

ROBERT R. PERRY

Atlanta

pp. 2091 - 2111

Rec Oct. 2, 1968

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Copy to:

Report of: SA ROBERT R. PERRY
Date: July 30, 1968

Office: Atlanta, Georgia

Field Office File #: 44-2386

Bureau File #: 44-38861

Title: JAMES EARL RAY;
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. - VICTIM

Character: CRIME ON GOVERNMENT RESERVATION - CONSPIRACY;
UNLAWFUL FLIGHT TO AVOID CONFINEMENT - ROBBERY

Synopsis: BILLY MAC WISDOM, inmate, U.S. Penitentiary, Atlanta, says he saw person who resembled subject, December, 1967, or January, 1968, at which time a white male he knew as "CHUCK" attempted to sell this individual a rifle with telescopic sight. Two individuals who were guests at the Provincial Motel, New Orleans, December, 1967, at the same time of the subject had no information. Itinerary for Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. from April, 1967 to time of his death obtained from SCLC Headquarters. ROBERT TATUM, Mableton, Georgia, who purchased .38 caliber revolver found on RAY at time of his arrest in London states sold revolver to a RAY SPAIN of Birmingham, Alabama. RAYMOND CURTIS interviewed at Whitfield County Jail, Dalton, Georgia, advised he was trying to sell a story to Ebony Magazine for approximately \$5,000 to help pay off the mortgage on his mother's home. At first interview he denied statements which were in his letter to Ebony Magazine concerning he and subject, JAMES EARL RAY. Second interview, same date, he allowed Agent to read his twenty page handwritten story concerning activities of himself and JAMES EARL RAY.

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DETAILS:

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AT 44-2386
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The following investigation was conducted by
SA ROBERT R. PERRY:

AT ATLANTA, GEORGIA

On May 11, 1968, JIMMY GARNER, 107 14th Street, NE; advised he had no additional information concerning the whereabouts of subject. He stated inasmuch as he and the subject had done some drinking together, and there has been no publicity concerning the subject residing at the rooming house on 14th Street, it is possible the subject might recontact him. He stated if he should hear any thing from the subject, he would immediately contact the Atlanta FBI Office.

On May 13, 1968, BILLY MAC WISDOM, contacted by SAs ROBERT R. PERRY and JAMES O. PONDER at the United States Penitentiary, Atlanta, where he is currently in custody. He was interviewed at the AFB Building where he is being held in administrative segregation for refusing to work where assigned at the penitentiary.

He stated he has no knowledge of the whereabouts of subject, RAY, and no knowledge of any plot to kill MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. He stated that in November, 1967, he saw a person in the 14th Street area of Atlanta, who closely resembled the subject.

WISDOM stated he has never resided in the 14th Street area himself. He stated this individual who he had seen believed to have a 1956 or 1957 Oldsmobile automobile.

WISDOM further stated that he would not furnish any information concerning subject, RAY, if he had such information.

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The following investigation was conducted by SA
ROBERT R. PERRY:

On May 29, 1968, BILLY MACK WISDOM was interviewed at the United States Penitentiary, Atlanta, where he is an inmate.

He stated since last interviewed he had recalled some additional information and wished to furnish all information he had concerning the person he believed identical with JAMES EARL RAY.

He stated that a white male, who he knew as "Chuck", blond, and probably in his early twenties, and who drove a red and white 1966 Mustang convertible with an unknown license, tried to sell a rifle to this individual who he believed identical with RAY either in December, 1967, or January, 1968. He said he recalled it was right after he was released from the Fulton County Jail following his arrest and in December, 1967.

He stated this attempted sale took place on the corner of Barnett and St. Charles Streets in Northeast Atlanta where several hippie-types were residing in an apartment house which faced St. Charles Street on the corner of Barnett, and would be located on the southwest corner of the intersection. He stated JIM NEIDMAN, a singer at the Catacombs, also might know the person he believed identical with RAY.

He stated CHUCK was visiting the girl who resided in this apartment, which he described as the first apartment on the right, and two hippies who he knew only as "WEASSEL" and "JOHN", also living there. Both were bike-riders who wore leather jackets and hung out around the Catacombs. He stated he believed CHUCK resided in the Fourteenth or Fifteenth Street area near Peachtree Street and stated he was not the hippie type but a veteran, 21 or 20 years old, 140 pounds, 5 feet 8 inches, blond hair, and not employed.

