

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 4/10/68

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GENE PEARSON CRAWFORD, 32-B Westwood Gardens, Jackson, Tennessee, home telephone 424-3415, was interviewed by Lieutenant J. D. HAMBY, Homicide Bureau, Memphis Police Department, and SA FRANKLIN L. JOHNSON in a Bureau automobile on the morning of April 5, 1968, at which time he furnished the following information:

He hitchhiked from Jackson, Tennessee, to Memphis, Tennessee, on the early morning of April 4, 1968, catching a ride with an individual who stated he was from Medina, Tennessee, and who was hauling some pigs from his home to a 4-H Club affair of some kind being held at the Fairgrounds in Memphis. During the previous night and until CRAWFORD caught a ride, he stated that he stood underneath an expressway overpass at Highway 20 and Interstate 40 near Jackson, Tennessee, having stood underneath this overpass because it was raining. He arrived in Memphis about 7:30 a.m. He had only a couple of dollars in his pocket. He therefore went to Baptist Memorial Hospital and sold a pint of blood for \$15. He produced a receipt reflecting that he did appear at this hospital on April 4, 1968.

From the Baptist Hospital he caught a taxicab to the Wynne Hotel, a rooming house at 390 1/2 South Main Street, Memphis, where he has stayed before when he was in Memphis. He checked into that hotel around 9:30 or 10:00 a.m., remaining in his room most of the day. He ate only one meal during the entire day, consisting of sausage, eggs, and iced lemonade. He would estimate this was around 2:00 p.m., he having eaten at a cafe known as Jim's Cafe in the immediate vicinity of the Wynne Hotel.

While he was at the Baptist Hospital, he had made a number of telephone calls to various persons and firms in Memphis attempting to get a ride "to California." He first looked at the Commercial Appeal to find the names of persons or firms who were seeking drivers of automobiles to the West Coast. He recalls that he talked to a firm known as Insured Driveways or some similar name

4/5/68 at Memphis, Tennessee

File # Memphis 44-1987-Sub 10-113

SA FRANKLIN L. JOHNSON:wp

Date dictated 4/9/68

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on Summer Avenue, and he also talked to some man named HUTTON who had this type ad in the newspaper. One of the persons he had called suggested that he call back around 6:00 p.m. to clarify whether or not he would be permitted to drive an automobile to California. Therefore, just prior to 6:00 p.m., he left his room in the rooming house and walked to the Ambassador Hotel, which is located about a block north of the Wynne Hotel. He stated there is no pay telephone in the rooming house known as the Wynne Hotel, and he did not want to bother the landlady, who has a private phone in her room. He made several additional calls based upon ads in the paper and telephone numbers he had previously called, at the Ambassador Hotel.

Around 6:00 p.m. as he left the Ambassador Hotel to return to his room, there was considerable excitement in the area, but he did not know the cause of this excitement. He stated he recalls seeing several men in the front of the Ambassador Hotel. He also recalls that there were two girls standing out on the sidewalk and he saw some police officers in the vicinity. He also recalls seeing an ambulance pass. He stated he does not recall seeing any man running in any direction and cannot recall what the traffic situation was. He stated he did not see any car speed away from the area and does not recall seeing a white Mustang at all.

He stated he walked south on Main Street to the Wynne Hotel, where he returned to his room and did not leave again until the morning of April 5, 1968. He stated that upon returning to the Wynne Hotel, he learned that Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING reportedly had been shot at a motel nearby. He stated that he neither heard nor observed anything whatever which in his opinion would have any bearing on the shooting of Dr. KING.

CRAWFORD stated that he would gladly furnish any information or cooperate in any manner in order that he could immediately be eliminated as having anything to do with the shooting of Dr. KING. He stated that he would be glad to display the contents of his luggage, which consisted of one attache type brief case containing various papers, toilet articles, two dirty shirts, undergarments, and socks, and one cardboard box containing

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a new radio inside a cellophane wrapper.

He stated he has traveled a great deal in the past and always "travels light." He stated that he expected to be hitchhiking and simply could not afford to carry much in the way of clothing. As to why he was carrying a new portable radio in a cardboard box, he stated that a day or so before, he had traded for this radio in Little Rock, Arkansas, and had the radio with him so that he could pawn it or sell it and get additional money for food while en route to California hitchhiking.

Among the various papers in the above-mentioned attache case was a yellow, lined pad, the first four pages of which contained handwriting, preceded by the date, March 25, 1968. The contents of the writing on this pad follow:

"March 25, 1968

"I got up at 5:50 AM from my bed at home where I had spent the weekend. This had been one of the pleasantest times at home for me since my marriage to Margaret nine years ago. Indeed the way Margaret had acted this weekend made it a refreshing time for me though deep within I knew that a sweeping change was imminent. A change that would affect not only her life and mine but all of our people and many scattered throughout our country. I almost did not go home for the weekend but I was hoping right up to the last moment that somehow I could avoid having to sever my relations with everyone and everything I have known and loved. (I only hope now that this separation and the road ahead for me will bring the peace and fellowship with God which I want and must have above anything else. For years I have prayed that God would allow me to suffer in any way. In whatever way He desired. I have hoped He would so order things that I might be drawn closer to Him and that my life might become a pleasure to Him.) Now the axe has fallen! I am chopped away from family and home and likely never to be with my loved ones again. I am a fugitive. Like the first murderer, I have slain the tender flower of trust. I have trodden down that which was lovely. Alas! I choke as I feel her tears soak

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"through my clothing as she nestles in my arms. My hands feel strange. There is a coldness in my veins. A chill hangs icily over the room. My children call for me. They ask for me but I am not there. Am I dead? Do I live? What is there left for me? Will I be chased and cornered and finally penned up like an animal? Other questions--other misgivings, doubts, and fears pound and pound and dizzyly I go on and on and on."

