

As an Escaped Con

By the Associated Press

The FBI has pinpointed an ex-convict, high school dropout and Army reject as the phantom fugitive Eric Starvo Galt, target of a massive manhunt in the slaying of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The FBI said yesterday a "systematic and exhaustive search" of the fingerprints of 53,000 wanted criminals revealed Galt and 40-year-old James Earl Ray—drifter, loner, avid dancer and prison escapee—are the same man.

In its first positive identification of the man sought by the FBI since the April 4 assassination of King in Memphis, Tenn., the bureau further pictured Ray as a 40-year-old white man in trouble with the law since his youth — and one who "should be considered armed and extremely dangerous."

There was no indication the FBI was any closer to catching Ray than it was Wednesday when it put the name Galt on a fugitive warrant charging him "and an individual whom he alleged to be his brother" with conspiring to deprive King of his civil right to travel from state to state.

Escaped Prison in 1967

In addition a warrant charging Galt with first degree murder has been issued by state authorities in Memphis.

Ray fled the Missouri Penitentiary on April 23, 1967. He had been serving the seventh year of a 20-year sentence for a 1959 market holdup and auto theft in St. Louis.

Prison officials, who said a 1966 escape try by Ray was

thwarted when he was discovered in a ventilator shaft, indicated he succeeded the next year by hiding in a truck carrying bread from the penitentiary bakery to its honor farms.

The earlier escape attempt landed Ray in a Fulton, Mo., prison hospital facility for a mental checkup.

Found "No Mental Defect"

"We gave him our Grade A, Class I workup," recalled Dr. Donald B. Peterson, hospital superintendent. "We found no mental disease or defect within the law."

Prison and police records showed Ray was born in Alton, Ill., son of a laborer of the same name.

Records at the Fulton facility indicated both parents were dead, but the penitentiary records listed his mother as Mrs. Lucille Ryan of St. Louis.

The FBI said Eric Starvo Galt was one of a string of aliases favored by Ray in frequent brushes with the law beginning when he was 21 years old — several years after he dropped

See GALT, A-2



1954



1959



1966



1968

These are the changing faces of James Earl Ray (Eric Starvo Galt) who is sought in a nationwide manhunt in connection with the killing of Dr. Martin Luther King.

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The Other Aliases

In addition to the aliases John Willard and Harvey Lowmyer listed on the FBI fugitive warrant, the bureau said Ray has also called himself James McBride, James Walton, W. C. Heron and James O'Conner.

John Willard was the name used by the man who checked into the Memphis rooming house overlooking the Lorraine Motel, where King was fatally shot as he stood on a balcony and talked with friends.

The portrait sketched by the FBI showed Ray as a rather average-looking ne'er-do-well of conflicting personality traits.

Ray's Description

He was described as 5-foot-10, and 163 to 174 pounds, with brown hair, blue eyes and small scars on his forehead and right palm. He's said to have a habit of tugging on an ear when nervous. His left ear protrudes slightly further than his right ear.

Ray was said by authorities to have worked at various times as a laborer, baker and color-matcher. In addition, persons who came in contact with him while he was outside prison said he spoke of having worked as a merchant seaman and riverboat cook.

The FBI said the fugitive's acquaintances called him a loner who likes beer and vodka, favors country and western music and speaks with a rural twang. The loner tag seemed to conflict with the FBI description of him as an "avid dancer."

A Discrepancy

In more obvious conflict was the FBI's Wednesday statement saying Galt "took dancing lessons" in New Orleans in 1964 and 1965—a time when Ray was still imprisoned in Missouri.

A bureau spokesman said the earlier Galt description should have said he "reportedly" took the dancing lessons, rather than stating flatly that he had.

The FBI said Ray was first arrested in 1949 in Los Angeles, where he drew an eight-month jail term for burglary.

Subsequent convictions came in Chicago, 1952, robbery; in Missouri, 1955, for breaking into a Kansas City post office and forging postal orders; 1959, the St. Louis market holdup and car heft.

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