WISDOM stated he first saw this person he believed identical with RAY in September or October, 1967, at the Regency Hyatt House in downtown Atlanta when he was with a BOB JONES of Decatur, who is believed to operate a nightclub in Daytona Beach, Florida. He said he saw this person other

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times at the Catacoabs, a hippie coffee house on Fourteenth Street in Atlanta. He stated he talked with NEIMAN at that time.

He stated the last time he saw this individual was at the intersection of St. Charles and Barnett Streets; however, he could not be certain as to whether it was before or after he was in the Fulton County Jail. He stated CHUCK had tried to sell this rifle for \$150.00 because the rifle was in a case and had a telescope. He stated after thinking about the matter further he recalled he was in jail at Christmas-time, 1967, and this attempted sale probably took place before he was placed in Fulton County Jail about December 8, 1967.

He stated CHUCK was in town in early January, 1968, and believes he may be from Tennessee. He stated WEASEL and JOHN had lived on Vedado Way.

On May 29, 1968, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. BAREOUR, who reside at 865 St. Charles Street and on the apartment listed at 859 St. Charles, which is the southwest corner of the intersection bordered by St. Charles and Barnett, stated at one time there had been a Mr. and Mrs. W. T. JONES residing in the right-hand apartment at 869 St. Charles. They were described as hippie-types, and asked to leave because of the many hippies who were apparently spending the night there. Mrs. BAREOUR stated there was always a crowd, and there would be as many as ten motorbikes parked in front of the house at one time. She described Mr. and Mrs. JONES as young white male and young white female, who did not dress like hippies, however, had hippie-type friends. She stated Mrs. JONES' name was RHONDA and a Mrs. LILLIAN JONES at 15 Habersham, telephone 261-7818, was apparently the mother of W. T. JONES.

She stated Mrs. LILLIAN JONES indicated she would pay the rent if W. T. JONES was unable to do so.

On May 29, 1968, records of the Atlanta Police Department reflected EILLY MACK WISDOM was arrested on December 11, 1967, released on December 30, 1967, on bond, and sentenced in United States District Court, Atlanta, on January 29, 1968.

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On May 31, 1968, Mrs. LILLIAN JONES, Apartment B-9, 15 Habersham, N.E., advised she has two sons, KELLY JONES, who is in school, and W. T. JONES. She stated W.T.'s full name is WILLIAM THOMAS JONES and he is presently on probation for theft of motor vehicles, and his probation officer is JAMES HUDSON, United States Probation Officer. She stated she had no idea of his whereabouts and knows that he moved recently from North Highland Avenue. She stated her parents are presently financing her rent, and she is unable to work at this time. She stated she has met "WEASEL" and "JOHNNIE", who she described as a tall person, and also noted that her daughter-in-law RHONDA is pregnant. She stated RHONDA's parents, who reside somewhere in Alabama, are presently paying the rent for her son and his wife. She stated if she obtains any information concerning his whereabouts, she will advise the FBI.

Records of the Atlanta Police Department reviewed on May 31, 1968, reflected WILLIAM THOMAS JONES, Atlanta Police Department number 189931, FBI number 179 306 D, white male born March 31, 19⁴⁴, was indicted by Fulton County Grand Jury on May 3, 1968, charged with robbery and rape. He is described as white male, 5 feet 11 inches, 177 pounds, black hair, hazel eyes, tattoo upper right arm of "LONIE", numerous cut scars.

On May 31, 1968, Lieutenant C. J. STRICKLAND, Atlanta Police Department, Homicide Squad, advised WILLIAM T. JONES is presently on Federal probation, and his probation officer is JAMES HUDSON. Lieutenant STRICKLAND stated he was one of the detectives assigned to the robbery-rape case and to contact Mr. HUDSON for any additional information.

