

shooting. On the afternoon of April 4, 1968, Tact Unit 10, consisting of three cars and 12 men stopped at Fire Station No. 2 for a rest break at approximately 5:50p.m. The unit was commanded by Lt. Judson E. Ghormley of the Shelby County Sheriff's Department. The other members of the unit included Deputies W.A. DuFour, W.J. Berry, Vernon Dollahite, R.N. Baker and Ronald Maley of the sheriff's department; and Patrolmen Carroll Dunn, William Gross, Jason Morris, Barney Wright, Emmett Douglass and Torrance Landers of the MPD.

Interviews of the above named men indicate that when the unit arrived at the fire station, the cars were parked on the north side of the fire station entrance with the lead car actually obstructing the sidewalk. The second car was parked directly behind the lead car and the third car was double parked alongside these two cars. (MPD Statements, State v. James Earl Ray, DuFour p.1449; Berry p.1450; Ghormley pp.1451 and 1532; Dollahite pp.1455 and 1505; Dunn p.1457; Gross p.1460; Morris p.1463; Wright p.1466; Baker p.1468; Douglass p.1469; Landers p.1471 and Maley p.1480.)

While Patrolman Douglass remained with the lead car to monitor the radio, all of the other men went into the fire station to take a break. When the shot was fired that killed Dr. King (at approximately 6:01p.m.), these men were at various

locations in the fire station drinking coffee, making telephone calls, etc. Patrolman Richmond, who was manning the surveillance post in the rear of the station, yelled throughout the station that Dr. King had been shot. The members of the tact unit, some of whom had heard the shot, all ran out the north side of the fire station and then east toward the rear of the fire station and the Lorraine Motel. (See diagram of crime scene, App. A. Ex. 2).

Patrolman Douglass, who had remained in the lead car to monitor the radio, heard the shot when it was fired. He immediately got out of the car and ran toward the rear of the fire station with the other men. After Patrolman Douglass realized what had happened, he returned to the lead car, along with Patrolman Wright, and radioed the dispatcher that Dr. King had been shot. Douglass and Wright then drove the lead car south on S. Main to E. Butler, east on E. Butler to Mulberry and north on Mulberry to the entrance of the Lorraine Motel. Douglass and Wright later drove the car, accompanied by one or two other unidentified officers, north on Mulberry to Huling, west on Huling to S. Main and south on S. Main to the front of the buildings located just north of the fire station. \*/

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\*/ There are conflicts in the statements of Douglass, Wright and Ghormley. Douglass stated that Ghormley and other unidentified officers got in the car with him at the fire station and they drove to the Lorraine Motel. According to Wright's version, he and Douglass left the fire station together and picked up one or two other unidentified officers at the Lorraine Motel. On the other hand, Ghormley claims he turned around at the concrete wall at the rear of the fire station and ran to the front of the station and then north on S. Main Street.

The other men in the tact unit continued to the rear of the fire station to a concrete retaining wall abutting Mulberry Street. DuFour, Dollahite, Morris, Baker, Landers, Maley and Durn climbed down the concrete wall and ran across Mulberry Street to the Lorraine Motel. DuFour and Morris ran up the stairs to the balcony where Dr. King's body lay. The people there said the shot had come from a red brick building north of the fire station on S. Main Street. While DuFour remained with Dr. King's body until the ambulance came, Morris ran north on Mulberry to Huling and west on Huling to the north side of the buildings facing S. Main Street. Another officer (probably Maley or Durn) was already at that point, and Morris stopped there to assist him in securing that area.

Baker ran to the Motel balcony where DuFour was standing beside Dr. King's body. He then ran back to Mulberry St. and ran north for a distance to an alley. Baker ran into the alley looking for anything suspicious. He noticed that other members of the tact unit were securing a building (probably the building with its north end on Huling). Therefore, Baker went to the corner of Mulberry and E. Butler and took up a position there.

After Landers learned the direction the shot came from, he found a 55-gallon drum and climbed back up the concrete retaining wall on Mulberry St. into the lot on

which the building where the shot was fired is located. Landers observed that the bathroom window was partially opened and he saw an elderly white male come up to the window and look out. He ordered him to get back from the window. Landers also saw an elderly white female looking out a window directly south of the bathroom window. He ordered her to get away from the window. Landers also checked the bushes on the lot for evidence and checked the entire area for footprints. After other officers arrived, Landers and another MPD officer climbed onto the roof of a one story building which backs up to Mulberry St. This building runs along the north side of the building whence the shot was fired. Finding nothing on the roof, they came down and started up an alley leading to a basement. About 10 feet up the alley they found two fresh footprints in the mud. Landers guarded these footprints until homicide detectives arrived on the scene. Subsequently, a plaster case was made of each footprint. However, the footprints were never positively identified by either the MPD or the FBI.

Upon learning where the shot was fired from, Dollahite and Maley ran out of the motel courtyard, turned north on Mulberry to Huling and west on Huling toward S. Main. Maley stopped in the center of the block and began guarding the

north end of the building. However, Dollahite continued running (with gun drawn) to S. Main and turned south on S. Main. Dollahite noticed a number of patrons in Jim's Grill at 418 S. Main. He ran into the cafe and ordered everyone to remain seated and not to leave. Dollahite then stopped momentarily at Canipe's Amusement Company located at 424 S. Main where he observed a green bed spread lying in the doorway partially covering a blue suitcase and a box containing a rifle. As he continued down S. Main a short distance near a fenced-in parking area, Dollahite observed Lt. Ghormley and another officer coming north on S. Main. Dollahite turned around at that point and walked back to Canipe's store ahead of Lt. Ghormley and then crossed the street for the purpose of securing the front of the building. After he took up his position, Douglass and Wright drove up in the lead car.

Other officers who did not climb down the retaining wall at the rear of the fire station and run to the motel are Ghormley, Gross and Berry. After running to the retaining wall and observing the people pointing to the building on S. Main St., Berry came back to the fire station entrance, jumped in a cruiser and drove north on S. Main to the first intersection at Huling where he stopped the car in the street and secured that area.

Ghormley and Gross also returned to the front of the fire station after first running to the retaining wall. They both turned north on S. Main and ran toward Huling. Ghormley stopped at Canipe's Amusement Co. where he observed what appeared to be a blanket partially covering a blue suitcase and a Browning rifle box with about a foot of the barrel of a rifle exposed.

The apparent discrepancies in the statements of Ghormley and Dollahite can be accounted for only by the mass confusion which must have occurred immediately after the shooting. However, it appears that Dollahite first observed the bundle while running south on S. Main with his gun drawn. But, he continued past Canipe's Amusement Company and after he saw Ghormley and the other officer coming north he turned around and took up a position on the opposite side of the street from Canipe's.

Gry H. Canipe, the owner of Canipe's Amusement Co., informed Ghormley that a white male had just dropped the bundle in front of his door a minute or two earlier and had run south on S. Main. Ghormley radioed this information to headquarters and stood guard over the articles. Shortly thereafter, Canipe told Ghormley that a white Mustang automobile had left the area at a high rate of speed after the bundle was dropped. Ghormley also radioed this information to headquarters.

