that he had not heard any discussion concerning the method of subject RAY's escape as to whether or not he left in a bread truck or walked out of the prison with a group of visitors.

## FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date May 24, 1968

JOHN PAUL VALENTI again called the St. Louis Federal Bureau of Investigation Office to promise his continued co-operation and indicate a continuing feeling of apprehension that something might happen which might possibly lead to the revocation of his parole.

VALENTI mentioned in the conversation that he and JAMES H. CARPENTER had visited JOHN EUGENE GAWRON on the previous night. He stated GAWRON mentioned he had been talking to the FBI.

VALENTI advised that both he and CARPENTER believed that after having visited with GAWRON that GAWRON probably harbored subject RAY after his escape from the Missouri State Penitentiary. VALENTI, however, stated that GAWRON made no such admission in any statement actually made by him.

VALENTI promised to be alert for any information which might be of value in efforts to locate subject RAY.

---

On 5/14/68 at St. Louis, Missouri File # SL: 44-775 - 954  
by SA CLETIS B. BIDEWELL :jfb Date dictated 5/20/68

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.

Date May 23, 1968

JOHN PAUL VELANTI called to indicate his concern that individuals, unknown to him, had linked his name with that of subject RAY, whom he could not actually recall. He expressed the opinion that certain individuals would like to see him charged with violating his parole and returned to the Missouri State Penitentiary to "get even with him" for things he had not done.

He expressed a desire to cooperate in any way in connection with this investigation and mentioned he had visited with another former inmate at the Missouri State Penitentiary who claimed he had seen subject JAMES EARL RAY in St. Louis approximately two weeks after the escape of RAY from the Missouri State Penitentiary. He declined to identify this person over the telephone but advised he might furnish this individual's name in a personal interview at a later time.

VELANTI indicated that in the conversation with this individual they discussed the fact that RAY was supposed to have walked out of the Missouri State Penitentiary with visitors, rather than having escaped concealed in a bread box.

---

On 5/13/68 at St. Louis, Missouri File # SL: 44-775 - 955  
by SA CLETIS B. BIDEWELL :jfb Date dictated 5/17/68

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.

Date May 16, 1968

Mrs. MELBA KOEHLER, Secretary, Jefferson - Gravois Bank, 2604 South Jefferson, St. Louis, Missouri, telephone PR 1-8833, who was contacted at the bank, furnished the following information:

After examining a deposit ticket supporting a \$1,350 deposit to the account of JOHN RAY, 1807 South 11th Street, St. Louis, Missouri, on August 30, 1967, she advised that she prepared this deposit ticket for the customer and the customer would not have had an opportunity to handle the deposit ticket.

She personally noted on the deposit ticket that it consisted of \$600 in cash and \$750 in travelers checks. It is her opinion that the travelers checks in question were American Express Travelers Checks although she does not specifically recall that they were American Express items. Further, she does not recall whether there was one or more persons, if any, accompanying the individual representing himself to her to be JOHN RAY at the time this deposit was made to a new regular checking account opened in the name of JOHN RAY at the same time.

She personally handled all of this detailed work and obtained the signature card from JOHN RAY.

On 5/15/68 at St. Louis, Missouri File # SL: 44-775 - 956  
by SAA HOWARD C. KENNEDY : pjh Date dictated 5/15/68

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.

Date May 16, 1968

Mr. A. G. ARB, Vice-President, Jefferson - Gravois Bank, 2604 South Jefferson, St. Louis, Missouri, telephone PR 1-8833, who was contacted at the bank, furnished the following information:

After examining a deposit ticket of this bank pertaining to a \$1,350 deposit on August 30, 1967, to an account of JOHN RAY, 1807 South 11th Street, regular checking account number 302 8879, he advised that with regard to a portion of the deposit amounting to \$750 consisting of travelers checks, no further record of these travelers checks can be located at Jefferson - Gravois Bank. None of these travelers checks would have been photographed by this bank but they would have been sent intact in a batch of work for further proof detailed work to the Bank of St. Louis, St. Louis, Missouri. This particular deposit transaction is identified in the proof work of Jefferson - Gravois Bank as Transaction #HH 9291, of August 30, 1967.

