

ME 44-1987

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JOHN EUGENE GAWRON, residing at [REDACTED], St. Louis, Missouri, was born on July 12, 1897, at Chicago, Illinois, and estimates that he has spent about 45 years of his life in penal institutions.

Paroled in 1954 to a Soldier's Home, Quincy, Illinois, GAWRON became acquainted at a tavern in Quincy with LUCILLE RYAN who was separated from her husband, JERRY RAYNES. LUCILLE had a daughter named CAROL, then living with her; a son named JERRY, who was also living with her; a son named JIMMY (JAMES EARL RAY), who was then serving a Federal sentence in the U. S. Penitentiary, Leavenworth, Kansas; a son named FRANKLIN DENNIS RAYNES, deceased; a daughter named MELBA, who was in a mental hospital in Jacksonville, Illinois; a son named MAX, who was in an orphanage located in the vicinity of Springfield, Illinois; a daughter named SUSAN, who was in a Catholic orphanage located at Alton, Illinois; and a son named JOHN (JACK), who was serving a sentence in the Illinois State Penitentiary, Menard, Illinois.

GAWRON, allegedly involved in a burglary at Quincy, Illinois, in 1956, had his parole revoked and was returned to the Illinois State Penitentiary, but in 1959 he escaped from this institution. After a few days, he went to the home of LUCILLE RYAN (RAYNES) where her mother, MARY MAHR, was operating a rooming house [REDACTED].

During a period of several months in 1959, he was closely associated with JAMES EARL RAY and taught him to be a burglar and they went together on a number of burglaries, estimated to be twelve. They were committed outside St. Louis in the northern part of Missouri, in Iowa, and in Illinois. GAWRON taught JIMMY (JAMES EARL RAY) to always wear gloves on any kind of a job, and he was surprised that he would now go on any job without wearing gloves at the risk of leaving fingerprints.

Together they spent a great deal of time, and in St. Louis they frequented a tavern known as Ruby's Bar, later known as the Haven Bar, Lafayette Street, just west of 18th.

RAY generally drank bourbon, which he mixed with sweet soda. He did not drink beer or smoke. When meeting any girl for the first time, he (RAY) had a tendency to lisp or stutter in his speech. When RAY wanted a girl, GAWRON usually found a girl for him and on such occasions, his relationship with the girl was only brief and temporary at some second or third rate hotel room.

RAY dresses extremely well when he has money, likes good food, and buys expensive clothes, but he always chooses a second or third rate hotel or a cheap rooming house in which to live.

GAWRON, RAY, and JAMES OWENS, with whom RAY was arrested and sentenced to the Missouri State Penitentiary, cased the Kroger Store in East St. Louis, Illinois, for a robbery. GAWRON declined to participate because of the danger involved.

The following day RAY and OWENS were arrested and subsequently RAY was transferred to the Missouri State Penitentiary. GAWRON has not seen RAY since that time.

In 1961, GAWRON, ALBERT PEPPER, and JOHN RAY, brother-in-law and brother of JAMES EARL RAY, respectively, were arrested at Louisiana, Missouri, and while his parole was revoked, the other two persons received sentences of ten days in jail. He does not believe that JAMES EARL RAY knows ALBERT PEPPER, who is married to RAY's sister.

GAWRON is on friendly terms with JERRY RAY and CAROL RAY PEPPER. All of RAY's family referred to him as "Uncle JACK," although he has no family relationship. The PEPPERS have two young sons, [REDACTED]. The PEPPERS operate the Grapevine Tavern, and JOHN RAY is active in the operation of this tavern at St. Louis, Missouri.

GAWRON stated that insofar as he knows, the subject has not been in St. Louis since his escape from the

Missouri State Penitentiary in view of the fact he is too well known. GAWRON has not seen JAMES EARL RAY since 1959.

GAWRON believes JAMES EARL RAY trafficked in drugs or barbiturates at the Missouri State Penitentiary and also had a loan shark business there. On three different occasions, he made purchases of inhalers, normally used for colds, at the request of RAY. His request, though originating from RAY in prison, was relayed to him by CAROL PEPPER. On each of these occasions, GAWRON purchased a gross of these inhalers (probably Benzedrine) and on three separate occasions, he was contacted by a guard from the prison at Jefferson City, Missouri, who would pick up the inhalers and take them to RAY at the prison. Reportedly, the guard told GAWRON that each trip was worth a "C" to the guard.

GAWRON recalls being told by JOHN RAY that JAMES EARL RAY was in Omaha, Nebraska, during well, making good money as some sort of a salesman. This was in June, 1967. Shortly thereafter, JOHN RAY told GAWRON that JAMES was now in Los Angeles, California. GAWRON had no knowledge as to how JOHN RAY and CAROL PEPPER would have come into possession of information relative to the location of JAMES EARL RAY in June, 1967.