On June 4, 1968, United States Probation Officer JAMES HUDSON advised WILLIAM T. JONES is under supervision until July, 1971, and is on parole, not probation. He stated he is not in possession of a present address for JONES; however, JONES is due to report that week and noted that he has always done so promptly. Mr. HUDSON stated he considers JONES' mother a "nut" and stated that his grandmother, Mrs. G. A. CHRISTIAN, 3729 Dunbarton Road, N.W., telephone 233-5223,

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apparently has some money and is financing JONES' mother. He also stated a Mrs. HARRINGTON, telephone 688-7279, resides at 1083 Culpwood Avenue, may have some information concerning JONES. JONES reportedly stole her car and used it in some armed robberies in Dekalb County.

Inquiries in the area of the Catacombs May 29, 31, June 4, 5, and 6, 1968, have failed to find anyone who knew the whereabouts of WEASEL, JOHN, or CHUCK. Several persons recalled knowing WEASEL and CHUCK, but were unable or declined to furnish any information as to their present whereabouts.

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The following investigation was conducted by SA ROBERT R. PERRY on May 10, 1968 and May 13, 1968:

AT ATLANTA, GEORGIA

LOUIS KLAUBER, 1145 Peachtree, NE, Georgia Laundrys and Cleaners Association, advised he has a list of approximately 700 cleaning establishments located throughout the state of Georgia, which contains the listing of all except plants that are not covered by employment compensation. He stated this list is very complete and he would be happy to make a copy of it available.

On May 13, 1968, LOUIS KLAUBER, Room 438, 1145 Peachtree Street, NE, made available listing at no cost.

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The following investigation was conducted by
SA ROBERT R. PERRY:

AT ATLANTA, GEORGIA

On May 15, 1968, R. C. MATTHEWS, JR., Group Vice President, Trust Company of Georgia, 2126 Mabry Road, NE, advised he had been in New Orleans at the Provincial Motel, in December, for about 3 days, however, did not recall the exact dates. He stated he and his wife were there on a short vacation, and proceeded from New Orleans to Birmingham, for Christmas. He stated they talked to no one while at the motel, and he stated the photograph of the subject is not familiar. Mr. MATTHEWS stated he recalled work being done on the swimming pool at that time, and that he and his wife had stopped to watch this construction.

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On May 29, 1968, N. R. HINES, Westinghouse Electric Corporation, 1610 Southland Avenue, advised that he had been at the Provincial Motel at 1024 Chartres Street in New Orleans, December, 1967, for one night on business. He stated he was at the motel very little, arrived late after dinner, and just spent one night there. He recalled that the room he had faced the street, and he was unable to recall seeing anyone who resembled the subject. He stated he was not at the motel during the day.

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On May 20, 1968, DORA MC DONALD, Secretary to the late Doctor MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) Headquarters, made available to Mrs. WILLINGHAM of the Accounting Division of SCLC, two copies of a memorandum directed to the Federal Bureau of Investigation reflecting the itinerary of Doctor KING for April 15, 1967, to the time of his death. This information was obtained from airline billings and reservation records and may not indicate all of the late Doctor KING'S travels.

MEMORANDUM

TO: FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FROM: SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
RE: TRAVEL ITINERARY FOR DR. KING
DATE: MAY 20, 1968

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DATE	PLACE
April 15, 1967	Hilton Inn - San Francisco, California
April 22-24	New York Hilton - Rockefeller Center
May 6, 1967	Louisville, Kentucky
May 12	Terrace Motor Inn - Appleton, Wisconsin
May 14	New York
May 19	From Chicago to Detroit
May 20	Summit - New York City
May 27	New York City
May 29 thru June 3	Frogmore, South Carolina
June 5 and 6	New York Hilton - Rockefeller Center
June 12	Seagill Restaurant -- Chicago
June 15	Sheraton Cleveland Hotel
June 22	New York City and Sheraton Cleveland, Cleveland
June 24	Ted's Rhivcho Restaurant -- Malibu, Calif.
June 25	Hyatt House Hotel -- Los Angeles, California
July 9, 1967	Cleveland and Chicago
July 13	Chicago and Cleveland
July 18--23	Chicago and Cleveland
July 23	New York Hilton
July 26	Sheraton Chicago - Chicago
July 29	Cleveland to Pittsburgh
July 23	

