

The King Suspect— A Dropout

LOS ANGELES—(UPI) — A probation officer's report on a man sought in connection with the death of Dr. Martin Luther King depicted him as a high school dropout whose luck always seemed to turn sour just when things looked the brightest.

James Earl Ray, 40, also known as Eric Starvo Galt and four other aliases, was 21 when he was convicted here Dec. 12, 1949, on one count of second-degree burglary. It was his first brush with the law.

ON PROBATION

Then Superior Judge W. Turney Fox sentenced Ray to eight months in county jail. Fox suspended the sentence and placed Ray on probation for three years provided he spend at least 90 days in jail and promise to abstain from intoxicating liquors.

The FBI in Washington said that Ray has used the names of James McBride, James Walton, W. O. Heron and James O'Connor.

His record shows convictions for armed robbery and forgery of postal money orders.

SOUGHT FOR YEAR

At the time of King's assassination, Ray had been sought for a year after he escaped from the Missouri state penitentiary in April, 1967.

Ray was arrested in Los Angeles Oct. 11, 1949, after he allegedly tried to steal a typewriter from a cafe. Court records showed Ray was surprised in the cafe office and ran away.

Four days later, he returned to the same area and was spotted in a bank. He subsequently was arrested and convicted.

Deputy county probation officer Robert V. Sieloff then

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probed Ray's past for a pre-sentencing report.

The report stated that Ray was born March 10, 1928, in Alton, Ill., the oldest of three sons. He dropped of Union High School in Ewing, Mo., during the ninth grade.

"I didn't want to go any more," Ray told Sieloff.

After apparently knocking around for some years, Ray went to work as a laborer in Illinois until December, 1945, when he was laid off.

On Feb. 19, 1946, Ray entered the Army, from when he was discharged Dec. 23, 1948, after spending two years and four months in Germany, first as an infantryman and then with the military police.

UNEMPLOYED

From the time of his discharge until May, 1949, Ray was unemployed. He then found work in Chicago as a rubber mold operator for \$45 weekly. He lost that job, also.

At some point, the report stated, Ray bought a 1947 Mercury car in St. Louis, but the car was repossessed.

The report also noted that Ray once had a bank account in Alton totaling \$1108. But the sum was depleted and the account was closed June 7, 1949.

Shortly thereafter, Ray came to Los Angeles.

Sieloff found Ray to be a man of normal intelligence. His report said Ray was "a Catholic who did not attend church services."

HARD LABOR

The deputy probation officer said he felt Ray had made a "reasonably adequate adjustment while in the Army, though he had some difficulty in the infantry." While in the Army, Ray spent three months at hard labor.

Sieloff's report also noted that Ray attended movies two or three times a week and dated frequently.

Asked by Sieloff why he had come to Los Angeles, Ray said he planned to meet his uncle (not identified), an overseas worker employed on Guam.

Ray told Sieloff he also wanted work outside the continental United States.

At the time of his arrest here, Ray listed his mother as Mrs. Lucille Ray of Alton, Ill. His father died in 1946, he said.

A wanted poster recieved by police here from Missouri authorities stated that Ray's grandmother, Mrs. Mary Maher, and his brother, John, lived in St. Louis, Mo., while another brother, Jerry, resided in Wheeling, Ill.