

FBI

Date: 4/14/68

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Via AIRTEL AIRMAIL - SPECIAL DELIVERY
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TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (44-38861)
FROM: SAC, BIRMINGHAM (44-1740) (P)

MURKIN

Responsive to Bureau teletype 4/14/68, evidence developed to date by the Birmingham Office has been reviewed and two copies of each pertinent FD-302 and/or insert are being transmitted to the Bureau herewith. One copy each is being furnished the Memphis Office.

The interviews have been broken down for ready reference by the Bureau and Memphis into the following categories:

Rooming House Where GALT resided at
2608 Highland Avenue, Birmingham, Alabama

PETER CHERPES, 4/8/68

HERBERT KELLY, 4/10/68

PETER CHERPES, 4/10/68

PETER CHERPES, 4/11/68

Purchase of Firearms under name
HARVEY LOWMEYER

JOE F. BIDDLE, 4/5/68

DONALD F. WOOD, 4/5/68

DONALD F. WOOD, 4/7/68

- 3 - Bureau, (Enc. 54) (AM-SD)
- 2 - Memphis (Enc. 27) (AM-SD)
- 3 - Birmingham

HAS:mas (8)

Approved: _____

Special Agent in Charge

Sent _____ M Per _____

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Bishop

Purchase of Firearms (Continued)

SA [REDACTED], 4/8/68

ROBERT E. WOOD, SR., 4/5/68

JOHN WEBSTER DeSHAZO, 4/7/68

JOHN DENNIS HANNERS, 4/6,7/68

HUGH L. BAKER, 4/7/68

J. HOYT STEPHENS, 4/7/68

Fictitious Address (1907 South 11th Street)
Used at Time Rifle Was Purchased Under
Name HARVEY LOWMEYER

Attorney WILLIAM ARTHUR JENKINS, 4/5,7/68

Mrs. WILLIAM ARTHUR JENKINS, 4/7/68

Mrs. NEWTON SKELTON, 4/7/68

Mrs. WILLIAM ARTHUR JENKINS, SR., 4/7/68

Purchase of 1966 White Mustang Two-door

SAs [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], 4/9/68

WILLIAM D. PAISLEY, 4/9/68

JR.
WILLIAM D. PAISLEY, 4/9,10/68

Mrs. WILLIAM D. PAISLEY, 4/9/68

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 4/12/68

Mr. HERBERT KELLY was interviewed at 2608 Highland Avenue and furnished the following information.

Mr. KELLY advised that he has been employed as a cook for Mr. PETER CHERPES for the past several years and was so employed since CHERPES occupied the present house, 2608 Highland Avenue.

After being advised of the nature of the interview, he stated that he remembers ERIC GALT only vaguely. He remembers that he occupied Room 14 for about two months shortly after they first moved into that house. He said that he serves breakfast to the boarders between 6 and 7:30 every morning and that this individual in Room 14 came out of his room at approximately 7:15 or 7:20 after everyone else had finished breakfast and gone to work, had his breakfast and then went back to bed. KELLY advised that he recalls "fussing" at this man several times for waiting so late to have his breakfast.

KELLY stated that he recalled something peculiar about this man in that he paid for room and board each week he was there, except the last week, he only paid for a room and did not take any meals. He said that he recalls this individual stating that the reason he did not have meals was that he did not have any money.

KELLY viewed a composite drawing and stated that it resembled GALT, except that he believed GALT to be thinner in the face than this drawing indicated.

KELLY is described as a Negro male, approximately 50 years old.

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 by SAs [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]
 Date dictated 4/11/68

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

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Date April 11, 1968

Mr. PETER CHERPES, owner and manager of a boarding house located at 2608 Highland Avenue, Birmingham, made available his receipts for all known guests for the months of August, September, October, November and December, 1967.