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July 28	Marriott Twin Brdgs - Washington, D.C.
August 4	Boston, New York City and Louisville, Kentucky
August 3	Laramie, Wyoming and New York
August 10	Los Angeles
August 13	Washington, D.C.
August 22 and 23	Howard Johnson's -- Cleveland
August 28	Chicago
August 11	International Hotel - Los Angeles, California
August 9	Los Angeles
August	Sheraton Palace - San Francisco, California
Sept. 7 and 8	Howard Johnson - Cleveland
Sept. 8 and 9	Netherland Hilton, Cincinnati, Ohio
Sept. 22	Fairmont Hotel and Tower - San Francisco, California
Sept. 24	Independence, Ohio
October 2 --7	Howard Johnson - Cleveland
October 20	Washington Hilton, Washington, D.C.
Nov. 9	Cleveland
Nov. 12-14	London Hilton Park Lane, Wl.
Nov. 3	Birmingham, Alabama - A.G. Gaston Motel
Nov. 26	Americana of New York
Dec. 2	Savannah, Georgia to Atlanta
Dec. 14 and 15	New York Hilton, New York
Dec. 28--Jan 1, 1968	Miami, New York, and Chicago
Jan 1, 1968	Chicago to Atlanta
January 31 to Feb. 3	Atlanta, Chicago, Fort Wayne, Cleveland, New York and Atlanta
Feb. 2 and 3	New York Hilton, Rockefeller Center
Feb. 5	New York Hilton
Feb. 10	International Hotel, Jamaica, New York
Feb. 12	Holiday Inn of Washington, D.C.
Feb. 14 and 16	Mississippi and Alabama Tour
March 5,	Dallas Texas.
March 10 and 11	

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March 10 and 11
March 15
March 17
March 18
March 19
March 22

New York Hilton - Rockefeller Center
Detroit
Los Angeles
Hotel Acapulco
Alamo Plaza Hotel Courts -- Mississippi
Washington, New York, Virginia and Georgia

N. Randa, Ohio

Memphis

July 3

April

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RRP:nlv

By communication dated June 10, 1968, the Los Angeles Division advised that JAMES EARL RAY was apprehended in London, England and he had in his possession a .38 caliber Liberty Chief revolver, serial number 715, manufactured by Miroku Firearms Manufacturing Company in Japan. MILA SVOBCDA, owner, Liberty Arms Company and the Solinger Cutlery Company, Montrose, California advised that the above described revolver had been sent to R. TATUM, New and Used Guns, 118 Edwards Drive, Mableton, Georgia, on October 3, 1966, under invoice from Solinger Cutlery in Montrose, California. The revolver was the only item in the shipment.

AT MABLETON, GEORGIA.

On June 11, 1968, ROBERT TATUM, 118 Edwards Street, Mableton, Georgia, advised Special Agent JAMES RICHARD FLICK he had purchased a .38 caliber revolver, serial number 715, a Japanese make from the Solinger Cutlery Company, Montrose, California for \$40, on October 11, 1966. On December 3, 1966, he sold the gun for \$50 to WALTER E. SPAIN, 2904 42nd Avenue, Birmingham, Alabama. He obtained SPAIN'S name and address from a driver's license and described SPAIN as a white male, thirty to thirty-five years of age with brown hair. He stated SPAIN is not identical to subject RAY.

By communication dated July 2, 1968, the Bureau advised that RAYMOND JERVIS, Whitfield County Jail, had written two letters to Ebony Magazine who had referred these letters to the Bureau. These letters are as follows:

"Box 21, Tunnel Hill
"Georgia
"June 22, 1968

"Mr. Charles L. Sanders

"Dear Mr. Sanders:

"I thank you for your answer to my letter. I think that details I give you in this letter will be of help to you.

"Well, Sir, I have written a story. No one but myself has read it but me. At this time I know that it will have to be re-written for I am not a writing it as bad as it is.

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"It all about the crime I did and about a crime I did in 1954 with James Earl Ray and about the 13 years of prison pal and everything we talk about. About thing and about James Earl Ray wanted the job of killing Martin Luther King, Jr. We talk of killing King for three years. And we talked to the man from Mississippi that knew all about the KK businessman association that was to put up the money to kill King. I also know the men from Mississippi.

