

20 April 1968
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Adv for 1 p.m. EST

Galt Lead

WASHINGTON AP - Escaped convict James Earl Ray, sought as the sniper slayer of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., was placed on the FBI's "most wanted" list today.

The FBI said Friday a systematic search of its vast fingerprint files identified the 40-year-old Ray as phantom fugitive Eric Starvo Galt, charged in Tennessee with murdering King April 4.

The FBI action today added formality to what was already fact-the escapee from the Missouri state penitentiary is the nation's most intensely hunted man in years.

Ray was described as an avid dancer, a high school dropout, Army reject, a man who likes to drink beer and vodka, and who tugs his ear when he's nervous.

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Adv for 1 p.m. EST

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WASHINGTON Galt Bjt Lead A082WX add: nervous.

"Ray should be considered armed and extremely dangerous," the FBI said.

The suspect is actually the 11th man placed on the traditional list of "10 most wanted fugitives," but the search for Ray obviously overshadows all others.

FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover said the 40-year-old white man was added to the list specially "to insure the widest possible dissemination of Ray's photograph and description to help effect his earliest possible location."

When Galt was left off the list at the time a 10th man was added Thursday, an FBI spokesman said the principal reason for listing fugitives was to "attract publicity for a guy you're looking for-and in this case there's been plenty of publicity."

The FBI said today Ray "has been the subject of a massive and intensive search" since the slaying of King 16 days ago in Memphis, Tenn.

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WASHINGTON AP - 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 Friday a "systematic and exhaustive search" through its fingerprint files revealed Galt and 40-year-old James Earl Ray-drifter, loner, avid dancer and prison escapee-as 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.

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

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

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.

"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 out of high school in the 10th grade.

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. Herron and James O'connor.

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

The FBI has said Eric Starvo Galt purchased a 30.06 rifle in Birmingham five days before the assassination. That rifle, with a telescopic sight intact, was recovered outside the rooming house just after the assassination.

The FBI did not make clear where it got the fingerprints which it matched against its files to show Galt is actually Ray.

But speculation was the prints may have been left in the rooming house, on the rifle or on a 1966 white Mustang-since impounded in Atlanta-that witnesses reported seeing leaving the vicinity of the shooting.

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But while some details remained fuzzy, the portrait sketched by the FBI showed Ray as a rather average-looking ne'er-do-well of conflicting personality traits.

He was described as 5-foot-10, and 163 to 174 pounds, with wavy hair. 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."

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 theft.

In addition, he was arrested but not convicted in 1950 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, for vagrancy; in 1951 in Alton, Ill., for driver license violations; in 1954, Edwardsville, Ill., for burglary.

All told, the records show Ray has spent 13 years and 5 months behind bars—not counting detention on charges of which he wasn't convicted.

Also not included in that total is the three-month stretch at hard labor he received for being drunk and "breaking arrest" while in the Army from February 1946 to December 1948.

The Army washed Ray out on a general discharge, saying he was inept and couldn't adapt to military life.

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