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WASHINGTON AP - What may be the nation's most intensive manhunt gained fresh pressure Saturday when the FBI placed on its "most wanted" list a fugitive convict accused of murder in the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. James Earl Ray, a 40-year-old habitual criminal, is being hunted by police from border to border and beyond for the April 4 sniper slaying in Memphis, Tenn., of the Negro civil rights leader from Atlanta.

The FBI always has limited its list of most wanted criminals to 10 names but Saturday it lengthened this roll of dishonor to 11 by adding Ray, a white loner known also by the name of Eric Starvo Galt and by six other aliases.

In addition to a state first-degree murder warrant issued in Memphis, Ray is wanted on federal charges of conspiracy to deny Dr. King his civil rights and of flight to escape confinement. The latter traces to his April 1967 escape from Missouri prison at Jefferson City where he was starting his eighth year on a 20-year sentence for armed robbery.

In announcing the unprecedented step of adding an 11th name to the "10 most wanted" list, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover announced it was done "to insure the widest possible dissemination of Ray's photograph and description to help effect his earliest possible location."

On Thursday, when Ray still was being sought under the name of Galt, the FBI filled a vacancy on the list with another name. When asked why Galt wasn't the nominee at that time a spokesman explained the main purpose of the listings is "to attract publicity for a guy you're looking for-and in this case there's been plenty of publicity."

But Hoover obviously decided more public attention was in order.

As usual, the FBI is appealing to the public for help in spotting its man and-as usual-gives implied warning against any effort by a plain citizen to apprehend the criminal unaided.

The official language puts it this way:

"Ray should be considered armed and extremely dangerous. Anyone with information concerning this fugitive is requested to immediately contact the nearest office of the FBI, the telephone number of which may be found on the first page of local telephone directories."

Reportedly a native of Illinois, Ray is described as about 5 feet, 10 inches tall, weighing from 163 to 174 pounds. He has blue eyes and brown hair usually worn short. Forehead and right palm bear small scars. His nose is narrow and straight, teeth even. And he has a noticeably protruding left ear, the lobe of which he reportedly tugs at when nervous.

By way of further help in the search which the FBI described Saturday as "massive and intensive", Ray is reported to speak in a "rural" manner and in a fashion indicating limited education. He is described as neat in dress and as an avid dancer with a taste for vodka and beer.

In addition to armed robbery, Ray has been convicted of burglary, forgery of a postal money order and unauthorized use of a motor vehicle. He has been confined in the Los Angeles County jail, two state prisons in Illinois and the U.S. penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kan.

During nearly three years in the Army he received a three-month sentence for drunkenness and breaking arrest. He was discharged in December 1948 for ineptness and lack of adaptability to military service.

Dr. King was killed by a single shot from a large-caliber rifle while he stood on the balcony of his motel room. The bullet reportedly came from a cheap rooming house about 200 feet away. Ray-not so identified until Friday-has been sought since the day of the killing which sparked racial riots in more than 100 cities.

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