

# At Phony Name Dim's King Investigation

ATLANTA, April 15 (UPI) —Indications mounted today that the most wanted man in the Nation, Eric Starvo Galt, never actually existed but was carefully contrived months before the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated.

Authorities pressed their search—without a warrant—for the man. But they indicated they feared Galt may be a blind set up to hamper the search for the killer, or killers, of Dr. King.

It was learned that investigators have been unable to trace his existence beyond last summer.

The man who called himself Galt purchased a car in Birmingham, Ala., on Aug. 30. He applied for an Alabama driver's license a week later, at which time he gave his occupation as an unemployed merchant marine sea-

man. But none of the merchant seamen's unions have any record of him, and it is impossible to work on a ship, officials say, without a union card.

Galt's trail grows cold in Atlanta, where his car—a white Mustang similar to one believed to have been used by the sniper in fleeing Memphis—was found abandoned April 5, the morning after Dr. King was slain.

In Birmingham, meanwhile, rooming house manager Peter Nicholas Cherpes said he had identified for FBI agents a sketch of a man known to him as Galt. Cherpes, 72, told the Birmingham News in a copy-righted interview that the sketch "looked exactly like" Galt.

"He was above the average roomer in dress, talk

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\_\_\_ THE WASHINGTON POST  
& TIMES HERALD

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# Slaying Suspect Veiled Identity

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and appearance," Cherpes said. "He always wore sporty clothes and a tie. He was always pleasant and I never knew of him drinking."

Cherpes said Galt "didn't say much about his family affairs, only that he was divorced. He only talked about the weather, never about politics or racial troubles."

He said Galt stayed at his rooming house at 2608 Highland ave. from Aug. 26 to Oct. 7 last year.

He said that during September, Galt received a prepaid package in the mail from Chicago. He said it weighed 20 to 25 pounds, was about two feet long and one foot wide. The next day, Cherpes said, Galt told him it was the wrong merchandise and he planned to send it back.

(The .30-06 Remington hunting rifle, found near the murder scene and believed to be the death weapon was sold in Birmingham, according to the manufacturer's serial number records.)

In October, Cherpes said, Galt told him he was leaving for Mobile, Ala., to seek a job. Galt said he expected a letter from Chicago and asked Cherpes to hold it for him.

In February or March, Cherpes said, the letter came from Chicago. He said the envelope was thin and green, with a Chicago post mark.

"I was puzzled for a while

where to mail it," Cherpes said. "I didn't have an address (for Galt). So I held the letter for a week, and returned it."

Cherpes said it appeared to him the letter contained a check.

When he received the letter, Cherpes said, he went to his file to look for Galt's registration card and found it. But when FBI agents came to him last week, Cherpes said it was missing.

Cherpes earlier denied knowing Galt. He said this was because the FBI has asked him not to say anything about the man. But he said the FBI had no authority to stop him. His rooming house was bolted and he refused to admit anyone this afternoon.

He said Galt was a natty dresser who always paid his \$27 a week room and board in cash, on time.

"When he was here, on the third or fourth day, he asked me if I would drive his car downtown for him to take a driver's test," Cherpes said.

"He was a new man to Alabama and to Birmingham and also a customer," Cherpes continued, "and I wanted to help him on that basis. If he had asked for my recommendation, I would have investigated more closely."

Cherpes said that when Galt arrived at the rooming house, he told him his last job was in the shipyards at Pascagoula, Miss. However, Ingalls Shipbuilding Co. at Pascagoula said it had never hired a man by that name.