According to the transcript of the MPD radio tapes (MPD James Earl Ray Supplements, Attorney General's copy, Supplement 79, p.1714) Tact Unit 10 advised the dispatcher that Dr. King had been shot at the Lorraine Motel at 6:03p.m. By 6:06p.m., the dispatcher had ordered a circle formed around the Lorraine Motel and the buildings west of the motel on S. Main. Moreover, patrol cars and other Tact Units had begun to arrive on the scene. At 6:07p.m. Tact Unit 10 advised the dispatcher that the weapon was in front of 424 S. Main and that the subject ran south on S. Main. At 6:08p.m. the subject was described as a well-dressed, young, white male. At 6:10p.m. the dispatcher relayed information from Tact Unit 10, that the subject had left the area in a late model white Mustang.

The men in the Tact Units and patrol cars kept the area sealed off, directed traffic, and checked out suspicious individuals while detectives from the Homicide Squad investigated the scene. Inspector Nevelyn E. Zachary of the MPD Homicide Squad arrived at the Lorraine Motel at approximately 6:15p.m., and by 6:30p.m. he had taken custody of the bundle of articles found in the doorway of Canipe's Amusement. Zachary turned the bundle, except for a tee shirt and pair of shorts, over to the FBI at about 9:30 or 10:00p.m. The tee shirt and shorts were also turned over to the FBI after the laundry marks were checked with local laundries (Interview of former Inspector Nevelyn E. Zachary, September 15, 1976, App. B).

B. The FBI Investigation Of The Assassination

1. The Department of Justice Response and FBI Performance

a. The Murder. At approximately 6:00 p.m. on April 4, 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was standing on the balcony outside of his room at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. Moments later, Dr. King was shot by a high power rifle and then rushed to St. Joseph's Hospital. At 7:05 p.m. he was pronounced dead. The cause of death was a bullet wound which tore the major neck blood vessels and severed the spinal cord at the root of the neck (Memphis 44-1987 Sub sec. 1-13, and see autopsy report, App. A, Ex. 3).

b. Top Priority Investigation Ordered. The Memphis Police Department was immediately aware of the King assault and promptly notified the FBI Memphis Field Office headed by SAC Robert G. Jensen. SAC Jensen telephonically relayed the information to Washington where Director Hoover and Attorney General Clark were informed. The Memphis Field Office was directed on the evening of April 4, 1968 to immediately conduct a full investigation of the matter as a possible violation of 18 U.S.C. 241, the civil rights conspiracy statute (HQ 44-38861-109).



This directive soon became national in scope with SAC's in all FBI Field Offices being ordered by teletype on April 7, 1968, to participate and conduct a top priority investigation under their personal supervision. This meant all leads were to be afforded immediate, thorough and imaginative attention and all possibilities from such leads exhausted. Also, 24 hours was set as the period after receipt of a lead within which the investigation and reporting must be completed. All SAC's were to bear personal responsibility for any failure to handle the investigation (HQ 44-38861-153).

c. Progress of the Investigation. The breadth of this top priority investigation is repeatedly evidenced in the Murkin files. All informant sources - racial, security and criminal - were immediately alerted and contacted for information. The KKK and other hate groups as well as individuals known to have violent proclivities were checked. The files were checked for prior threats against Martin Luther King, Jr. (HQ 44-38861-2649). Name checks were continuously being made on Selective Service records, city and telephone directories, drivers license bureaus, motor vehicle divisions, financial institutions, credit records, criminal and civil records, marriage licenses, public utility rolls, unions, common carrier passenger lists and more (e.g. HQ 44-38861-233).

(1) Bessie Brewer's Rooming House. Key information was developed early at Bessie Brewer's Rooming House whence

the shot was fired. Bessie Brewer, Charles A. Stephens and William C. Anchutz were interviewed and a physical description of a suspect was obtained.

Bessie Brewer, resident manager of the rooming house, explained that a "John Willard" registered with her April 4, between 3:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. He was first directed to Room 8, but rejected it because it had a stove and refrigerator. Instead, he asked for a sleeping room only and accepted Room 5-B in the rear of the hostelry. This room provided a window with a view of Dr. King's room at the Lorraine Motel. Mrs. Brewer described the new tenant as a white male approximately 35 years of age, 5'11" to 6' tall, weighing 180 pounds with a medium build and presenting a neat clean appearance (Memphis 44-1987 Sub Sec. 1-15).

Stephens, who was in his room on the afternoon of April 4, remembers hearing footsteps between Room 5-B and the bathroom. He also remembers the bathroom being occupied for considerable periods of time - 20 to 30 minutes - without water running or the toilet being flushed except for the last visit. This last visit ended when he heard what he is certain was a gun shot. Interrupted by the shot, Stephens opened his door to the hallway to see a man running down the hallway carrying a large wrapped bundle. As this man ran down the hall in the direction of Anchutz, Stephens

recalls believing that he had seen this person earlier that afternoon with Mrs. Brewer. Stephens described him as a white male of average build, in his 30's, 5'10" to 11" tall, weighing 165 pounds and wearing a dark suit presenting a neat clean appearance (Memphis 44-1987 Sub A sec. 1).

Like Stephens, Anchutz was a resident of the rooming house and in his room at the time of the shooting. Also like Stephens, Anchutz occupied a room adjacent to "John Willard." He recalls watching television in his room that afternoon when he heard a gun shot. Immediately, he went to the door and as he opened it saw a man running toward him. This man covered his face as he ran and carried a blanket wrapped bundle. Anchutz addressed the man, saying: "I thought I heard a shot." The man responded: "Yeh, it was a shot." Anchutz described the man as 6' tall with a slim build and in his 30's (Memphis 44-1987 Sub A sec. 1).

(2) Canipe Amusement Company. The Canipe Amusement Company is located at 424 South Main Street and is just a short distance from Bessie Brewer's Rooming House at 422½ South Main Street. In the recessed entrance to Canipe Company a blanket wrapped bundle (presumably the bundle Stephens and Anchutz saw) containing valuable pieces of physical evidence was recovered shortly after the shooting.

The store owner, Guy W. Canipe, and two customers, Bernell Finley and Julius L. Graham, were in the store at the time of the assassination. Each was interviewed by the FBI and described hearing a "thud" which drew their attention, and as they looked to see what had happened, they observed the blanket wrapped bundle in the entrance. At the same time, they saw a man dressed in a dark suit walking rapidly south on the sidewalk away from the bundle. A few moments later, they said, a white compact automobile - possibly a Mustang - proceeded north on South Main Street at a high rate of speed. The male was described as white, approximately 30 years of age with a medium build, 5'10" to 6' tall and weighing 160 to 180 pounds. (Memphis 44-1987 Sub A sec 1).

The bundle, after being discovered at Canipe's doorway by a member of a Memphis Police Department Tactical Squad, first came into the custody of Inspector Zachary of the Memphis Police Department's Homicide Bureau. Later in the evening of April 4, 1968, between 9:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m., Inspector Zachary delivered the bundle to SAC Jensen who immediately had it flown by agent courier to Washington for laboratory examination (Memphis 44-1987-610). The bundle contained a Model 760 Remington Gamemaster rifle, 30-06 Springfield caliber, and a blue zipper bag. The bag contained various toilet articles along with a pair of men's underwear

with laundry tags, a pair of binoculars, two cans of beer, and a paper bag bearing an advertisement for York Arms Company, Memphis, Tennessee, with a York Arms Company cash sales receipt dated April 4, 1968 (Memphis 44-1987 Sub A sec 1).