A review of these receipts disclosed the following information:

1. Receipt dated August 26, 1967, to Mr. ERIC S. GALT -- Room and board from August 26, 1967 through September 1, 1967. The cost of these accommodations was \$22.50, and it is noted on the receipt that ERIC GALT occupied Room #14 at this residence.
2. Receipt dated September 2, 1967, to Mr. ERIC S. GALT -- Room and board from September 2, 1967 through September 9, 1967. The cost of these accommodations was \$22.50, and it is noted on the receipt that ERIC GALT occupied Room #14 at this residence.
3. Receipt dated September 9, 1967, to Mr. ERIC GALT -- Room and board from September 9, 1967 through September 16, 1967. The cost of these accommodations was \$22.50, and it is noted on the receipt that ERIC GALT occupied Room #14 at this residence.
4. Receipt dated September 30, 1967, to Mr. ERIC GALT -- Room only from September 30, 1967 to October 7, 1967. The cost of this accommodation is shown as \$17.50, and further, Mr. GALT occupied Room #14.

Mr. PETER CHERPES advised that he recalls ERIC GALT requesting him to drive him to the Drivers License

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Department, Birmingham, Alabama, in order that he could obtain a current State of Alabama drivers license. He said that he is unable to state positively if he drove ERIC GALT to the drivers license examination station in his automobile or if he drove Mr. GALT's Ford Mustang. He said that he did remain with ERIC GALT while he took his drivers license test and examination, and thereafter he departed.

Mr. CHERPES also recalls that ERIC GALT received a package from Chicago, Illinois, while at his boarding house during the month of September 1967. He said that this package was a box approximately ten inches in height, by 18 inches by 24 inches, weighing approximately 20 pounds. Mr. CHERPES said that ERIC GALT was not happy with the merchandise he received, and that he was returning the box to the sender. He added that the contents of this box is unknown to him.

Mr. CHERPES stated after ERIC GALT departed from the boarding house, a letter was received addressed to ERIC GALT, which he believed was from the same sender as the box. He described this letter as a business-type letter, and he believed it contained a check. CHERPES said that he held the letter for several days, and since ERIC GALT had moved and furnished no forwarding address he returned this letter to the Post Office.

A review of additional guest receipts disclosed a receipt dated October 17, 1967, which shows that Mr. FOREST McCABE paid room rent on Room #14 from October 17, 1967, through October 24, 1967. In this regard, it is noted that ERIC GALT resided in Room #14 during his entire stay at the boarding house.

An additional receipt was located dated October 24, 1967, which shows that rent was paid on Room #14 from October 24, 1967, through October 31, 1967, by Mr. FOREST McCABE.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date April 14, 1968

Mr. PETER CHERPES, Economy Rooming House, 2608 Highland Avenue, Birmingham, advised that ERIC GALT first came to his rooming house during the last week in August, 1967. He said that ERIC GALT resided in Room 14 during his stay at the rooming house and he was unable to state positively the mode of transportation used by GALT when he first arrived. Mr. CHERPES pointed out that he runs a continuous ad in the Birmingham, Alabama newspapers and more than likely GALT obtained the address of his rooming house from a newspaper. He said that he was unable to recall if GALT telephoned him prior to coming to the rooming house, pointing out that he gets numerous inquiries each day concerning rooms and rates.

Mr. CHERPES said that when ERIC GALT arrived, he had two or three pieces of luggage, was cleanly dressed and said that he previously lived and worked in Pascagoula, Mississippi. He recalled that GALT said he worked for a manufacturing company that made boats and he believed it was the Ingalls Boat Company, Pascagoula, Mississippi. He said that GALT told him he was on vacation and further that he was unemployed during the entire time he stayed at the rooming house.

Mr. CHERPES said that a few days after ERIC GALT arrived, he came to him and asked him if he would go with him to obtain a State of Alabama driver's license inasmuch as he had no driver's license. He said that since GALT was a new tenant, which he desired to keep, he agreed to accompany GALT, which he did, to the driver's license examination station, Birmingham, and waited for GALT while he took his driver's examination and road test. He recalled that GALT had a white recent model Mustang which he drove to and from the driver's license examination station. Mr. CHERPES was unable to recall seeing this white Mustang prior to the day that he accompanied ERIC GALT for his license examination.

Mr. CHERPES said that he recalls that GALT remained to himself most of the time and further recalled that he was always late for breakfast and ate around 10:00 a.m. GALT,

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thereafter, would return to his room and rest and he observed him on occasions leaving during the day. He said that to the best of his recollection GALT would always be on time for the evening dinner, which was served between 5:30 and 6:00 p.m. each day.

