

disruption of the march caused Dr. King's aides to commandeer an automobile, and Dr. King and his party were escorted by police to the Rivermont Hotel operated by Holiday Inns of America. (HQ 157-9146-45). Dr. King left the march at 11:15a.m. and checked into the Rivermont Hotel at 11:24a.m. where he stayed until March 29, 1968. Dr. King and his party were scheduled to return to Atlanta on March 28, 1968, at 9:05p.m. via Eastern Airlines and were scheduled to leave Atlanta the morning of March 29, 1968, for Baltimore (HQ 157-9146-45). Thus, remaining in Memphis on the night of the 28th was a change in plans.

The city ordered a 7:00p.m. curfew and approximately 3,500 members of the Tennessee National Guard were called out to end the violence. During the disturbance four blacks were shot, one fatally; approximately 150 fires were set; and over 300 persons were arrested. Approximately one percent of the marchers engaged in looting and violence and many of these were people who were criminally inclined and who had been in previous trouble. The March 29, 1968, issue of the Memphis "Commercial Appeal" reported that many of the looters and window breakers were black power advocates and that several wore jackets of the "Invaders". However, other sources, including Lieutenant E.H. Arkin of the Memphis Police Department, indicated that

many high school age students had put the word "Invaders" on their jackets for effect and were not necessarily affiliated with the BOP movement (HQ 157-9146-45). The violence and disruption of the march was of great concern to Dr. King because of the possible effect it might have on the planned POCAM. Therefore, he vowed to return to Memphis and demonstrate that he had not lost his effectiveness in leading nonviolent marches.

Dr. King, together with his SCLC staff, returned to Memphis on April 3, 1968, at 10:33a.m. After a press conference at the airport, the group proceeded to the Lorraine Motel, arriving there at approximately 11:20a.m. At about 12:05p.m. Dr. King left the Lorraine Motel for a meeting at the Centenary Methodist Church (Security and Surveillance Rept. of G.P. Tines, Inspector, Memphis Police Department, dated July 17, 1968). Dr. King announced at this meeting that his purpose in returning to Memphis was to lead a mass march on April 8, 1968 (HQ 157-9146-9 p.8).

However, on April 3, 1968, United States District Court Judge Bailey Brown issued a temporary restraining order against further marches in Memphis (HQ 157-9146-9, p.1). Dr. King returned to the Lorraine Motel at 2:25p.m. and sometime that afternoon Federal Marshals served him and his aides with

the restraining order. (Security and Surveillance Rept. of G.P. Tines, Inspector, Memphis Police Department, dated July 17, 1968).

At approximately 4:00p.m. Dr. King and the SCLC staff met with the BOP group at which time Charles Cabbage requested money to institute BOP plans to start a "Liberation School" and a "Black Co-op". Dr. King agreed to use his influence to secure funds for BOP and Rev. Andrew Young agreed to help write up a plan. It is believed these concessions were made to BOP in order to keep them in line and prevent them from following a violent pattern. (HQ 157-9146-9, p.9)

On the night of April 3, 1968, Dr. King spoke to approximately 2,000 persons at the Mason Temple. He emphasized that the scheduled mass march must be held on April 8, 1968, to re-focus attention on the eight-week old sanitation workers strike.

After the speech, Solomon Jones, Jr., serving as Dr. King's chauffeur drove him back to the Lorraine Motel. Dr. King told Jones to report back on Thursday morning, April 4, 1968, at 8:30a.m. because he had to appear in court in connection with a restraining order. (Memphis 44-1987-2322 p.51.)

3. Dr. King's Activities on April 4, 1968

According to Mrs. Georgia M. Davis of Louisville, Kentucky (FBI interview: HQ File 44-38861-2634, p.20) she, Rev. A.D. Williams King, (Dr. King's brother) and Mrs. Lucie Ward arrived in Memphis on April 4, 1968, from Florida and registered at the Lorraine Motel at approximately 1:00a.m. Upon inquiring about Dr. King, they were told that he was attending a strategy meeting at a church. The three then went to the church, but Dr. King was not there.

