

# Traced Step by Step, But...

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"The man who killed King is either the world's luckiest amateur or part of a fantastically clever conspiracy," said one weary investigator yesterday as the massive hunt for the slayer of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. continued.

Eleven days after the civil rights leader was slain by a sniper in Memphis, Tenn., the Federal Bureau of Investigation finds itself in the dilemma of possessing a lot of physical evidence but nothing that points to the true identity or whereabouts of the assassin.

From information publicly disclosed and from non-FBI sources, this much can be reported about the evidence in hand, the man being sought and how he prepared for and committed the crime:

- The FBI has three names for the fugitive and all of them are considered to be pseudonyms.
- They have latent fingerprints taken from the Remington Gamemaster 30.06 pump rifle believed to have been the assassination weapon, and from the telescopic sight attached to the gun.
- They have a 1966 white Mustang believed used as the getaway car.
- They have half a dozen or more people who saw the suspected slayer both before and after the fatal shooting at 6:01 p.m. April 4.
- But they do not now know who the gunman really is, where he is, whether he was working alone or as part of a conspiracy.

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Authorities have pieced together this much information about the car they have connected with the case:

On August 30, 1967 William D. Paisley of Birmingham, Ala., sold a 1966 white Mustang to a man who gave his name as Eric Starvo Galt. On Sept. 6, 1967, "Galt" applied for a Birmingham driver's license under that name and No. 2898947 was mailed to him. On March 1, 1968, Galt requested a duplicate and one was mailed to him at a Birmingham rooming house.

Galt had listed his occupation as unemployed merchant seaman and gave a rooming house address, 2608 Highland Ave., Birmingham. It is a place for transients and Galt did not live there more than six months. He apparently was last a resident in November.

The car and the name Galt became significant when Mrs. Ernest Payne, of Atlanta, Ga., looked out her window between 7 and 9 a.m. Friday, April 5, and saw a man drive the Mustang into a parking lot at Capitol Homes, a low-rent housing project near the State Capitol. The car fit the description of one of two white Mustangs which had been parked in the 400 block of South Main Street, Memphis, around the corner from the motel where King was killed.

#### Mexico Tourist Stickers

The car evidently was abandoned at the Atlanta spot. It was not until April 11 that it was brought to the attention of the FBI. It bore the red-and-white Alabama license No. 1-38903 traceable to the man who gave his name as Galt. There was mud and cigaret stubs on

departments, institutions or on other records.

But, according to Mrs. Payne's description, "Galt" resembles the man being sought for the slaying of King: dark-haired, dark, neat clothes, pointed nose. The Alabama license records for Galt are considered not inconsistent. The application described him as 5 feet 11, 175 pounds, with blue eyes and brown hair.

Both descriptions are considered close to those given by persons who saw the suspect fleeing from the Memphis flophouse from which the fatal shot was fired. The general description given by Memphis witnesses is 5 feet 8 to 5 feet 11, 26 to 32 years of age, neat dark clothing.

#### About The Gun . . .

The Remington rifle believed to have been the murder weapon was traced by its serial number to a Birmingham, Ala. sporting goods store. The weapon was acquired from the shop on March 30 by a man who could have been either the suspect or an accomplice.

The man got the Remington by trading another gun for it. The FBI has not disclosed his identity, but it can find no trace of anyone with a name like that given to the Birmingham shop. The acquisition has, however, given the FBI another consistent description and another handwriting specimen.

The next event linking King's death to the mystery man occurred April 4, a few hours after King's well-publicized arrival at the Lorraine Motel for a planning session in connection with a march of striking sanitation workers. King checked into a second-floor balcony room, No. 306, at the Lorraine in the morning.

At 3:15 p.m. that same day, a man who gave his name as John Willard checked into a nameless flophouse in Memphis' 400 block of South Main. Bessie Brewer, the proprietor, took him upstairs, showed him a \$10-a-week room on one side of the building. She said he turned down No. 3, which has a kitchenette, remarking: "I only want a sleeping room."

#### Room No. 5 Chosen

Then she showed him Rooms 4, 5 and 6 on the other side facing the Lorraine Motel. The man known as Willard took Room 5 and paid the weekly \$8.50 rent in advance with a \$20 bill. Mrs. Brewer recalls that he had a sharp nose, dark hair, a "silly" smile and a neat appearance—unusual for her rundown establishment.

So far as investigators have been able to determine, "John Willard" is another false name.

"Willard" had no luggage and was

lived in the . . . but his track was . . .

According to Memphis Police Officer Frank C. Holcomb, a . . . agent, the distance from the . . . window to King's balcony . . . inches. The angle of . . . was 30 degrees to the . . . down, an easy shot with a . . . rifle.

King emerged three times just before 6 p.m. The third time, he . . . the Rev. Samuel Kyles that he . . . of restaurants and wanted some . . . food." Kyles invited him home to . . . and King said he would like that. . . leaned on the balcony rail, talking to . . . driver, Solomon Jones, on the ground below. Jones told King it was . . . suggested he wear a top coat.

King replied, "Okay, I will." Those were his last words. Standing in the bathtub of Bessie Brewer's flophouse, the killer took aim across a . . . pile on a vacant lot, over a row of scrubby trees on an embankment, squinted through the telescopic sight and fired.

#### Soft-Nosed Bullet Used

King was struck in the lower right jaw by a soft-nosed bullet which coursed through his neck, hit his spine and came to rest in his shoulder. He fell to the balcony deck, unconscious and bleeding profusely, and was dead on arrival at the hospital.

Willie Anchutz heard the shot and looked out his door. He saw a man rush past him in the hall carrying a blue handbag and a long object wrapped in a sheet. Anchutz did not get a good look at the man presumed to be the gunman but remarked, "That sounded like a shot." The man replied, "Yes, it was."

The fugitive ran out the opposite entrance of the flophouse, ducked into the doorway of the Canipe Amusement Co. at 424 South Main, and dropped the rifle and the bag there. The proprietor, Guy Canipe, saw him abandon the gun and bag, but did not go outside. Other witnesses said the suspect climbed calmly into the white Mustang a few feet beyond and drove away.

It is an easy 8- to 10-hour drive from Memphis to Atlanta, a time element which fits with Mrs. Payne's observation of the man parking the Mustang owned by Galt in the Atlanta housing project.

Within a few hours, the fatal bullet was extracted from King's body and sent to the FBI crime laboratory here, along with the rifle and the bag with all its contents. The FBI has refused to say what was found in the bag or what its laboratory examinations showed.