Mr. CHERPES said that approximately two weeks later a parcel post package was delivered to the rooming house for ERIC GALT from Chicago, Illinois, and that he is unable to recall the sender. He remembered this package being delivered inasmuch as GALT was not at the rooming house when the package arrived and that he kept the package in his room until GALT returned. He said that GALT did not open the package in his presence and that he took it to his room and, therefore, he is unable to state what merchandise was in the box. He described the box as approximately ten inches in height by 18 inches by 24 inches and weighing approximately 25 pounds. He said that a day or so later, GALT said to him that he was not happy with the merchandise he had received and was returning it to the sender. He said that GALT did not ask him for any wrapping paper, nor did he see him leave the rooming house with the box.

Mr. CHERPES said that during the latter part of March, 1968, he received a business-type letter addressed to ERIC GALT at his address. He said that this letter contained what he believed to be a check for Mr. GALT and that it was also from the same company in Chicago, Illinois which had mailed the above described box to GALT. He said that he held this letter for one or two days and, thereafter, marked it "Not here" and returned it to the U. S. Post Office. Mr. CHERPES described the envelope in which the letter or check came as a business-type envelope, thin, blue in color, window-type.

Mr. CHERPES said that to the best of his memory he believed that ERIC GALT left his residence on Thursday or Friday evening. He said that a few days prior to GALT's departure he had a conversation with ERIC GALT, at which time he said to CHERPES that he had a possible job on a boat at Pascagoula, Mississippi. He said that GALT said he had made a telephone call concerning this possible employment and the following day GALT advised CHERPES that he had confirmed this employment and that he would be leaving and was going to Mobile, Alabama. He said GALT told him he had

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no current address which he could leave in order that his mail could be forwarded, but that he would send him a forwarding address, which he failed to do.

Mr. CHERPES pointed out that at no time previous or since has he observed ERIC GALT and, further, he is unable to remember any other correspondence he may have received while at the rooming house.

Mr. CHERPES pointed out that GALT remained to himself most of the time and did not mix with other tenants. He was always neatly dressed in sport-type, as well as business-type, clothes. He said that GALT was approximately 30 to 35 years in age, approximately five feet ten inches in height, weighed from 170 to 175 pounds, had medium brown hair which he combed straight back with no part, fair complexion, and thin build.

Mr. CHERPES said that he was unable to remember if he had ever seen GALT with any other person leaving the rooming house and was unable to say who his acquaintances, associates or any other individuals GALT may have known in Birmingham, Alabama might be. He said that GALT would on occasions watch television in the TV room and that possibly some of the other guests who were there during the same time as GALT may have talked with GALT or be in a position to furnish additional information concerning his activities. Mr. CHERPES said that he knows ERIC GALT and could identify him should he see him again or if he should return to the rooming house.

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 4/11/68

JOE F. BIDDLE, Manager, Sporting Goods Department, Wimberley-Thomas Hardware Company, 1809 First Avenue, South, Birmingham, was contacted at approximately 8:30 a.m. and advised that he had already been contacted by the man from Remington-Arms Company in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and had been advised by him that Remington 30.06 rifle, serial number 461476, had been shipped to Wimberley on March 30, 1966, under Remington invoice number 55868.

Mr. BIDDLE stated that this order was received and was, in fact, a shipment of 418 guns of various types.

He consulted his record book, captioned Daily Report of Sale of Guns and Pistols, and determined that Remington rifle, caliber 30.06, marketed under Remington symbol number 9684, serial number 461476, had been sold on August 31, 1966, to Aeromarine Supply Company, 5701 Airport Highway, Birmingham.

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by SA [REDACTED] Date dictated 4/11/68

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 4/11/68

At approximately 10:30 a.m. DONALD F. WOOD was contacted at Aeromarine Supply Company, 5701 Airport Highway, Birmingham, and advised that he is the son of ROBERT E. WOOD, SR., who is the owner of the Aeromarine Supply Company. WOOD was discreetly questioned concerning the sale of a Remington caliber 30.06 rifle, serial number 461476, which Aeromarine had purchased from Wimberley-Thomas in August, 1966. DONALD F. WOOD immediately stated that he had heard the accounts of the assassination of MARTIN LUTHER KING the previous day on the radio and had immediately recalled selling a rifle, as was described in the newspaper as the murder weapon, to an individual about a week before the murder. WOOD immediately searched for and found a sales invoice in his records and indicated that on Saturday, March 30, 1968, he had sold this gun to an individual using the name HARVEY LOWMEYER.

