

4/24/68

Date

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ORLAN EUGENE ROSE, Inmate No. [redacted] Missouri State Penitentiary, said he first came to the Missouri State Penitentiary in 1958. He said he first met RAY in jail at Kansas City, Missouri in 1955, and celled with him and WALTER RIFE prior to the time that all three went to Leavenworth, Kansas.

[redacted] RAY gave no indication of abnormal sexual behavior.

He described RAY as quiet, a loner, and "not a loud mouth". He could not picture RAY, he said, as being vicious. He said RAY liked to follow baseball. He said they both lived in K Hall and associated together. He said they talked every day. He said RAY "did not fool" with as many as five men in the penitentiary. He said RAY used amphetamines when he could get them. He paid from \$2.00 to \$5.00 a shot. He did not get into debt and did not gamble.

He said he was in maximum security when RAY escaped and knew nothing of the details. He said the rumor inside is that RAY did not escape in a bread truck, but he had no information as to how he did escape.

He said RAY has a half-sister in St. Louis, Missouri with his mother. He said RAY did not like his mother as she left him and started living with an ex-convict out of Illinois. He said RAY has a brother and some half brothers. He believed his mother is living and re-married after the ex-convict died. She may have had some property "which she lived up".

ROSE said the inmates call him "The Jew" in the penitentiary, but he said RAY was "tighter" with his money than ROSE. He said he could not imagine RAY spending any money for dancing lessons or leaving a gun behind him someplace because of this characteristic.

ROSE said he did not know any RAYMOND LEWIS CURTIS, nor did he know of this person as an associate of RAY's.

44-1987-Sub B-407

On 4/22/68 at Jefferson City, Missouri

File# KC 44-760

by SA ROWEN B. AYERS - lw

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Date dictated APR 29 1968	
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KC 44-760

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On April 22, 1968, Warden HAROLD SWENSON, in addition to furnishing a copy of the entire files of the Missouri State Penitentiary, furnished an article handed to him on April 22, 1968 by ORLAN ROSE which is:

Warden Swenson:

Would you look the attached article over and consider turning it over to a reporter of the Kansas City Star newspaper. I have a feeling that Jimmy Ray might give himself up if he happens to read what I have written. If you do release the article I give you full permission to reword it as you see fit as long as it contains the same line of thought.

There is a possibility that he might get killed before it is ever learned whether or not he is actually guilty of shaking shooting Doctor King. If this would happen, it would be another Oswald case in the eyes of the world.

If you do not think it appropriate to release this article to the news media, just tear it up, however, knowing Jimmy as I do there is a very faint possibility that he would give himself up if he were to read what I have written. I am sure that he will be reading either the K.C. Star or the St. Louis papers wherever he is.

The above & the attached ⁴⁻²²⁻⁶⁸ 4-page statement handed to Capt. W. G. Wick by Colonel Rose-73723, then to me - JFR

"IF JAMES EARL RAY IS GUILTY, WHO IS REALLY TO BLAME?"

KC 44-760

"For quite a number of years I have been one of the very few close friends of James Earl Ray. Because of this I would like to say a few things about him since everyone else who discusses him reveals that he is either anti-social, a loner, an escape artist, seeks recognition, etc. If this sort of unfavorable publicity continues to be brought out against him there is a very good chance that he might end up like Lee Harvey Oswald without ever having been given a chance to prove his innocence or guilt before a trial court. If this happens it will be a disgrace in the eyes of the world and bring about the same amount of doubt and criticism that arose after Oswald was killed in cold blood by a fanatic who decided to take the law into his own hands.

I first met Jimmy in the Kansas City jail during 1955 where he was being held on a forgery charge. His accomplice on the forgery charge was another man named Walter Rife and we all three lived in the same cell together and passed many hours shooting the breeze while playing three-handed card games for candy bars. Jimmy loved candy bars and always managed to win his share.

On one of our several trips to the federal courthouse, prior to our sentencing, we were taken in the same group. Jimmy's jail partner, Rife, was facing a parole violation or detainer of some sort from the state of Illinois and planned to escape if the proper situation arose. On our trip to the courthouse, a chance did come up by means of a unlocked door in the holdover room which led to a hallway or stairs. Rife begged Jimmy to leave with him through the unlocked door, but Jimmy quashed the deal by saying that all he wanted to do was to plead guilty to the forgery and get his sentence served. I mention this reluctance to escape on Jimmy's part because everyone always brings up that he was continually trying to escape custody. This is not so. I will explain what I think to be the real reason behind his later escape attempts while he was serving the twenty year sentence, but first I would like to point out a few things about Jimmy Ray's personality that have never been mentioned by anyone up to the present time.

