

APPROVED FOR RELEASE 1994
CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM



John Willard

Shooting

The FBI picked one of the most menacing men in its history today for the shadowy figure known as Eric Starvo Galt, charged in the slaying of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The FBI and police across the country received numerous tips, rumors and rumors.

But little more was known publicly about the alleged assassin than when his name — probably an alias — first arose a week ago.

Dr. King was killed by a single bullet the night of April 4 as he leaned over the second-floor railing of a Memphis motel. Police have said the shot was fired from the common bathroom of a modest hotel across the street.

The FBI said Galt had used the name of Harvey Lowmyer, said John Willard.

A man registered as "John Willard" checked into the flophouse just three hours before King was slain.

And Ron D. Webb, night clerk at the Royal Motel in Memphis told the Associated Press yesterday that a man registered there under the name of Eric S. Galt on April 3, the day before the slaying.

Webb said a white Mustang bearing Alabama license plates and Missouri tourist stickers was parked near the room occupied by Galt. A similar car had been impounded in Atlanta, Ga., and the FBI said that car belonged to Galt. A white Mustang was believed to have been the getaway car after the slaying.

The FBI declined comment on the possibility that a man who had checked into another motel April 3 might have been Galt's supposed brother.

201-0832732

Eludes F.B.I. Agents in California; Thousands of

MARTIN WALDRON

The New York Times

APRIL 19, 1968

Galt, the son of the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., appeared in the Federal Bureau of Investigation in California last night, a source said.

The source said that agents had been told that Galt, after General James Earl Ray's arrest, had been in the area of the arrest. He did not make any contact with thousands of people asking for his help in locating the body of the late Dr. King.

The source said that Galt had been charged in Birmingham by the FBI with conspiracy to violate civil rights, and was in Memphis by the FBI. He was with a group of 20-odd people with a single rifle.

The source said that Galt had been a member of the FBI. He was about to be graduated from a bartenders' school in Hollywood in March. He turned down a job because he is reported to have said, because he had to go see his brother.

The source said that the brother might be Eric Starvo Galt. The FBI still had not learned whether Eric Starvo Galt was in custody.

the brother in custody brought a denial from headquarters in Washington.

"The FBI has no one in custody in connection with Dr. King's slaying," the bureau said.

Galt is known to have twice mentioned a brother in the last two months. The first mention came when he is reported to have told a clerk in a Birmingham gun store that he and his brother planned to go hunting.

Agent Joseph H. Gault, in charge of the Birmingham bureau, said in the complaint that the rifle found discarded on a Memphis street near the scene of Dr. King's slaying had been brought by Galt on March 30, 1968.

The clerk at the gun store refused today to answer questions about the rifle sale.

The Remington Arms Company of Bridgeport, Conn., and the Memphis police have said that it was a .30-06 caliber Remington rifle with a telescopic sight.

A second mention by Galt of a brother was reported when he was about to be graduated from a bartenders' school in Hollywood in March. He turned down a job because he is reported to have said, because he had to go see his brother.

There was an indication that the details of the charge against Galt would not be released until the bureau had whether Eric Starvo Galt was in custody.

a fictitious name, although the agency was reported yesterday to have decided that it was.

Agents were searching through the files of Birmingham bail bondsmen, looking for old bail bonds under the name Galt.

In his nationwide bulletin for the pick-up of Galt, the bureau did not mention where Galt had been born, where he had lived, whether he was married and what his occupation was.

The only schooling mentioned was dancing lessons and a course in bartending. This information was developed in California this week.

2 Aliases Mentioned

The wanted poster mentioned two aliases, Harvey Lowmyer and John Willard.

Until yesterday, agents were still trying to find out at rooming houses in Birmingham if Galt had checked into one of them in the last few weeks. The proprietors of 10 of 21 rooming houses checked in Birmingham said that agents had questioned them this week.

There was no mention of possible motive in the F.B.I. complaint.

The details of the murder charge filed in Memphis have been kept secret by the state.

A police spokesman said there was an indication that the details of the charge against Galt would not be released until the bureau had whether Eric Starvo Galt was in custody.

The bureau's photographs of Galt have drawn conflicting reactions from persons in Birmingham, Memphis and Atlanta who have told the F.B.I. that they had seen Galt recently.