(3) Information and Physical Evidence Tracked. The investigation continued with emphasis on tracing all physical evidence and information received. To this end a search of all Memphis area hotels and motels was initiated for the source of the blanket and bar of soap found in the blue zipper bag. Also, registrations at area inns were examined for the unknown suspect who fled the rooming house and who might be driving a white compact automobile. At the same time, the rifle, scope, binoculars, cans of beer, laundry tags and other items were tracked (HQ 44-38861-139).

The rifle and scope were quickly traced to the Aero Marine Supply Company in Birmingham, Alabama. The rifle was sold to a "Harvey Lowmyer" March 30, 1968. The scope, along with a second rifle, was purchased March 29, 1968, but "Lowmyer" exchanged this rifle the following day for the one recovered at the Canipe Amusement Company. According to the Aero Marine salesman, "Lowmyer" explained that he talked with his brother and was advised a more powerful rifle was necessary for deer hunting in Wisconsin. However,

a laboratory examination of this returned rifle revealed that it was clogged with cosmoline (a heavy grease firearm preservative) and could not be loaded and readied to fire (HQ 44-38861-432). The salesman also provided a physical description of "Lowmyer" which matched those previously obtained (HQ 44-38861-180).

The paper bag and the sales receipt from York Arms Company led agents to the Memphis store where the binoculars were purchased. The York Arms salesman explained that he sold the pair of binoculars at approximately 4:00 p.m. April 4, 1968, to a white male matching the descriptions previously obtained (Memphis 44-1987 Sub A sec. 1). By checking the manufacturer's can codes and distribution records, the two beer cans were traced to Southhaven Mirror Shop, Southhaven, Mississippi (HQ 44-38861-1360).

The center of the investigation shifted from Memphis to Birmingham on April 9, when the search of Memphis inns focused on the Rebel Motel and the April 3 registration record of an Eric Starvo Galt. It was already known that the rifle and scope were purchased in Birmingham and the Galt registration also pointed to Birmingham. The registration record aroused interest because Galt registered for the night of April 3 only, listed a Birmingham address and drove a Mustang with Alabama license plates, (HQ 44-38861-1180).

The possibility of a link between Eric Starvo Galt and the unknown subject was pursued in Alabama by the Birmingham and Mobile offices. In their pursuit they learned that on August 29, 1967, Galt purchased a 1966 white Mustang automobile. The Bureau agents also learned that the State of Alabama issued a motor vehicle operator's license in October 1967 to Eric Starvo Galt, 2608 Highland Avenue, Birmingham, Alabama. The physical description obtained from this license matched those previously received: white male, born July 20, 1931, 5'11" tall, 175 pounds with blue eyes and brown hair (HQ 44-38861-1180).

When the investigation moved to Galt's Birmingham address it was learned that Galt lived there in late August until early October 1967. Because of the length of this contact, emphasis was placed on developing information on Galt's background. Significantly, it was learned that during his Birmingham sojourn Galt expressed an enthusiastic interest in dancing and attended dancing school there (HQ 44-38861-607).

(4) Los Angeles. Soon after the Birmingham connection was uncovered Los Angeles became a focal point in the investigation. The significance of Los Angeles became apparent April 11, with the knowledge of four facts.

One, when on April 11, 1968, the Bureau located Galt's abandoned Mustang in Atlanta a search of it indicated that

Galt had had it serviced twice in the Los Angeles area (HQ 44-38861-989).

Two, also incident to the search of the Mustang a fragment of cardboard torn from a Kleenex box was found. On it were the names and Los Angeles addresses of Anita Katzwinkel and Ginger Nance (HQ 44-38861-989).

Three, laundry markings from the recovered underwear were tracked to Home Service Laundry and Dry Cleaning, Hollywood, California (HQ 44-38861-885). The following day agents learned that the name Eric Starvo Galt appeared in the laundry's records.

Lastly, a pair of pliers recovered from the blue zipper bag were traced to the Rompage Hardware Store which is within five blocks of Home Service Laundry and Dry Cleaning (HQ 44-38861-1174).

Since it was known that while in Birmingham Galt pursued an interest in dancing, all dance schools in the Los Angeles area were checked. Galt's name appeared in the records of the National Dance Studio, Los Angeles. (44-38861-1293).

Eventually, the dance studio contact proved to be most important because it was through an interview with the dance studio owner that a photograph of Eric Starvo Galt was finally obtained. The owner keyed the agents to an interest



Galt had expressed in attending a bartending school (HQ 44-38861-1066). Checking the area, the International School of Bartending was located and it provided Galt's graduation photograph. For the first time, agents were able to see and distribute a photo of their subject. To be sure of maximum dissemination, the photo was circulated among the news media (HQ 44-38861-967).

While in Los Angeles Galt first lived at the Serrano Apartments and later at the St. Francis Hotel. Persons contacted at these locations called him a "loner" and described him as a person who kept to himself. A departure from this characterization, however, was reported by Charles Stein who, at no expense to himself, rode with Galt in the Mustang from Los Angeles to New Orleans and return.

Stein explained that he and his sister Rita Stein met Galt through their cousin Marie Martin who was working as a bar maid at the Sultan Bar located in the St. Francis Hotel. Galt had mentioned to Martin that he was planning to drive to New Orleans and she asked if he would be willing to give her cousin a ride there in order to pick up her children. He agreed, but it was Charles and not Rita who went along with Galt (HQ 44-38861-1117).

Notwithstanding the information Stein provided, the investigation moved no closer to locating Galt. New Orleans

was scoured for clues and although Galt's hotel and room were located the effort was fruitless (HQ 44-38861-1197). Stein also stated Galt made several telephone calls from pay telephones along the way but an exhaustive search of countless telephone records, numbers and subscribers produced nothing (e.g. HQ 44-38861-3857). Lastly, Stein explained that Galt conditioned the ride to New Orleans on Charles Stein, Rita Stein and Marie Martin joining George Wallace's American Independent Party. Each joined but again the ensuing investigation of this lead learned nothing (HQ 44-38861-1003).

(5) Atlanta. On April 11, 1968, a citizen call came through to the Atlanta Police Department reporting the missing white Mustang. According to this caller and another person, both interviewed by the FBI, the abandoned Mustang was parked shortly before 9:00 a.m. April 5, 1968, by a lone man matching Galt's description. The discovery of Galt's Mustang immediately caused agents to seek out any additional contacts by Galt in Atlanta (HQ 44-38861-989).

Because Galt was believed to use low cost rooming houses all such establishments were contacted for any sign of him. Success was found at Jimmie Dalton Gardner's Rooming House where Galt registered March 24, 1968. Although Galt was nowhere to be found, he had left evidence behind. Found

in his room were a booklet, "Your Opportunities in Locksmithing" and a collection of maps. One of these maps was of the city of Atlanta with the residence of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the headquarters of SCLC circled (HQ 44-38861-967).

Other evidence of Galt's presence in Atlanta was received from the Piedmont Laundry where records showed he picked up laundry April 5, 1968 (HQ 44-38861-3627).

