

The Greatest Manhunt in Law- Enforcement History

The assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., last April, touched off a massive search for the trigger man. That search involved police in five countries. And now it has brought to bay a prime suspect

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Army sentenced him to three months at hard labor for drunkenness and breaking arrest, then kicked him out as undesirable. After losing a job as a factory worker in Illinois, he turned to crime. At that, too, he was a failure.

He stole a typewriter in Los Angeles but dropped his bankbook at the scene and was caught. Fleeing from a grocery-store robbery in Illinois, he fell out of the getaway car when it made a sharp turn. After a robbery in Chicago, he ran into a blind alley, was shot, and tumbled through a basement window. He tried to elude a deputy sheriff in St. Louis by jumping into an elevator, but forgot to close the door and was dragged out. Twice he was caught attempting to escape from the Missouri State Penitentiary, where he was serving 20 years for armed robbery. He finally succeeded on April 23, 1967, by hiding in a bakery truck.

Now, relatives, bars, vagrants' hangouts, rail, air and bus terminals throughout the nation were quietly watched. Never has so tight a law-enforcement net been woven. Yet as the days passed and every trail grew cold, the FBI concluded that he must have slipped out of the country. But how, and where?

North and Away. Hoover calculated that Ray might have ob-

through passport files one by one, looking for an application that contained a photograph of James Earl Ray. At the Passport Office, a block from the White House, they began work, laboring only at night so as to preserve secrecy.

At the same time the Royal Canadian Mounted Police began a similar examination, at FBI request. Each night and on weekends, a team of 12 young officers assembled secretly at the Blackburn Building in Ottawa. They painstakingly compared passport photographs by the tens of thousands. A dozen pictures looked enough like Ray to cause investigation, but each application turned out to be legitimate. By late May, more than 240,000 had been inspected.

Then on Saturday morning, June 1, one constable came across an application submitted by a Ramon George Sneyd. For a whole minute, he studied the picture of a man wearing heavy horn-rimmed glasses. "This could be it," he said.

Within the hour, two RCMP plainclothesmen drove to the listed address—a run-down rooming house in Toronto. "Sneyd" had been in Toronto only four weeks. The woman manager of the travel agency through which the passport application had been made recalled him as "a nebulous character, the kind of