

Phone Call On Shooting Is Unverified

A Somerville, Tenn. man has reported overhearing part of a Memphis telephone conversation in which a white man spoke of shooting someone on a balcony a few hours before the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., was slain, but sources close to the investigation of the King slaying incident cannot be verified and is believed to be without foundation.

John McFerren, a Negro civil rights worker and owner of a store in Somerville, reported to authorities that he overheard the conversation in a produce market in Memphis on April 4 but attached no significance to it at the time.

According to McFerren, he saw a heavy-set white man with a scar on his right cheek using the telephone in the market several hours before a sniper fatally wounded King. His account of conversation is that the man said:

"Shoot the S.O.B. on the balcony. Don't worry about the money. You'll get your \$5,000. Don't come here. Your brother will get it (the money) in New Orleans."

The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Justice today refused to comment on McFerren's story but authoritative sources said the incident cannot be substantiated.

The proprietors of the produce store indicated that it is normal for them to call New Orleans from Memphis to order food shipments. It is common for them to mention fairly large sums of money in these calls.

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