

*The bullet has always  
been the greatest equalizer of  
them all. It was the tool  
used by a warped  
and twisted throwback when . . .*

# He Killed The Dreamer

*by Bob Mannings*

It somehow doesn't seem like it, but it was almost eight years ago. Memphis, Tennessee, sometimes referred to as a "decaying river town," and called many other things by many Blacks, was not exempt from the growing unrest that seemed to have been unleashed since the Watts riots. ■ In the midst of a strike by some 1300 sanitation workers (nearly all Black) which was wreaking havoc on the city fathers, Memphis, in those warm, muggy, uncomfortable early Spring days of 1968 had a visitor whose presence could not go unnoticed. With a Nobel Peace Prize already under his belt, Dr. Martin Luther King was in the midst of building for his Poor People's Campaign, which was to be a crescendo in the civil rights movement; a march on Washington galvanizing the poor from across the country into what would be the most massive nonviolent demonstration in this nation's history. ■ These were difficult times for Martin Luther King. His outspoken attacks against the Vietnam war and his linking of peace abroad with the civil rights struggle at home was proving unpopular with his more moderate supporters such as Roy Wilkins. Both the NAACP and the National Urban League were far from enthralled by his upcoming march on Washington. But King persisted, despite the endless arguments over stepping beyond the limits of the "respectable." On the other side of the spectrum, his liberalism and nonviolence were called into question by the eloquent spokesmen of the growing calls for Black Power such as H. Rap Brown and Stokely Carmichael. King sought to placate all his critics with the march on Washington. ■ Memphis was an interruption to his plans, one that would prove to be fatal. Several reasons persuaded him to accept the invitation to Memphis. There was the need to hold a strategy meeting of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference Executive Committee, and the call to lend his support to the strike of the garbage and sewer workers, who in a sense were in microcosm just what his Campaign was all about. ■ April 3, 1968 was a day filled with eerie foreboding. With a strange prescience, Dr. Martin Luther King told a rally of several thousand in Memphis that assassination threats had delayed his plane. Years later we would learn that this sort of harassment was something the FBI specialized in. ■ "It doesn't matter with me now," King cried out with that captivating flare of tone and temperament, "because I've been to the mountain-top. Like anybody I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now, I just want to do God's will. And he's allowed me to go up to the mountain, and I've looked over and I've seen the Promised Land."

Late the next afternoon, as Dr. King leaned over talking with his chauffeur, a bullet caught him in the neck and killed him almost instantly.





Now, amidst a seemingly endless flood of disclosures flowing out of Washington about government lawlessness, James Earl Ray, the man who in March, 1969 pled guilty to the murder, is trying desperately to withdraw the guilty plea and have an open trial. After the revelations of CIA assassination plots abroad, domestic surveillance at home, and chilling plots hatched at home by J. Edgar Hoover and his FBI, the unanswered questions in the case of James Earl Ray loom larger than ever. Is Ray yet another "nut" acting alone, as we are told was

the case in the murder of the Kennedys? Is Ray guilty of killing Dr. King? Was he part of a far-reaching conspiracy? A trial could shed light on these questions.

James Earl Ray was captured at London's Heathrow Airport two months and thousands of miles after the assassination, and he was quickly extradited back to Tennessee. Ray had been the prime suspect, though he was first sought under one of the several aliases he used, since his fingerprints were found on what police described as the murder weapon. That November, just two days before he

was to go on trial, Ray fired his attorneys, Arthur Hanes Sr. and Jr., claiming they had a conflict of interest because they owned 60% rights to Ray's biography; obviously a book about the murderer of Martin Luther King would be worth little if Ray were innocent. Later, Ray would dismiss his next attorney, Percy Foreman, on the same grounds.

Almost a year after the assassination, on March 10, 1969, Ray entered a surprise guilty plea in exchange for a 99 year sentence. Except for signing the confession prepared by the prosecution,

# Slaves Ain't Promised Heaven

by Yusef Nabil

**Bibles can spit bullets  
kill souls . . . break  
backs . . . stuporize . . .  
make you believe that  
you like getting kicked  
in the ass!**

They shout, sweat pouring in ever swelling rivulets from bodies, suspended somewhere in timeless space, jerking violently, rhythmically, while gleaming faces contort suggesting many things . . . pain . . . agony . . . lust . . . escape . . . pleasure. Feet pound out chaotic cadences on trembling floors. Clenched fists are pressed tightly to heaving breasts as the moment explodes in a din of whoops, hollers, hand clapping and moaning. Soon the mob settles down, drained of all energy, of all tension, of all potential violence, dripping wet and satisfied!?

We need gods of war, militants screamed in the sixties. We need the vengeful gods of fire and blood and death (Thor, Shango, the god of the Crusades) who led their people to victory over their enemies. We need gods who will harness the thunder and the lightning and break the chains that cut into our flesh. We need an *armed* god who can kick ass or we don't need no god at all!!!

The sixties saw violence, widespread, fiery and often futile. In the



fury, smoke and bloodshed religion died. The thought came to mind that while the great white world was about the business of conquest, that is to say, taking what they wanted, when they wanted and any way that suited them, jamming bibles down folks' throats, gagging them with the *word* and pumping lead into bellies that refused to digest the gastronomic drug; we, many of us anyway, were happily tambourine slappin', Amenin' and praisin' de Lawd between *Cotton Pickin' Hours* while waiting in segregated train stations for that train to the glories of the world beyond.

This realization sponsored an all out move, among young people especially, away from the "submissive strictures" offered by churchdom. Ministers who had sacrificed much in their efforts to help a people survive were quickly crowned as HNICS (Head Niggers In Charge) of the *Turn the Other Cheek, Smile and Praise Jesus 'While You Gettin' Slapped Upside Yo' Head, Things Gonna Be Better In The By-And-By* movement.