Most of the witnesses have said that the photographs did not appear to be that of the man they had seen.

Mr. Gamble, the Birmingham agent, said last night that a photograph of Galt was taken in Birmingham last month. Today, it was reported that the photograph came from Galt's application at the bartenders' school.

Meanwhile, the drivers' license division of the Alabama Highway Patrol said again that it mailed a duplicate of Galt's driver's license to him at a Birmingham address on March 1, 1968, a date that the F.B.I. said Galt was in California.

Duplicate License Sought

The Highway Patrol spokesman said that a telephone caller, identifying himself as Eric Galt, had asked for a duplicate of the original license that was issued to him last September.

The envelope with the duplicate license contained a bill for 25 cents to cover the cost, and the 25 cents was paid promptly. The Highway Patrol said it received the money on March 6.

New York Times

19 April 68

3-1-68 3273

Wanted Posters Distributed in Nation

The complaint filed by Mr. Gamble read:

"On or about March 29, 1968, at Birmingham, Ala., in the northern district of Alabama, Eric Starvo Galt and an individual whom he alleged to be his brother, entered into a conspiracy which continued until on or about April 5, 1968, to injure, oppress, threaten or intimidate Martin Luther King Jr., a citizen of the United States, residing in Atlanta, Ga., in the free exercise and enjoyment of his rights secured by the Constitution or laws of the United States, namely the rights to freely travel from state to state.

"In furtherance of this conspiracy, Eric Starvo Galt did on or about March 30, 1968, purchase a rifle at Birmingham, Ala., all in violation of Section 241, Title 18, United States Code.

"And the complainant states that this complaint is based on the purchase of the weapon used to carry out the conspiracy in Birmingham, Ala., on or about March 29, 1968; identification of the gun used by defendant found at the scene of the crime, and investigation conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation."

The complaint was sworn to before United States Commissioner Mildred F. Sprague. Last night, Mrs. Sprague denied that

such a complaint had been filed before her. Today she declined to explain why she had denied it.

Galt Recalled on Coast

Special to The New York Times

LOS ANGELES, April 18—Acquaintances of Eric Starvo Galt recalled him today as pleasant and intelligent but shy and somewhat mysterious.

The suspect apparently spent most of last December, January and February in the Los Angeles-Long Beach area.

He took lessons at the National Danco Studios in Long Beach from mid-December to Feb. 12, the manager, Rod Arvidson said, paying \$465 in cash for a 50-hour course of instruction.

Galt left before completing the course, the manager said, with the explanation that he was concentrating on a bartending course so he could open a bar in Los Angeles.

Early in February, according to Tomás Reyes Lau, operator of the International School of Bartending in Hollywood, Galt paid \$225 for a course that extended over the next four weekends.

He completed the course March 2, Mr. Lau said, but declined a proffered job, saying:

"I have to leave to see my brother. What would it do for me to work only two or three

weeks? I'd better wait until I get back to town and get a permanent job."

Galt telephoned a week later, Mr. Lau said, and again declined a job.

While taking the bartending course, Galt lived in a small hotel in Hollywood. Some individuals he gave as references at that time could not immediately be located.

The people who have known him recalled him clearly but had no notable recollections about him except that he had a Southern accent.

Personnel at the dancing school said he had spoken of operating a bar in the Mexican coast, yet did not appear to speak Spanish.

A Suspect Released

Special to The New York Times

ATLANTA, April 18—The police arrested a man this morning said to resemble Galt, but after questioning by F.B.I. agents he was apparently cleared and released.

The man, who said that he worked for a carnival, had just arrived in Atlanta from Valdosta, officials said. They said he had volunteered to accompany them to the Atlanta police headquarters for questioning this morning after someone reported him as resembling Galt's photograph.

No charges were lodged.

F.B.I.'s Statement on the Hunt for Galt

Following is the text of a statement released by the Federal Bureau of Investigation yesterday concerning a warrant issued for Eric Starvo Galt in the slaying of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.:

Attorney General Ramsey Clark announced today that Eric Starvo Galt is being sought by the F.B.I. as a fugitive on a Federal charge arising from the fatal shooting of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis, Tenn., on April 4, 1968.

