

MEMO

*Rhyme*

Mr. Rosen

C. L. McGowan

MURKIN

~~June 13, 1968  
1 - Mr. Rosen  
1 - Mr. Malley  
1 - Mr. McGowan  
1 - Mr. Long~~

At 7:30 p.m., 6-13-68, Assistant Attorney General Stephen J. Pollak, Civil Rights Division, called and advised Extra-Duty Supervisor H. E. Helgeson that they had affidavits in Memphis and Los Angeles which they needed in Washington as soon as possible, and he requested Bureau assistance in expedite handling.

He was queried as to the urgency of this matter, and he advised arrangements have been made to have these affidavits certified by the State Department on 6-14-68, and then flown to London on a plane leaving 6-14-68.

ACTION:

Appropriate arrangements were made with the Los Angeles and Memphis Offices to obtain the affidavits from Departmental representatives and place them on flights leaving night of 6-13-68, for Washington. Washington Field Office was alerted to pick up the affidavits and deliver them to the Duty Agent in the General Investigative Division. These affidavits should be delivered to Mr. Pollak's Office on the morning of 6-14-68.

LA AND MEMPHIS

HEH:hw  
(5)

Package Delivered  
to Pollak

905 A.M.  
6/14/68  
*L*

*MURKIN  
MEMO*

JUNE 13, 1968

STEPHEN J. POLLAK - CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION

ASSASSINATION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

////// a memorandum  
BUFFALO

////////////////////////////////////  
APRIL 8, - MAY 6, 1968

XXX REL/hdc (F)

BU 44-374

-1-

JAMES EARL RAY, aka  
Paul Bridgeman,  
Paul Bridgman,  
Paul Edward Bridgeman,  
Paul E. Bridgeman,  
Ramon George Sneyd  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
April 8, - May 6, 1968

On April 8, 1968, subject, using the name PAUL BRIDGEMAN, obtained a room at a second rate rooming house at 102 Ossington Avenue, Toronto, operated by FELIKSA SZPANKOWSKA. He paid one week's rent in advance. It appears that subject obtained the room as a result of a room for rent sign in the window at the front of this residence.

The means by which subject entered Canada and his reason for selecting the alias Paul Bridgeman is not known. However, it is known that one PAUL BRIDGMAN is a former inmate of a prison in Kansas City, Missouri, who was paroled on January 16, 1968, and whose identity may or may not be known to RAY. While at this rooming house, RAY had no visitors, did not befriend any of the other roomers, was not known to be employed and according to the landlady usually left the house early in the morning and returned late at night.

On April 10, 1968, subject wrote a letter to the Bureau of Vital Statistics in Toronto, requesting a copy of the birth certificate of PAUL EDWARD BRIDGMAN and indicating that it should be sent to 102 Ossington Avenue, Toronto. In this letter subject gave his date of birth as [REDACTED], his father's name as EDWARD G. B. BRIDGMAN and his mother's maiden name as EVELYN GOODEN.

It is noted that the above biographic information relative to BRIDGMAN is accurate insofar as it relates

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DU 44-374

-2-

to an existent PAUL EDWARD BRIDGMAN who resides at 80 Cassandra Street, Toronto, and who is a reputable citizen employed as a consultant for the Board of Education.

Interviews of both the real BRIDGMAN and his wife by Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) officers in Toronto failed to establish any method by which subject obtained the biographic information set forth in his letter to the Bureau of Vital Statistics but both BRIDGMAN and his wife recall having received several telephone calls in early April, which at the time appeared to them to be innocuous, wherein they believed the caller claimed to be a representative of the Canadian Immigration Department and inquired as to whether BRIDGMAN had applied for passport. Both state that they at no time furnished to the unknown caller any information concerning PAUL R. BRIDGMAN's background.

Attachment number one to this insert is a photographic copy of the letter directed by subject to the Bureau of Vital Statistics, Toronto, dated April 10, 1968, requesting the BRIDGMAN birth certificate.

On April 11, 1968, subject, as BRIDGMAN, visited the Arcade Photo Studio, Toronto, and obtained passport size photographs.

On April 16, 1968, subject, as RAMON GEORGE SNEYD, obtained a room at 362 Dundas Street West, Toronto, a second rate rooming house, operated by a Chinese woman named Mrs. Sun Fung LOO.

It appears that he obtained this room as a result of a sign, room for rent, in a front window and he paid one week's rent in advance (\$9.00) with the understanding that he would take occupancy on April 19, 1968.

On April 16, 1968, subject, as RAMON GEORGE SNEYD, visited the Kennedy Travel Bureau, 424 Bloor Street West, Toronto, where he arranged with Miss LILLIAN



SPENCER, Manager of that travel bureau office, for a round trip ticket via British Overseas Airline Company (BOAC) from Toronto to London. In connection with arranging this reservation, it was necessary for subject to furnish an Affidavit for a Canadian passport which he did in the name of RAMON GEORGE SNEYD, listing his date of birth as [REDACTED] and giving his address as 962 Dundas Street, Toronto. In answer to a requirement in connection with the passport application for the name of a sponsor, RAY indicated that he had only been in Toronto for three weeks and had no local sponsor. In answer to the question on the application as to who should be notified in the event of an emergency, EARL RAY listed the name PAUL BRIDGMAN and the address of 102 Ossington Avenue, Toronto.

In answer to Miss SPENCER's request for three passport photographs, RAY furnished to her three copies of the photograph which he had previously obtained from the Arcade Photo Studios on April 11, 1968, under the name of PAUL BRIDGMAN. It is noted, however, that nowhere on the photograph does any name appear.

As a result of a request made by subject at that time, Miss LILLIAN SPENCER obtained through BOAC, reservations for him to travel to London departing from Toronto on May 6, 1968, via BOAC Flight 600 and returning to Toronto on May 21, 1968, via BOAC Flight 601.

Anticipating that it would take approximately ten days to receive the passport, Miss SPENCER suggested that subject return to pick up his ticket and his passport in about ten days.