(6) Galt Identified as James Earl Ray. Knowing that Galt returned to Atlanta after the assassination all conceivable modes of transportation in, around and out of Atlanta were checked (HQ 44-38861-907). However, Galt's trail was cold; there was no evidence as to where he fled from Atlanta.

The Bureau became worried because with each passing hour Galt's chances of avoiding capture became better and better. Therefore, the investigative emphasis shifted from following Galt's trail to identifying Galt. In an effort to accomplish this the Bureau initiated a comparative search of three identical latent fingerprints believed to be Galt's (one fingerprint was recovered from the rifle; a second from the binoculars; and a third from the map of Atlanta found in Galt's room) against fingerprints of white male fugitives. To be sure, the limitation to fugitives was purely speculative.

However, the speculation paid off when on April 19, 1968, James Earl Ray's fingerprint card compared identically (HQ 44-38861-1575).

With the discovery that Eric Starvo Galt was James Earl Ray, the investigation was redirected to a search of Ray's whereabouts since the time of his April 23, 1967, escape from Missouri State Prison. Through the months of April and May the Ray-Galt steps were traced. Eventually, the Bureau was able to account for Ray's whereabouts almost continuously since his escape. Nevertheless, his trail remained cold beyond Atlanta on April 5, 1968 (HQ 44-38861-3509; and see Chronology infra).

In connection with their search, Ray's family was identified, located, physically surveilled and periodically interviewed for information (E.G., HQ 44-38861-3987). Also, prison inmates and associates were queried (e.g. HQ 44-38861-3502) as well as his military record perused (HQ 44-38861-1616). But, no clues developed. Ray's family said they knew nothing; they had not heard from nor been in contact with James and did not know of his whereabouts (Chicago 44-1114-27). Prison inmates and associates told tales of bounties offered for the death of Dr. King but exhaustive investigations could not substantiate their claims (e.g., HQ 44-38861-3767).

Frustrated, the Director prepared a memorandum for the

Attorney General dated May 13, 1968 in which he explains that extensive investigation has not resulted in any new developments beyond Atlanta, April 5. Therefore, the Director requested authorization for telephone and microphone surveillance on Ray family members. The request, however, was never acted upon (HQ 44-38861-3509).

(7) Passport Search. From an interview with a former cellmate of Ray's at Missouri State Prison it was learned that Ray appreciated the ease with which a person living in Canada could obtain a false passport (HQ 44-38861-3889). Though it is not clear that the cellmate's comments precipitated a search of Canadian passports issued since Ray's April 23, 1967 escape, it is known that on the request of the FBI Legat in Canada such a search was conducted by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. A passport search was also conducted in Mexico and the United States (HQ 44-38861-4445).

Though the search went through a staggering number of applications and was based on the comparison of Ray's photograph to those submitted with the application, it proved to be the necessary break in picking up Ray's trail. At 9:30 p.m. June 1, 1968, The Legal attache, Ottawa, Canada, called the Bureau to advise that after reviewing some 175,000 applications the RCMP located a passport issued

April 24, 1968 under the name Ramon George Sneyd which contained a photograph very definitely similar to Ray (HQ 44-38861-4190).

The passport was filed by the Kennedy Travel Agency in Toronto, Canada. Incident to their investigation, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police contacted the travel agency and obtained a hand printed note from Sneyd concerning his application. The note together with the passport photo and a latent palm print were forwarded to the Bureau for laboratory examination which concluded that Ray and Sneyd were the same person (HQ 44-38861-4262, 4263).

(8) Ray Apprehended. The Kennedy Travel Agency also provided information that Sneyd purchased a round trip air ticket from Toronto to London departing May 6 and returning May 21, 1968. But New Scotland Yard determined that Sneyd turned in the return portion of the fare and received a May 7, 1968 ticket to Lisbon, Portugal plus a \$14.60 voucher (HQ 44-38861-4319).

Immigration authorities in Lisbon were immediately contacted. It was learned that Ray had entered Lisbon May 7 but had exited for London May 17, 1968 (HQ 44-38861-4725).

Stops were issued by New Scotland Yard for Sneyd. At 11:15 a.m., June 8, 1968, Ray was apprehended by officers of

New Scotland Yard while he was passing through British immigration offices in the London Airport. At the time he was planning a flight to Brussels, Belgium (HQ 44-38861-4616).

## 2. Alleged Conspiracies

Literally scores of alleged conspiracies were communicated to the Bureau. From the date of the assassination in April, 1968, even up to this date, the FBI has been approached by numerous persons with stories which purport to identify a conspiracy to kill King. These stories involved the widest range of perpetrators and participants as well as motives. To the extent that these leads were pursued, the Bureau was put in the rather difficult position of conducting an investigation which ranged far beyond the concrete evidence that had already been obtained. When the leads were in fact bogus ones, the FBI was attempting to prove a negative in each reported case. With a controversial figure, such as Dr. King, the possibilities of conspiracy were numerous. Consequently, the Bureau's credibility would necessarily be strained, given its past relationship with the civil rights leader, unless each story was disproved. Yet the Bureau attempted to cover each lead.

As previously stated, each SAC was held personally responsible for an expedited and thorough review.

Based on our review of the files, the task force is satisfied that the FBI did a credible and thorough job in attempting to identify any possible conspiracy or persons who could have been involved in the murder. In each of the allegations received, the Bureau immediately interviewed the person who was the source of the allegation where this was possible (i.e. where the source was not anonymous). In situations where the complaint was not an obvious hoax the Bureau then attempted immediately to identify the alleged participants and interview them. Where there was not a satisfactory explanation to dispel the allegation concerning such matters as whereabouts or associations, the Bureau then would check further. This does not mean that every allegation was pursued to the ultimate degree. Judgment based on experience dictated many of the decisions.

These judgments were also tempered by a critical factor. Within fifteen days after the murder, the FBI was convinced that Galt and Ray were the same person, that this individual purchased the rifle, rented the room across from the Lorraine Motel, and fired the shot that killed Dr. King. While there were many other people



who were antagonistic toward Dr. King and many who had apparently discussed killing him, any successful conspiracy would have to have involved Ray based on the evidence at hand. In all the years following the assassination, the investigation has failed to reveal any connection between any alleged conspirator(s) and James Earl Ray including those alleged by Ray himself. Indeed, the overwhelming evidence indicates that Ray was almost totally alone during the year after his escape from the Missouri State Prison.

We have not addressed here the Bureau's handling of particular conspiracy leads because of the large number of allegations involved. Bureau files can be checked for each reported lead and the resulting investigation on that lead traced to its conclusion.

