

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
COMMUNICATION SECTION

MAY 8 1968

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TELETYPE

FBI BIRMGHAM

250 PM URGENT 5-8-68 JGA

TO DIRECTOR, KANSAS CITY, AND MEMPHIS
FROM BIRMINGHAM 44-1740 9 PAGES

MURKIN

[REDACTED] REINTERVIEWED IN DEPTH
 CONCERNING KNOWLEDGE OF JAMES EARL RAY. [REDACTED] ADVISED HE WAS
 RECEIVED IN MISSOURI STATE PENITENTIARY [REDACTED] AND
 AFTER PERIOD OF QUARANTINE, ASSIGNED TO "J" HALL DURING [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] FIRST MADE ACQUAINTANCE OF RAY, WHO WAS ALREADY
 ASSIGNED TO J HALL, AS THE "WALK BOY". ADVISED RAY'S DUTIES AS
 WALK BOY WERE TO TAKE ORDERS FOR CIGARETTES, CANDY, ETC., WHICH
 COULD BE PURCHASED WITHIN PRISON, AND TO BRING HOT WATER TO PRISONERS.
 SAID RAY ONLY WALK BOY IN J HALL AND THEREFORE WAS FREE
 TO CONTACT ANY INMATES AND COULD MOVE THROUGHOUT HALL FREELY.
 STATED FIRST CONVERSATION WITH RAY TOOK PLACE WHEN RAY [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] INQUIRED OF HIM IF HE
 WAS FROM STATE OF ALABAMA AND SAID HE HAD VISITED OR STAYED IN
 BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA AREA IN PAST AND MENTIONED SEVERAL TAVERNS

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RAY HIS ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER, RAY REPLIED, "DON'T BE SURPRISED IF I CALL YOU UP SOMETIME".

[REDACTED] SAID RAY WAS A VERY QUIET INDIVIDUAL, SOFT SPOKEN, NEVER LAUGHED OR ENJOYED A GOOD STORY, SOLEMN FACED, AND REMAINED TO HIMSELF MOST OF THE TIME. HE WOULD OFTEN SEE RAY IN THE PRISON YARD AND ON OCCASIONS ATTEMPTED TO STRIKE UP A CONVERSATION WITH RAY, BUT HE NEVER APPEARED INTERESTED, SO HE GAVE UP TRYING TO MAKE CONVERSATION.

THE ONLY TOPIC WHICH WOULD AROUSE RAY'S INTEREST WAS THE SUBJECT OF MONEY. HE STATED ON ONE OCCASION DURING HIS CONVERSATION WITH RAY, HE WAS TALKING ABOUT HOW HE WAS GOING TO MAKE BIG MONEY WHEN HE GOT OUT OF PRISON BY ROBBING BANKS, ETC. HE SAID RAY AT THIS TIME MADE THE STATEMENT, "I HAVE A PLAN AND WHEN I GET OUT, I AM GOING TO MAKE BIG MONEY, AND IT IS NOT GOING TO BE ROBBING BANKS." HE ASKED RAY WHAT HIS PLAN WAS, TO WHICH RAY REPLIED, "THE BUSINESS MEN'S ASSOCIATION HAS OFFERED ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS FOR KILLING MARTIN LUTHER KING, AND HE'S FIVE YEARS PAST DUE". [REDACTED] SAID HE THEN ASKED RAY WHAT THE BUSINESS MEN'S ASSOCIATION WAS, TO WHICH HE REPLIED, "I DON'T

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KNOW BUT I WILL FIND OUT." [REDACTED] SAID THAT THIS WAS THE FIRST AND LAST TIME RAY EVER MENTIONED MARTIN LUTHER KING, NOR DID HE EVER AGAIN MENTION THE BUSINESS MEN'S ASSOCIATION IN HIS PRESENCE.

HE SAID RAY TOLD HIM HE ALWAYS WORKED ALONE AND THEREFORE LIMITED THE POSSIBILITY OF BEING CAUGHT AND SAID, "I HAVE GOT A PLACE PICKED OUT WHERE I CAN HIDE", NEVER MENTIONING WHERE THE PLACE WAS LOCATED.

[REDACTED] STATED THERE WAS A PRISON CIGARETTE LOTTERY GOING ON ALMOST DAILY IN J HALL AND THAT RAY WAS INVOLVED IN THIS LOTTERY DELIVERING WAGERING TICKETS AS WELL AS PICKING THESE UP AND WOULD DELIVER THE WINNINGS EACH NIGHT. HE SAID THERE WERE TWO SEPARATE LOTTERIES IN J HALL, RUN BY TWO INMATES, ONE NAMED [REDACTED] AND ANOTHER FROM ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, NAME UNKNOWN, DESCRIBED AS WHITE MALE, ITALIAN, AGE FORTYTHREE TO FORTYSIX, DARK COMPLEXION, WITH GUN SHOT WOUND IN FACE, AND NICKNAME [REDACTED].