On April 16, 1968, subject wrote a letter to the Bureau of Vital Statistics, Toronto, requesting birth certificate in the name of RAMON GEORGE SNEYD, listing his date of birth as [REDACTED] at Toronto, setting forth his father's name as GEORGE SNEYD and his mother's maiden name as GLADYS MAE KILNER and requesting that it be sent to 962 Dundas Street West, Toronto.

BU 44-374

A photographic copy of this letter is attachment number 2 to this insert.

It is noted that according to Mrs. FELIKSA SZPAKOWSKA, landlady at 102 Ossington Avenue, Toronto, a letter arrived for subject as PAUL E. BRIDGMAN at the Ossington Avenue address from the Bureau of Vital Statistics, Toronto, several days before he left that address and although she pointed out to him on at least two occasions that the letter was on a table and for him, he never did take possession of it and, therefore, after he departed from the Ossington Avenue address, she returned it to the Bureau of Vital Statistics. On April 17, 1968, Miss LILLIAN SPENCER, Kennedy Travel Bureau, Toronto, addressed a letter to the Canadian Passport Department, Ottawa, forwarding subject's application under the name of RAMON GEORGE SNEYD and enclosing a \$5.00 money order, which is the standard fee for a passport.

On April 19, 1968, subject, as RAMON GEORGE SNEYD, moved into the rooming house at 362 Dundas Street West, had no baggage according to Mrs. Sun Fun, LOO, landlady at that address and she did not see him thereafter until April 26, 1968. According to Sun Fun, LOO, subject did not appear to make friends with anyone in the rooming house and she had no knowledge as to any employment or other activities on his part.

On April 20, 1968, subject, as RAMON GEORGE SNEYD, listing his address as 362 Dundas, wrote a letter to the Kennedy Travel Bureau informing them that he had to go to Capreol for several weeks on business and would pick up his passport upon his return.

It appears he was referring to Capreol, a small town in northern Ontario. RCMP investigation indicates that subject was not known in that small town nor was there any evidence that he had actually gone there.

Photographic copy of the letter of April 20, 1968, is attached hereto as attachment number 3.



With regard to the RAMON GEORGE SNEYD identification used by RAY, commencing approximately April 16, 1968, it is noted that there is an existent RAMON GEORGE SNEYD, a police officer in the Metropolitan Toronto Police Department (MTPD), who has been so employed for over 12 years, who resides at 1731 Victoria Park Avenue, Toronto, and whose biographic background is identical with that furnished by subject when RAY wrote to the Bureau of Vital Statistics at Toronto, on April 16, 1968, requesting a birth certificate in that name. Interviews of the real RAMON GEORGE SNEYD by representatives of both the RCMP and MTPD have failed to establish any information as to how subject obtained the necessary background data to apply for the birth certificate in that name. The real SNEYD has advised that he did not know subject and when shown photographs of him, stated that insofar as he could recall, had never seen him.

Mrs. Sun Fung LOO, landlady at 562 Dundas West, advised during interview that the next contact she had with subject, subsequent to his moving into her rooming house on April 19, 1968, was on April 26, 1968, when he paid her another week's rent in advance and told her that since he had last seen her he had gone back to Montreal.

According to Mrs. Sun Fung LOO, she did not again have any contact with the subject until May 2, 1968, when he again paid her one week's room rent in advance.

On May 2, 1968, RAY, as SNEYD, visited the Kennedy Travel Bureau, Bloor Street, Toronto, and picked up his Canadian Passport and round trip ticket via BOAC to London. It is noted this ticket called for his departure from Toronto on BOAC Flight 600, May 6, 1968, with a schedule of return by BOAC Flight 601 on May 21, 1968.

According to Miss SPENCER, Manager of the Kennedy Travel Bureau, subject paid \$345.00 in Canadian funds for the round trip ticket and during interview,

Miss SPENCER was very emphatic that it was Canadian money that he used, pointing out that if it had been American money, she would have become involved in the exchange rate, etc., which she could not possibly have forgotten.

On May 6, 1968, subject, as RAMON GEORGE SNEYD, departed Toronto International Airport via BOAC Flight 600 at 7:00 P.M. for London, England. During interview by RCMP, Mrs. Sun Fung LOO, landlady at 962 Dundas West, advised that not until May 10, 1968, did she realize that subject, as SNEYD, had abandoned his room in her rooming house so that she does not actually know when he left, as she had not seen him subsequent to the occasion on May 2, 1968, when he paid one week's rent in advance.

It is noted that while both landladies and the Manager of the travel bureau in Toronto, as well as the employee at the Arcade Photo Studios, Toronto, all recognized the passport photograph of subject, none could make a positive or even strong identification of any other available photographs of RAY. It is also pointed out that according to RCMP investigation in Toronto, those individuals who had contact with the subject during his stay in Toronto, from April 8, 1968, to May 6, 1968, advised that he wore glasses at all times and none had seen him without them.

One of the suggestions as to how subject got the necessary background data concerning both BRIDGMAN and SNEYD to obtain birth certificates in both names is through a check at the morgue at the local Toronto newspaper or possibly a similar check of newspapers available in the public library. This suggestion was advanced since announcements of births appear in Toronto newspapers, listing in addition to the date of birth, the names of the parents. It is noted that both SNEYD and BRIDGMAN were born within approximately one month of one another, that is October 8, 1932, and November 10, 1932, respectively.



BU 44-374

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The switch from the BRIDGMAN identity to the SNEYD identity in Toronto appears to have possibly been triggered by some suspicion of RAY's that the BRIDGMAN identity was heating up. However, investigation in Toronto, such as a review of MTPD records to ascertain whether BRIDGMAN might have been stopped on a routine or other type check in Toronto, during the time that subject was using that identity, has failed to develop any record of such a check.

No logical explanation has been developed as to why subject, once he decided to abandon the BRIDGMAN identification, continued to reside at the 102 Ossington Avenue West address, particularly, since the landlady at that address had stated that on at least two occasions she called his attention to the fact that there was a letter there for him from the Bureau of Vital Statistics, Toronto, which presumably contained the birth certificate which he had requested.