Mr. ARB advised that Mr. WILLIAM GASSER at the Bank of St. Louis should be familiar with this transaction, insofar as proof work of the Bank of St. Louis is concerned. Mr. ARB further explained that following the completion of proof work by the Bank of St. Louis, the travelers checks should have been sent by that bank to First National Bank in St. Louis which would have in turn forwarded the checks on to New York City, New York, if in fact, the travelers checks involved were American Express Travelers Checks.

It was Mr. ARB's opinion that the travelers checks in question probably were American Express items.

On 5/15/68 at St. Louis, Missouri File # SL: 44-775 - 957  
by SAA HOWARD C. KENNEDY : pjb Date dictated 5/15/68

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.



## FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date May 16, 1968

Records of the Jefferson - Gravois Bank of St. Louis, 2604 South Jefferson Avenue, St. Louis, telephone PROspect 1-8833, disclosed the following information with regard to a regular checking account (Account [REDACTED]) maintained there in the name of JOHN RAY, whose address is shown as 1807 South 11th Street, St. Louis, Missouri 63104:

This regular checking account was opened August 30, 1967, with a deposit of \$1,350. The deposit ticket shows that the deposit consisted of \$600 in cash and \$750 in "travelers checks". Records disclose that the account was opened for RAY at the bank by MELBA KOEHLER, a secretary. The signature card executed at the time the account was opened discloses that RAY was then unemployed and that he had previously maintained a checking account at Manufacturers Bank and Trust Company, St. Louis, Missouri. The signature card shows he resided in St. Louis for fifteen years. References identified on the signature card were CAROL PEPPER, 712½ Shenandoah, St. Louis, and JOHN GOWRON, 1813 Lafayette, St. Louis.

In response to a request for a verification of JOHN RAY's signature and other information directed to Manufacturers Bank and Trust Company of St. Louis, 1731 South Broadway, St. Louis, Missouri, telephone MA 1-1230, by Jefferson - Gravois Bank, the Manufacturers Bank and Trust Company, on August 30, 1967, directed a letter to Jefferson - Gravois Bank advising that the specimen signature of JOHN RAY compared favorably with the one on file with the Manufacturers Bank's Commercial Department where "he established an account yesterday". This letter of the Manufacturers Bank and Trust Company was signed by RAYMOND R. KROMNACKER, Vice-President.

Records show that following the initial deposit, the following additional deposits were made in that account in the period from August 30, 1967, through April 16, 1968:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Amount of Deposit</u>
October 31, 1967	\$ 16.82
January 22, 1968	250.65
February 9, 1968	48.55
March 19, 1968	203.46
April 1, 1968	449.03

On 5/15/68 at St. Louis, Missouri File # SL: 44-775 - 958  
by SAA HOWARD C. KENNEDY / pjh Date dictated 5/15/68

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.

SL 44-775

<u>Date</u>	<u>Amount of Deposit</u>
April 9, 1968	\$314.83
April 12, 1968	311.22

There were no withdrawals noted in this account in the period from August 30, 1967, through January 16, 1968, however, commencing January 17, 1968, there were frequent withdrawals, checks or other charges disclosed by the account; these withdrawals, checks or charges ranged between \$2.00 and \$325.00. These items of \$100.00 or more were as follows:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Amount of Check or Withdrawal</u>
December 29, 1967	\$320.00
January 3, 1968	325.00
January 9, 1968	200.00
April 5, 1968	100.00
April 11, 1968	300.00

Examination of paid checks drawn on this account still on hand at Jefferson - Gravois Bank disclosed the following information concerning these check items:

