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"LIFE" MAGAZINE PHOTOS - MURKIN

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EVIDENCE

**FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
WASHINGTON, D. C.**



It would have been a great picture.

When she came home from the hospital
and the baby was in her arms. And she
sat on the wooden bench in the hallway
rocking the baby back and forth.
When she turned to look at me she had
tears in her eyes.

It would have been a great picture if
there had been flashbulbs on the camera.
Sylvania makes Blue Dot flashbulbs and
flashcubes that help you get great
pictures again and again and again.
So you won't end up with just
a dream, but something
you can hold in your hand and see.

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A week before his death, King led a march in Memphis

"I have a dream today . . . I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low. The rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. This is our hope. . . . With this faith we shall be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day. . . ."

Martin Luther King Jr. lived by this exalted dream of freedom for his people, and he died in Memphis for daring to have it. The awful striking down of the apostle of nonviolence made still another terrible wound in the conscience of the nation—and brought outbreaks of violence all across the country. A tender and a gentle man, he fought endlessly for the simple recognition of human dignity, and he maintained his convictions about the ultimate reconciliation of all men in the face of dreadful pressure from both black and white. His sense of the rightness of his cause was both ennobling and prophetic. "I accept this award," he said upon receiving the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1964, "in behalf of a civil rights movement which is moving with determination and a majestic scorn for risk and danger to establish a reign of freedom and a rule of justice." His own scorn for danger led him to his death, and it could not have really surprised him. The night before he died he told a cheering crowd in Memphis, "It really doesn't matter with me now, because I've been to the mountaintop." Dr. King had always faced death with the hopeful spirit of the words of a hymn he loved: *Free at last. Free at last. Thank God almighty, we are free at last.*



**It really doesn't
matter with me
now because**

I've been to the



mountaintop'

Photographs by JOSEPH LOUW

Futilely, aides kneel beside their dying leader. A minute before, standing on this balcony, King was felled by a single shot in the head.

APRIL 4, 1968 5586⁷⁵

The extraordinary photographs on these pages of the death of Martin Luther King were taken by Joseph Louw, a 27-year-old associate producer for the Public Broadcast Laboratory, in Memphis to make a documentary film on this month's Poor People's March. This is his account of what happened:

I had gone back to my room—which was 309—a little after 5:30 [Memphis time] because I wanted to watch the Huntley-Brinkley show. King was then in 306, less than 60 feet away. He came on the screen, speaking to the audience he had addressed the night before in Memphis. He was saying very powerfully that injunctions would not stop Monday's march. After the program ended, I reached over to turn the set down. That was when I heard the shot.

At first it sounded like a loud explosion, but there was an echo right after it. I rushed out on the balcony. Dr. King was collapsing. He was about 40 or so feet away and I ran up to where he was. Blood was gushing out of the side of his face. His lips were just shaping a last word. It looked like "Oh." By this time Ralph Abernathy was there and Andy Young, and Jesse Jackson was ducking and crouching down the corridor. In that one moment, the sound of the

shot and the sight of Dr. King made me almost feel that wound and I was terrified that it was going to happen to me. Then I ran to my room to get my cameras.

When I came back, Abernathy had a white cloth, and he was trying to close the wound. There was a large pool of blood next to Dr. King's neck and there was shouting. A little girl was crying. Dr. King's Memphis chauffeur had tears running down his face. By this time Abernathy was saying a prayer. He had his head down and the words were barely audible.

Then a group of Dr. King's aides were around him and the cops arrived with their guns drawn. The ambulance came and I ran down to help. But I knew Dr. King was dead. I had no doubt about that. I knew they had killed Dr. King.

Two nights before we had been on the same balcony together. I was outside my room and he was outside his and the sky was filled with black clouds and lightning. I remember calling out to Dr. King, saying, "Hey, Doc, now we really see who's boss." He said: "Yes, sir. He sure is." That was the first time I had seen him as just a man as well as a great man. And I felt the same way when I was watching him on that cement floor bleeding to death. He was just a man and he was a great man.