It is also worthy to note that RAY appeared to have gone through the necessary procedure to obtain the RAMON GEORGE SNEYD birth certificate from the Bureau of Vital Statistics in Toronto, even though it was not necessary in connection with his passport request for his obtaining of passage by BOAC to London. This is evidenced by the fact that his letter applying to the Bureau of Vital Statistics for the SNEYD birth certificate was dated on exactly the same date on which he had arranged, through the Kennedy Travel Bureau, for his Canadian Passport.

DEAR SIR;

4-10-68

ENCLOSED IS \$2.00 MONEY ORDER  
FOR BIRTH CERTIFICATE.

NAME PAUL EDWARD BRIDGMAN

BORN TORONTO, ONTARIO, [REDACTED]

FATHER EDWARD G.B. BRIDGMAN.

MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME, EVELYN GODDEN.

THANKS:

Sincerely

Paul Edward Bridgman

102- OSSINGTON AVE.

TORONTO, CANADA.

ONTARIO.

4-16-68

DEAR SIR

ENCLOSED IS A M.A FOR \$2.00,  
WOULD YOU PLEASE SEND BIRTH CERTIFICATE,

NAME: RAMON GEORGE SNEYD

BORN [REDACTED]

TORONTO, ONTARIO

FATHER'S NAME: GEORGE SNEYD

MOTHER'S NAME, MAIDEN, [REDACTED]

GLADYS MAE KILNER

THANKS,

Ramon George Sneyd

962 DUNDAS ST. W.

TORONTO, ONTARIO.



RAMON GEORGE SNEYD

4-20-68

DEAR SIR

I HAVE TO GO TO CARREAL  
FOR SEVERAL DAY ON BUSINESS  
WILL PICK UP PASSPORT ON RETURN

THANKS

Ramon George Sneyd

965 DUNDAS

INCHES  
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Printed in Canada 61

6/11/68

AIR TEL

AIR MAIL

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (44-38861)

FROM: SAC, BUFFALO (44-374)

MURKIN

Forwarded herewith for the Bureau, Memphis and Legat, Ottawa are two copies each of a memorandum setting forth a brief chronology of subject's activities during his stay in Toronto, insofar as they had been determined as of the date of apprehension in London, England, 6/8/68.

It is noted that ASAC WASON G. CAMPBELL and SA JAMES F. Mc MARDON of the Buffalo Office were in Toronto and worked with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) there in the development of this information. The RCMP is still conducting investigation at Toronto in an effort to fill in the gaps in the chronology.

The speculation as to why RAY did certain things in Toronto and how he obtained necessary information to establish his false identities while in Toronto represents the combined thinking of the RCMP personnel in Toronto as well as the Buffalo Bureau representatives who worked on the matter, based upon available information as to his behavior while in Toronto.

It is pointed out that details of the RCMP investigation in Toronto, including interviews, are being prepared by the RCMP and will be submitted in the usual manner, through Legat, Ottawa.

④ - Bureau (Encls. 4) (AM)  
    (1 - Legat, Ottawa)  
1 - Memphis (44-1987) (Encls. 2) (Info.) (AM)  
1 - Buffalo  
JPM:m:far  
(6)

# The Biggest Manhunt in History

By Jeremiah O'Leary

The great detective story  
of how the FBI identified  
and tracked down the escaped  
convict accused of killing  
Martin Luther King.



In the predawn darkness of last June 8, British European Airways Flight 404 bound from Lisbon landed at London. A traveler wearing thick, horn-rimmed glasses, a cheap sport jacket and light raincoat descended from the plane and wandered about Heathrow Airport. Four hours later a Scotland Yard detective closeted in a small airport office scrutinized the passenger list for a flight to Brussels. One strange name leapt out at him. Quickly he checked it against an All Ports Warning issued by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Washington. Hurrying through the terminal, he approached the bespectacled traveler standing in line at the passport desk. "Would you mind stepping aside, sir," said the Scotland Yard operative.

Thus ended history's greatest manhunt, the search for the accused killer of civil rights crusader Martin Luther King. In its pursuit, 3014 FBI agents spent \$1.4 million, flew 900,000 miles ✓

and drove more than 500,000. Police forces throughout Western Europe and North America joined the hunt for the shadowy suspect who sought escape in a dozen cities of five nations. They had to follow a tortuous, seemingly hopeless trail through Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, California, Mexico, Canada, Portugal, Belgium and Great Britain. The story of how they pieced together a chain of clues to achieve the arrest many said would never be made constitutes one of the most remarkable detective stories of our time.

It began just before 5:30 p.m. last April 4 when a puffy-faced 40-year-old man locked himself in the bathroom of a seedy rooming house in Memphis, Tenn. From a brown and green bedspread he unwrapped a Remington 30.06 hunting rifle loaded with a "dum-dum" bullet, a hideous projectile designed to tear a fist-size hole in human flesh. The man stepped into the bathtub, raised a small window and braced his elbows on the dusty sill. Through a high-powered telescopic sight, he trained his rifle on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel, 205 feet away.

Suddenly the door knob behind him rattled. "Anybody in there?" a roomer shouted. The gunman froze, and waited silently. Finally the intruder's footsteps creaked away.

At 6:01 p.m. civil rights crusader Martin Luther King, Jr., walked out onto the motel balcony -- and into the cross hairs of the gun sight. One shot rang out. Instantly, Dr. Martin Luther King was dead.

The figure in the bathroom threw the bedspread over the rifle, picked up his blue canvas bag and hurried down a dimly lit hall.

"That sounded like a shot!" shouted roomer Willie Anschutz. "Yes -- it was," said the stranger, smiling. With that, he ran outside, got into a white 1966 Mustang and drove off into the twilight.

Plan to Deceive. The hunt began minutes after the assassination, when the senior FBI agent in Memphis telephoned Washington. Director J. Edgar Hoover was immediately notified. "Put every man who can conceivably help on the case," Hoover declared.

During the first hours ~~the FBI had reason to be optimistic.~~)  
Memphis police, searching door to door, quickly ascertained that the shot had been fired from the rooming house. Making a microscopic



examination of the bathroom, intensely questioning tenants, FBI agents had by midnight reconstructed the murder. "The guy we want checked in at 3:15 p.m. under the name John Willard," Special Agent Robert Jensen telephoned Cartha D. DeLoach, assistant to the Director. "He's about 5 feet 11, medium build, brown hair, blue eyes. He's got a dimpled chin, scar on his forehead and his left ear sticks out."

