

FBI Files Reveal Earlier King Plot

Washington

A prison acquaintance of James Earl Ray told the FBI he and Ray plotted unsuccessfully to kill Martin Luther King Jr. in 1966 for \$50,000 they were to receive from unidentified backers in St. Louis and Philadelphia, FBI files disclosed yesterday.

The convict's name was censored from the just-released King assassination files, but there is no notation on the inmate's handwritten deposition to indicate the FBI doubted the truth of his voluntary statement.

The files show agents obtained the deposition in September, 1968 — five months after Ray shot King to death in Memphis — in the Collier county jail in Naples, Fla., where the man was then an inmate.

"This is how Ray explained it to

me," the inmate wrote. "Some people (friends in St. Louis) fixed it with someone in Philadelphia for him to kill Martin Luther King.

"Ray told me not to worry about a thing. Also how did a grand sum of \$50,000 sound to me? I said great, but what if we get caught? He explained we wouldn't and if we did we would get out of it with a fixer lawyer — besides, who in the South likes niggers?"

The inmate said they planned to kill King once his sentence had ended and Ray had escaped from the Missouri state penitentiary, where they were housed at the time. But Ray's escape attempt failed on that occasion.

The inmate said Ray also expressed a desire to assassinate one of the Kennedys.

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