After obtaining both copies of this sales invoice, Mr. WOOD was requested to accompany the interviewing Agent to the Birmingham Office of the FBI, which he agreed to do. Mr. WOOD was transported to the Birmingham Office of the FBI, where he furnished the following signed statement:

"Birmingham, Alabama
April 5, 1968

"I, DONALD F. WOOD, hereby make this statement to Special Agent [REDACTED] who has identified himself to me as a Special Agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. I reside at [REDACTED], Birmingham, Alabama and subscribe to telephone number [REDACTED]. I am employed by my father, ROBERT E. WOOD, SR. at the Aeromarine Supply Company, 5701 Airport Highway, Birmingham, Ala., as a salesman.

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by SA [REDACTED] Date dictated 4/11/68

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"On Friday, March 29, 1968, sometime in the early afternoon I had just returned from lunch when I observed Mr. U. L. BAKER, also a salesman, completing the sale of a rifle to an individual unknown to me. Mr. BAKER had just sold this man a Remington, Model 700, Caliber .243 Winchester with a 2x-7x Redfield Scope mounted thereon. Mr. BAKER had made this sale and had also mounted and bore sighted the scope on our machine. This individual also bought one box of 20 rounds of .243 Norma ammunition. He payed cash for this sale. When I first observed this man he was dressed in a dark business suit with a white shirt and tie, as well as I remember. He was approximately 5'8" tall, 150 to 160 pounds and had dark hair. He had a medium complexion and appeared to be a meek individual. This individual had given his name as HARVEY LOWMEYER and stated that he resided at 1907 South 11th Street, Birmingham, Alabama. He also advised that he was 36 years of age.

"This information was not given to me personally by this individual, but I determined it from the bill of sale that was prepared by Mr. BAKER.

"Following the sale this individual left the store carrying the gun in a cardboard box utilized by the Browning Manufacturing Company. This box was used because with the scope mounted the rifle would not fit in the normal Remington box. He also took the empty Remington manufacturer's carton with him when he left.

"It was, as best I recall, either later that afternoon or early the following Saturday morning when this individual called on the telephone and stated that he had had a conversation with his brother and decided that the gun he had purchased was not the gun he wanted and he requested whether he could exchange it for a Remington, Model 760, 30.06 caliber. I advised him that we could make this exchange but that it would cost him an additional \$5.00.

"At approximately 9:00 AM on Saturday, March 30, this same individual returned to the store with the gun he had previously purchased. When he returned the gun he had the gun still in the Browning box. I told him that I would change the scope from the caliber .243 rifle to the Model 760, but that it would take me until approximately 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon and I instructed him to return at 3:00 o'clock and to bring the original Remington box for the caliber .243 weapon with him when he came as I would need a box to store the gun in. I gave him the Model 760 gun and I believe that I left it in the Browning carton. I did not receive the \$5.00 because in exchanging the scope I had to use a Weaver base and rings instead of the Redfield base and rings and this made up the cost difference. I also exchanged the box of .243 caliber ammunition for a box of 30.06 ammunition which I believe was Peters Core Lokt, 150 grain, 20 rounds per box. He left the store carrying the gun in the cardboard box.

"During the course of our dealings on Saturday I asked this individual why he didn't want the caliber .243 gun and I told him that it was a big enough gun to bring down any deer in Alabama. He stated in an offhand manner that he wanted the 30.06 caliber gun because he was going to use it to hunt in Wisconsin.

"At the present time this is all that I can remember concerning the transaction with this individual.

"4/5/68

"I have read this signed statement and accept where I have initiated one correction. I find it to consist of this and two other pages and it is true and correct.

"/s/ DONALD F. WOOD

"/s/ [REDACTED], Special Agent,
FBI, 4/5/68.

"/s/ [REDACTED] Special Agent,
FBI, Birmingham, 4/5/68."