Meanwhile, a block from the motel, police discovered the rifle, the bedspread and blue canvas bag containing toiletries and underwear discarded in a doorway. At 4:40 a.m. an agent landed at Washington's National Airport with the evidence. By 5:30 a.m. -- just 12 hours after the killer crouched in the bathroom -- his rifle had been inspected for fingerprints and was being test-fired in the FBI laboratory. Through the manufacturers the FBI later in the day traced the weapon to the Aeromarine Supply Co. in Birmingham, Ala. Records there showed that a Harvey Lowmyer had bought the rifle, the telescopic sight and bullets on March 30 for \$248.59 cash.

But there were problems. Fingerprints on the rifle were too indistinct to be of immediate use. Worse, there was no absolute proof the soft-nosed bullet removed from Dr. King's throat came from the

rifle. It had flattened too much on impact to permit conclusive scientific comparison. And nowhere in the country did union rolls, tax lists, credit, military or crime records reveal anything about the John Willard who registered at the rooming house or the Harvey Lowmyer who purchased the rifle.

"We might as well face it," Hoover told his men as the investigation entered its fifth day. "We're up against an elaborate plan to deceive us. Right now I'd say our best bet is the car -- wherever it is."

Looking Westward. On the morning of April 11, Mrs. Ernest Payne, a housewife in Atlanta, Ga. -- 250 miles southeast of Memphis -- learned from a friend that the FBI was searching for the assassin's white Mustang. "Why, I know where a car like that is," exclaimed Mrs. Payne. "I saw a man leave it in front of my apartment last week. Now I remember -- it was the morning after Dr. King was shot. It's still there!" The Atlanta police were notified, later the FBI. Two carloads of agents sped through downtown Atlanta to begin an inch-by-inch inspection of the Mustang.

On a soiled sheet inside, an agent detected a few green threads.

They were forthwith flown to FBI laboratories in Washington, and hours later the teletype message came back: The threads taken from the sheet were like those on the bedspread found in Memphis with the rifle. The tiny threads thus helped link the Mustang to the rifle and the murder.

The car offered still more clues. A Turista sticker showed it had been driven into Mexico last fall. Oil company stickers pasted inside the door revealed it recently had been serviced in Los Angeles. And finally, the car registration yielded the name of its owner: Eric Starvo Galt, 2608 Highland Avenue, Birmingham, Ala.

Meanwhile, a long-shot paid off. The underwear in the blue bag found with the rifle in Memphis bore laundry markings. Determining which cleaning establishment -- among 100,000 in the nation -- made <sup>this</sup> ~~them~~ seemed an impossible task. But with help from the laundry industry, agents concluded that the marks were imprinted by a type of machine manufactured in Syracuse, N.Y. Guided by the manufacturer, they then ascertained that the marks probably were left by a particular machine sold to a laundry in Los Angeles.

Now two clues -- the oil company stickers on the Mustang and the



laundry markings -- pointed westward. They caused Hoover to concentrate 300 agents for a saturation search of the Los Angeles area.

"We've found out that an Eric S. Galt took dancing lessons in Birmingham," he told the Special Agent in Charge of the California detachment. "You might start with dance studios."

Sure enough, an agent located a dance studio in Long Beach where an Eric S. Galt had taken lessons last December, January and February. No one could remember much about him except that he was a shy, evasive loner. One employe, though, did remember that he had mentioned something about taking bartending lessons.

On the Seamy Side. Immediately the FBI began checking vocational schools. In Los Angeles two agents making their second call of the day visited the International School of Bartending. "Have you ever heard of Eric Starvo Galt?" one asked owner Tomas Reyes Lau. "Sure," answered Lau. "He was here about six weeks. Just graduated last month. Would you like to see a picture of him?" He handed over a color photograph taken on "graduation day." As soon as the FBI men had it, they dashed for a phone booth. A courier carrying the photograph boarded the next plane for Washington.

The face clearly matched descriptions of the stranger who lurked in the Memphis bathroom and the "sportsman" who bought the game rifle in Birmingham. Flashing copies of the picture, FBI agents now spread through hotels, motels, bars and rooming houses in Southern California. Their investigation established that Willard-Lowmyer-Galt had lived on the seamy side of Los Angeles from mid-November 1967 until March 17, 1968. It also turned up scores of people who offered small but telling descriptions of him. A prostitute thought he looked "kind of funny" in an overly pressed dark suit, starched white shirt, green tie, brown shoes and dirty fingernails. Another recalled that he had a "sweetly offensive" odor, the result of using large doses of sprays and deodorants instead of soap and water. He tended to squint and tug at his ear. Friendless, he had trouble looking anyone in the eyes and tended to stutter upon first meeting someone. He never seemed to have a job, but he always could peel off \$20 bills from a large roll of cash.

As analysts fitted these fragments together, the hunted man began to change from a shadowy figure into an individual. A heavy-drinking frequenter of rundown rooming houses and neighborhood bars, his attire,

bad grammar and twangy accent suggested a poor education and perhaps a small-town Midwestern background. Lacking any perceptible trade or skills, he well might be a professional criminal. He was not intelligent, but he was crafty enough to lie well and to meld easily into the murky milieu of drifters.

A Single Fingerprint. Thus, by mid-April the FBI knew how the wanted man looked and a great deal about what he was like. But despite the most massive investigation in its history, it still did not know who he was. Moreover, promising clues were leading nowhere. First, a bearded songwriter told of going along with Eric Galt last December on a trip from Los Angeles to New Orleans. En route, said the songwriter, his companion made a series of unexplained telephone calls. Second, acting on an FBI tip picked up in California, Royal Canadian Mounted Police located a Montreal apartment where Galt lived six weeks during the summer of 1967. There, he had claimed -- falsely -- that he worked at Expo 67. Third, Mexican police verified that Eric S. Galt visited the resort of Puerto Vallarta last October. They also found prostitutes who had known him in Mexico and a man who remembered him saying, "After I make a big score, I'm gonna come down here and live on beer and beans." Yet for all the round-the-clock effort,

the trails simply evaporated in mystery.