SL 44-775

<u>DATE</u>	<u>PAYEE</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>ENDORSEMENTS</u>
April 18, 1968	Cash	\$100.00	Cashed at Bank, April 19, 1968
April 19, 1968	PETER HAUPTMANN COMPANY	\$ 92.92	Endorsed by payee and McKesson & Robbins, Inc., to Boatmen's National Bank, St. Louis
April 23, 1968	LCOR DISTRIBUTING COMPANY	49.49	Endorsed by payee to bank identified as Southern Commercial and Savings Bank, St. Louis
April 26, 1968	Cash	300.00	Cashed at Bank, April 26, 1968
April 24, 1968	MANHATTAN DISTRIBUTING COMPANY	36.09	Endorsed by payee to Mercantile Trust Company, St. Louis
April 28, 1968	Cash	100.00	Cashed at bank, April 29, 1968
April 25, 1968	PETER HAUPTMANN COMPANY	36.74	Endorsed by payee to Boatmen's National Bank, St. Louis
May 3, 1968	Cash	300.00	Cashed at bank, May 3, 1968
May 2, 1968	PETER HAUPTMANN COMPANY	121.27	Endorsed by payee to Boatmen's National Bank, St. Louis
May 3, 1968	MILLER and SCHEER REALTY & INSURANCE COMPANY	80.00	Endorsed by payee to Tower Grove Bank, St. Louis
May 6, 1968	FALSTAFF BREWING COMPANY	78.30	Endorsed by payee to Boatmen's National Bank, St. Louis. Check also bears handwritten notations.....

SL 44-775

<u>DATE</u>	<u>PAYEE</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>ENDORSEMENTS</u>
May 6, 1968 continued.....			...."1982 Arsenal" and "Randazzo 166"
May 10, 1968	Cash	\$300.00	Cashed at bank, May 10, 1968
April 30, 1968	CAROL PEPPER	320.00	Endorsed by payee and check also bears stamped endorsement "for deposit only - E. L. R. Investments, 3638 Olive St., St. Louis 8, Mo." The check also bears a bank stamp impression of the Mercantile Commerce Bank, St. Louis, Missouri.

SL 44-775

These bank records may be produced on issuance of a subpoena duces tecum, which should be directed to Mr. A. G. ARB, Vice-President, Jefferson - Gravois Bank, St. Louis, Missouri.

Date June 14, 1968

Mrs. ALBERT PEPPER (CAROL ANN), residing 2025 Bellevue, Maplewood, Missouri, telephone 645-9152, telephonically furnished the following information at 2:30 p.m.

On inquiry as to whether her brother, JOHN LARRY RAY, is in fact intending to travel to London, England, in behalf of JAMES EARL RAY, his brother, she commented that her brother JOHN is definitely not going to leave St. Louis to travel to England or anywhere else. She said he does not have funds with which to travel and although she personally "has a few dollars" she does not intend to give any of it to JOHN. She said she might consider doing so if either of them could be of any assistance to JAMES EARL RAY, but she is confident that "there is no help for him". She said that if they can in anyway help him, they will have to do so after he is returned to this country.

She said that JOHN RAY does not have a telephone where he may be reached except at the Grape Vine Tavern. He visited her home on the afternoon of June 13, 1968, and he usually telephones her once each day. He has not yet called her today and she expects to hear from him this afternoon. At the request of SA(A) HOWARD C. KENNEDY she said she will inform JOHN RAY to telephonically contact SA PATRICK W. BRADLEY at this office.

On 6/14/68 at St. Louis, Missouri File # SL 44-775 - 959  
by SA (A) HOWARD C. KENNEDY : pjh Date dictated 6/14/68

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.

## FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date June 14, 1968

Mrs. ALBERT (CAROL ANN) PEPPER, residing 2025 Bellevue, Maplewood, Missouri, telephone 645-9152, who was contacted at her residence, disclosed the following information:

She has been truthful in previous contacts by FBI Agents with her that she does not recall having any contact at all except by personal correspondence with her oldest brother, JAMES EARL RAY, since about eight or nine years ago, prior to the time he escaped from the Missouri State Penitentiary (MSP), Jefferson City, Missouri. Her only contact with JAMES EARL RAY while he was incarcerated there was via mail. She admitted having written to him under the name of her grandmother who died after RAY was confined to the penitentiary.

She emphasized that she has never at anytime nor does she now know where her brother spent the time between about April 23, 1967, when he escaped from the MSP and July 1967, when his whereabouts have been established through investigation. She did not see or hear from him at all during that period of time, and insofar as is known to her, none of her brothers or sisters have seen him since he escaped from the MSP.

She was very much surprised when she learned that JAMES EARL RAY had been arrested in London, England. She first learned of these circumstances after being called by telephone by a woman friend, name not disclosed, on Saturday, June 8, 1968, the day of his arrest. This friend informed her of the news and she then heard the same news on television. Although she has saved most of the local papers for each day since that time, she has not read from more than one or two of them about her brother. The news is, of course, upsetting and she has formed an opinion that in many instances information is grossly exaggerated and misrepresented. She is somewhat bitter towards the local press, advising that CHRIS CONDON, a St. Louis news commentator, telephoned her, probably on Monday, June 10, 1968, requesting an interview with her. She declined and on the following day, Tuesday, June 11, 1968, in the late afternoon she observed CHRIS CONDON and several other men with him, both in front of the house and in a vestibule at her house. They appeared to be attempting to gain entrance but she declined to answer the door. She observed that they took pictures of the house and then on the 6:00 p.m. television news broadcast, Channel 5, she observed pictures of her house. The pictures disclosed the house number of 2025, and the news announcement indicated the house was located on Bellevue Street in Maplewood.

On 6/13/68 at Maplewood, Missouri File # SL 44-775 - 960  
by SA (A) HOWARD C. KENNEDY Date dictated 6/14/68

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.

SL

44-775

On the previous evening, CHRIS CONDON reported photographs and news concerning the Grape Vine Tavern owned by her and operated by her brother, JOHN LARRY RAY, at St. Louis. She believes this news coverage is very unfair to herself and to her brother, JOHN.

At one point she commented that it is rather discouraging to know that she and many other people are paying through taxes the expenses for a representative of the United States Government to travel to London, England, in behalf of the Government for prosecution of her brother when she personally does not have money enough to afford to go there also. She said it might be possible if she had money to "help in his defense" in referring to her brother, JAMES EARL RAY, but she did not comment further. She emphasized she has absolutely no information pertaining to his activities within the past several years.

She became sad and tearful in recalling incidents of her childhood, mentioning that a Catholic children's home, not otherwise identified, was wrong in taking from her mother her three youngest children, namely [REDACTED], SUSIE and BUZZY. [REDACTED], if living, is now [REDACTED]. According to the recent news, [REDACTED] was [REDACTED] but she has no other information concerning [REDACTED]. She knows that her mother never signed papers or gave any approval for [REDACTED], who she heard many years ago was [REDACTED]." She would very much like to know the whereabouts of [REDACTED]. She has not seen her sister, SUSIE, who is married and who lives in the Chicago, Illinois, area, since BUZZY's funeral. Her mother, of course, was an alcoholic.

Her husband, ALBERT PEPPER, has indicated to her he believes they should obtain a gun of some kind "for protection" in view of recent publicity. She is afraid that Negroes may attempt to harm them. She personally directed JOHN RAY to close the tavern for a few days. JOHN RAY, she believes is at home. She talked to him by telephone when he called her from the tavern where he had stopped for a few minutes on June 12, 1968. She does not know when the tavern will reopen.