Director J. Edgar Hoover stated that a Federal complaint was filed by the F.B.I. in Birmingham, Ala., today charging Galt with conspiring to violate the civil rights of Dr. King in violation of Title 18, Section 241 of the United States Code.

The F.B.I. complaint charges that "on or about March 29, 1968, in Birmingham, Ala., Eric Starvo Galt and an individual whom he alleged to be his brother, entered into a conspiracy which continued until on or about April 5, 1968, to injure, oppress, threaten, or intimidate Martin Luther King Jr. in the free exercise or enjoyment of a right secured to him by the constitution or laws of the United States; namely, the right to freely travel from state to state. In furtherance of this conspiracy Eric Starvo Galt did, on or about March 30, 1968, purchase a rifle at Birmingham, Ala.

Rifle Found

According to Mr. Hoover, a .30'06 rifle equipped with a telescopic sight was found near a rooming house on South Main Street in Memphis immediately after the fatal shooting of Dr. King occurred. The rooming house overlooks the Lorraine Hotel

and Motel where Dr. King was staying.

Mr. Hoover said that F.B.I. agents determined that the .30'06 rifle had been purchased from a gun dealer in Birmingham, Ala., on March 30, 1968. The telescopic sight was also purchased from this dealer.

The F.B.I. director said that Galt, who has used the names of John Willard and Harvey Lowmyer in the past, is the owner of a 1966 white Mustang bearing Alabama license plates which was located abandoned in Atlanta, Ga., on April 11, 1968.

Investigation disclosed that Galt purchased this car from a private citizen in Birmingham on Aug. 30, 1967. The Mustang odometer showed that it had been driven more than 19,000 miles between late August 1967, and early April 1968.

According to Mr. Hoover, Galt's travels in the Mustang included trips to Los Angeles, Calif.; New Orleans, La.; Birmingham, Ala., and Mexico, as well as to Memphis, Tenn., and Atlanta, Ga. Galt was reported to have been in Memphis on April 3 and 4, 1968, and to have departed from there for Atlanta.

Avid Dancer

Intensive investigation by the F.B.I. has disclosed that Galt has claimed to have been in Florida as a cook on Mississippi River vessels and as a merchant seaman. He is said to be an avid dancer and took dancing lessons in New Orleans in 1964 and 1965; in Birmingham between September and October, 1967, and in Long Beach, Calif., from December, 1967, to February, 1968.

Galt left Los Angeles on Dec. 15, 1967, and drove his white Mustang to New Orleans, where he claimed he contacted either an engi-

neering or contracting firm. He left New Orleans on Dec. 21 and arrived back in Los Angeles on Dec. 21, 1967.

While in the Los Angeles area earlier this year, Galt took a course at a school of bartending and was graduated on March 2, 1968.

The fugitive is described as a white male. He is approximately 5 feet 8 inches to 5 feet 11 inches tall and weighs between 160 and 175 pounds. He is said to be a neat dresser and has a medium build.

Galt has brown hair which he wears in a "brush" cut. He reportedly has blue eyes; his nose is straight and narrow; his teeth are straight and clean; and he has given his date of birth as July 29, 1931.

Nervous Habit

The fugitive is said to have a nervous habit of occasionally pulling at an ear lobe with his hand. His left ear protrudes farther from his head than his right ear.

According to Mr. Hoover, persons who have met Galt describe him as a "loner" and state his language and diction have a "rural" quality and suggest that he probably does not have a high degree of education. He is said to drink alcoholic beverages and has a preference for vodka and beer. He is a fan of Western and country music.

The Federal statute under which Galt has been charged provides a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment and/or \$5,000 fine. Bond of \$50,000 has been recommended.

Galt should be considered armed and dangerous. Any information concerning him should be furnished immediately to the nearest F.B.I. office.

GALT IS ACCUSED OF A CONSPIRACY

Continued From Page 1, Col. 1

who fled from a rooming house near the Lorraine Motel just after Dr. King was shot. The man had taken a room in the house, and the fatal shot is believed to have been fired from a bathroom window there.

There was no explanation of the Lowmyer alias.

The Mustang found in Atlanta resembled one seen speeding away from the assassination area.

Sources close to investigators in Memphis said that the Memphis police had almost run Galt down as they went to the murder scene.

