

Dear Bob,

*Cutler*

9/29/85

You really ask two questions: where was Ray when Dr. King was killed and had he been to a gas station at about that time. The present confusion is a perfect illustration of what I've been saying about irresponsibility in what "critics" say and do, in this case mostly Lane, the rest Renfro Hays, from whom Lane plagiarized. I'll provide some explanations. I wish I could lay my hands ~~on~~ on a tape of an interview with Hays.

Hays told me that he just made stories up to confound the FBI, which he claimed was giving him a rough time. His fabrications received wide attention and repetition and in some quarters credibility. Also, he never made much and was usually alert to anything that could yield a little money.

I don't know the antecedents of the thing he made up that Lane stole from the National Enquirer, but I think I do. I found it in the morgue of either the Commercial Appeal or the Press-Scimitar. It was a picture of a gas-station attendant with a caption saying that Ray was at the gas station where he worked when Dr. King was killed. This interested me much because I'd gotten his story, with some detail, from Ray. I got a xerox of this picture (they would let me have xeroxes but not pix) and showed it to Ray. He told me that was not the guy to whom he'd spoken. With the alibi already in the papers, this tended to make me believe what Ray said.

His story to me before I saw this picture of a man whose name I remember, perhaps incorrectly, as Willis Green, is that Raul told him he'd need the car after a while so why didn't Ray just go to a movie or something. As Ray left the flophouse he noticed a tire was low. He'd earlier been stopped by a Tennessee or Mississippi state trooper, I think the latter, and told that he had a low tire. Close call, huh? So, with time on his hands and his pal Raul expecting to use the car, Ray went looking for a gas station to get it repaired. He was quite painstaking in his accounts of this. His verbal accounts never changed, his written accounts were always the same as what he said, but he was uncertain about the street. He told me that he'd driven north on Main looking for a gas station and turned right after a few blocks. His maps include a few accurate landmarks on Main but he was uncertain about the street on which he turned right. As I now recall, it is the street on which he passed the Greyhound station, with it on his right or the north side. He was not certain whether he went another block, as I recall. That is where the bus station was and I know of no reason for him to have gone exploring, so I'm confident that he learned where it is by accident while he was looking for a gas station.

Wayne Chastain checked that out for me and he told me that there had ~~been~~ been two gas stations on that corner but one had closed or been torn down. So, HSCA was restricted to the one that remained.

Ray told me that the attendant to whom he spoke told him that he was there at their rush hour and it took all the time they had to pump gas. The attendant suggested that he put air in the tire to hold it inflated and to return after the evening rush-hour, for then the going-home traffic, was over. I think he gave a time, too but I don't recall it. Probably something like 7-7:30.

I am satisfied that Ray was at a gas station and I believe that it was at about the time Dr. King was killed. There is no way of being certain, but I am without doubt from something else I'll go into. I digress to tell you that I interviewed enough people to be satisfied also that at the time of the assassination and immediately before it Ray's car was not in front of the flophouse or near it.

Ray told me that after he put air in the tire so it would hold up long enough for Raul to use it that evening and night he went south on the street from the gas station to return the car and leave it. He was not familiar with the area so he

went a little too far before he turned right to get back to Main Street. Now from what he told me I am satisfied he was truthful, as I'll explain. He told me that when he got back to Main Street he realized he'd gone too far. So he turned back and right after he passed a bend in Main Street he saw the police barricades. His description of what he told me he saw happens to have unpublished confirmation: a tape of an appearance by the DA, Canale, and his description of the barricade is the same as Ray's and I never saw it in any newspaper. (With Ray on the lam it is not likely that he saw the Memphis papers in any event, or many if any others.) So, with Canale as confirmation, Ray seems to have been telling the truth, and there is no way he could have fired the shot and then returned to face police barricades. He told me that all he did was make a U-turn, as everyone else did and all had to.

So, once again Lane was a disaster, as he almost always was every time he cribbed anything and, each time, he added his own touches, which were always inappropriate. He believes that lilies were put on the earth for his gilding.

From Ray's account of what happened at the gas station, not an unusual event, I can think of no reason for any attendant to remember it many years later. That kind of thing happened all the time.

Two of those who were most persuasive in establishing that Ray's car was not there are Lloyd Jowers and Jame McCraw, the cab driver. Jowers white Caddy was parked where the FBI and police claim Ray's car was and Jowers was there for more than an hour. He never moved it from the time he parked it, something like 5-4:30. McCraw not only confirmed this but he told me and he later testified that when he got there to pick Stephens up he had to double-park because Lloyd's car was that close to the fire hydrant. That was so close to the time of the assassination that while McCraw was driving for his next pickup, given to him by radio, the dispatcher told all drivers to stay away from that area because Dr. King had just been shot. This was before McCraw got to where his next fare awaited him. He remembered the whole thing, told me where he was going, etc., and I have that on tape somewhere. But his account is in the transcript of the hearing. He and Jowers were our witnesses.

Hope this answers your question.

Thanks and best wishes,

*Harold*