Then, unexpectedly, the massive questioning produced another dividend. Making inquiries at a hippie boarding house not far from where the Mustang was abandoned in Atlanta, two agents accidentally saw some letters lying on a foyer table. They were addressed to Eric S. Galt.

The agents left at once, for they wanted to do nothing which might forewarn the suspect and lead to a gun battle. The FBI was determined at all costs to try to capture him alive so that the country could learn the truth behind the assassination. Secretly, 22 agents set up a watch on the house, hoping to grab Galt by surprise if he came in or out. But after 48 hours of futile waiting, Washington ordered them to go in, guns drawn. Galt was not there.

But the agents immediately discovered that indeed he had rented a room in the house and that he had left some things behind. Among them were a portable television set, a booklet entitled Your Opportunities in Locksmithing and a collection of maps. On a street map of Atlanta were four penciled black circles, drawn around Martin Luther King's home, the headquarters of his Southern Christian Leadership Conference,



the hippie boarding house, and the exact spot where the white Mustang was abandoned. Another map contained something else -- a single clear fingerprint, the best one the FBI had been able to find anywhere!

Coveted as it was, this lone fingerprint posed a nightmarish technical problem. FBI files today include the fingerprints of 81 million people. Identification experts can pick out any given set within minutes if they have an entire set of prints. But if only one fingerprint is available, it is necessary to pull out each card and make an eyeball comparison with each of the ten impressions on it -- 810 million prints in all!

Hoover determined the FBI had to find a short cut. From all it had learned, he reasoned that the wanted man might be not only a criminal but also an escaped convict. So he ordered identification experts to pick out all cards bearing fingerprints of fugitives. Out came 53,000 cards -- still too many. Thus, it was decided to narrow the search to cards of white male fugitives between 25 and 50. This quickly shrank the number of cards to 1700. Now teams of the best FBI experts began the tedious investigation.

Born\_Loser. At 9:50 a.m. April 17 the search suddenly stopped.

A veteran identification man picked up FBI Record Card No. 405,942G, the 702nd examined. He stared hard at it and said, "I believe this is it." Crowding around, other experts looked. All agreed. The ridges of the lone print taken from the map in Atlanta were identical to those on card 405,942G. A supervisor asked, "Who is No. 405,942G?"

The almost instant answer: "James Earl Ray, born [REDACTED], Alton, Ill. We have 19 cards on him. He's a born loser."

The file on Ray showed that he was an escaped convict often imprisoned for crimes ranging from forgery to armed robbery. By nightfall, the dossier was brimming over with new reports being telegraphed from more than 500 agents combing the Midwest to recreate Ray's life in minute detail. They sought out his father, seven brothers and sisters, his former teachers and schoolmates, prison officials and fellow convicts -- everyone who might know anything about him. Within 48 hours the FBI was able to etch out a clear portrait of James Earl Ray.

Aimlessly drifting with his family among Mississippi River towns in the Mark Twain country, Ray grew up in poverty, sometimes living in dirt-floor shacks. He skipped school regularly. Friendless and

scorned, he developed into a rock-throwing, knife-wielding bully and thief. His family disintegrated when he was a teen-ager, the children shifting for themselves as best they could.

Ray dropped out of school at 15, joined the Army in 1946 and spent 30 months in Germany. But the Army sentenced him to three months of hard labor for drunkenness and breaking arrest, then kicked him out as undesirable. After losing a job as a factory worker in Illinois, he turned to crime. At that, too, he was a failure.

He stole a typewriter in Los Angeles but dropped his bank book at the scene and was caught. Fleeing from a grocery store robbery in Illinois, he fell out of the getaway car when it made a sharp turn. After a robbery in Chicago, he ran into a blind alley, was shot, and tumbled through a basement window. He tried to elude a deputy sheriff in St. Louis by jumping into an elevator, but forgot to close the door and was dragged out. Twice he was caught attempting to escape the Missouri State Penitentiary where he was serving 20 years for armed robbery. He finally succeeded on April 23, 1967, by hiding in a bakery truck which carried him through the prison gates.

In the penitentiary Ray often spoke of Negroes with blind hatred.

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He rejected a transfer to a more comfortable life on the prison farm because it was integrated. And inmates told the FBI he had boasted that someday he would "get" Martin Luther King.

Now, relatives, bars, vagrants' hangouts, rail, air and bus terminals throughout the nation quietly were watched. Never has so tight a law enforcement net been woven across the United States. Yet as the days passed, every trail grew cold. The FBI concluded that he probably had slipped out of the country. But how and where?

Hoover and DeLoach speculated that Ray might have obtained a false passport by using still another alias. A call to the State Department disclosed that since he broke out of prison more than 1.5 million passports had been issued. Scrutinizing each would be a stupendous job. But the FBI had no choice. So Hoover assigned 80 agents to go through passport files one by one, looking for an application which contained not the name but the photograph of James Earl Ray. At the Passport Office a block from the White House they began work, laboring only at night so as to preserve secrecy.

At the same time, the FBI requested the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to make a similar examination. Each night and on weekends, a team of

12 young constables secretly assembled at the Blackburn Building in Ottawa. Staying up until dawn, they painstakingly compared passport photographs brought to them in cardboard boxes by the tens of thousands. Eleven pictures looked enough like Ray to cause investigations in different parts of Canada. But each application turned out to be legitimate. By late May more than 250,000 had been inspected without success.

Then last June 1, on a Saturday morning, a Mountie with less than two years' experience came across an application submitted by a Ramon George Sneyd who gave a Toronto address. For a full minute he stared at the picture of a man wearing heavy, horn-rimmed glasses. "This could be it," he said, passing the photo to the supervising corporal. "At least," replied the supervisor, "it's worth another check."

Within the hour two plainclothesmen drove to the Toronto address listed by Sneyd. It was a rundown rooming house -- the kind toward which James Earl Ray gravitated. As the investigation in Toronto expanded, the telephone at Royal Police headquarters back in Ottawa began to ring with increasingly suspicious reports. The man who called himself Sneyd had been in Toronto only three weeks. The character



reference on his application was fictitious. Then police discovered he simply had assumed the identity of a real Ramon George Sneyd -- probably by picking the name out of birth announcements in a 1932 newspaper file. By Monday Canadian detectives were able to talk to Miss Lillian Spender, manager of a Toronto travel agency through which the passport application had been made.

