

King Assassin's Trail Weaves Into Mexico

By CV EGAN

The hunt for the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassin spread from the South into the Midwest and across the border into Mexico today amid speculation that the killer may have planted false clues to confuse the hunters.

Police said the large amount of physical evidence left behind near the scene of the murder in Memphis, Tenn., was highly unusual.

That led some law officers to suspect the assassin was trying to throw pursuers off his trail.

While federal authorities assumed complete charge of the investigation and maintained silence on its progress, FBI agents were reported to be

steadily widening the search area.

One focal point was Birmingham, Ala., where gun shop records were being checked and last week's passenger lists for Delta and Southern Airlines were being scanned for several names.

A new Remington 30.06 caliber rifle was found outside the rooming house where the killer had fired a fatal shot from a bathroom window at

King, who was standing on the balcony of a nearby motel.

It was not known what names were being sought in the airline manifests, but the man believed to be the killer had signed into the rooming house as "John Willard."

Fingerprints and handprints were discovered in the bathroom used by sniper, but there was no word on what checks of these against official records has produced. Nor would authorities reveal what inspection of a piece of blue luggage outside the rooming house had disclosed.

Copies of a composite sketch drawn from descriptions provided by persons who saw the suspected sniper were distributed to officers at the Mexican border and inside Mexico.

Rolando Veloz Canales, Mexican counsel at Memphis, reported to police that a young man resembling the sketch obtained a Mexican travel card last Wednesday—the day before King was killed.

The man gave a Chicago address in his application, but the street given proved to be vague, needing a north or south to make it complete.

The applicant listed his age as 21, whereas most witnesses described the suspect as in his late 20s. He also showed an Illinois voter registration card as proof of citizenship, but a check of voter lists showed no such name.

Witnesses disagreed over whether a man who ran from the rooming house after the shooting fled in a white Mustang. Two said he left in the opposite direction from the parked vehicle.

Others said they believed he doubled back to get into the car and speed off.