The Federal warrant was issued in Birmingham, Ala., where Mr. Hoover said that a .30-06-caliber rifle equipped with a telescopic sight had been found near a rooming house on South Main Street in Memphis immediately after the shooting. He said an F. B. I. agent had determined that that rifle and a telescopic sight was bought from a gun dealer in Birmingham on March 30.

Suspect Described

The announcement did not directly link Galt to the rifle found in Memphis or say that the .30-06 was the weapon that killed Dr. King.

Galt was described as 5 feet 8 to 5 feet 11 inches tall, weighing between 160 and 175 pounds and having "brush-cut" brown hair and blue eyes.

"He is said to be a neat dresser and has a medium build," the F. B. I. said.

Those who have met him describe him as a loner and say his "language and diction have a 'rural' quality and suggest that he probably does not have a high degree of education," the agency said.

Galt was said to like vodka, beer and Western and country music and to have a nervous habit of occasionally pulling at an ear lobe, the F. B. I. added.

"His left ear protrudes farther from his head than his right ear," it said.

The F. B. I. released two photographs of Galt, one with his eyes closed and another containing a notation on the back: "Eyes drawn in by F. B. I. artist."

The man whom the agency said Galt had alleged was his brother was not further identified in the announcement here.

Galt traveled extensively in this country and went to Mexico after he bought the white Mustang from a private citizen in Birmingham last Aug. 30, Mr. Hoover said. The car's odometer showed the Mustang had been driven more than 19,000 miles since the purchase, the F. B. I. director said. "Galt's travels in the Mustang included trips to Los

Angeles, New Orleans, Birmingham and Mexico as well as Memphis and Atlanta," the F. B. I. announcement said.

The suspect left Los Angeles last Dec. 15, drove to New Orleans and "claimed he contacted either an engineering firm or a contracting firm," according to the agency.

He left New Orleans four days later and arrived in Los Angeles on Dec. 21. The agency said.

There was no indication why he had been in touch with the company.

Took Bartending Course

While he was in Los Angeles, Galt "took a course at a school of bartending and was graduated on March 2, 1968," the agency said.

The announcement did not attempt to trace Galt's whereabouts day by day or even week by week. But it placed him in New Orleans in 1964 and 1965, in Birmingham last September and October and in Long Beach, Calif., from last December until last February, by saying he took dancing lessons in those places at those times.

"He is said to be an avid dancer," the announcement said.

It also said intensive investigation by the F. B. I. had disclosed that Galt "has claimed to have been employed as a cook on Mississippi River vessels and as a merchant seaman."

Galt should be considered "armed and dangerous" and any information about him should be furnished immediately to the nearest F. B. I. office, the announcement added.

The F. B. I. refused to say where it got Galt's photograph. The pictures show him in a dark suit and a neat, dark bow tie; he might have been wearing a tuxedo at the time. One picture appeared to have been cut out and placed on a different background, as though it might have been taken from a group picture, such as one taken at a nightclub.

Sketch Shown Previously

The photographs were the first to be connected with the case, although F. B. I. agents have been showing a full-face sketch of a suspect to hundreds of persons all through the South.

There was nothing in today's role the F. B. I. thought the al-

leged other conspirator played, or whether there might be still other suspected conspirators.

Galt's name was first publicly linked with the King murder on April 11, when an F. B. I. bulletin was released in Florida, apparently by mistake, and later withdrawn. The bulletin asked that Galt be located for questioning.

On April 12 the Mustang was found in Atlanta. It apparently had been parked there since about 12 hours after the murder. It was impounded after residents of the housing development where it was found noted that it matched the description of the car wanted in the murder.

The section of the United States Code under which Galt is accused states:

"If two or more persons conspire to injure, oppress, threaten, or intimidate any citizen in the free exercise or enjoyment of any right or privilege secured to him by the Constitution or laws of the United States, or because of his having so exercised the same; or

"If two or more persons go in disguise on the highway, or on the premises of another, with intent to prevent or hinder his free exercise or enjoyment of any right or privilege so secured—

"They shall be fined not more than \$5,000 or imprisoned not more than 10 years, or both."

Memphis Hopes to Try Galt

MEMPHIS, April 17 (UPI)—Tennessee authorities indicated tonight that they would file murder charges in the assassination of Dr. King.