Returning to the motel, Dr. King's brother, Mrs. Davis and Mrs. Ward conversed in room 207 until they observed Dr. King, along with Reverends Ralph Abernathy and Bernard Lee, getting out of a taxicab in the motel courtyard at about 4:30a.m. Dr. King was invited to room 207 where he visited with his brother, Mrs. Davis and Mrs. Ward until about 5:00a.m. He then went to room 306 where he and Rev. Abernathy were registered. About a half hour later Dr. King went to room 201 where he visited with Mrs. Davis for approximately one hour. Afterwards he returned to room 306 for a strategy meeting scheduled for 8:00a.m.

Solomon Jones, Jr., Dr. King's chauffeur, returned to the Lorraine Motel at about 8:30a.m. to take him to court.

However, Rev. Andrew Young advised Jones that he was going to court instead of Dr. King. Therefore Jones was requested to remain at the motel. (HQ 44-38861-2322, p.51).

Dr. King remained at the motel the entire day, returning to room 201 at about 1:30p.m. to visit Mrs. Davis. He was later joined in room 201 by his brother, Mrs. Ward, Abernathy, Lee, Young, and Attorney Chauncey Eskridge. The group conversed until about 5:45p.m. when Dr. King announced they were going to dinner at the home of Rev. Billy Kyles (HQ 44-38861-2634, p.23). ^{*/} Enroute to room 306 to dress, Dr. King saw Solomon Jones, Jr. in the motel courtyard and told him to start the car as they were preparing to go to dinner (HQ 44-38861-2322, p.52).

^{*/} There is a discrepancy in the exact time Dr. King returned to room 306. Mrs. Davis places the time at 5:45p.m. However, in an FBI interview, Rev. Abernathy stated that on April 4, 1968, he and Dr. King did not leave the motel and spent most of the day in room 306. He further stated that he and Dr. King had been gone from their room for approximately one hour or less when they returned to the room at about 5:30p.m. to get dressed for dinner at the home of Rev. Billy Kyles. (HQ 44-38861-2322, p.48).

At approximately 6:00p.m. Dr. King and Rev. Abernathy started to leave room 306. Rev. Abernathy stopped for a moment and Dr. King walked out onto the balcony just outside the door to the room (HQ 44-38861-2322, p.46). He saw Jones standing beside the car on the ground level and began a conversation about the weather. Jones advised Dr. King that he should put on a topcoat as it was cool outside. During this conversation, Dr. King was facing west and Jones was facing east and looking up at Dr. King from the ground level. As Dr. King acknowledged Jones' concern about getting his topcoat, Jones heard a sound which he thought was a fire cracker and Dr. King fell to the floor of the balcony in front of room 306. Jones immediately called for help and a number of Dr. King's aides, who were either in their rooms or standing in the courtyard, rushed to his side (HQ 44-38861-2322, p.52). */

*/ Some critics of the FBI investigation have speculated that Solomon Jones, Jr. set Dr. King up for the assassination by unduly detaining him on the balcony. Nothing in the evidence reviewed by the task force lends any credence to such speculation.

4. FBI Intelligence and Local Police Activities

a. FBI Informants. Robert G. Jensen, the Special Agent in Charge of the Memphis Field Office, and Joseph Hester, case agent for MURKIN, have unequivocally assured the task force that there was no electronic surveillance of Dr. King in Memphis. It was explained that Memphis was not in the mainstream of Dr. King's SCLC activities (Interview of Special Agent Joe Hester, June 23, 1976, App.B). However, FBI agents did observe the sanitation worker's strike activities for intelligence purposes and the Memphis Police Department (MPD) and confidential paid informants did supply information to the field office (Interview of former SAC Robert Jensen, July 7, 1976, App.B).

Our investigation disclosed that there were five paid confidential informants providing intelligence regarding the racial situation to the Memphis Field Office on a continuing basis. The intelligence coverage provided by these individuals related to the activities of the Nation of Islam, Black Students Association of MSU, Students for a Democratic Society, Black Organizing Power, Black United Front, Afro-American Brotherhood, Invaders and the sanitation workers strike. There is

no evidence that the activities of these informants related directly to Dr. King. Moreover, there is no evidence that would suggest that these informants were connected in any way with the assassination of Dr. King. (HQ 134-11867; 170-1841; 170-1922; 170-2530 and 137-4885.)

