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(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Tips Swamp FBI in Manhunt for James Earl Ray

BY JERRY COHEN
Times Staff Writer

Callers claiming to have knowledge of the whereabouts of James Earl Ray kept the switchboard humming Saturday at Los Angeles FBI headquarters.

Ray lived here until mid-March under the alias Eric Starvo Galt, the name used in Memphis on April 4 by the man believed to have assassinated Dr. Martin Luther King.

Telephone traffic in tips to the FBI here since disclosure of Ray's identity Friday has been remarkably heavy, it was learned.

The same apparently has been true of other FBI offices throughout Southern California, where Ray has been an off-and-on resident for 18 years.

The Riverside County Sheriff's Department reported the FBI's Indio office had received more than 75 calls by noon Saturday.

"They were from persons who thought they had seen the guy in stores or walking along highways. None panned out," said a sheriff's deputy.

The deputy said an unfounded report that a man resembling Ray had been seen walking along an Imperial County road Friday may have helped trigger the crush of calls.

The FBI office in El Centro also was swamped with tips.

Most persons who believed they possessed information apparently called the FBI directly. Most local police jurisdictions reported no unusual volume of tips.

Some callers obviously were cranks or practical jokers. Others were well-intentioned citizens whose tips, on occasion, led to awkward situations.

A team of detectives stopped a man on Wilshire Blvd. Friday afternoon after a tipster had said he resembled Ray (Galt). The man was cleared immediately.

Another tip Saturday morning sent the same detective team to nearly the same spot on Wilshire. The "suspect" turned out to be the very same man they had questioned a few hours earlier.

Gardena police received a call from a man who hissed, "I'm the guy that shot Martin Luther King." Squad cars sped to the location where he said he would await arrest, a pay phone booth. When police arrived, no one was in sight.

For a time Saturday, the Baldwin Park police station buzzed with activity after officers picked up a man said to resemble Ray.

FBI agents arrived at the station, followed shortly by representatives of news media.

The man was questioned for three hours, then released—a procedure developing into a common pattern Saturday across the nation.

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instructors that he has a restaurant or a bar along the coast of Mexico.

Dec. 19—Ray and Stein leave New Orleans (in the Mustang) for Los Angeles.

Dec. 21—Arrives in Los Angeles.

Jan. 19, 1968—Applies for a six-week course at International School of Bartending in Los Angeles. The school's director has said that Ray paid the $220 fee in cash and at the same time told him that he (Ray) wanted to go to work as soon as possible.

Jan. 20 — Begins bartending course.

January to March — During these months, Ray is known to have been a nightly patron of the Rabbit's Foot Club, a cocktail lounge at 5023 Hollywood Blvd. Bartenders recall he often preached his support of Wallace and once was involved in a dispute in which he indicated that he was anti-Negro.

Feb. 12—Ends his dance lessons in Long Beach before completion of all 50 hours coming to him because, he tells studio manager, he wants to concentrate on his bartending course.

February — A gasoline station attendant recalls talking with a man who looks like Ray at his Birmingham gas station sometime during the month. The attendant says the man was driving a white Mustang with Georgia license plates.

March 1—A person, who identifies self as Galt, calls Alabama State Highway Patrol in Montgomery to request a duplicate driver's license. It was mailed to his former Birmingham boarding house address and subsequently picked up by someone who was not seen by anyone living in the boarding house.

March 2 — Graduates from his bartending course, has his picture taken and declines a job that the school's director obtained for him saying he has to leave to see his brother.

March 9—On or about this date, calls the director of the bartending school and again refuses a job offer.

Mid-March — Ray last seen in Los Angeles at the Rabbit's Foot Club, sometime during the week of March 20 or March 27, according to a bartender.

March 29 — Purchases a rifle from a sporting goods store near the airport in Birmingham. Buys a .243-caliber Remington rifle, but returns later the same day to exchange it for a .30-06 rifle, declaring that he and his brother have decided the .243 is not suited for their hunting purposes. The .30-06 retails for $139.95; Ray paid cash.

April 3—The night clerk at the Rebel Motel in Memphis says a man registered as Eric S. Galt on this date. He also noticed that a white Mustang with Mexican tourist stickers was parked at the motel while the man stayed there.

April 4—A man named "John Willard" who fits Ray's description registers at a S. Main St. rooming house about 3:15 p.m. The landlady recalls that the man preferred a room in the back (that had a view of the Lorraine Motel where Dr. Martin Luther King was staying).

One of the occupants of the Memphis rooming house has said he saw "Willard" walk out of the bathroom immediately after he heard a shot, then walk down the stairs and out of the rooming house on S. Main St.

Witnesses have told of seeing one or two white Mustangs parked in front of the rooming house before they heard a shot. A white Mustang was seen pulling away minutes after the firing.

April 5—Residents of a housing development near the state capitol in Atlanta recall seeing a man fitting Ray's description park the white Mustang registered to Galt around 8:30 a.m. this morning.

Two Atlanta taxi drivers remember driving a man who looked like Ray on two short cab rides.