"That will be our immediate consideration," Memphis Fire and Police Director Frank Holloman said in answer to a question of whether there were plans to issue a warrant for the arrest of Galt.

"We look forward to the apprehension of this individual and his ultimate return to Memphis for trial for the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.," Mr. Holloman said.

He would not elaborate on the statement.

F.B.I. ACCUSES GALT OF A CONSPIRACY IN DR. KING SLAYING

Alleges a Plot With Man
He Said Was a Brother to
Violate Victim's Rights

FUGITIVE WARRANT OUT

Hoover Places Suspect in
Memphis at Time of Killing
—Two Photos Released

Text of the F.B.I. statement
is printed on Page 46.

By EVERT CLARK

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 17 —

The Federal Bureau of Investigation issued a fugitive warrant today charging Eric Starvo Galt, described as a 36-year-old "loner," with conspiracy in the slaying of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Dr. King's assassin has been sought since the civil rights leader was killed by a rifle bullet on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis on April 4.

The F.B.I. said Galt conspired beginning about March 29 with a man "whom he alleged to be his brother" to "injure, oppress, threaten or intimidate" Dr. King. The conspiracy continued until about April 5, the agency said.

Attorney General Ramsey Clark announced that Galt was being sought as a fugitive on the charge of having conspired to violate Dr. King's civil rights. In violation of Title 18, Section 241, of the United States Code.

The maximum penalty on conviction under this law is a \$5,000 fine and a 10-year prison sentence.

Announcement by Hoover

An announcement by J. Edgar Hoover, F.B.I. director, placed Galt in Memphis at the time of the killing and said he then left for Atlanta.

It said that Galt, "who has used the names of John Willard and Harvey Lowmyer in the past," owned the white 1966 Mustang automobile bearing Alabama license plates that was found abandoned in Atlanta one week after the assassination.

John Willard was the name given in Memphis by a man

Continued on Page 46, Column 4

Sought by the F.B.I.



Man said to be Eric Starvo Galt. The eyes were painted in by an F.B.I. artist. Original picture is below.



New York Times
18 April 1968

FBI Warrant in King Killing Accuses Pair of Conspiracy

By JEREMIAH O'LEARY
Star Staff Writer

The nation today was being flooded with photographs of the man accused by the FBI of conspiracy in the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

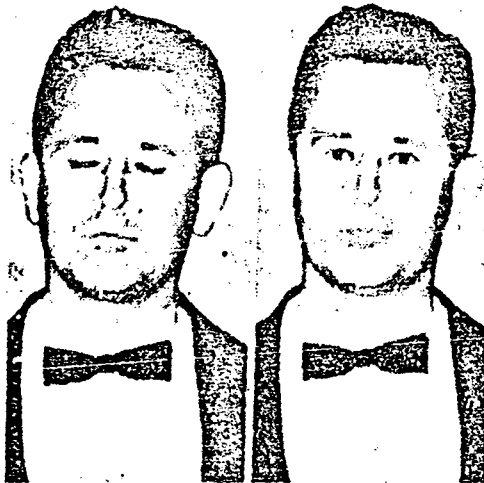
The FBI broke its long silence on the search for King's slayer by filing a federal civil rights complaint against the man called Eric Starvo Galt late yesterday in Birmingham, Ala.

The warrant issued on authority of Atty. Gen. Ramsey Clark says that Galt "and an individual whom he alleged to be his brother" entered into the conspiracy on or about March 30.

Police in Memphis, Tenn., filed a murder charge against Galt. The FBI only charged conspiracy because murder is not a federal offense.

King was shot to death on the balcony of a motel in Memphis on April 4, by a single shot fired by a sniper from the window.

See GALT, Page A-8



These are the FBI pictures of the man called Eric Starvo Galt. His eyes were closed in the original photo and an FBI artist sketched in the open eyes.

WS APR 18 1968

201-0832 732

Charges Conspiracy

Continued From Page A-1
 door of a flophouse 205 feet away.

The FBI warrant was the first mention of a conspiracy by any agency involved in the nationwide man hunt. Galt is accused of conspiracy to violate King's civil rights.

Rewards totaling \$100,000 have been offered by non-federal sources for information leading to the arrest and conviction of King's murderer.

FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover ordered thousands of "Wanted" flyers sent out on the man known as Galt in hopes that the public will now be able to help locate a man about whom much is known, but whose true identity and present whereabouts are a mystery.

Officials say "Eric Starvo Galt" is an alias used in purchase of a white 1966 Mustang which investigators believe was the gunman's getaway car. There also is no certainty that Galt has a brother, although the fugitive is said to have mentioned a brother at the time he bought a rifle in Birmingham six days before King was slain.

In releasing the photographs and filing for the warrant against Galt, the FBI also said that the suspect used the names Harvey Lowmyer and John Willard. Sources in Alabama say Lowmyer was the name the suspect used when he purchased the rifle found a few blocks from the scene of King's murder.

The suspect used the Willard alias when he registered at the flophouse on April 4 and took a room which gave a clear view of the door of King's room at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis.

Names Believed False
 Officials believe all three names — Galt, Lowmyer and Willard — are false.

The photograph of Galt was located at a school for bartending in Los Angeles, Calif., where a man using the name Eric S. Galt was graduated on March 2, 1963.

While the true identity of the suspected killer is not known, the FBI has amassed a large body of evidence against the man known as Galt. Hoover disclosed that the .30.06 rifle found near the Memphis flophouse was traced to a gun dealer in Birmingham. The telescopic sight on the rifle also was purchased from the gun dealer on March 30.

Informed sources said Galt went to the gun shop on March 29 and said he wanted a gun to shoot deer in Wisconsin. He bought a .30 caliber weapon, using the name Lowmyer. The next day, these sources said, he returned and said his brother had told him to get a .30.06 Remington Gamemaster.

Owner of Mustang
 The FBI also said Galt is the owner of the Mustang seen in front of the flophouse the day King was shot and later found abandoned in an Atlanta, Ga., housing development.

Agents warned that Galt made of the rifle and the bullet brought the car from a private citizen in Birmingham on August 30, 1967. The car's odometer showed that it had been driven more than 19,000 miles between the date of purchase and the day it was found in Atlanta.

According to the FBI, Galt traveled in the Mustang to Los Angeles, New Orleans, Birmingham, Mexico, Memphis and Atlanta. He was seen in Memphis on April 3 and 4 and is known to have departed from there for Atlanta, the FBI said.

The FBI investigation turned up information that Galt claimed to have been a cook on Mississippi river boats and a merchant seaman, although records of maritime unions contain no such name. Galt was also said to be an avid dancer and had taken dancing lessons in New Orleans in 1964 and 1965; in Birmingham during September and October 1967; and in Long Beach, Calif. from December 1967 to February 1968.

Agents have verified that Galt left Los Angeles on Dec. 15, 1967 and drove the Mustang to New Orleans where he claimed to have contacted either an engineering or a contracting firm. He drove back in bartending in Los Angeles that led FBI agents to the photograph.

Galt Described
 Galt is described as white and by his own account, 36 years of age, although his supposed birthplace of July 20, 1931 is not born out by records. He is 5 feet 8 to 5 feet 11 inches tall and weighs between 160 and 175 pounds. His acquaintances and witnesses describe him as a neat dresser of medium build.

He has brown hair which he wears in a brush cut. His eyes are blue or hazel, his nose is straight and narrow and his teeth are regular and clean. Galt reportedly has the nervous habit of occasionally pulling at the lobe of his left ear with the result that the ear sticks out noticeably.

The FBI said persons who have met Galt described him as a "loner" whose manner of speech has a "rural" quality and suggests that he probably has no high level of education. He is said to drink alcoholic beverages, preferring vodka and beer, and is a fan of country and Western music.

The FBI warned that Galt probably is armed and dangerous and asked that any information concerning him be furnished immediately to the nearest FBI office.

"He's our man no matter what his name really is," said one official. There are witnesses who can identify the suspect from his purchase of the car and the rifle, and two witnesses saw him in the flophouse. However, one of them reportedly says the pictures of Galt are not the same man he saw in the flophouse. There is a witness who saw a man of Galt's description park the Mustang in Atlanta after the crime. The FBI laboratory has latent fingerprints from the murder weapon and other unnamed objects believed used by the suspect.

Ballistics tests have been taken from King's body