"In that three years we made maps just had to find the right place to kill King. Well I have made the maps over myself. They are with the story also.

"And just where we would go after we killed King so yes when we talk about it I was to be in on it. But I was not. The story has it all in it. All the big thing and the little one also. And what Ray like and what he did not like. This story could get me killed. I know that. That is why. I won't send the story by mail. I know that this is getting to be a long letter. But when you read this if you want the story O.K. If not just let me know, O.K. That way I won't talk to men about it.

"Mr. Sanders there are men in five states that is behind the King killing and they don't know what I know. But James Earl Ray did not. Now that they have Ray Tenn. will trial him if they get him back.

"Well, they want me to testify. Well, I just don't know yet what I will do.

"You see, me and Ray were pal. I could tell what I have to the news. That not much. Or I could not say everything. And I did not tell the FBI. Well, this is not a book. I am just trying to tell you what you ask of me in your letter.

"If you have a man or have someone down this way, if you will have them stop by the jail I will let them read the story and you can go from there. O.K.

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RRP:mlw

"I thank you again.

"I will be looking to hear from you soon.

"Raymond Curtis

"I am still in the Dalton County, Jail."

"Box 21, Tunnel Hill
"Georgia
"May 30, 1968

"Mr. John H. Johnson
(evidentially connected with Ebony Magazine)

"Sir:

"I am Raymond Curtis, a man that said we talk about killing King. Will, Sir, there is things that have never been told. Thing he did and better. Things that would make a story so if you are interested and want the story then I will look to hear from you or someone you send if you are not interested and you know someone that is I would appreciate it if you would tell them about me and give my address. O.K. I am still at the Whitfield County Jail, Dalton, Georgia. My home address is at the top. Sir, I would appreciate if if you would let me hear from you.

"Thank you for your time.

"Raymond Curtis"

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date July 5, 1968

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RAYMOND CURTIS was contacted at the Whitfield County Jail and advised of the identities of Special Agents THOMAS R. HENRY, JR. and ALBERT D. MILLARD. He was furnished a rights and waiver of rights form which he read, indicated he understood, but refused to sign. He was advised that he was being interviewed concerning statements he made in a letter he had mailed to Mr. SANDERS of Ebony Magazine.

CURTIS stated he was merely trying to sell a story to Ebony for approximately \$5,000 to help his mother pay off a mortgage on her home. She had obtained this mortgage as a result of paying attorney's fees for the defense of CURTIS at a previous trial.

CURTIS stated that he and JAMES EARL RAY participated in a burglary in Joliet, Illinois, in October or November, 1954. It was pointed out to CURTIS that certain statements made by him in his letter to Ebony Magazine could possibly involve him in a conspiracy with JAMES EARL RAY in connection with the murder of Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. CURTIS then stated he wished to go on record as to the statements made in his letter to Mr. SANDERS. He categorically denied the following statements which were in his letter to Ebony Magazine:

- 1) That he and JAMES EARL RAY participated in a crime in 1954;
- 2) That RAY wanted the job of killing KING;
- 3) That he and RAY talked about killing KING for three years;
- 4) That he and RAY talked to the man from Mississippi that knew all about the KK Businessmen's Association which Association was to put up the money to kill KING;
- 5) That he knew the men from Mississippi;
- 6) That for three years he and RAY made maps just to find the right place to kill KING and that he made the maps over himself;
- 7) That he and RAY knew just where they would go after the killing of KING;
- 8) That he was to be in on the killing of KING;
- 9) That there are men in five states who are behind the killing of KING and these men do not know what he (CURTIS) knows.

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On 7/3/68 at Dalton, Georgia File # AT 44-2336
by SA ALBERT D. MILLARD and SA THOMAS R. HENRY, JR. :jlh Date dictated 7/5/68

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During this interview CURTIS drew two maps setting out how he thought RAY would stalk KING. This map indicated the following towns where he said KING made most of his speeches: Atlanta, Georgia; Little Rock, Arkansas; Birmingham, Mobile, and Selma, Alabama; Jackson, Vicksburg, and Marks, Mississippi.