"Have you ever seen this man?" they asked, handing her pictures of both Sneyd and Ray.

"I vaguely remember him," answered Miss Spender. "He was a nebulous character, a most forgettable man; the kind who fades right into the wallpaper."

"Would your records show where he went?" the detectives inquired.

"Let me check," Miss Spender replied, and minutes later she disclosed that on May 2 Sneyd had paid \$345 in Canadian cash for a round-trip ticket to London. He was booked aboard the May 6 flight 600 of the British Overseas Airway Corp. and was scheduled to return to Canada May 21. Through the FBI liaison man in Ottawa, the Mounted Police advised Washington and rushed along a sample of Sneyd's handwriting from his passport application.

On Tuesday night, June 4, DeLoach received word from FBI handwriting experts. Immediately he made an emergency call to the FBI representative at Scotland Yard in London. Meanwhile, more vital intelligence arrived from Ottawa. The next day when DeLoach heard back from the agent in London, he ordered a report drafted "FOR EYES OF THE DIRECTOR ONLY." Knowledge of the contents was limited to only six men in the entire FBI, so great was the fear of an inadvertent leak.

The top secret report outlined a whole new picture. FBI handwriting analysis proved beyond a doubt that Ray now was using the passport issued to Ramon George Sneyd. Scotland Yard had discovered that upon landing in London May 7, Ray, alias Sneyd, had switched tickets and flown on to Portugal. On May 16 he had visited the Canadian embassy in Lisbon and picked up a second passport, claiming his first was mutilated. Thus, James Earl Ray probably was still alive and somewhere in Europe, if not still in Portugal. But to the FBI the fact that he now had two passports was ominous. It meant that he intended to alter one of them and thereby masquerade under yet another identity. "If we don't get him soon," said Hoover, "we may

not have another chance."

He ordered two Portuguese-speaking agents, one from Paris, one from Washington, to rendezvous in London and fly on to Lisbon. The FBI issued bulletins urgently requesting police and immigration officials throughout Europe to seize anyone using the name Sneyd. Then there was little more to do but wait and hope.

At 7:15 a.m. Washington time on Saturday, June 8, DeLoach was making coffee in the kitchen of his Virginia home when the phone rang with a trans-Atlantic call. "The British have picked up a man named Sneyd who came in on a Lisbon flight," reported the FBI agent in London. "He was carrying a loaded pistol. Scotland Yard is on the way to the airport right now." Still in a sport shirt, DeLoach raced to FBI headquarters on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington.

Back in London at the dark, fortress-like Cannon Row police station, two of Scotland Yard's most famous investigators questioned the traveler, who insisted he was Ramon George Sneyd. A time-consuming court order would have been required to obtain fingerprints, so casually they offered him a drink of water. As soon as he put the glass down, it was whisked away to Scotland Yard laboratories where

the fingerprints left on it were examined.

At 10:20 a.m. the FBI agent telephoned Washington. "The fingerprints check." DeLoach conferred with Hoover, then waved for his secretary. "Take a bulletin, all points North America and Europe.

JAMES EARL RAY APPREHENDED THIS DATE LONDON, ENGLAND. DISCONTINUE SEARCH."\*

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\*Announcing the arrest, Hoover went out of his way to express American gratitude for Canadian and British cooperation. Replied C. J. Sweeny, chief of the Mounted Police Criminal Investigation Bureau: "It was a pleasure to make one more investigation for the FBI. They've made a thousand for us."

# The Biggest Manhunt in History

By Jeremiah O'Leary

The great detective story  
of how the FBI identified  
and tracked down the escaped  
convict accused of killing  
Martin Luther King.



In the predawn darkness of last June 8, British European Airways Flight 404 bound from Lisbon landed at London. A traveler wearing thick, horn-rimmed glasses, a cheap sport jacket and light raincoat descended from the plane and wandered about Heathrow Airport. Four hours later a Scotland Yard detective closeted in a small airport office scrutinized the passenger list for a flight to Brussels. One strange name leapt out at him. Quickly he checked it against an All Ports Warning issued by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Washington. Hurrying through the terminal, he approached the bespectacled traveler standing in line at the passport desk. "Would you mind stepping aside, sir," said the Scotland Yard operative.

Thus ended history's greatest manhunt, the search for the accused killer of civil rights crusader Martin Luther King. In its pursuit, 3014 FBI agents spent \$1.4 million, flew 900,000 miles ✓

and drove more than 500,000. Police forces throughout Western Europe and North America joined the hunt for the shadowy suspect who sought escape in a dozen cities of five nations. They had to follow a tortuous, seemingly hopeless trail through Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, California, Mexico, Canada, Portugal, Belgium and Great Britain. The story of how they pieced together a chain of clues to achieve the arrest many said would never be made constitutes one of the most remarkable detective stories of our time.

It began just before 5:30 p.m. last April 4 when a puffy-faced 40-year-old man locked himself in the bathroom of a seedy rooming house in Memphis, Tenn. From a brown and green bedspread he unwrapped a Remington 30.06 hunting rifle loaded with a "dum-dum" bullet, a hideous projectile designed to tear a fist-size hole in human flesh. The man stepped into the bathtub, raised a small window and braced his elbows on the dusty sill. Through a high-powered telescopic sight, he trained his rifle on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel, 205 feet away.

Suddenly the door knob behind him rattled. "Anybody in there?" a roomer shouted. The gunman froze, and waited silently. Finally the intruder's footsteps creaked away.

At 6:01 p.m. civil rights crusader Martin Luther King, Jr., walked out onto the motel balcony -- and into the cross hairs of the gun sight. One shot rang out. Instantly, Dr. Martin Luther King was dead.

The figure in the bathroom threw the bedspread over the rifle, picked up his blue canvas bag and hurried down a dimly lit hall. "That sounded like a shot!" shouted roomer Willie Anschutz. "Yes -- it was," said the stranger, smiling. With that, he ran outside, got into a white 1966 Mustang and drove off into the twilight.

