

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# Identifying King

## Assassin Suspect Explained

By **BERNIE WARD**  
Beacon Staff Writer

One man sitting in a Memphis, Tenn., jail cell knows only too well what kind of an expert George Bonebrake is.

James Earl Ray, awaiting trial as the accused assassin of Dr. Martin Luther King last spring, is in that cell largely through the efforts of Bonebrake.

Bonebrake, one of the FBI's most respected fingerprint experts, is in Wichita conducting a seminar on fingerprint identification for area law enforcement agencies.

FOLLOWING the assassination of Dr. King, Bonebrake led the search through thousands of fingerprints on file at the Washington, D.C., FBI headquarters for the identification of the killer.

After Ray was arrested earlier this summer in London, England, Bonebrake was the government's star witness in the extradition proceedings that followed. And it was his expert testimony that identified the man being held by Scotland Yard as the fugitive — James Earl Ray.

**DURING THE PAUSE** in the seminar

here Wednesday, Bonebrake, a quiet, unassuming man, discussed the Ray case and others he has been involved in during his 27 years with the FBI.

"My testimony in the extradition hearing was two-fold," Bonebrake said, "since Ray was refusing to admit his true identity.

"I was able to testify that the latent prints we found in Memphis matched those taken of the man arrested in London, and that the same prints matched those taken of James Earl Ray while he was at the Missouri Penitentiary.

"Therefore," Bonebrake continued, "My testimony tended to implicate him in the murder of Dr. King as well as identify him as the fugitive wanted for escaping from the Missouri prison."

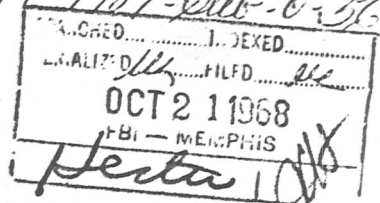
**BONEBRAKE PICKED** up a large chart showing side-by-side blow-ups of two fingerprints. "This one," he pointed to a blurred photo of a fingerprint, "is a latent print, or one which was found at a crime scene. The other is an ink print, one taken from a suspect when he was arrested.

1 Wichita Beacon

Wichita, Kansas

Date: 9/12/68  
Edition: Daily  
Author: Bernie Ward  
Editor:  
Title:

Character:  
or  
Classification:  
Submitting Office: Kansas Cit  
 Being Investigated



"When I am called to testify in court, I point out to the jury how the two are identical.

"This is what I did in London. I was able to show that the latent prints obtained in Memphis, the ones taken in London and the ones taken of Ray at the Missouri prison were all the same."

BONEBRAKE SAID FBI agents obtained "good" latent prints from a rifle believed used to kill Dr. King, from a telescopic sight on the rifle and from a pair of binoculars found at the scene.

"This was a real break for us," he said. "We had several names to go on but we didn't know which one was correct.

"Ray had purchased a car under the name of Gault, bought the rifle under another name and registered at the flophouse in Memphis using the name John Willard."

Once the latent prints were obtained, he said, an exhaustive comparison search was launched of thousands of prints of known offenders and known fugitives.

"This way," Bonebrake added, "We were able to come up with Ray's name and eventually to identify him in London."

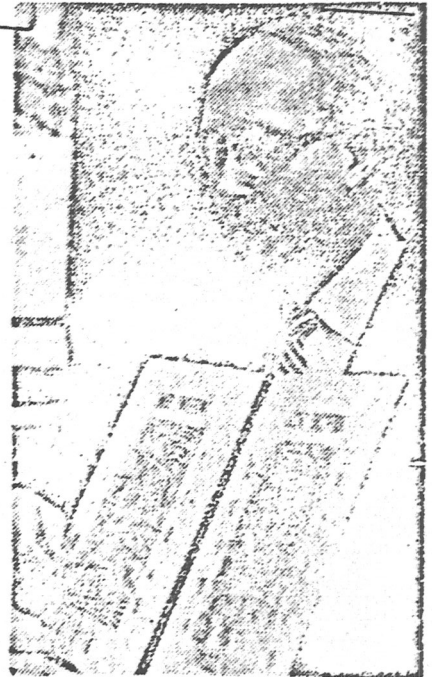
BONEBRAKE SAID he anticipated going to Memphis to testify on the fingerprint identification during Ray's upcoming trial.

"There's no doubt in my mind that he (Ray) at least handled the murder weapon," Bonebrake commented.

During the week-long seminar here, Bonebrake is instructing lawmen from several South Central Kansas police and sheriff's departments on the proper identification of latent prints.

The class is designed to teach officers to go to a crime scene and develop the crime scene or latent prints using various processes.

Wednesday, the law officers compared latent prints found at a prepared crime scene with those of known offenders and established identifications. Today, they were instructed on the means of preparing that evidence for trial. Friday they will present the evidence during a mock trial.



George Bonebrake