

Assassin Hunt Takes FBI Up Blind Alleys

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP)—Dead-end clues to a man who vanished without a trace apparently confronted FBI agents today in their investigation of the sniper slaying of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

False leads multiplied in the hunt for Eric Starvo Galt, a mysterious quiet-talking man whose last known address was a Birmingham rooming house. His former landlord said yesterday that he had identified drawings shown by FBI agents as resembling Eric Galt.

"It's him," said Peter Cherpes, 72 who runs a two-story boarding house where an Eric Galt lived for six weeks last fall.

Galt's abandoned white Mustang was impounded last Thursday by the FBI in Atlanta. It fit the description of a car seen leaving the scene after King was killed April 4 by a sniper firing from a rooming house in Memphis, Tenn.

Clean, Neat Man

Memphis witnesses described the suspected assassin, who registered as John Willard at a rooming house opposite King's motel, as about six feet and sandy-haired and "a clean, neat man." No trace of Willard has apparently been found.

An FBI alert for Eric Starvo Galt in a white Mustang was issued in Florida last Thursday, but was canceled. However, the FBI has continued a search for Galt's whereabouts or clues to his past.

After Cherpes disclosed what his boarder said of his work and background, Associated Press inquiries turned up blanks.

Is there a real Eric Starvo Galt? The FBI was asked, but declined comment. Neither the FBI say why Galt was wanted, though the Florida alert had sought only to spot the man, not arrest him. No warrant had been issued then.

Mysteries Increase

The man known as Eric Galt had said he was employed at a Mississippi shipyard, but there was no record of him. He claimed he held Louisiana drivers license six years ago, but no record was found in the

files.

There are mysteries within the mystery: Galt left the Birmingham boarding house last Oct. 7, saying he had a ship job in Mobile, Ala., but in December, he turned in the keys to his safety deposit box at the Birm-

ingham Trust National Bank.

In addition, a duplicate driver's license for Eric Starvo Galt was mailed to the Birmingham address March 1, nearly seven months after he left, and it apparently vanished. The Birmingham post office indicated no forwarding address was left for Galt.

"The papers said he went down March 1 to ask for a duplicate license and he put the same address, which was wrong. He wasn't here," said Cherpes, who recalls Galt as "nice and friendly, quiet."

Cherpes described Galt as about 6 feet, 165-170 pounds with blue eyes and light brown hair, a neat, taciturn man. "If somebody talked to him, he would talk," the landlord recalled.

Galt had a room at the boarding house from Aug. 26 to Oct. 7, 1967, Cherpes said. The rent was \$22.50 a week. "He registered here that he came from Pascagoula, Miss." The boarder said he worked at Ingalls in shipbuilding jobs, Cherpes said.

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