Plan to Deceive. The hunt began minutes after the assassination, when the senior FBI agent in Memphis telephoned Washington. Director J. Edgar Hoover was immediately notified. "Put every man who can conceivably help on the case," Hoover declared.

During the first hours ~~the FBI had reason to be optimistic.~~)  
Memphis police, searching door to door, quickly ascertained that the shot had been fired from the rooming house. Making a microscopic

examination of the bathroom, intensely questioning tenants, FBI agents had by midnight reconstructed the murder. "The guy we want checked in at 3:15 p.m. under the name John Willard," Special Agent Robert Jensen telephoned Cartha D. DeLoach, assistant to the Director.

"He's about 5 feet 11, medium build, brown hair, blue eyes. He's got a dimpled chin, scar on his forehead and his left ear sticks out."

Meanwhile, a block from the motel, police discovered the rifle, the bedspread and blue canvas bag containing toiletries and underwear discarded in a doorway. At 4:40 a.m. an agent landed at Washington's National Airport with the evidence. By 5:30 a.m. -- just 12 hours after the killer crouched in the bathroom -- his rifle had been inspected for fingerprints and was being test-fired in the FBI laboratory. Through the manufacturers the FBI later in the day traced the weapon to the Aeromarine Supply Co. in Birmingham, Ala. Records there showed that a Harvey Lowmyer had bought the rifle, the telescopic sight and bullets on March 30 for \$248.59 cash.

But there were problems. Fingerprints on the rifle were too indistinct to be of immediate use. Worse, there was no absolute proof the soft-nosed bullet removed from Dr. King's throat came from the

rifle. It had flattened too much on impact to permit conclusive scientific comparison. And nowhere in the country did union rolls, tax lists, credit, military or crime records reveal anything about the John Willard who registered at the rooming house or the Harvey Lowmyer who purchased the rifle.

"We might as well face it," Hoover told his men as the investigation entered its fifth day. "We're up against an elaborate plan to deceive us. Right now I'd say our best bet is the car -- wherever it is."

Looking Westward. On the morning of April 11, Mrs. Ernest Payne, a housewife in Atlanta, Ga. -- 250 miles southeast of Memphis -- learned from a friend that the FBI was searching for the assassin's white Mustang. "Why, I know where a car like that is," exclaimed Mrs. Payne. "I saw a man leave it in front of my apartment last week. Now I remember -- it was the morning after Dr. King was shot. It's still there!" The Atlanta police were notified, later the FBI. Two carloads of agents sped through downtown Atlanta to begin an inch-by-inch inspection of the Mustang.

On a soiled sheet inside, an agent detected a few green threads.



They were forthwith flown to FBI laboratories in Washington, and hours later the teletype message came back: The threads taken from the sheet were like those on the bedspread found in Memphis with the rifle. The tiny threads thus helped link the Mustang to the rifle and the murder.

The car offered still more clues. A Turista sticker showed it had been driven into Mexico last fall. Oil company stickers pasted inside the door revealed it recently had been serviced in Los Angeles. And finally, the car registration yielded the name of its owner: Eric Starvo Galt, 2608 Highland Avenue, Birmingham, Ala.

Meanwhile, a long-shot paid off. The underwear in the blue bag found with the rifle in Memphis bore laundry markings. Determining which cleaning establishment -- among 100,000 in the nation -- made them seemed an impossible task. But with help from the laundry industry, agents concluded that the marks were imprinted by a type of machine manufactured in Syracuse, N.Y. Guided by the manufacturer, they then ascertained that the marks probably were left by a particular machine sold to a laundry in Los Angeles.

Now two clues -- the oil company stickers on the Mustang and the

laundry markings -- pointed westward. They caused Hoover to concentrate 300 agents for a saturation search of the Los Angeles area.

"We've found out that an Eric S. Galt took dancing lessons in Birmingham," he told the Special Agent in Charge of the California detachment. "You might start with dance studios."

Sure enough, an agent located a dance studio in Long Beach where an Eric S. Galt had taken lessons last December, January and February. No one could remember much about him except that he was a shy, evasive loner. One employe, though, did remember that he had mentioned something about taking bartending lessons.

On the Seamy Side. Immediately the FBI began checking vocational schools. In Los Angeles two agents making their second call of the day visited the International School of Bartending. "Have you ever heard of Eric Starvo Galt?" one asked owner Tomas Reyes Lau. "Sure," answered Lau. "He was here about six weeks. Just graduated last month. Would you like to see a picture of him?" He handed over a color photograph taken on "graduation day." As soon as the FBI men had it, they dashed for a phone booth. A courier carrying the photograph boarded the next plane for Washington.

The face clearly matched descriptions of the stranger who lurked in the Memphis bathroom and the "sportsman" who bought the game rifle in Birmingham. Flashing copies of the picture, FBI agents now spread through hotels, motels, bars and rooming houses in Southern California. Their investigation established that Willard-Lowmyer-Galt had lived on the seamy side of Los Angeles from mid-November 1967 until March 17, 1968. It also turned up scores of people who offered small but telling descriptions of him. A prostitute thought he looked "kind of funny" in an overly pressed dark suit, starched white shirt, green tie, brown shoes and dirty fingernails. Another recalled that he had a "sweetly offensive" odor, the result of using large doses of sprays and deodorants instead of soap and water. He tended to squint and tug at his ear. Friendless, he had trouble looking anyone in the eyes and tended to stutter upon first meeting someone. He never seemed to have a job, but he always could peel off \$20 bills from a large roll of cash.

As analysts fitted these fragments together, the hunted man began to change from a shadowy figure into an individual. A heavy-drinking frequenter of rundown rooming houses and neighborhood bars, his attire,

bad grammar and twangy accent suggested a poor education and perhaps a small-town Midwestern background. Lacking any perceptible trade or skills, he well might be a professional criminal. He was not intelligent, but he was crafty enough to lie well and to meld easily into the murky milieu of drifters.

