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***It Happened Here! Alcatraz East Crime Museum Exhibit Highlights Tennessee***

*Tennessee's fascinating crime history will be on exhibit for a year*

**PIGEON FORGE, Tennessee (May 1, 2018)** – From its earliest days, Tennessee has had a rich history of crime and justice, with stories known across the country. From local stories of moonshiners and vigilantes, to the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. that rocked the nation, those interested in learning more about the state's notorious crime history can do so at the new temporary exhibit, "It Happened Here," opening May 17, 2018.

"Alcatraz East is already known for highlighting the work of local leaders in forensic science, and as the home of the state's electric chair Old Smokey, but we wanted to delve deeper into other Tennessee stories that related to our collection. These Tennessee crime stories many visitors will recognize as being of national importance, while we've also included some lesser known local stories" states Rachael Penman, director of artifacts and exhibits at Alcatraz East Crime Museum.

"It Happened Here" will open in May and will remain open through April 2019. The exhibit takes place during the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., in Memphis, and the exhibit will include items related to the assassin, James Earl Ray. These items include a courtroom sketch by his future wife, who he met while she was covering his escape from Brushy Mountain State Penitentiary. The famous former penitentiary is also featured in the exhibit, including a cell key. The most significant piece related to Ray is a hotel registration card signed under the alias Eric

Galt, a name he used while on the run after his escape from Missouri State Prison in 1967.

The Tennessee crime-focused exhibit will also feature legendary lawman Sheriff Buford Pusser. He was the youngest sheriff in the state's history, and became famous for his crusade against moonshiners and the local mafias. His wife was killed in an assassination attempt and he was killed in a car crash in 1974. The *Walking Tall* movies are based on his life.

Of particular interest in the exhibit, is the little-known story of area native Kenneth Jones, who was incarcerated at Alcatraz Federal Penitentiary from 1940-1946. He was convicted of robbing a jewelry store and spent time in Greeneville and Dandridge jails before ending up at Alcatraz, partly due to his numerous escape attempts. Jones is one of only two inmates to ever be paroled directly from Alcatraz, after which he returned to Knoxville, where he lived out his life. The exhibit will feature a set of extremely rare handcuffs from Alcatraz.

Additional topics that will be covered in the temporary exhibit include the Sevier County Perry Camp and White Cap murder cases, Elvis Presley's love of law enforcement, the FBI's presence in Tennessee, moonshiner Popcorn Sutton, the murder of Knoxville high school student Zaezion Dobson, and the almost-duel between "founding fathers" Andrew Jackson and John Sevier.

"There's a lot of interesting history in this exhibit," adds Penman. "Crime buffs as well as those interested in local history should learn something new, and we look forward to sharing these stories with both our local community and visitors from around the country."

The museum also recently added new exhibits and artifacts and new interactives to test visitors' ability to test their pirate skills at tying knots, share their own 9/11 experiences, and offer a thank you message to their law enforcement heroes. One of the most

popular items on display at the museum since opening is the white Bronco from the infamous O.J. Simpson police chase that unfolded on television before millions of viewers.

The museum is always adding to their collection and has a star-studded panel of experts who make up the Advisory Board, including those in law enforcement, collectors, a medical examiner, crime scene investigators, and others. The board includes Jim Willett, a retired prison warden, Anthony Rivera, a combat veteran and Navy SEAL chief, and Judge Belvin Perry, Jr., who is best known for the Casey Anthony trial. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit: [www.alcatrazeast.com](http://www.alcatrazeast.com).

### **About Alcatraz East**

Alcatraz East is the most arresting crime museum in the United States. Guests of all ages can encounter a unique journey into the history of American crime, crime solving, and our justice system. Through interactive exhibits and original artifacts, Alcatraz East is an entertaining and educational experience for all ages - so much fun it's a crime! This family attraction is located at the entrance of The Island, located at 2757 Parkway, Pigeon Forge, TN. General admission tickets are \$14.95 for children, \$24.95 for adults. Group ticket sales are available. The museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., with the last ticket sold 60 minutes before closing. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit: [www.alcatrazeast.com](http://www.alcatrazeast.com).

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