Date 5-23-68

Records of the Manufacturers Bank and Trust Company of St. Louis, 1731 South Broadway, St. Louis, Missouri, telephone MA 1-1230, disclosed the following information:

A checking account, known as a personal check plan, was opened by an individual using the name JAMES CARL O'CONNOR at this bank March 9, 1959, with an initial deposit of \$159. This account was closed July 20, 1959, by a withdrawal of \$4.

When the account was initially opened O'CONNOR used the residence address 1820 South 12th Street, St. Louis, Missouri, but subsequently his address was changed to 1818 South 12th Street, St. Louis, and then it was again changed to 1727 South 11th Street, St. Louis, Missouri.

This account showed the following additional deposits on the dates indicated:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Amount of Deposit</u>
March 10, 1959	\$ 40
March 13, 1959	40
March 18, 1959	30
March 20, 1959	40
March 26, 1959	370
April 14, 1959	100
May 14, 1959	150
June 2, 1959	42
June 9, 1959	30
June 10, 1959	10
June 17, 1959	10.

The account showed withdrawals or charges ranging in amount between \$4 and \$600. Microfilm records disclosed photographs of the face side only of the following-described checks drawn against this account:

On 5-17-68 at St. Louis, Missouri File # SL 44-775 - 961  
by SAA HOWARD C. KENNEDY:amb Date dictated 5-17-68

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.

SL 44-775

<u>Date</u>	<u>Payee</u>	<u>Amount</u>
March 25, 1959	Y. P. WEBBE	\$ 50
March 26, 1959	"	600
April 10, 1959	CAROL RYAN	6
April 26, 1959	"	6
May 1, 1959	Standard Auto Parts	20
May 4, 1959	JAMES CARL O'CONNOR	40
May 9, 1959	CAROL RYAN	6
May 12, 1959	JAMES CARL O'CONNOR	30
May 21, 1959	"	50
June 19, 1959	"	100
June 23, 1959	"	36
June 27, 1959	Carson-Union-May-Stern	4
June 30, 1959	JAMES CARL O'CONNOR	30
July 12, 1959	CAROL RYAN	4

Only one check item was not located on microfilm records, this being a \$30 withdrawal on June 2, 1959.

These records may be obtained on issuance of a subpoena duces tecum which should be directed to Mr. HARLEY E. SCHWERING, Senior Vice President of the Bank.

## FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 5-23-68

Mr. JOSEPH STAHLSCHMIDT, Auditor, Manufacturers Bank and Trust Company of St. Louis, 1731 South Broadway, St. Louis, Missouri, who was contacted at the bank, furnished the following information and records:

A signature card executed on March 9, 1959, at the time a checking account was opened at this bank in the name of JAMES CARL O'CONNOR, 1820 South 12th Street, whose address was subsequently changed to 1818 South 12th Street and then to 1727 South 11th Street, St. Louis, Missouri, bears the handwritten signature "JAMES CARL O'CONNOR." It is believed that this is the only handwriting of O'CONNOR appearing on this card, however, the card contains further handwritten notations indicating that O'CONNOR had no telephone and that he was employed as an attendant at a service station, identity or location of which was not known. The card also showed that he had no former bank accounts.

Mr. STAHLSCHMIDT made available for use in this investigation the original signature card. He requested that it be returned to this bank when it is no longer needed.

On 5-17-68 at St. Louis, Missouri File # SL 44-775 - 962  
by SAA HOWARD C. KENNEDY: amb Date dictated 5-17-68

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.

## FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 5-23-68

Records of the Manufacturers Bank and Trust Company of St. Louis, 1731 South Broadway, St. Louis, Missouri, telephone MA 1-1230, disclosed the following information:

The only available records in existence at this time pertaining to sales of Travelers' Checks by Manufacturers Bank and Trust Company in 1959 are contained in a large bound journal or register listing sales of American Express Travelers' Checks in the period from June 9, 1942, to June 29, 1962. This register is comprised of 300 pages and it is being stored for permanent retention. This register in the period August through December, 1958, and in the calendar year 1959 did not disclose any sale of Travelers' Checks to JAMES EARL RAY or JAMES L. OWENS nor did it show any sale listed in any of their known aliases.