CURTIS further advised that there was a man living on a houseboat in Vicksburg, Mississippi, on the Mississippi River whose name he would not divulge who was to take RAY down the River on his boat to New Orleans after the killing. CURTIS further advised that in the past he had pulled several burglaries and armed robberies in towns along the Mississippi River and while police were looking for him on the highway he would be on a boat down the Mississippi. He added that he had written a story concerning the KING killing which was currently being typed and this was the story he mentioned in the letter to Ebony Magazine and which he intended to sell to Ebony.

JAMES EARL RAY;
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. - VICTIM

On July 3, 1968, Sheriff G. T. Mauldin, Whitfield County, Georgia, advised that Curtis sent no letters or communications from the Whitfield County Jail which passed over the jailer's desk. He stated Curtis probably sent his mail out with visitors and jail trustees which would probably not have been observed by men of his department. Sheriff Mauldin stated that Curtis' attorney, Ervin Mitchell, former U. S. Congressman from the Seventh District of Georgia, is of the opinion that most of Curtis' comments concerning his knowledge of Ray's alleged assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. are pure fabrications on the part of Curtis or the result of something Curtis has read in the newspapers.

Approximately one hour following the conclusion of the interview with Curtis, he sent a note to Sheriff Mauldin requesting to again see an FBI Agent and stating that he wanted to tell the entire truth. Curtis was re-interviewed at the Whitfield County Jail.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date July 5, 1968

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RAYMOND CURTIS was furnished a rights and waiver of rights form which he refused to sign. He then stated in connection with the previous interview that apparently in his letter to Ebony Magazine, he used the word "we" indicating that he and JAMES EARL RAY had planned the murder of MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., and he realized now this would involve him in a conspiracy. For that reason in the previous interview he denied the statements he had made in his letter to Ebony Magazine. CURTIS then advised he had written a story which he intended to sell to some magazine for the purpose of obtaining money for his mother. He stated the story was still in his possession and had not yet been sent out to be typed. He permitted SA HENRY to read this 20-page handwritten story one page at a time and he declared this story was true. The first five or six pages of the story merely set out his early life in crime and the prison sentences he had served as a result of the crimes, starting at the age of 15. The remainder of the story is the same as he originally furnished in an interview in April, 1963, concerning his knowledge and association with JAMES EARL RAY. The story reflects that he first became associated with RAY in 1954 when they pulled a payroll robbery together in Quincy, Illinois, with a third individual. Shortly thereafter CURTIS lost contact with RAY when RAY and this third individual were apprehended in connection with a bank robbery at Southwest City, Missouri. After that CURTIS again became acquainted with RAY in prison and while in prison they both learned of the death of President JOHN F. KENNEDY. At this time RAY stated the murder of KENNEDY sounded like a big job and he was always on the inside of a prison when big jobs and big money were to be had.

Shortly after the death of JOHN F. KENNEDY, MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. became prominent, and RAY stated on several occasions that somebody was going to kill KING. During this period an individual came into the Missouri State Penitentiary from Vicksburg, Mississippi. This individual upon learning of JAMES EARL RAY's feelings toward killing KING advised RAY of the EK Businessmen's Association of the South

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On 7/3/63 at Dalton, Georgia File # AT 44-2386by SA THOMAS R. HENRY, JR. :jlh Date dictated 7/5/63

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and stated that people in five states were putting up money for KING's assassination. The story further reflected that RAY informed this individual that he intended to have everything set when he killed KING. RAY followed KING's movements through maps so that he could later stalk KING to the point of assassination. RAY indicated during the time that he would leave a false gun and false trail immediately following the murder. RAY was supposed to go to Vicksburg, Mississippi, following the murder, contact the man from Vicksburg who had the houseboat, and this man was to take him either to New Orleans or Canada via the Mississippi River.

At the conclusion of the interview CURTIS stated he would not testify to any of the above information. He did advise that the name of the individual on the houseboat in Vicksburg, Mississippi, was (first name unknown) WILLETT, also known as "Mississippi," who served time in the Missouri State Penitentiary.

CURTIS refused to allow his story to be copied and stated he would not write it over again nor would he allow the pages to be removed from his prison cell. CURTIS then presented crude sketches of the Federal Penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kansas, and the Missouri State Penitentiary.