A Single Fingerprint. Thus, by mid-April the FBI knew how the wanted man looked and a great deal about what he was like. But despite the most massive investigation in its history, it still did not know who he was. Moreover, promising clues were leading nowhere. First, a bearded songwriter told of going along with Eric Galt last December on a trip from Los Angeles to New Orleans. En route, said the songwriter, his companion made a series of unexplained telephone calls. Second, acting on an FBI tip picked up in California, Royal Canadian Mounted Police located a Montreal apartment where Galt lived six weeks during the summer of 1967. There, he had claimed -- falsely -- that he worked at Expo 67. Third, Mexican police verified that Eric S. Galt visited the resort of Puerto Vallarta last October. They also found prostitutes who had known him in Mexico and a man who remembered him saying, "After I make a big score, I'm gonna come down here and live on beer and beans." Yet for all the round-the-clock effort,

the trails simply evaporated in mystery.

Then, unexpectedly, the massive questioning produced another dividend. Making inquiries at a hippie boarding house not far from where the Mustang was abandoned in Atlanta, two agents accidentally saw some letters lying on a foyer table. They were addressed to Eric S. Galt.

The agents left at once, for they wanted to do nothing which might forewarn the suspect and lead to a gun battle. The FBI was determined at all costs to try to capture him alive so that the country could learn the truth behind the assassination. Secretly, 22 agents set up a watch on the house, hoping to grab Galt by surprise if he came in or out. But after 48 hours of futile waiting, Washington ordered them to go in, guns drawn. Galt was not there.

But the agents immediately discovered that indeed he had rented a room in the house and that he had left some things behind. Among them were a portable television set, a booklet entitled Your Opportunities in Locksmithing and a collection of maps. On a street map of Atlanta were four penciled black circles, drawn around Martin Luther King's home, the headquarters of his Southern Christian Leadership Conference,

the hippie boarding house, and the exact spot where the white Mustang was abandoned. Another map contained something else -- a single clear fingerprint, the best one the FBI had been able to find anywhere!

Coveted as it was, this lone fingerprint posed a nightmarish technical problem. FBI files today include the fingerprints of 81 million people. Identification experts can pick out any given set within minutes if they have an entire set of prints. But if only one fingerprint is available, it is necessary to pull out each card and make an eyeball comparison with each of the ten impressions on it -- 810 million prints in all!

Hoover determined the FBI had to find a short cut. From all it had learned, he reasoned that the wanted man might be not only a criminal but also an escaped convict. So he ordered identification experts to pick out all cards bearing fingerprints of fugitives. Out came 53,000 cards -- still too many. Thus, it was decided to narrow the search to cards of white male fugitives between 25 and 50. This quickly shrank the number of cards to 1700. Now teams of the best FBI experts began the tedious investigation.



Born Loser. At 9:50 a.m. April 17 the search suddenly stopped.)

A veteran identification man picked up FBI Record Card No. 405,942G, the 702nd examined. He stared hard at it and said, "I believe this is it." Crowding around, other experts looked. All agreed. The ridges of the lone print taken from the map in Atlanta were identical to those on card 405,942G. A supervisor asked, "Who is No. 405,942G?"

The almost instant answer: "James Earl Ray, born [REDACTED], Alton, Ill. We have 19 cards on him. He's a born loser."

The file on Ray showed that he was an escaped convict often imprisoned for crimes ranging from forgery to armed robbery. By nightfall, the dossier was brimming over with new reports being telegraphed from more than 500 agents combing the Midwest to recreate Ray's life in minute detail. They sought out his father, seven brothers and sisters, his former teachers and schoolmates, prison officials and fellow convicts -- everyone who might know anything about him. Within 48 hours the FBI was able to etch out a clear portrait of James Earl Ray.

Aimlessly drifting with his family among Mississippi River towns in the Mark Twain country, Ray grew up in poverty, sometimes living in dirt-floor shacks. He skipped school regularly. Friendless and

scorned, he developed into a rock-throwing, knife-wielding bully and thief. His family disintegrated when he was a teen-ager, the children shifting for themselves as best they could.

Ray dropped out of school at 15, joined the Army in 1946 and spent 30 months in Germany. But the Army sentenced him to three months of hard labor for drunkenness and breaking arrest, then kicked him out as undesirable. After losing a job as a factory worker in Illinois, he turned to crime. At that, too, he was a failure.

He stole a typewriter in Los Angeles but dropped his bank book at the scene and was caught. Fleeing from a grocery store robbery in Illinois, he fell out of the getaway car when it made a sharp turn. After a robbery in Chicago, he ran into a blind alley, was shot, and tumbled through a basement window. He tried to elude a deputy sheriff in St. Louis by jumping into an elevator, but forgot to close the door and was dragged out. Twice he was caught attempting to escape the Missouri State Penitentiary where he was serving 20 years for armed robbery. He finally succeeded on April 23, 1967, by hiding in a bakery truck which carried him through the prison gates.

In the penitentiary Ray often spoke of Negroes with blind hatred.

He rejected a transfer to a more comfortable life on the prison farm because it was integrated. And inmates told the FBI he had boasted that someday he would "get" Martin Luther King.

Now, relatives, bars, vagrants' hangouts, rail, air and bus terminals throughout the nation quietly were watched. Never has so tight a law enforcement net been woven across the United States. Yet as the days passed, every trail grew cold. The FBI concluded that he probably had slipped out of the country. But how and where?

Hoover and DeLoach speculated that Ray might have obtained a false passport by using still another alias. A call to the State Department disclosed that since he broke out of prison more than 1.5 million passports had been issued. Scrutinizing each would be a stupendous job. But the FBI had no choice. So Hoover assigned 80 agents to go through passport files one by one, looking for an application which contained not the name but the photograph of James Earl Ray. At the Passport Office a block from the White House they began work, laboring only at night so as to preserve secrecy.

At the same time, the FBI requested the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to make a similar examination. Each night and on weekends, a team of

12 young constables secretly assembled at the Blackburn Building in Ottawa. Staying up until dawn, they painstakingly compared passport photographs brought to them in cardboard boxes by the tens of thousands. Eleven pictures looked enough like Ray to cause investigations in different parts of Canada. But each application turned out to be legitimate. By late May more than 250,000 had been inspected without success.

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