CRAWFORD voluntarily made these pages available, stating that this was "something of a diary" that he had been keeping, adding that all of the writing on these pages was his and he had prepared the material at different times. He stated that he has always considered writing a book. He advised that at the present time he is not only having domestic difficulties at home but also faces financial disaster, particularly because he owes approximately \$1,000 to his employer, The Relax-A-Cizor Company of Los Angeles, California, he having made sales and collected money which he has not turned in to the company. He stated that this was the reason he was en route to California, adding that he intended to go to Los Angeles and talk to an official there about making some arrangements to repay the \$1,000 which he does not have.

He stated that the references in the above quoted "diary" to murder, to his being a "fugitive," and similar remarks were merely figures of speech which he had used while sitting alone in his room and brooding over his financial and domestic situation. He stated that he has previously served time in the penitentiary as a result of embezzling postal funds while in the military service, and he fears that he may face prosecution as a result of having not turned in money which he has received from customers and which money belongs to his employer.

He stated that he does not have a weapon and has never been charged with any type of violence or harmed anyone in any manner. He stated that he is not a member of any organization or in sympathy with any organization which advocates violence or which has a point of view with regard to race. He stated that he

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has no animosity toward any person or any group of persons. He stated that he has never been confined to any institution and has never received psychiatric treatment, but he volunteered the statement that he is aware that he needs psychiatric help.

CRAWFORD stated that he would be more than happy to accompany officers of the Memphis Police Department to the Central Police Station where he would attempt to furnish additional information to clarify his presence in Memphis and to establish that he had nothing whatever to do with the shooting of Dr. KING and that he had no knowledge whatever which would be of assistance in identifying the person who shot Dr. KING.

The following descriptive and background information was obtained during the interview with CRAWFORD:

Name	GENE PEARSON CRAWFORD
Race	White
Sex	Male
Date of Birth	October 2, 1927
Place of Birth	Jackson, Tennessee
Height	5'7"
Weight	150 pounds
Hair	Light brown
Eyes	Blue
Education	Equivalent of high school diploma (as result of G.E.D. test)
Military Service	Served in U. S. Navy under Navy Serial No. [REDACTED] on two different occasions, first from about January 1945 to June 1946 and again entered military service September 1, 1950, during Korean War. Stated volunteered both times [REDACTED]

Tennessee
Driver's License 3134957
Selective Service # [REDACTED]
Marital Status

Stated has been married
four times as follows:

(1) present wife is
MARGARET CRAWFORD, nee
LITTON, to whom married
9 years. She now resides
32-B Westwood Gardens,
Jackson, Tennessee, with
her son by a previous
marriage, JIMMY FULBRIGHT,
and a daughter by CRAWFORD,
SHERRY LYNN CRAWFORD, age 6;
(2) NAOMI TURNER of Jackson,
Tennessee, to whom he was
married about one month in
about 1957;

(3) LOUISE BELCH, to whom
he was married about 5 years,
by whom he has 2 children,
SANDRA, age about 14, and
MARTHA JEAN, age 17 or 18.
This wife remarried to
CHARLES A. WROBLESKI and
resides in St. Clair Shores,
Michigan;

(4) GERALDINE MORGAN, first
wife, from Hattiesburg,
Mississippi, no children.

Employment

- (1) has been part-time salesman
for The Relax-A-Cizer Company,
980 North LaCienega Boulevard,
Los Angeles, California,
since April 1967
- (2) dispatcher for Transports,
238 Madison, Memphis, a company
which operates buses between
Millington and Memphis.
Employed by this firm two
different periods, first from
October 1964 to June 1966
and again about 6 months from
about January 1967 to about
July 1967.

Employment,
continued

Addresses

- (3) has also worked part time for Central Hearing Service selling hearing aids since about September 1967
- (1) 32-B Westwood Gardens, Jackson, Tennessee, telephone 424-3415, since September 1967;
- (2) has downstairs apartment at 1464 Madison, Memphis, which he rented January 19, 1968, and where rent was due March 19, 1968, but he moved out before rent due. Kept this apartment because he was working in Memphis and stated his wife knew he had this apartment;
- (3) 787 Leath, Memphis, Tennessee, prior to moving to Jackson in September 1967. Premises believed to be owned by former policeman named FRANK BRUNO, who was killed in Memphis.
- (4) Apartment 9, 2641 North Watkins, about one year
- (5) Apartment 5, 2641 North Watkins, in same apartment project as 2641 North Watkins
- (6) Stated that he stayed at room in rooming house, 2204 Battery, Little Rock, Arkansas, several days prior to April 5, 1968, being in Little Rock selling Relax-A-Cizors, being at that address when he purchased 1958 Ford station wagon mentioned hereafter.

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Automobiles

[REDACTED]

Had receipt in his billfold for a 1958 Ford station wagon purchased from Rowe Motor Sales, Little Rock, Arkansas, on March 27, 1968, for \$49, Vehicle Identification Number shown as B8MX119674 (Stated car is at home of his wife's father, G. F. LITTON, Route 1, Jackson, Tennessee.)

~~Miscellaneous~~

Stated that for about past year he has owned and operated a 1965 light blue Comet which he purchased from Ford Credit Company, 2400 Poplar, Memphis, as a repossessed car and in last several days he turned that car in to that company because he could not pay for it.

Miscellaneous

Stated he does not drink or smoke; frequently cried during interview; neatly dressed in gray hound's tooth type suit, white shirt and tie, bareheaded.