b. MPD Infiltration of the Invaders. In addition to the paid FBI informants, an officer of the MPD infiltrated the Invaders in an undercover operation. The officer who was later exposed and is no longer with the MPD, was interviewed by the task force. The undercover assignment began in February of 1968 for the specific purpose of infiltrating the Invaders who became active about the same time of the sanitation workers strike. According to the officer the MPD was primarily interested in the Invaders, not Dr. King, because the MPD was concerned about what they might do. The police officer was, in fact, accepted as a member of the Invaders and participated in their activities. On the evening of April 4, 1968, when Dr. King was shot, the informant had been on a shopping trip with Reverend James Bevel and Reverend James Orange. The informant said he returned to the Lorraine Motel at approximately 5:00p.m. and was standing in the motel courtyard at the time Dr. King was shot. He is positive that the shot that killed Dr. King

came from the rear of the buildings which front on South Main Street.

c. MPD Surveillance Detail and Removal of Detective Redditt from Duty. */ From the time of Dr. King's return to Memphis on April 3, 1968, until the time of his assassination, he was under physical surveillance by the MPD. Upon learning of Dr. King's flight schedule, Inspector G.P. Tines of the MPD Inspectional Bureau instructed two black plainclothes officers, Detective Edward E. Redditt and Patrolman Willie B. Richmond, to go to the airport to observe the arrival of Dr. King and to keep him under continuous surveillance in order to see with whom he came in contact. According to Inspector Tines, the surveillance was ordered because Dr. King was a controversial figure and had met with local black militants on his prior visit to Memphis. While at the airport a Mrs. Thomas Matthews pointed her finger at Redditt and told him that she was going to get him. (Report of G.P. Tines, July 17, 1968, Re: Security and Surveillance of Dr. King, App. B.)

*/ The removal of Redditt from duty was cited as one of the bases for the House Select Committee to investigate the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.

In addition to the surveillance detail, Assistant Chief of Police W.P. Huston ordered a detail of four men, commanded by Inspector Don H. Smith, to go to the airport for the purpose of providing security for Dr. King. While waiting for Dr. King to arrive, Mrs. Thomas Matthews advised Lieutenant George K. Davis that she had come to the airport to pick up Dr. King and that no one had asked for police to be assigned to him. Inspector Smith also asked Reverend James Lawson where they were going when they left the airport and he replied: "We have not fully made up our minds." Nevertheless, when Dr. King and his party left the airport, Inspector Smith and his men followed them to the Lorraine Motel, arriving there at approximately 11:20a.m. With the assistance of Inspector J.S. Gaglian and two other officers, Inspector Smith and his men secured the entrances to the motel.

Dr. King and his party left the Lorraine Motel at approximately 12:05p.m. and were followed by the security detail to the Centenary Methodist Church where a meeting was held. The detail secured the front and rear entrances of the Church until approximately 2:15p.m. when Dr. King and his group returned to the motel. The security detail then returned to the motel area and resumed their positions until they were ordered to headquarters by Chief J.C. Macdonald

at approximately 5:05p.m. Inspector G.P. Tines stated in his report that he was not conferred with and has no idea why the security detail was removed from Dr. King after 5:05p.m. Former Chief Macdonald has no present recollection of the security detail (Interview of James C. Macdonald, former Chief MPD, December 22, 1976, App. B.) The security detail was not resumed on April 4, 1968, (Reports of Inspectors Don H. Smith and J.S. Gagliano as incorporated in Report of Inspector G.P. Tines, supra.)

As a separate activity from the security detail, Detective Redditt and Patrolman Richmond went to the airport on April 3rd and observed Dr. King's arrival. When Dr. King left the airport they followed him to the Lorraine Motel and learned that he was registered in room 306. Redditt telephoned headquarters and informed Inspector Tines where Dr. King was staying. At approximately 12:05p.m. Redditt and Richmond followed Dr. King and his party to the Centenary Methodist Church where a closed meeting of approximately 30 black ministers was scheduled. Redditt again called headquarters and advised his superiors of his location. Redditt was instructed to leave Richmond at the church and for him to return to the area of the Lorraine Motel for the purpose of finding a suitable place where close surveillance could be kept on the motel. Richmond remained at the Centenary Methodist Church until the

meeting was over at approximately 2:15p.m. Richmond then went to Clayborn Temple where he thought Dr. King would address the sanitation workers prior to a scheduled 3:00p.m. march. However, Dr. King did not make an appearance there. Richmond telephoned headquarters at about 3:30p.m. and was advised that Dr. King had returned to the motel and that Redditt had set up a surveillance post at Fire Station No. 2, located at South Main and Butler streets. Richmond immediately left Clayborn Temple and joined Redditt at the fire station. (Interview of Patrolman W.B. Richmond, April 9, 1968, MPD Statements, State v. James Earl Ray p. 1444).