HE SAID OTHER LOTTERY IN J HALL RUN BY INDIVIDUAL, NICKNAME [REDACTED], WHO WAS DOING TWENTY YEARS, DESCRIBED AS WHITE MALE, FORTYFIVE YEARS, VERY SHORT, AND OCCUPIED EITHER CELL TWENTY THREE, TWENTYFOUR OR TWENTYFIVE ON THE FLAG IN J HALL, MEANING FIRST FLOOR.

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HE SAID THAT HE DID NOT LIKE [REDACTED] ODDS, SO HE ALWAYS PLACED HIS WAGERS WITH [REDACTED]. STATED RAY WOULD HANDLE WAGERS, SINCE HE COULD TALK TO ANYBODY IN CELL BLOCK AND WAS REIMBURSED BY [REDACTED] AND [REDACTED] FOR THIS SERVICE.

[REDACTED] ESTIMATED THAT THERE WERE APPROXIMATELY TWO DOZEN LOTTERIES BEING OPERATED IN MSP WHICH CONSISTS OF FIVE SEPARATE HALLS HOUSING PRISONERS.

[REDACTED] SAID THAT HE NEVER SAW RAY RUN NARCOTICS OR HANDLE CONTRABAND AT ANY TIME AND ON ONE OCCASION, RAY SHOWED HIM HIS ARMS TO PROVE THAT HE HAD NEVER BEEN ADDICTED TO NARCOTICS. HE ADDED THAT HE NEVER OBSERVED RAY WITH ANY LARGE SUMS OF MONEY.

[REDACTED] WAS QUESTIONED CONCERNING THE COOLEY'S ORGANIZATION, AND STATED THIS WAS A PROTECTOR AND ENFORCER ORGANIZATION THAT OPERATED IN THE PRISON. HE STATED THAT WHILE ENROUTE TO MSP, HE WAS LODGED IN [REDACTED] FOR SEVERAL MONTHS AND BECAME ACQUAINTED WITH A PRISONER, [REDACTED], WHOM HE DESCRIBED AS A "FOUR TIME LOSER." HE SAID THAT [REDACTED] HAS A BROTHER WHO IS [REDACTED] SPRINGFIELD, MO. [REDACTED] HE ADVISED THAT [REDACTED] HAD PREVIOUSLY SERVED TIME AT MSP AND WAS BEING RETURNED TO MSP. HE SAID WHEN [REDACTED] LEARNED HE ALSO WAS ENROUTE TO MSP,

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HE ADVISED HIM TO JOIN THE COOLEY'S ORGANIZATION AT MSP SINCE HE WOULD NEED TO GET ALONG WITH PRISONERS AND BY BEING A MEMBER, HE COULD OBTAIN "SPECIAL FAVORS". [REDACTED] ALSO INFORMED HIM THAT THE COOLEY'S ORGANIZATION WOULD SETTLE ANY GRIEVANCES HE MAY HAVE AGAINST OTHER PRISONERS AND THAT THIS WAS A VERY POWERFUL ORGANIZATION AT MSP, HAVING INFLUENCE WITH GUARDS AND COULD EVEN ARRANGE "A MURDER."

[REDACTED] SAID AFTER QUARANTINE, HE SAW [REDACTED] WHO WAS WORKING IN MESS HALL AT MSP. HE APPROACHED [REDACTED] AND TOLD HIM HE DESIRED TO JOIN THE COOLEY'S ORGANIZATION AND GAVE HIM A TEN DOLLAR CANTEEN BOOK, POINTING OUT THAT MEMBERSHIP FEE TO JOIN WAS TEN DOLLARS, WHICH WOULD LAST AS LONG AS AN INDIVIDUAL WAS IN PRISON. [REDACTED] ADVISED [REDACTED] THAT HE WOULD GET HIM HIS MEMBERSHIP, AND THE SAME NIGHT, JAMES EARL RAY CAME TO HIS CELL AND SAID, "HERE IS YOUR CARD", AND NOTHING ELSE, AND THEREFORE HE ALWAYS FELT RAY WAS A MEMBER SINCE HE WAS SO TRUSTED. RAY NEVER SAID HE WAS A MEMBER, NOR DID HE ASK HIM.

HE SAID THIS MEMBERSHIP CARD WAS TYPE-WRITTEN WITH HIS NAME ON IT AND HAD THE HEADING THEREON "MEMBERSHIP, COOLEY'S CLUB". HE SAID THAT THIS CARD WAS LIKE A CREDIT CARD AND IT COULD GET A

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PERSON CREDIT OR PURCHASED OF CANDY, ETC., BUT COULD NOT BE USED FOR CREDIT WITH LOTTERIES.