C. The Story of James Earl Ray

1. Chronology of Ray's Activities On and After April 23, 1967

On Sunday, the 23rd of April 1967, after he had  
served seven years of a twenty year sentence for armed  
robbery in the Missouri State Penitentiary at Jefferson  
City, James Earl Ray escaped. When a truck appeared at  
the prison bakery where Ray worked, a bread box was  
carried onto the truck to be delivered to a nearby prison  
farm. Ray had concealed himself inside the bread box,  
and later fled from the prison truck at a stop prior to its  
reaching the Renz prison farm. (3503; Huie, pp.24-27.) <sup>\*/</sup>  
April 23, 1967

Ray allegedly headed first toward Kansas City  
(Huie, p.27). On the third day he burglarized a  
trailer sitting by the Missouri River taking a blanket  
and food (Huie, p.27). For the next three nights he made  
his way along the railroad in the direction of Kansas City  
April 24-28

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\*/ Ray has provided varying accounts of his escape from  
prison and of his subsequent activities prior to apprehension.  
The task force's most credible view of his statements has  
been used here. These admissions of Ray are found in He Slew  
the Dreamer, Huie, William Bradford, Delacorte Press, New York,  
1968 (hereinafter, Huie); All other citations herein are for  
serials in the Bureau's MURKIN file, HQ 44-38861. The task  
force has obtained xerox copies of Ray's correspondence with  
Mr. Huie which reflect the admissions cited by Huie.

to a city large enough so he would not be noticed and took a train to St. Louis. He then took a taxicab to East St. Louis, called a friend who drove him to Edwardsville whence he caught a bus for Chicago (Huie, p.28).

On May 3rd, Ray secured work for the next eight weeks as a dishwasher and cook's helper at the Indian Trail Restaurant in Winnetka, Illinois, and resided at 2731 North Sheffield in Chicago under the name John L. Rayns. He purchased a 1959 Chrysler automobile from a private owner on June 5th for \$200 (5448). On June 9th, he failed a driver's test, but passed the test on June 12th (5394). Ray moved from his Sheffield address to 1648 Lunt Street on June 17th where he paid one week's rent (5118). Ray was issued a driver's permit in the name of John L. Rayns for the State of Illinois on June 21st (5394). During the week of June 19th Ray left his job, and requested that his final paycheck be forwarded to the Lunt Street address, which it was (5118).

Thereafter, on July 14, Ray purchased a 1962 Plymouth automobile from a commercial dealer in East St. Louis, Illinois, and transferred the licensed plates from the Chrysler to the Plymouth (5413; Huie, p.39). Leaving East St. Louis on July 15, Ray proceeded

May 3

June 5

June 9

June 12

June 17

June 21

July 14

to Montreal, Canada, via Indianapolis, Detroit and Windsor (Huie, p.40). His prime objective was allegedly to secure a Canadian passport (idem p.41). As John L. Rayns, he registered for an overnight stay at the Bourgard Motel in Dorion, just west of Montreal (idem, p.43; 5437x). July 15

Next, Ray first used the alias Eric S. Galt when he signed a six month lease for an apartment in the Harkay Apartments, 2589 Notre Dame East, in Montreal (2192; Huie, p.43). Ray then allegedly held up a food store stealing \$1700 (Huie, p.47). The following day he spent \$300 for new clothes at the Tip Top Tailors, 488 St. Catherine West, had his hair cut and a manicure at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel (Huie, p.48). He also ordered on July 21st a \$75 tailor-made suit at the English and Scotch Woolen Company (4692). (A month and a half later, by a letter from Birmingham dated September 6, 1967, this tailoring company was instructed by Ray to send the finished garment to him at his then Birmingham address.) Three days later Ray ordered three sex books from Futura Books, Inc., in Inglewood, California, (2192), and on July 28th, he enrolled in a correspondence course at the Locksmithing Institute, Little Falls, New Jersey (2068). Both matters were paid by Canadian money orders. July 19 July 24 July 28

Ray vacationed, beginning July 30th, at the	July 30-
Gray Rocks Inn on Lake Quirnet in the Laurentian	August 5
Mountains seeking, according to Ray, contact with	
a respectable woman to vouch for him on a passport	
application. He was "picked up" by a female Canadian	
Government employee and her girlfriend and spent the	
next few days with them before leaving on August 7th;	
The two women followed, stayed overnight with Ray in	August 7
Montreal on August 7th, and then returned to their	
residences in Ottawa (Huie, pp.51-53; 5402). On	
August 9th, he purchased by money order a formula for	August 9
making glass for a two-way mirror (2192). Then, on	August 19
August 19th, Ray visited the government employee in	
Ottawa, but did not importune her to assist him on his	
passport application (Huie, p.54).	

During the approximately two and one-half	"Raoul"
months of Ray's stay in Canada he relates meeting an	contact
underworld character named "Raoul". After negotiations,	dates July 18-
	Aug. 8 & through
	Aug. 18
Ray stated to author Huie, that he engaged in smuggling	
operations with "Raoul" and then proceeded to Birmingham	
to meet "Raoul" at the latter's direction. Meanwhile,	Aug. 18-20
he stayed at the Town and Country Motel, Ottawa, from	
August 18th to August 20th (5502). Whatever may be	

the truth of the story, Ray left Montreal, met his brother at Northbrooke, Illinois, gave his Plymouth car to his brother Jerry Ryan, (5413), proceeded from Northbrooke or Chicago to Birmingham, stayed August 26th at the Granada Hotel, 2230 Fourth Avenue as John L. Rayns (5400; Huie, p.61), and that same day also took a room in the name Eric S. Galt at the Economy Rooms, 2608 Highland Avenue (2324). Two days later Ray, as Galt, giving the Highland Avenue address, rented safety deposit box No. 5517 at the Main Office, Birmingham Trust National Bank (2323; Huie, p.62). The access record on this box shows entries at 2:32p.m. on August 28; from 1:52p.m. to 1:56p.m. on September 5; from 11:05 to 11:08a.m. on September 21; and from 10:16a.m. to 10:19a.m. on September 28 (2323).

August 26

August 28

The purchase of a white 1966 Ford Mustang was accomplished at the end of August by answering a newspaper ad on the 29th of August and paying \$1995 in cash to William D. Paisley on the 30th (628). All this checks with the car purchase chronology Ray himself admitted to author William Bradford Huie (Huie, pp.61-63; Ray's self-serving attribution of "Raoul" as the one who directed him to buy the car and who supplied the cash is uncorroborated).

August 29-30

Ray as Eric Starvo Galt, applied for and was issued Alabama driver's license No.2848947 (4143). The signature matches the other handwritings of the same name (4143). At some point during his stay in Birmingham, Ray purchased a .38 revolver which was found on his person on his arrest in Heathrow Airport, London, England (1422).

September 6

On September 12th, Ray enrolled for 5 weekly dance classes at the Continental Dance Club Studios (2324). The Modern Photographic Book Publishing Co. Inc., of New York City received a coupon order from Eric S. Galt for a photo book (633) and a letter by Ray as Galt written September 26, asking that the book not be sent as he was moving and would give the changed address later (4143). The handwriting was identical with Ray's (4143).

September 12

September 26

Ray purchased a bank draft from the Exchange Security Bank, 5 points' South Branch, Birmingham payable to the Superior Bulk Film Co. of Chicago and this accompanied an order on that company for a Kodak Super 8 movie camera, a projector, a splicer and a 20 foot remote control cable; price \$337.24 (1135). Then Ray typed a note to the film company seven days

September 28

later in which he acknowledged receipt of the items he had ordered but returned the movie camera as the wrong one; he stated he was leaving for Mexico on October 7, and would send a new address to which the correct movie camera could be forwarded (4143). On September 30th, Ray paid only for his room (2118).