The rear of Fire Station No. 2 overlooks the Lorraine Motel and provided an excellent vantage point where Redditt and Richmond could observe Dr. King and his associates as they entered and left the motel. On April 3, 1968, Redditt and Richmond remained at their observation post until 6:35p.m. at which time they were relieved by Lieutenant E.H. Arkin and Lieutenant J.V. Papia of the MPD Internal Security Bureau. (Statement of Edward E. Redditt, April 10, 1968, MPD Statements, State vs. James Earl Ray p. 1453).

After leaving their observation post, Redditt and Richmond went to the Mason Temple where Dr. King was

scheduled to address a mass meeting. Shortly after they arrived at the temple, Redditt was approached by Reverend Malcomb D. Blackburn and told that the word was out that he was over in the fire station near the Lorraine Motel spying with binoculars. Reverend Blackburn also advised Richmond that the temple was the wrong place for him because the tension was too high. Fearing they would be exposed, Redditt and Richmond left the meeting at approximately 8:50p.m. (Report of Inspector G.P. Tines.)

Redditt and Richmond resumed their surveillance of the Lorraine Motel from Fire Station No. 2 on April 4, 1968, at 10:30a.m. At approximately 12:50p.m. Redditt received a threatening telephone call from a female who stated that he was doing the black people wrong, and they were going to do him wrong. (Interview of Edward E. Redditt, April 10, 1968.)

At approximately 4:00p.m., Redditt was ordered by telephone to leave the fire station and report to headquarters where he was advised that threats had been made on his life. He was, therefore, ordered to move his family into a motel under an assumed name by Frank Holloman, former Director of Police and Fire, Memphis, Tenn. (Interview of Frank Holloman, September 15, 1976, App. B.) Redditt was taken

home in a squad car, but refused to move his family because of a sick relative. At about the time the squad car arrived in front of Redditt's residence, it was announced on the radio that Dr. King had been shot. After a couple of days, Redditt did not hear any more about the threat on his life. (Interview of Edward E. Redditt, July 8, 1976, App. B.)

In our efforts to trace the source of the threat, we have found that Philip R. Manuel, an investigator with the Senate Investigating Committee, chaired by Senator McClellan was in Memphis on April 4, 1968. While at the MPD Manuel advised them based on a telephone call to his office in Washington, that the Senate Committee Staff had information from an informant in Mississippi that the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party had made plans to kill a "Negro lieutenant" in Memphis. Manuel left Memphis on a 5:50p.m. flight to Washington and the next day (April 5, 1968) he telephoned the MPD and advised them that the threat was on the life of a "Negro lieutenant" in Knoxville rather than Memphis. (Report of Inspector G.P. Tines, July 17, 1968, supra.)

Philip R. Manuel neither has a present recollection of providing the information regarding the threat to the MPD, nor does he have a memorandum of the event. However, he

confirmed that he was in Memphis and visited the MPD at the time stated and that his office did have a Mississippi source. Moreover, he said the events sounded familiar and he believed the MPD records were correct. (Interview of Philip R. Manuel, September 28, 1976, App. B.)

