

'Mystery Man' Galt Is Charged with Murdering King

APRIL 18, 1968

MEMPHIS (AP)—The mysterious Eric Starvo Galt has been charged with conspiracy and murder in the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The FBI said in a fugitive warrant issued last night in Birmingham, Ala., that Galt, 36, conspired with a man "whom he alleged to be his brother" to violate King's civil rights.

The state charge of first-

degree murder was filed against Galt in Memphis, where King, 39, Nobel Prize-winning civil rights leader, was shot to death on a motel balcony April 4 by a sniper who fled from a nearby rooming house.

FIRST-DEGREE murder in Tennessee carries the death penalty, although the electric chair has not been used in the state since 1960.

The maximum penalty under the federal charge of conspiracy to violate a person's civil rights is a \$5,000 fine and 10-year prison sentence.

There was no further mention in the FBI statement

GALT SAID N.O. VISITOR

(The FBI reports that Eric Starvo Galt, charged in the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. made trips to New Orleans. Galt, the FBI said, once claimed to have a 1962 Louisiana driver's license, but there is no record of it. Galt was said to have taken dancing lessons here in 1964 or 1965.)

about the alleged brother and no charge was filed against him.

FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover announced in Washington that the conspiracy to "injure, oppress, threaten or intimidate" King began "on or about March 30" in Birmingham.

THE FBI statement said a .30.06 rifle equipped with a telescopic sight found near the rooming house shortly after King was slain was purchased March 30 in Birmingham.

The statement did not con-

Continued from Front Page
nect Galt directly with the rifle.

The FBI released a photograph of Galt and solicited public aid in finding him. Whether this appeal meant the trail had become cold was unclear, but U.S. Atty. Gen. Ramsey Clark told a reporter in Washington that he felt this was not the situation.

THE FBI started hunting Galt a week ago. Agents even contacted persons named Galt in several states in an attempt to find him.

The picture—which had to have the eyes "opened" by an artist—brought uncertain responses from witnesses who were acquainted with Galt or saw the fleeing sniper.

"Unless he was wearing a wig or had had a face lift or something, it's not the man I saw," said Charles Q. Stevens, who lives at the Main st. rooming house from which the fatal shot apparently was fired.

"THE HAIR is too full and the face is too young," he said. But Stevens said he

(Turn to Page 4, Column 4)



—AP WIREPHOTO.

ERIC STARVO GALT is wanted by the FBI for conspiracy in the slaying of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The FBI has released the above photo of a man identified as Galt. The man's eyes were closed in the original picture, the FBI said, and were drawn in by an artist.

only got a side view of the fleeing figure.

A source in Birmingham said the photograph was taken within the past three months, although the FBI did not specify when it was made. The photo has sharp contrast, making hair and features very dark.

"It's very near, but I'm not sure," was the reaction of Peter Cherpes, owner of a Birmingham boarding house where an Eric Galt stayed from Aug. 26 to Oct. 7 last year.

"I don't really know," Cherpes said. "It's so hard to tell. His hair seemed to be lighter."

THE FBI, replying on witnesses apparently, said the fugitive had been described as a white man, 5-8 to 5-11, weighing 160 to 175 pounds, with brown hair in a brush cut, blue eyes, straight nose.

Persons who have met Galt, the FBI reported, described him as a loner with a "rural" speech and little schooling, fond of vodka, beer and hill-billy music.

The FBI statement also said, "The fugitive is said to have a nervous habit of occasionally pulling at an ear lobe with his left hand. His left ear protrudes further from his head than his right ear."

"GALT SHOULD be considered armed and dangerous," the FBI release warned.

Galt has used the names of John Willard and Harvey Lowmeyer, the FBI said. The assassin registered at the Memphis rooming house under the name of John Willard.

Details of the alleged conspiracy were missing from the FBI release, as were vital statistics, such as Galt's birthplace, formal schooling, employment. The statement said Galt claimed to have been a cook on Mississippi riverboats, a merchant seaman and "is said to be an avid dancer."

GALT, THE FBI said, is the owner of a 1966 white Mustang with Alabama li-

cense plates abandoned in Atlanta the day after King was shot to death. The vehicle was left in the parking lot of an apartment project near the Georgia Capitol.

Two white Mustangs were parked near the rooming house shortly before the shooting, witnesses have said, and both disappeared minutes later. Some witnesses told of a man in a black business suit, neatly dressed, walking down the steps to the street, dropping a rifle and getting into a Mustang with either Alabama or Arkansas tags.

A BUSINESSMAN said last night he was certain the Mustang parked farthest from the shooting scene had an Arkansas tag. "I'm clear in my own mind," he said.

The FBI said Galt's car traveled more than 19,000 miles between Aug. 30, 1967, when he bought it in Birmingham and its abandonment last week in Atlanta. There were trips to Los Angeles, New Orleans and Mexico, the FBI said.

While in the Los Angeles area early this year, Galt took a course in bartending and graduated March 2, the FBI said. In Hollywood, director Tomas Reyes Lau of the International School of Bartending said Galt took a four-week course but refused a job.

LAU SAID GALT turned down the job because he wanted to visit his brother.

"He never said anything about Negroes," Lau said. Similarly, residents of the Birmingham boarding house did not recall Galt talking about racial issues.

Galt told his landlord in Birmingham he was on vacation and had worked at Ingalls Shipyards in Pascagoula, Miss. The company had no record of him.

Likewise, Galt put "merchant seaman, unemployed," on his application for an Alabama driver's license last year, but no record has been found of his name on maritime union rolls.