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1Date April 8, 1968

DONALD F. WOOD, residence [REDACTED], Birmingham, the son of the owner of Aeromarine Supply Company, Airport Highway, was asked if he could identify a customer who purchased a gun case for a Varmint model rifle on March 29, 1968. WOOD, after checking his invoices, noted that there was such a sale made on March 29, 1968, but the invoice was made out to "Cash." WOOD recalled, however, that this customer is a regular customer who is a white male, about 25 years old, five feet, ten inches, 170 pounds, long, black hair, whose first name is JOHN. WOOD further recalled that he had sold a Browning pistol to this man about two and one-half years ago. WOOD then checked his records and identified this man as JOHN WEBSTER DeSHAZO, [REDACTED], Mountain Brook, Alabama, who purchased a Browning Standard Weight Pistol on December 11, 1965.

Later on April 7, 1968, DON WOOD made available the following weapons which had been identified by JOHN WEBSTER DeSHAZO as having been handled by the person who purchased a rifle and scope sight at the Aeromarine Supply Company on March 29, 1968:

One Browning Safari grade, caliber .243, bolt-action rifle, Serial No. 3700Z5, Stock No. 946A.

One Remington Model 700, heavy barrel, Varmint .243 Winchester, Serial No. 266009, Stock No. 753A.

One Remington Model 788, caliber .30-30, bolt-action rifle, Serial No. 020726, Stock No. 756A.

Mr. WOOD was furnished a receipt for the above weapons.

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 by and [REDACTED] RMB:mas Date dictated 4/8/68

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date April 14, 1968

Immediately following the receipt of a package at approximately 12:30 a.m., April 8, 1968, containing three weapons from Special Agent [redacted], Special Agent [redacted] hand-carried them aboard a Delta Airlines flight, changing to an Eastern Airlines flight in Atlanta, Georgia, and ultimately accompanied them to Mr. GEORGE BONEBRAKE of the FBI Identification Division at approximately 8:00 a.m. on April 8, 1968.

These items, from the time they were delivered to SA [redacted], did not leave his possession until delivered to Mr. BONEBRAKE.

On 4/8/68 at Birmingham, Alabama - Washington, D. C. File # BH 44-1740

by SA [redacted] Date dictated 4/11/68

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

Date 4/8/68

JOHN WEBSTER DE SHAZO, [REDACTED], Mountain Brook, furnished the following:

DE SHAZO is a regular and frequent customer at Aero-marine Supply Company, Airport Highway, Birmingham. DE SHAZO is also a member of the National Rifle Association (NRA) and therefore has an extensive and avid interest in weapons.

On March 29, 1968, DE SHAZO went to the Aeromarine Supply Company, arriving sometime around 3:00 P.M. He was there for about one to one and one-half hours. At the time he arrived, the son of the owner, DON WOODS, was out to lunch, and DE SHAZO wanted to conduct his business with WOODS. About twenty minutes after DE SHAZO arrived, a man in a dark shade of brown business suit which was wrinkled as if he had been working or traveling, came into the store. DE SHAZO said his first impression of this man was that he did not look like a hunter or an outdoorsman, and that he appeared to be out of place in the store. It was apparent to DE SHAZO in watching this man that he did not know anything about rifles. He looked at and handled several different weapons and finally decided to buy a Remington Model 700 .243 Winchester. He also ordered a Redfield Variable scope. The total cost of this purchase would have been about \$270. DE SHAZO recalled saying to this man, "You've really got quite a gun there - you'll have to learn how to use it." The man replied that he was going deer hunting with his brother, or brother-in-law, in Wisconsin, who had invited him to hunt. This man also said that he was now able to buy a rifle so he was going to get a good one. Sometime while DE SHAZO was observing this man, he noticed that he could detect the odor of alcohol on his breath. He said the man was not drunk, bleary-eyed, nor was his speech slurred, but he had definitely been drinking. DE SHAZO said when he left the store this purchaser was still in the store waiting for a salesman named BAKER to get the scope sight mounted on the rifle that this man had purchased.

On 4/7/68 at Mountain Brook, Alabama File # BH 44-1740

by SAs [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] Date dictated 4/8/68

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