Ray, as Galt, was issued Alabama license tags	October 6
No.1-38993 for 1968. He left Birmingham for Mexico	
on October 6 (Huie, p.66). On the 8th of October,	October 8
Ray purchased a 30 day Mexican auto insurance policy	October 10
(1904). He reached Acapulco on October 10th, proceeded	October 15
to Guadalajara on October 15th and left there on	
the 18th for Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, Mexico,	October 18
arriving in Puerto Vallarta on the 19th (5496). He	October 19
registered in Room 212 of the Hotel Rio at Morelos 86	
on this date; his "Galt" signature and writings match	October 22
his other Galt writings (4143). Galt typed a letter	
to the film company to ask for a refund to the Puerto	
Vallarta address in lieu of the Kodak movie camera	
which had been mailed meanwhile to his vacated	
Birmingham address (4143). Again the written signature	
on this note matched the string of "Galt" signatures.	
(4143). For some reason (Huie says Ray said he wanted	November 6-13



a week in a more expensive room in a hotel on the beach.) (Huie, p.81), Ray switched hotels, going from the Rio to the Hotel Tropicana (1219). He spent most of his time in the period from October 19 to November 13, 1967, with a girlfriend, Irma Morales, whose true name is Manuela Aguirre Medrano (1219), and possibly another female named Nina (Huie, p.8).

Ray left Puerto Vallarta and drove to Los Angeles where he rented an apartment at 1535 North Serrano Avenue on the 19th of November. (668; Huie, p.85). He then wrote a typed letter to the Superior Bulk Film Company, Chicago, to forward to his new address the refund due him for the undelivered Kodak movie camera; the signature on this letter matches the other "Galt" signatures. (4143).	November 14
	November 19

In this second week of his stay in Los Angeles,	November 27
Ray began a series of six visits to a clinical psychologist, Dr. Mark O. Freeman, in hopes of overcoming his shyness, gaining social confidence, learning self-hypnosis to gain relaxation, sleep and remember things better.	December 14
	November 27
	November 30
	December 4, 6, 11, & 14

Apparently, in a further self-improvement step, Ray enrolled in a course of dancing instructions with the owner of the National Dance Studio, 2026 Pacific Avenue, Long Beach, California (4143). On December 13th, Ray wrote his Birmingham bank to close his safety deposit box (2323). He paid \$100 on the dancing lesson contract on the 14th of December, left laundry at the Avalon Cleaners & Laundry, Inc., 5662, Hollywood Blvd., Los Angeles, on the following day-ticket No.31053 and laundry mark "20R-3" made by a Thermo Seal marking machine (4143); and also on December 15th Ray, as Galt still, began a round trip drive with Charles J. Stein, 5666 Franklin Avenue, Los Angeles, to New Orleans in Ray's white Mustang to pick up Stein's sister's two small children (4143). Stein and Ray arrived in New Orleans on the 17th, the latter registering at the Provincial Hotel, 1024 Chartes Street, Room 126 (5399). The "Galt" registration card signature matched the string of such signatures in Ray's odyssey and he further recorded that he was driving a Mustang with Alabama license No.1-38993 and gave his address as 2608 Highland Avenue, Birmingham (4143).

Ray checked out before the 1:00p.m. checkout	December 19
time on the 19th and, with the two children and	
Charles Stein, made the return trip to Los Angeles	
arriving by the 21st of December when he took the	December 21
first of the series of dancing lessons he had	December 22
signed up for. The next day he picked up his	
laundry. Four more dancing lessons are recorded	December 25,
next (4143).	26,27&28

On December 28, 1967, Ray first indicated his interest in immigrating to Africa, and more particularly to a white ruled area, by writing a letter of inquiry to Mr. John Acord, Chairman, American-Southern African Council, 800 Fourth St., S.W., Washington, D.C.; the signature of Galt matched up with the other Galt writings. (4143).

Ray said he visited Las Vegas on New Year's	1968
Day. (Huie, p.96). Dance lessons are documented	January 1,2&3
on the 2nd and 3rd days of 1968 (2325). Galt	
bought Bank of America money order No.0799 18037	January 8
in the amount of \$15 from the Hollywood Western	
Branch payable to the Locksmithing Institute (2325).	
The FBI lab made the usual writing match up on the	
signature (4143). Meanwhile Ray showed up regularly	January 9,11,15,
for dance lessons (2325). On January 19th Ray signed	16&18

up for a bartending course at the International School of Bartending 2125 Sunset Boulevard (2325); his application signature fits his other Galt signatures (4143). He left his laundry at the Home Service Laundry and Dry Cleaning Co. at 5280 Hollywood Boulevard (2325, cites laundry list No.3065 in E. Galt's name with Thermo Seal sticker 02B-6, the marking on the T-shirt and shorts in the bag abandoned at the front door of Canipe's Amusement Co. in Memphis, April 4, 1968).

On January 21, 1968, Ray changed his lodgings to Room 403 of the St. Francis Hotel, 5533 Hollywood Boulevard (2325). On the 22nd and on the 23rd, 25th, 29th, 30th, 31st, February 1, 5, 6, 8 and 12, Ray regularly attended dance lessons (2325). He attended bartending school through to March 2, 1968. He bought January 29 two Bank of America money orders on the 29th of January, one to place an ad in the Free Press soliciting a female pen pal and the second to pay for a mail forwarding service (1500). Each transaction created a handwriting match as did a Bank of America money order No.0799 17281 payable to the Locksmithing Institute, January 31 Little Falls, New Jersey (2325).

Ray's 1966 white Mustang with Alabama license No.1-38993 registered in Alabama under the alias Galt was serviced on the 13th at a Chevron Station, 1506 North Normandic Avenue, Los Angeles with mileage at 34,185. Another undated servicing some 200 miles later occurred at Cort Fox Ford Co., 4531 Hollywood Boulevard in Los Angeles (2325).

Ray attempted to increase his social life by February 17  
writing and sending his photograph to a woman listed  
by "The Local Swinger" which listing was secured for  
\$1.00; Ray in fact wrote 5 such letters (4143). The  
Galt signature was added to the FBI's matchups and February 26  
Ray's photograph secured. For reading material,  
Ray ordered books from Futura Books paying by money  
order No.0799 19430 on the 26th. (1500). The  
signature matchup was made (4143). On this same day  
Ray made a money order payment No.0799 19701 to the  
Locksmithing Institute (2325). He sent another,  
No.0799 19704, for the "Locksmith's Ledger" with  
matching signature (2325); he sent two money orders,  
Nos.0799 19702 and 0799 19703, and a letter order to  
Tiffany Enterprises, 8512 Whitworth Drive in Los Angeles,  
a mail order house, for one pair of Japanese handcuffs  
(1500), with signatures matchable on two of the three  
documents (4143).

At intervals in his stay in Los Angeles, Ray had plastic surgery done to change his appearance (author Huie puts this treatment as on March 3, 7 and 11, 1968, Huie, pp.107-8); he visited a psychologist-hypnotist, Reverend Von Koss on January 4, 1968 (Huie, p.102), and allegedly some seven other psychiatrists, hypnotists or scientologists. According to author Huie, he frequented a bar known as the Rabbit's Foot Club and on one night became involved in a racial argument followed by a mugging in which he had his wallet stolen and lost his suit jacket, car keys and driver's license (Huie, p.96-98). According to author Huie citing Ray as his source, Ray telephoned Alabama and had a duplicate license issued; this was forwarded from his former Birmingham address to California and received there about March 10, 1968 (Huie, p.98).