A shot, an echo and then a prayer



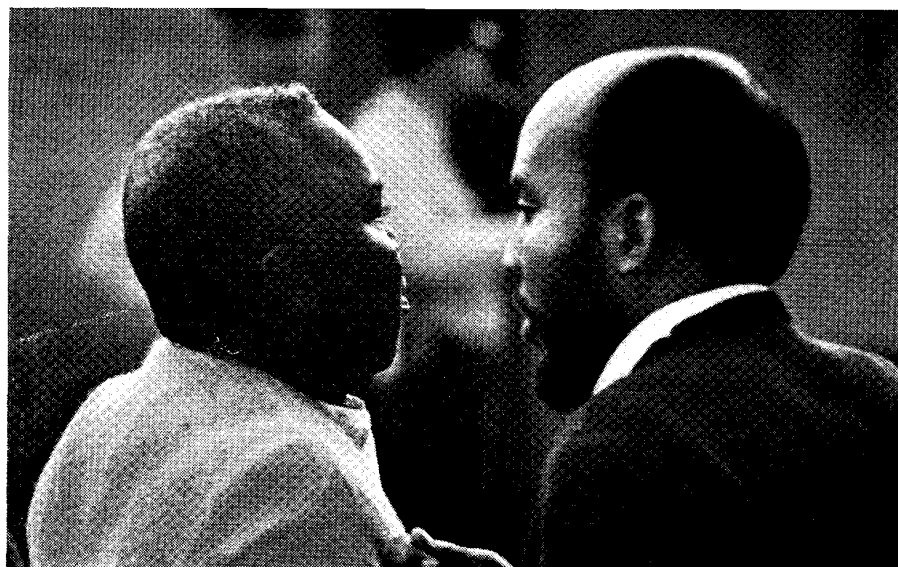


Swarming instantly into the motel area, police—aided by King's colleagues (above)—try to pin down where the shot had come from. Responding to a police radio call, an ambulance arrived within minutes (left). Attendants hauled a stretcher along the balcony where King lay mortally wounded (far left), loaded him onto it (below) and with awkward care handed it down the steps as quickly as possible (right). Barely alive when he reached St. Joseph's Hospital, the civil rights leader was pronounced dead a half hour later.



In a state of shock, King's associates talk despairingly about the shooting. Below, Rev. James Bevel (right) questions Walter Lorraine, owner of the motel; at right, with

Lorraine and others, is Hosea Williams, who for years marched with King. They soon decided to go ahead with the protest march that had brought them to Memphis.



Sorrow in her face, a young girl who had been an eyewitness to the shooting awaits interrogation by the Memphis police investigators.

With police pickets lining wall behind him, motel owner Lorraine stares up at King's balcony. Shot came from building beyond trees.





Desperately attempting to trap the killer, police race to seal off streets surrounding the entire motel area. Witnesses said they saw a white man aged 26 to 32 racing away.

Frantic search for the killer

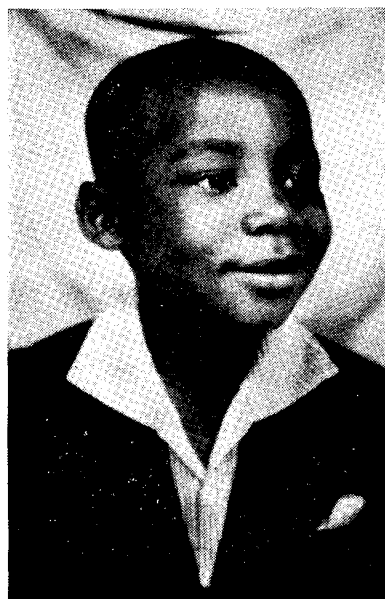




There was irony in the life of this man of peace. In Montgomery, Ala. in 1956, leading a bus boycott, King was arrested—one of several trips to Southern jails.



King spoke often of the American dream. Was he not an emblem of it? As a child in Atlanta he was photographed at 2 with his sister Christine, who became a teacher, and again at 6 (center). "I was



pretty well off," he said, "though most of the Negroes were terribly poor." In 1948 he graduated from Morehouse College at 19, the same year that Christine graduated from Spelman College. Sixteen years lat-



er, he went to Stockholm to accept the Nobel Peace Prize. On his return he and his wife (below) received a tribute from the citizens of Atlanta, black and white alike—and a Steuben glass bowl.

From humiliation in jail to a Nobel Peace Prize



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