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New Light Cast On Galt Identity

Los Angeles Times

HOLLYWOOD, April 13 — the presidential bid of former Eric Starvo Galt, prime suspect in the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King, emerged today as:

- A fervent supporter of

the presidential bid of former Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace.

- A man with anti-Negro attitudes who once got into a wild argument at a Hollywood cocktail lounge with a girl who defended Negroes.

- A man who made at least one mysterious trip in recent months to New Orleans, a fact which appears to be of great interest to the FBI.

- A steady drinker, alternately moody and contentious in public.

This picture came into focus as the result of a series of interviews conducted by the Los Angeles Times with persons who knew Galt when he lived here.

A songwriter whom Galt drove to New Orleans and back in a white Mustang in December said he had a strong impression that the suspect was not using his right name.

The statement was made by Charles Stein, 38, who was offered the free ride after he agreed to add his signature to the drive by Wallace to qualify for a place on the California June primary ballot.

Stein said his sister, Rita, had made the arrangements. While at the Sultan room, a lounge on Hollywood Blvd.,

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she had let it be known that her two children had to return soon from her sister's place in New Orleans. Galt let it be known that he would be going there.

Stein appeared at the Sultan room that same night and Galt agreed to take him along to fetch the children if Stein would sign up for Wallace.

The next day, Stein said, Galt picked him up at the sister's home and drove him to the Wallace headquarters.

"I thought he was some kind of politician," Stein recalled. "I got the impression they all knew him."

Statement Disputed

Robert Walters, campaign coordinator for Wallace in California, disputed this. "We checked all of our name files here—particularly those from the North Hollywood office—and found nothing under the name of Galt or the other names he reportedly used," Walters said.

Stein said that after he had registered for Wallace's American Independent Party, he and Galt departed that afternoon on the two-day trip to New Orleans.

Galt did not disclose why he was making the drive. He told his passenger he "knew some people there." He said he had been there before.

While passing through Texas, according to the songwriter, Galt made several long-distance calls from phone booths, but declined to discuss any of them.

Stein said Galt went to uncommon pains to impress upon him his name, emphasizing it in unnecessary ways, such as when they checked in at motels.

with his companion, commenting that the same creator made everybody and that color is just incidental. He said Galt was noncommittal.

Stein said he believes the suspect made a subsequent trip to New Orleans. "I heard he was asking people if they wanted him to drop anything off while he was down there," Stein said.

Stein said FBI agents have been visiting him almost every day, showing great interest in the suspect's activities in New Orleans.

He said, however, that he and Galt went their separate ways while in that city, and he had no idea what his companion was up to.

At the time of the trip, Galt was staying in a Los Angeles apartment. Residents there either did not know or remained tightlipped about him.

Moved to Hotel

However, Galt subsequently moved to a hotel, the St. Francis, at 5533 Hollywood blvd. One block away is a cocktail lounge known as the Rabbits Foot Club, at 5623 Hollywood blvd.

The crowd there remembers Eric Starvo Galt very well.

Until three or four weeks ago, according to bartender Bo Del Monte, Galt was a nightly patron.

He would come in at around 9 p.m., perch on a stool near the door, and order the first of several screwdrivers (vodka and orange juice).

The thing everybody at the Rabbits Foot Club remembers most about Galt is the big dispute he got into.

Jim Morrison, who was the bartender that night, recalled that Galt had begun talking with a young woman named Pattie. Somehow the conversation turned to Negroes, and she declared them to be "good people."

Suddenly, Galt began dragging her by the arm toward the door.

"I'll drop you off in Watts and we'll see how you like it there!" Galt shouted.

Del Monte said another customer who had been dating the girl followed the pair outside, and Galt fled.

A short time later, according to De Monte, a Negro was struck in the head by a rock while in a nearby parking lot.