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Long Record

**King Slaying
Suspect Fled
Missouri Prison**

New York Times

Washington

The FBI announced yesterday that the man being sought for the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King under the alias of Eric Starvo Galt is an escaped convict named James Earl Ray.

Information released by the FBI pictured Ray as a trouble-prone "drifter" and habitual criminal with a long record of erratic and violent behavior.

Galt's true identity was discovered after latent fingerprints uncovered in the King investigation were compared with the prints of more than 53,000 persons listed as "wanted" by the FBI.

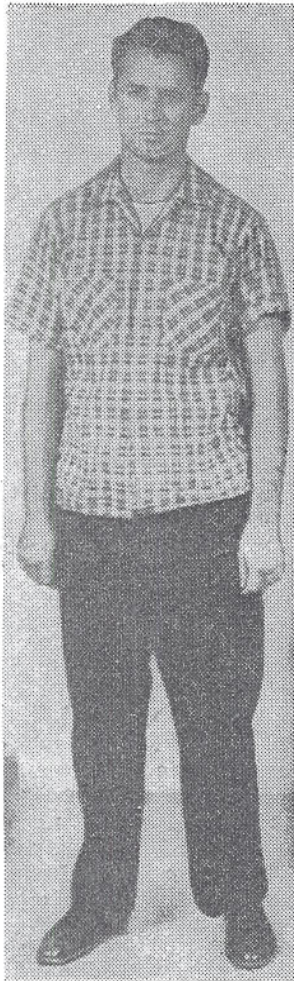
ESCAPE

Director J. Edgar Hoover said in a joint announcement with Attorney General Ramsey Clark that Ray escaped from the Missouri State Penitentiary on April 23, 1967.

Ray, a 40-year-old native of Illinois, had served seven years of a 20-year sentence for armed robbery and car theft in St. Louis.

The FBI released front and side "mug" photographs of Ray that were taken by Missouri prison officials in 1960. They bear a close resemblance to pictures of Galt, taken in 1968, that the FBI released earlier.

The convict Ray had close-cropped hair and a leaner face than the Galt photo shows, but the protruding left ear, which the FBI emphasized in its initial description of Galt, appears to be the same in both photographs.



AP Wirephoto
JAMES EARL RAY
A police photo

BACKGROUND

Full details of Ray's background are not yet known, because the FBI announced his true identity soon after an around-the-clock check of fingerprint records disclosed it.

Fingerprints can be matched quickly by means of an elaborate classification and filing system when the full ten prints of the unknown person are available on a card that identifies the finger

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and hand represented by each print.

But when only a few prints are available and it is not known which fingers or thumbs made them, they can be checked only by the tedious process of comparing each latent print with all ten prints on the card of each "wanted" person.

RECORD

The FBI announcement said Ray has a known arrest record dating back to 1949, when he was convicted of burglary in Los Angeles. In 1952 he was convicted of armed robbery in Chicago and in 1955 he was found guilty of forging U. S. postal money orders in Missouri.

He served a jail term in Los Angeles county in 1949 and in the Illinois State Prisons at Joliet and Pontiac in 1952-54. He served a term in the federal penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kan., in 1955-58.

While he was serving his latest sentence Ray was confined for a time in 1966 in the maximum security ward at the state hospital at Fulton, Mo.

ATTEMPTS

Missouri officials said that Ray made three unsuccessful attempts to escape before he finally got away last April. One attempt came when he bolted from sheriff's deputies who were guarding him during his trial. He was quickly caught and given 20 years as an habitual offender on Dec. 17, 1959.

He tried again in 1961 and 1966. In the attempt in 1966 he escaped from his penitentiary cell but was found two days later hiding in a ventilation shaft.

The FBI statement said Ray was an enlisted man in the Army from February, 1946, to December, 1948, when he was given a general discharge due to "ineptness and lack of adaptability for military service."

While in the army he was given a three-month sentence at hard labor for being drunk and breaking arrest.

ALIASES

Ray was said to have also used the names of James McBride, James Walton, W. C. Herron and James O'Connor during his criminal career. When the FBI filed formal charges against him on Wednesday in the name of Galt, it gave two other aliases, John Williard and Harvey Lowmeyer.

The FBI's description of Ray was much more detailed than that given for Galt. Ray was said to be about 5 feet 10 inches tall and to weigh about 163 to 174 pounds. He has blue eyes, brown hair and a small scar on the cen-



AP Wirephoto
JAMES EARL RAY
Picture from a prison

ter of his forehead and a scar on the palm of his right hand.

According to the FBI, Ray claimed to have been born on March 10, 1928, in an upstate location in Illinois. He said he attended school through the tenth grade in Alton, Ill. Since then, the FBI said, "he has had the reputation of being a 'drifter'."

EXPLANATION

The identification of Galt as the escaped convict Ray explains some of the strange circumstances about Galt that led to some speculation that he might have established a false identity in contemplation of assassinating Dr. King.

Galt first appeared, according to FBI statements, on Aug. 30, 1967, when he purchased a white Mustang car in Birmingham. Despite efforts to check Galt's earlier activities, no trace of him prior to the fall of last year was ever disclosed.

On Wednesday a fugitive warrant was obtained by the FBI accusing Galt of having conspired with a person "whom he alleged to be his brother" to injure Dr. King and violate his civil rights.

FBI spokesmen declined to say yesterday whether James Earl Ray had a broth-

er, or to comment on reports that the FBI already has the "brother" in custody.