

Chapter Seven

Memphis April 2, 3 and the fourth, 1968

These are the days that changed my life and many others for the rest of our lives. I've had nightmares every since and i dot guess they will every go away. Everything we did these days still seem like yesterday. I had kept a diary most of my life and at the end of this chapter I will insert a few pages.

Butch came by my fathers the night of the first of April and pick me up to go to Memphis. It was around 10 PM and we arrived in Memphis at 2 PM on the second of April and went to southheaven Miss. And got a room. Then we went out and visited a massage parlor down the street. Southheaven was full of parlors and we knew a few of the owners, most of them women. We got to bed about 7 am that morning after we had dropped by the casz bar down off Jefferson Ave.

Paul met us at the room the night of the second about 10 PM. He had a small package he laid on the bed and said there was 5000.00 dollars now and five more after we killed James Earl Ray on the fourth. Paul then ask had we brought the rifles and we told him no, we thought it was better if we didn't carry them around in the car. Paul said to go and get the rifles and then get a room out on Lamar Ave., which is 78 south. Paul begin telling us how Ray had doubled crossed some people and stole their money and he had bragged if he was messed with that he would tell the papers everything he knew. Paul said he had a couple of Memphis police officers that were going to help us, he said that ray was to pull a robbery at a bar and when he was leaving the detective would kill him. But if something went wrong then i would have to do the job. Paul then said that when Ray left the building that he would be guided south toward my position and I was to take him out before he reached the arcade restaurant a block and half from the grill. Also added to this was I could not shoot ray until after 5 pm, Paul said this was very important because of the police timing to get there. I ask why and he told me if I had to do the shooting that the police would be the first on the scene and would take full credit for killing Ray. Then we went over several escape routes to be taken under different circumstances. Then Paul said there would be three mustangs, Ray would have his in front of the rooming house and Butch would park Joe's two cars in front and the third would be park at the arcade in case anything went wrong. He said the third mustang would have police radios to help with the escape and in the clove compartment would be Id's for us. Paul left and we went to bed for a couple of hours and then got up and drove to Caruthersville Missouri. I got dad's car and went over to Bill's a guy I had left the rifles with. Bill knew nothing about what was going on, infact bill was as straight as they come. I met back up with Butch at jaybirds and we sat and talk to him and Bo for awhile. I expressed my feelings to Jaybird and he said not to worry that him and Paul would take good care of us, I only wish I had known what those words had meant then as I know today.

We went on back to Memphis and got a room out on Lamar Ave. We got a little rest before I went downtown to see a old buddy of mine that was in barber school. Sammy had came from Caruthersville and became a barber and had also lived at the modinaire apts. Next to me and Joe R. Then i went back to the motel and laid back down. Paul showed up that night around eight-thirty and we all sat down and went over some maps of downtown and main street. He showed us our routes and wrote

some building names down for landmarks. I already knew the area to some extent and knew there was a lot of cotton warehouses in that area. We left the motel and drove downtown and scouted several buildings and streets. I showed Paul about where I would be positioned and then i ask where Butch would be and Paul said he would be close to him and Butch would be dropping me off and picking me up . I ask where and Paul said for me and Butch to work that out and there better be no mistakes. This was the first time that Paul had used that tone of voice with me. It was kind of a mad and scared voice mixed but it was different. Paul told us that this had been planned for months and there could be no mistakes. Paul also said that maybe, even our life could be riding on the outcome or at least out reputations. I didn't know how important those words were at the time I heard them. We drove back to the motel and Paul said he had to meet with some other people and he left.

Me and Butch sat up along time that night talking, you see I have always been a curious person. My biggest problem was I trusted Butch and believed what he told me. I always had a gut feeling that Butch wasn't telling me everything but that would be normal when you was in our business. The closer the morning came the more nervous Butch got. I had never seen Butch this way and it was starting to make me nervous, I quess Butch saw this and said lets go to bed, this was about three in the morning.

The thing that I noticed most about Butch that night is how his mood had changed to a person I had never seen. He talked a lot about blacks and how they were messing up the country, I figured this talk came from him working at the show house. You have to go back to the times, the blacks had their own bathrooms, their own water fountains, separate seating from whites, blacks and whites were not allowed to mix at all. So his talk went along with the times, but how I was wrong!