██████████ SAID THAT HE HAD TWO OR THREE DIFFERENCES WITH PRISONERS OVER WAGERS AND UPON GETTING NO SATISFACTION, HE PERSONALLY CONTACTED ██████████ IN THE MESS HALL, AT WHICH TIME HE DISPLAYED HIS MEMBERSHIP CARD AND FILED HIS COMPLAINT WITH ██████████. ██████████ INFORMED HIM THAT HE WOULD HANDLE THIS GRIEVANCE; HOWEVER, THE FEE FOR HANDLING A GRIEVANCE WAS FIFTY PERCENT OF WHAT WAS DUE A PRISONER. HE SAID THAT SUBSEQUENTLY RAY APPEARED AT HIS CELL WITH HIS SHARE OF THE CIGARETTES COLLECTED FROM HIS GRIEVANCE.

HE ADDED THAT ██████████ WAS LATER TRANSFERRED FROM THE MESS HALL TO THE CHURCH FARM OUTSIDE THE PRISON WALL. HE SAID THAT PRIOR TO ██████████ DEPARTURE, ██████████ CONTACTED HIM AND INSTRUCTED HIM WHO TO SEE TO TAKE CARE OF FUTURE COMPLAINTS IN THE MESS HALL, BUT ██████████ WAS UNABLE TO FURNISH ANY DESCRIPTION OR NAME OF THIS INDIVIDUAL SINCE HE NEVER FILED COMPLAINT WITH HIM AND WAS SUBSEQUENTLY TRANSFERRED TO THE RENZ FARM LOCATED OUTSIDE THE PRISON.

HE ADDED THAT THE COOLEY'S ORGANIZATION WAS OPERATING WHEN HE ARRIVED AND WAS STILL DOING BUSINESS WHEN HE DEPARTED AND HE FELT THIS OPERATION HAD BEEN STARTED BY "OLD CONS WHO ARE NOW

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PAGE EIGHT

TRUSTIES AND WHO RESIDE IN A HALL WHICH IS TRUSTY BARRACK".

HE SAID THAT DURING THE TIME RAY WAS ASSIGNED TO J HALL, HE ATTEMPTED AN ESCAPE, WHICH WAS UNSUCCESSFUL, AND THEREAFTER HE NEVER SAW RAY AGAIN, SINCE RAY WAS NOT RETURNED TO J HALL AND HE WENT TO RENZ FARM.

██████████ SAID THAT THE INMATES LOCATED ██████████ ██████████ IN J HALL, ██████████ CELL ██████████, AND ██████████ CELL ██████████ ATTEMPTED TO ESCAPE AND OVERPOWERED GUARD, TAKING GUARD'S UNIFORM, THEN MADE SUCCESSFUL ESCAPE. ADVISED THAT INMATE, NAME UNKNOWN, WHO OCCUPIED CELL ██████████, WAS LOTTERY PLAYER AND THAT POSSIBLY INMATE, NAME UNKNOWN, NICKNAME ██████████, HOLDING TENDER IN CHARGE OF CONVICTS J HALL, COULD POSSIBLY FURNISH ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONCERNING RAY AND THE COOLEY'S ORGANIZATION.

KANSAS CITY, ATTEMPT TO IDENTIFY INMATES ██████████, ██████████, ██████████, ██████████, ALL INMATES J HALL, AND DESCRIBED ABOVE. WILL INTERVIEW EACH INMATE CONCERNING HIS KNOWLEDGE OF RAY AND IF NO LONGER INCARCERATED, OBTAIN ADDRESS OF RECORD AND SET FORTH LEADS TO HAVE THEM INTERVIEWED. PROTECT IDENTITY OF ██████████ WHEN INTERVIEWS ARE CONDUCTED AND IN ANY LEADS SET FORTH.

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BIRMINGHAM, DURING INTERVIEW WITH [REDACTED] INFORMED HIM OF THE POSSIBILITY OF PAYMENT FOR SERVICES RENDERED, BUT NO SPECIFIC AMOUNT STATED. HE APPEARS TO BE SOMEWHAT INTERESTED; HOWEVER STATED NOT INTERESTED IN POSTED REWARD BECAUSE HE FEARED "COOLEY ORGANIZATION IF IT WERE CLAIMED.

BIRMINGHAM MAINTAINING CLOSE CONTACT WITH [REDACTED] FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, COUPLED WITH FACT RAY MAY ATTEMPT CONTACT. BIRMINGHAM [REDACTED] WILL INTERVIEW [REDACTED] WIFE THIS DATE. TAVERNS MENTIONED BY RAY AS HAVING BEEN FREQUENTED BY RAY IN THE PAST BEING CONTACTED.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] EX-CONVICT BEING REINTERVIEWED.

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