These records may be obtained on issuance of a subpoena duces tecum which should be directed to Mr. HARLEY E. SCHWERING, Senior Vice President, Manufacturers Bank and Trust Company, St. Louis.

---

On 5-17-68 at St. Louis, Missouri File # SL 44-775 - 963  
by SAA HOWARD C. KENNEDY:amb Date dictated 5-17-68

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.

## FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date May 22, 1968

Records of the Jefferson-Gravois Bank of St. Louis, 2604 South Jefferson Avenue, St. Louis, telephone PR 1-8833, disclosed the following information with regard to a regular joint checking account, account number [REDACTED], maintained there in the past in the name of JAMES L. OWENS.

A signature card disclosed that this account, a joint checking account of OWENS and IDA B. OWENS, was opened August 9, 1965, with a \$100 initial deposit. The account was closed February 28, 1966.

OWENS' residence address was shown as 2241 Oregon Avenue, St. Louis, telephone TO 5-1279. The record showed he was employed as a barber at the Belmor Barber Shop, address not shown; IDA B. OWENS was listed as a housewife. The record showed further that they previously banked at Lindell Trust Company, St. Louis, Missouri. OWENS' Missouri vehicle operator's license was shown as number [REDACTED]. There was no record of any account for subject, under his true name or known aliases.

These records may be obtained on issuance of a subpoena duces tecum which should be directed to Mr. A. G. ARB, Vice President, Jefferson-Gravois Bank.

On 5/16/68 at St. Louis, Missouri File # SL 44-775 - 964  
by SA HOWARD C. KENNEDY (A) :paw:hcv Date dictated 5/16/68

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.

Date 6-12-68

DONALD GARFIELD COX, residing at the northeast corner of Case and Thelma, Berkeley, Missouri, was interviewed at his place of employment, Derby Service Station, 8970 Natural Bridge, Berkeley, Missouri, and furnished the following information:

He was confined to the Missouri State Penitentiary from September, 1960, to September, 1963, after his conviction for armed robbery in the city of St. Louis, Missouri.

He viewed a photograph of JAMES EARL RAY as depicted on FBI Wanted Flyer #442-A dated April 19, 1968. He advised that he recognized the center photograph on this wanted flyer as a JAMES RAY with whom he was acquainted in the penitentiary. He advised that he knew RAY only slightly and described RAY as a loner who seldom associated with the other inmates. He stated that RAY was not well liked in the penitentiary and that he came to the penitentiary with the attitude that he was a "big shot" and was going to run things. He advised that RAY was not a gambler to his knowledge nor did RAY collect gambling debts for anyone else.

While in the penitentiary he, COX, associated with BOB BURNS, BOB DOUGLAS, CLYDE CASEY, and GLEN CHERNICK. He advised that he is acquainted with a JAMES BROWN from the city of St. Louis. He advised he is unaware of BROWN's present residence but that BROWN would be approximately 33 years of age at the present. He is unaware of whether or not BROWN was close to JAMES RAY. He advised that BROWN had "so many stories" that he tried to stay away from BROWN. He advised that BROWN was a "liar" and always had some stories to tell.

He is not acquainted with a (first name unknown) ALLEN who was an inmate at the Missouri State Penitentiary. He advised that he may recognize a photograph of ALLEN but that he knew many of the inmates only by their faces rather than their names.

He advised that he is acquainted with a "SLICK" STEDHAM doing life at the Missouri State Penitentiary from Kansas City. COX also described STEDHAM as a liar.

---

On 6-5-68 at Berkeley, Missouri File # SL 44-775 - 965  
by SA WILLIAM H. WARFIELD  
SA MARVIN R. DORAN WHW:amb Date dictated 6-7-68

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.