"Galt" was graduated from the bartending school March 2 on the 2nd of March. His picture was taken with the school operator and Ray closed his eyes to make recognition more difficult (4143; Huie, p.104).

A postal money order No.1,916,211,078 was sent March 8 to the Locksmithing Institute as a periodic payment on the correspondence course Ray was taking (1428). The signature matchup was made. (4143.)

Ray listed a change of address on March 17 with the St. Francis Hotel, giving his forwarding address as General Delivery, Main Post Office Atlanta, Georgia (4143). Presumably he left Los Angeles in his white Mustang on this date, proceeding to New Orleans where he left a box of clothing for Marie Martin's little daughter, Marian de Grasse, at Charles Stein's cousin Theresa Stone's residence, 4019 Royal Street (4143; Huie, p. 108).

From New Orleans, Ray drove to Selma, Alabama March 22 (5502), (where Ray began to stalk Dr. King according to Huie's statement of Ray's admission on this) and, March 23 after an overnight stay there, he went on to Montgomery, March 24 to Birmingham and finally to Atlanta, Georgia (Huie, p. 112).

In Atlanta, Ray rented room No.2 in a rooming March 24 house at 113-14th Street, N.E. from the operator, Jimmy Delton Garner (1033). He stayed there until March 28 March 28 on which day, while still in Atlanta, he purchased U.S. Postal money order No.5,615,057,923 payable to the Locksmithing Institute (1428). The Galt signature was a matchup (4143).

On the 29th Ray appeared at the Aeromarine Supply Company, 5701 Airport Highway in Birmingham, Alabama, and using the alias Harvey Lowmyer purchased a Remington .243 caliber rifle, Model 700 with a 2x-7x Redfield telescopic sight mounted on it (432). Almost certainly because the breech of the .243 caliber weapon was caked with a hardened preservative (cosmoline) and could not be loaded, Ray returned it the following day (not having fired it). He explained that his "brother" didn't like it, and exchanged the .243 rifle for a Model 760, 30-06 caliber Remington. The scope was transferred to the latter rifle. Throughout these transactions the package for either rifle was a Browning shotgun carton which was large enough to hold the scope-equipped Remingtons (432).

March 29

March 30

The Atlanta rooming house operator, Jimmy Delton Garner stated he had Ray print his name (Eric S. Galt) on an old envelope at Garner's request so that Garner could transfer the name properly to his official records; the handprinting is a matchup with other Galt-Ray printing samples (1033).

March 31



Using the name Eric Galt, Ray left his laundry and dry cleaning at the Piedmont Laundry pickup station, 1168 Peachtree, N.W. in Atlanta (4143). Two days later, as Eric S. Galt, Ray on April 3 registered into Room 34 at the Rebel Motor Hotel, 3466 Lamar Avenue, Memphis, Tennessee (the distance between Atlanta and Memphis by the most convenient route is 398 miles); he gave 2608 Highland Avenue, Birmingham as his address and he noted on the registration card that he was driving a Mustang with Alabama license No. 1-38993 (4143). His signature was a match to the other identified Galt signatures (4143). On this same day, Ray purchased a safety razor and shaving supplies at the Rexall Drug Store in the Whitehaven suburb of Memphis (Memphis 44-1987 Sub A-Sec. 1; Huie, p.129).

April 1

April 3

April 3

Ray left the Rebel Motel before the 1p.m. checkout time on April 4th (4143). At some point between 3p.m. and 3:30p.m. on the 4th, a man generally answering Ray's description rented Room 5-B at 422 1/2 South Main Street, Memphis, in the name of John Willard (idem. 33). Ray admits to having been in the room with "Raoul" whom he first said rented the room using the "Willard" alias he, Ray, supplied (Huie, p.115). In another letter to Huie, Ray states he himself

April 4

3-3:30p.m.

4:00p.m.

rented the room using the alias John Willard (Huie, p. 30). Ray went out to the York Arms Company Store then located at 162 South Main Street and purchased a pair of Bushnell binoculars for a total of \$41.55 (4143); Ray was identified by the salesman at York Arms and Ray admits to having been to the sports store and to having made the purchase of the binoculars (Huie, p. 115). By 5p.m. at the latest, Ray had returned to the rooming house, parked his Mustang and had taken his zipper bag and bedspread to Room 5-B (Huie, p.115); by necessary inference, because it was admittedly brought down from there and dropped on the sidewalk, the 30-06 rifle had been taken up to Room 5-B at this time or just before Ray's trip to the York Arms Co. Store (See Huie, p.114 and p.131; 4143).

As detailed in the discussion of the course of the FBI investigation ante at pp. 48-50, the assassin fled from the common bathroom at the rear of the rooming house after firing the shot that killed Dr. King. The assassin could have cleared and undoubtedly did clear the corridor and the stairs to the street in about 45 seconds. In another 15 seconds at the outside he could have reached and undoubtedly did reach Ray's white

6:03:50p.m.

Mustang after dropping Ray's bag, the rifle Ray bought and bearing only his fingerprints and the bedspread which Ray admits taking up to Room 5-B (Staff reenactment; Huie, p.115). According to a post-conviction statement by Ray to then Special Agent in Charge of the Memphis Field Office, Robert Jensen, roomer Charles Stephens had a good look at Ray in the rooming house (5622; Interview of Robert Jensen, July 7, 1976, App. B).

On the street Guy Warren Canipe, Jr., in his place of business, Canipe Amusement Co., at 424 South Main Street heard a thud near the front door of his store, looked up to see a white male walk rapidly past his store going south (right to left to someone inside the store) and, with the two customers in his store, went to the front door where they observed a small white car, a Mustang 6:04p.m. according to the two customers, pull away going north (left to right) from a curb side parking place just south of Canipe's store (Memphis 44-1987 Sub A-Sec.1; cf. Huie, p.131).

According to Ray's admission to author Huie, Ray April 4, 1968 drove south into Mississippi and then turned east through Birmingham reaching Atlanta about 6a.m. on April 5th April 5, 1968 (Huie, p.132). He abandoned the white Mustang. On the

table in the room at the Atlanta rooming house, he left a letter about South Africa from the John Birch Society in California and a copy of the Free Press from Los Angeles to divert the FBI's attention to California while he fled to Canada (Huie, p.133). Ray picked up his laundry at the Piedmont Laundry pick-up station at 1168 Peachtree N.E. in Atlanta on the 5th of April (4697). He then took a bus departing Atlanta just after noon on the 5th and arrived in Cincinnati at about 1:30a.m. on the 6th of April. After a one hour layover which he stated he spent in a tavern near the bus depot, Ray continued by bus to Detroit where he arrived at about 8a.m. (Huie, p.135). He crossed by taxi into Canada arriving in Windsor an hour or so before noon and proceeded from there to Toronto by train arriving at about 5:00p.m. (Huie, p.135). He rented a room at 102 Ossington Avenue without giving his name (5502; Huie, p.135).

April 5,  
1968  
between  
9:00a.m. &  
10:00a.m.

approx.  
1:00p.m.