Although Redditt was relieved from duty at Fire Station No. 2, Richmond remained there and continued to observe who entered and left the motel. At approximately 6:00p.m. Richmond saw Dr. King leave his room and walk to the handrail on the balcony. The Reverend Billy Kyles was standing off to Dr. King's right. An instant later Richmond heard a loud sound similar to a shot and saw Dr. King fall back from the handrail and put his hand up to his head. At approximately 6:01p.m. Richmond telephoned headquarters and reported that Dr. King had been shot. He was instructed to remain at the fire station. Richmond then yelled to members of a MPD tactical squad (which had stopped at the station a few moments earlier) that he believed Dr. King had been shot. He then ran to the front of the fire station and looked north and south on South Main Street, but did not see anyone running or walking, except the men in the tactical squad who left the fire station running in different directions. Shortly thereafter,

Captain J.G. Ray arrived at the fire station and instructed Richmond to go to headquarters and make a detailed report of what he had seen. (Interview of Patrolman W.B. Richmond, April 9, 1968, supra.)

d. Details of Two Black Firemen from Fire Station No. 2.*/ As of April 3, 1968, Norvell E. Wallace and Floyd E. Newsum were the only black firemen assigned to Fire Station No. 2 of the Memphis Fire Department (MFD). Wallace was working the night shift on April 3rd and Newsum was scheduled to report for the day shift on April 4th. Both of these individuals actively supported the sanitation workers strike, attending their rallies and making financial contributions.

In our interview of Wallace (Interview July 8, 1976 App. B.) he stated that at about 10:00 or 10:30 on the night of April 3rd his captain told him that a call had come in requesting that a man be detailed to Fire Station No. 33. He was immediately detailed to No. 33 although it was raining and he was preparing to go to bed. Wallace further stated that while Fire Station No. 33 was understaffed as a whole, there was no shortage of personnel for the pump truck on which he worked. Otherwise, he does not know why he was detailed.

*/ The details of the black firemen from Fire Station No. 2 is a second reason cited as a basis for the House Select Committee to investigate the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Also, on the night of April 3rd Fireman Newsum, in a wholly personal capacity, attended a rally at the Mason Temple where Dr. King made his last speech. When he returned home (about 10:30p.m.) there was a message for him to call Lt. J. Smith at the fire department. When he called, Lt. J. Smith ordered him to report to Fire Station No. 31 on the morning of April 4th rather than Fire Station No. 2. Newsum claims that Fire Station No. 31 was overstrength at the time and his detail made his company short. Moreover, he says he never has received a satisfactory explanation why he was detailed. However, he did say that Lt. Barnett at one time told him he was detailed at the request of the police. (Interview of Floyd E. Newsum, July 8, 1976, App. B.)

Interviews of past and present members of the MFD have failed to disclose the individual who initiated the order or the reason for detailing Wallace and Newsum. According to former Lt. Jack Smith, he received a telephone call between 3:00p.m. and 5:00p.m. on April 3, 1968, from either Captain James T. Baity or former Assistant Chief Arthur J. Rivalto in the personnel department specifically requesting that Newsum be detailed. No reason was given for the detail. Smith said he immediately called Newsum, but Newsum was not

home. Therefore, Smith left a message for Newsum to call the fire station. Newsum called about 10:30p.m. and Smith advised him of the detail (Interview of Jack Smith, dated September 27, 1976).

Wallace's commanding officer, then Captain R.T. Johnson, likewise stated that he received a telephone call from someone in the personnel department requesting him to detail Wallace. However, Johnson has no present recollection of who the individual was that made the request. (Interview of R.T. Johnson, Deputy Chief, Memphis Fire Department, December 21, 1976, App. B.)

Neither Captain Baity nor former Assistant Chief Rivalto has any present recollection of the detail of Wallace or Newsum. Captain Baity indicated that any district chief could have ordered the men moved (Interview of James T. Baity, September 27, 1976, App. B). Also, former Assistant Chief Rivalto said the fire department shifted people around all the time when a company became understrength because of sickness, etc. (Interview of Arthur J. Rivalto, September 27, 1976, App. B).

Similarly, the former Chief of the MFD, Edward A. Hamilton, has no recollection of the details. He speculated that the men could have been detailed for a "fill in" to bring a company up to strength (Interview of Edward A. Hamilton, September 27, 1976, App. B).

The MFD Strenth Report-Firefighting Personnel for Shift "A", Battalions One and Eight, dated April 3, 1968 (attached to Reinterview of James R. Boatwright, October 20, 1976, App. B) show that Wallace's Company No. 2 at Fire Station No. 2 was operating at minimum strength (five men) after he was detailed; whereas Company No. 33 to which he was detailed operated at one over the minimum strength (four men) after the detail. Likewise, the Strength Report for Shift "B" for Battalions One and Two, dated April 4, 1968 (Also attached to the Boatwright interview of October 20, 1976) show that Newsum's Company No. 55 at Fire Station No. 2 was operating at minimum strength (five men) after the detail, but Company 31 to which he was detailed operated at one over the minimum strength (four men) after the detail.

