

FBI Identifies King Suspect By Fingerprints

Records Reveal He Escaped Prison In Missouri in '67

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Star Staff Writer

The Federal Bureau of Investigation today disclosed the true name of the suspected assassin of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., identifying him as James Earl Ray, a 40-year-old escapee from the Missouri State Penitentiary.

FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover said Ray used the alias of Eric Starvo Galt and other false names prior to the April 4 murder of the civil rights leader in Memphis, Tenn.

The identification of Galt as Ray by Hoover and Atty. Gen. Ramsey Clark was made possible by the systematic comparison of latent fingerprints uncovered in the King case against the fingerprints of more than 53,000 persons on the FBI fugitive list.

The identification was accomplished by experts working around the clock in the files of the FBI's Identification Division here.

Escaped in April '67

The records reveal that Ray, who escaped from the Missouri Penitentiary at Jefferson City April 23, 1967, was sent to that prison March 17, 1960 on a 20-year sentence following conviction in St. Louis for armed robbery.

The FBI released a photograph of Ray, a 1960 prison picture taken at Jefferson City, and said Ray and Galt are the same man. A photograph of Galt was made public earlier this week.

Ray has an arrest record dating back to 1949. He was convicted of burglary in Los Angeles in 1949, armed robbery in Chicago in 1952 and forging United States postal money orders in Missouri in 1955.

The records show, according to Hoover, that Ray has served terms in the Los Angeles County Jail in 1949; in state prisons at Joliet and Pontiac, Ill., in 1952-54, and in the federal penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kans., from 1955 to 1958.

Army Enlisted Man

Ray was an enlisted man in the U.S. Army from February 1946 to December 1948, when he was given a general discharge due to ineptness and lack of adaptability for military service, the FBI said. While in the Army, he received a three-month sentence at hard labor for being drunk and breaking arrest.

During his career, Hoover said Ray also had used the names of Harvey Lowmyer and John Willard, both also linked to the King slaying, and also the aliases James McBride, James Walton, W. C. Herron and James O'Conner.

He began using the name of Galt after his escape from the Missouri jail and it was under this name that he bought the white Mustang car the FBI has

See GALT, Page A-6

DATE 4-19-68

PAGE A-1

- THE WASHINGTON POST & TIMES HERALD
- THE EVENING STAR
- THE SUNDAY STAR
- THE WASHINGTON DAILY NEWS
- WASHINGTON-AFRO AMERICAN

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GALT

Continued From Page A-1
connected with the King murder.

In the week before King's slaying, the FBI said Ray also used the name of Harvey Lowmyer to purchase in Birmingham, Ala., the 30.06-caliber Remington Gamemaster rifle the FBI believes was used to fire the fatal shot and registered as John Willard in the Memphis flophouse from which the shot was fired.

The FBI said Ray claims to have been born March 10, 1928 in Illinois, but the location is not known, nor have any records of the birth been located.

Ray is approximately 5 feet 10 inches tall and weighs about 163 to 174 pounds. The FBI said he has blue eyes and brown hair and has a small scar on the center of his forehead and a scar on the palm of his right hand. Both 1960 and 1963 photos of the suspect show that his left ear protrudes further than normal from his head.

Ray has claimed that he attended school through the 10th grade in Alton, Ill. The FBI said he has the reputation of being a "drifter" since leaving school and has worked, among other things, as a baker and laborer.

It was not immediately determined whether the Justice Department would lodge a new civil rights conspiracy charge against Ray, like that issued Wednesday in the name of Galt.

DATE 4-19-68

PAGE A-6

___ THE WASHINGTON POST
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THE EVENING STAR

___ THE SUNDAY STAR

___ THE WASHINGTON DAILY NEWS

___ WASHINGTON-AFRO AMERICAN

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