Eventually, we all three ended up in the federal prison at Leavenworth, Kansas where our friendship continued. Rife went to work in the

prison hospital and lifted weights during his off duty hours while
Jimmy and I either walked the yard or watched the ball games together.
It is true that Jimmy is sort of a loner, but this is not unusual in
a penitentiary. Being a loner doesn't mean that he didn't have many
friends. Jimmy always wore a smile and laughed softly at the various
occurrences during our time together in jail and while we were at
Leavenworth. His friendly smile alone made him many friends and got
him many greetings, but he just wasn't one to mix or join a group ball
session as is most usually the case in jail or prison. He would rather
stroll around the yard with one or two persons and discuss clothes,
travel, baseball, or the enjoyment he got while working as a painter
just prior to his arrest. It must have been one of the best paying
jobs he ever had because he was always talking about it. If I remember
correctly, I believe him and Rife lived in the Pickwick Hotel during
the time they both worked for the painting contractor. He liked nice
clothes and was always very neatly dressed during his court appearances
He would sometimes mention his brother, but I never heard him ever
mention his mother or father in any of our conversations. I took it
for granted that he had not been blessed with many luxuries while
growing up. He was very saving with the few dollars he was able to
obtain while serving time, in fact, I often accused him of being a
miser. Somehow he was able to smuggle a wristwatch into the jail
at Kansas City and he was so proud of it that I actually believe it
was the first wristwatch he ever owned. He did not want to part with
it for anything, however, he finally did so because he learned that
he could not possibly take it into the prison at Leavenworth with him.
I ended up with the watch and passed it on to my brother, but only after
having paid Jimmy a much higher price than is usual in jail. Up until
I left him at Leavenworth, he was one of my best friends and he was
always a very enjoyable person to be around.

When I again met him in 1960 at the Missouri State Penitentiary,
he had aged a bit, he lacked his usual smile, and his whole
demeanor seemed to be changed. He was very withdrawn and it took quite
a number of conversations before he finally opened up to me and told me
why he felt so bad. We were both assigned jobs in the Food Service
Department. He worked upstairs in the Bakery and I worked on the bottom



of him as being innocent until proven guilty. In the meantime, put I ask you to withhold your opinions. Instead I would ask you to think before he has been proven guilty or given the benefit of a fair trial. For the benefit of you persons I have in your heart toward Jimmy and happened to favor the alleged assassinator of Doctor King he doesn't become a scapegoat simply because he drove a white Mustang. I hope Jimmy is innocent of killing Doctor King. I also hope that your sentence he swears he didn't deserve.

him to do so as a means of retaliation against society for the twenty actually sent to prison on a trumped up charge which in turn caused wondering whether or not it all leads back to the fact that he was can't believe it is possible. However, if he is guilty of it I am As far as him being the person who shot Martin Luther King, I just

himself.

accused of treating him. If there was he just kept such things to animosity ever revealed by him toward the two police officers who he just wouldn't say anything. In fact, there was no outward showing of spent together. If he couldn't say something good about someone, he never heard him ever mention one thing against anyone in all our time.

As far as him being prejudice toward any person or race, I have his mind and after four different attempts, he finally made it.

case reopened without making any headway. Escape was continually on Jimmy was convicted. Anyway, Jimmy made several attempts to get his them because they both resigned from the police force shortly after to convict an ex-convict, and that their conscience must have bothered that the two police officers were not above planting evidence in order carry his case into the United States Supreme Court. I later learned he did not have the money to hire lawyers to prove his innocence or on. He swore up and down that he was innocent of the crime, but that had treated him on the robbery charge he was serving the twenty years behind his personality change. He told me that two police officers versions that I finally learned what I think to be the main reason with each other after our jobs were over. It was during these con- We both lived on the same tier in K Cellhouse and would often talk. I got where he would deliver bread each weekday for outside delivery.



yourselves in his place, on the run from 200 million persons, without a known friend or voice raised in your behalf, and a hundred thousand dollar reward placed on your head. If you were innocent, how would you feel? --

In closing, I would like to say that if this article reaches a newspaper and is published and read by Jimmy, I would like to advise you, Jimmy, as a friend to make immediate arrangements for your personal protection by contacting a Judge or Lawyer and give yourself up so that you can be given a fair trial. Don't put it off until you are recognized by some trigger ~~happy~~ happy nut like Jack Ruby who wants to make a name for himself. You realize that you are on the top wanted list with a large reward on your head. You know that the odds are against you because of this. You can't win. In the meantime, while you are thinking this over, if you happen to be cornered by police officers, for Christs sake don't hold a shootout. Grab a phonebook and call a judge or lawyer.

There's no need for me to mention my name because you know who I am. You do have some friends. Turn yourself in, but use discretion in doing so.