However, former Deputy Chief James O. Barnett stated that the people on the security detail operating out of the fire station probably felt better without Wallace and Newsum around (Interview of James O. Barnett, September 27, 1976.) On the other hand, Assistant Chief James R. Boatwright explained that they were having a very tense situation at the time; that a number of threatening calls had been received at Fire Station No. 2; and that the consensus of opinion was that Wallace and Newsum were detailed for their own protection, since they were the only black firemen assigned to that station (Interview of James R. Boatwright, September 23, 1976).

In this connection MPD Patrolman Willie B. Richmond and former Detective Edward E. Redditt, who conducted the surveillance of Dr. King and his associates from the fire station, were recontacted and specifically asked whether they had requested that Wallace and Newsum be detailed. Both Richmond and Redditt denied that they made such a request or had knowledge of any one else in the police department making such a request (Reinterviews of Richmond and Redditt, September 28, 1976, App. B).

Our investigation has not disclosed any evidence that the detail of Wallace and Newsum was in any way connected with the assassination of Dr. King. However, the circumstances surrounding the details strongly suggest that both men were detailed because they supported the sanitation workers and were considered to be a threat to the security of the surveillance of Dr. King conducted from the fire station by Patrolman Richmond and Detective Redditt.

e. MPD Tactical Units- Their Deployment and Activities on the Evening of April 4, 1968. When the sanitation workers of Memphis began their strike in February of 1968, the MPD either organized or beefed up various tactical units. Generally, each of these units consisted of 12 law enforcement officers from the MPD and the Shelby County Sheriff's Department.

These units were organized for the purpose of avoiding riots which other cities, such as Detroit, had experienced (Interview of Frank Holloman, former Director of Fire and Police for the City of Memphis, September 15, 1976, App. B). Documents obtained from the State's Attorney General (Item 9 from MPD Miscellaneous Records) show that on the evening of April 4, 1968, at the time Dr. King was shot, there were nine tactical units in service at various locations as follows:

<u>Tact Unit No.</u>	<u>Street Locations</u>
6	Thomas and North Parkway
8	Jackson and Watkins
99	Chelsea and Watkins
10	Main and Butler
11	Georgia and Orleans
12	Trigg and Latham
13	Bellevue and Effie
17	Union and Bellevue
18	Fourth and Gayoso

In addition to the tactical units, the documents obtained from the State's Attorney General show that there were ten regular police cars (with 3 to 4 men per car) in the general area of the Lorraine Motel. These cars were at the following locations at the time Dr. King was shot:

<u>Car No.</u>	<u>Street Locations</u>
224	Main and Beale
228	Third and Poplar
232	Fourth and Butler
230	Union and Front
236	Third and Belz
245	Second and Gayoso
247	Crump and Barton
365	Lamar and Bellevue
367	Poplar and Cleveland
369	Linden and East

The map (Part of Item 9 from MPD Miscellaneous Records, see App. A, Ex. 1) shows that Tact Units 10 and 18 were within a radius of one mile of the crime scene (200 block of Mulberry Street) at the time of the shooting; and Tact Units 6, 11 and 12 were within a radius of two miles of the scene. Tact Units 7, 14, 15 and 16 were located outside the boundaries of the map and are not shown. Cars number 224, 230, 232, 245 and 247 were within a radius of one mile of the scene and cars number 228 and 369 were within a radius of two miles. However, cars number 236, 365 and 367 were outside the boundaries of the map.

Particular emphasis is given to Tact Unit 10 and the activities of its men, as this unit was located at Fire Station No. 2 (S. Main and Butler) at the time of the

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. */

*/ 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.

Guy 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 firms 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 44-38361-4319).

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 April 23, 1967
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.) */

Ray allegedly headed first toward Kansas City April 24-28
(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

*/ 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).	May 3
	June 5
	June 9
	June 12
	June 17
	June 21

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	July 14
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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