April 6,  
1968  
1:30a.m.  
2:30a.m.

between 10  
and 11a.m.

approx.  
5p.m.

approx.  
6p.m.

April 8,  
1968

On the 8th of April Ray began the process of securing a Canadian passport. He picked two names, Paul Edward Bridgman and Ramon George Sneyd, from the announcements of births in newspapers for the year 1932 at the public library (Huie, p.137). He made an

April 10,  
1968

application for a duplicate birth certificate in each of these names on April 10 and on the following day had a passport picture taken in the name of Bridgman and then to provide a separate mailing address for the expected replies as to Sneyd, he rented a room at 962 Dundas Street in the name of Sneyd on April 16th (5502; Huie, p.141). On the same day he executed an application in the name Paul Bridgman with his, Ray's 102 Ossington Avenue address as the person to be notified in case of emergency (Huie, p.143). The Kennedy Travel Agency of Toronto handled the processing of the application for Ray (5502). On the 19th Ray moved to the Dundas Street address (5502).

April 11,  
1968

April 16,  
1968

April 19,  
1968

The fingerprints of "Eric S. Galt" were found to be a match with those of James Earl Ray after a search of the print file on Fugitive Felons.

April 19,  
1968

According to author Huie he gleaned from Ray that Ray visited four bars on the 21st in order to watch the TV show "The FBI" (Huie, p.147). He found the show tuned in at the fourth place he tried and learned that he had made the Ten Most Wanted List with an international "look-out" as to Ray (Huie, p.147). He checked out of the Ossington Avenue room on the 19th (Huie, p.147).

On April 24 the Canadian passport in the name of Ramon George Sneya was issued to Ray (Huie, p.148). Ray purchased a round trip ticket to London and departed on May 6, 1968 (Huie, p.149). From London Ray took a plane to Lisbon where he spent 10 days looking for a passage to Angola (Huie, p.150). When he was unable to do so he returned to London after first getting his passport replaced at the Canadian Embassy in Lisbon to correct the spelling of the name Sneyd (instead of Sneya) (5502; Huie, p.150).

April 24,  
1968

May 6,  
1968

May 16,  
1968

Ray returned to London and spent his time trying to find a way to join a mercenary force (Huie, p.150). To this end he bought a plane ticket to Brussels and was in the process of meeting his plane at the Heathrow Airport when he was apprehended on June 8, 1968, by detectives from New Scotland Yard (4346,4368; Huie, p.150-151). The arrest was made on the basis of use of a fraudulent passport and carrying a concealed weapon, i.e., the loaded .38 caliber Japanese-make revolver found on his person at Heathrow (4346,4368; Huie, p.151).

May 17,  
1968

June 8,  
1968

This chronology has been compiled from data in FBI reports and Ray's letters to author William Bradford Huie. It was hoped by the task force that we would have an

opportunity to go over the facts with James Earl Ray himself. Accordingly, after the United States Supreme Court denied his petition for a writ of certiorari, on December 13, 1976, a verbal request was made to Ray's Attorney, James H. Lesar, for an opportunity to interview Ray. Lesar stated that he was writing Ray a letter that day and would advise him of our desire to interview him and leave the matter up to him (Interview of James H. Lesar, December 14, 1976, App. B). Also, the task force sent Ray a letter on December 15, 1976, via his attorney requesting an interview (See letter to James Earl Ray, December 15, 1976, App. A, Ex.14). While no answer to our letter was received, Ray sent the task force a copy of a letter addressed to his attorney. Ray attached a copy of a complaint he recently filed in a civil action and stated in the letter to his attorney that: "I agree with your advice opposing the interview. It would appear that this would only be in the interest of the J.D. and their book writing collaborators, e.g., Gerold Frank, George McMillian, et al." (See letter to James H. Lesar, December 20, 1976, App. A, Ex.15).

Absent a statement to us from Ray, four existing Ray explanations were compared and are here briefly noted.

First, no one, other than his attorneys talked with Ray before the plea bargaining resulted in his conviction of the First Degree murder of Martin Luther King, Jr., and sentencing in open court on March 10, 1969, before Judge W. Preston Battle, Criminal Court of Shelby County, Tennessee (See Transcript App. A, Ex.16). At that time, on voir dire, Judge Battle asked Ray: "Are you pleading guilty to Murder in the First Degree in this case because you killed Dr. Martin Luther King under such circumstances that would make you legally guilty of Murder in the First Degree under the law as explained to you by your lawyers?"

Ray answered: "Yes."

Ray then acknowledged that he was pleading guilty freely, voluntarily and understandingly. He and his attorney, Percy Foreman, initialed the copy of these questions and answers. Ray also signed a detailed stipulation confessing that he fired the fatal shot (5506).

The task force observes that the only way one can be "legally guilty" of first degree murder is when one accomplishes, or aids or assists in the accomplishment, of the wrongful killing of a human being with premeditation and malice aforethought. Thus, Ray has judicially confessed that he intended to and did kill Dr. King.



Second, Ray related in writing to author Huie a story of his odyssey from Missouri State Prison to Memphis which acknowledged that he bought the murder weapon, made his way to Memphis, rented the room there at 422 South Main on April 4, 1968, using the alias "John Willard," waited in the white Mustang, and drove "Raoul" away from the crime scene after the murder wholly unaware of the killing of Dr. King. In this version "Raoul", or "Roual", is the mysterious killer whom Ray thought to be an international gun-runner; Ray bought the murder weapon for "Raoul" thinking it was to be displayed to prospective Mexican buyers in Room 5-B of the "flop house" on South Main Street (Huie, p.130-131).

Third, in a statement read on a program of Station KMOX-TV St. Louis, Missouri, in August of 1969 by his brother Jerry, James Earl Ray was quoted as alleging that he was the innocent victim, "the fall guy" of a scheme by the FBI (Memphis 44-1987 Sub M-665). This description of the crime contains no reference to Raoul.

Fourth, the most recent story available to the task force is reported as the result of a four hour interview by Wayne Chastain, Jr., for the Pacific News Service, October 20, 1974. It is to the effect that Ray was "set up

as a patsy" for "Raoul." It proceeds along the same lines as the tale told by Ray to author Huie that there was to be a meeting at the rooming house at 6p.m. with an international gun runner. Ray was instructed by Raoul to have the white Mustang at the curb for "Raoul's" use that evening. Ray, however, drove away from the area at about 6:00p.m. to get air in a low tire and found police swarming all over the place when he tried to return at 7:05p.m. He could not park, was turned back by police and learned only after driving 100 miles into Mississippi that he had been associated with the men who killed Dr. King (The Assassinations, Dallas and Beyond, Edited by Peter Dale Scott, Paul L. Hock and Russell Stetler, Random House, 1976, pp.315-317).

The task force views the exculpatory content of these varying and patently self-serving tales to be unbelievable. The varying details are materially self-refuting. Ray first admits full guilt. He then says he waited innocently at the curb and took off after the shot with "Raoul" as a passenger. He next says he was the catspaw of the FBI. And finally, he and the Mustang were not in the area when the shot was fired and he never saw "Raoul" after the event.

The eye witnesses to the "get away", saw only one man who resembled Ray. The man left in a hurry in a white Mustang as Ray admitted doing in version number two. We concluded Ray was lying about the existence of a "Raoul".