Young brothers and sisters were tired of what they considered an *Handkerchief Head* philosophy. They could no longer hold a Bible in one hand turning pages with their trigger fingers while biting bullets. They wanted to spit those bullets, rapid-fire, at the source of their anguish.

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s non-violent Civil Rights Movement that made its first fledgling steps in the fifties had lost much of its glamour. Young militants were no longer prepared to stand by and take the abuse and punishment that had become so much a part of the movement. Because it was the energetic youth who were the adrenalin that coursed through the veins of the movement built on Ghandi's non-violent philosophy, Rev. King was rightfully worried when confronted with the exodus of the more militant, more direct, hit back when hit ideas that were more than just seeds in the young minds who were no longer enamoured of his charisma. The seeds had taken strong root and were blooming and flowering into something potentially explosive.

Black Power! Raised fists! Slogans and symbols that roared mightily from the streets, challenging King's magic, charisma and eloquence. Challenging the God that would demand non-violence in the face of so many armed and vicious people.

We can only make assumptions, now. The "assassin's" bullet that ripped through the eloquent throat, silencing forever the powerful leader, left many questions hanging. King's last days were probably the most important days of his life. Were probably



Ray has consistently maintained that he did not shoot Dr. King. The ink was not yet dry on his signed confession, when at his guilty plea hearing he repeated that there were others involved in the murder, and that "the theories of Hoover (J. Edgar) and (then) Attorney General Ramsey Clark were wrong." Clark and Hoover had made numerous statements denying any sort of conspiracy. The following day Ray began his campaign to withdraw the guilty plea, claiming that he had been coerced into it.

Ray's efforts to withdraw the guilty

days of re-evaluation. We can never really know.

We do know that King was going through a period of transformation. We do know that King realized that the movement was bogging down in the mire of non-violence. We do know that King had to find new directions and motivations or all was lost.

King went to the mountain top. What all did he see? What did he hear?

Could he hear the booming eloquence of Rev. Henry Highland Garnett bursting across time barriers . . .

*"To such degradation it is sinful in the extreme for you to make voluntary submission . . . you are not certain of heaven, because you allow yourselves to remain in a state of slavery, where you cannot obey the commandments of the sovereign of the universe."*

Was he moved by the thundering words that shook the 3rd National Convention of Colored Citizens (1843) . . . *"Neither God nor Angels, or just men, command you to suffer for a single moment. Therefore it is your solemn and imperative duty to use every means, both moral, intellectual, and physical, that promise success. If a band of heathen men should attempt to enslave a race of Christians, and to place their children under the influence of some false religion, surely Heaven would frown upon the men who would not resist such aggression, even to the death . . . the God of heaven would smile upon every effort which the injured might make to disenthral themselves."*

Did he find direction or truth in . . . *"If they then commence work of death, they, and not you, will be responsible for the consequences. You had far better all die—die immediately, than live slaves, and entail your wretchedness upon your posterity . . . If you must bleed, let it all come at once—rather die freemen than live to be slaves."*

Would the non-violent movement have taken on a new attitude . . . *resistance!!!* if King had lived? We can't be sure. What we do know is that the old was snuffed out with his murder and there is still a battle to be waged and won. ●

plea and bring the case to trial have so far yielded little fruit. His appeals are weaving their way through the labyrinth of the US Justice system. After an evidentiary hearing last fall (1974) which, though it brought to light many of the startling inconsistencies and unanswered questions involved, was unsuccessful when the judge refused to allow Ray to withdraw the guilty plea, Ray's attorneys are appealing that decision. The Sixth Circuit Court is expected to rule on the appeal this fall, and with Ray's attorneys prepared to take the case all the way to the Supreme Court, a final decision is not expected until Spring of 1976.

"The whole thing is being covered up by the Department of Justice and the State of Tennessee," insists Robert Livingston, one of Ray's lawyers. "I think the reason is," Livingston told one reporter, "that the Department of Justice knows or has reason to believe, who they might catch if they pursued this thing to its fullest extent. I'm of the opinion that there are some people the Dept. of Justice would just as soon not have to catch. I suspect this thing could be linked up with the CIA, frankly."

Certainly whether or not there was a conspiracy of any sort involved in Dr. King's murder, let alone one involving US government agencies, remains to be seen. But there has been a steady erosion of government credibility as revelations of the CIA keeping tabs on tens of thousands of Americans, experimenting with LSD, and cooking up "Mission Impossible" assassination plots and "destabilization" of foreign leaders and governments, continue to dot the front pages. Perhaps the most chilling is the now documented concerted efforts of the FBI to "prevent the rise of a Black messiah," utilizing the once secret COINTEPRO (Counter Intelligence Program) which was aimed at wiping out the Black Panther Party in particular but was generally aimed at a growing Black militancy.

Among the various and sundry measures taken by the FBI specifically against Martin Luther King that are already documented are: a campaign of harassment including (according to the NY Times, 3-9-75) electronic surveillance, sending an obscene tape recording to his wife, Coretta, disrupting planned activities of SCLC by making anonymous charges against Dr. King's personal life (such as spreading false stories that he directed SCLC funds to a Swiss bank account). But despite a massive surveillance that according to one estimate included some 5000 conversations under the hob goblin of "National Security" (although grounds for such charges were never made) there were never any recommendations to prosecute Dr. King on any charges.

Although there is no question that the US government clearly conducted large

scale efforts to discredit the growing civil rights and Black Power movements of the '60s, and Dr. King in particular, this sort of evidence, though possibly as concrete as the State's case against James Earl Ray, is merely circumstantial—that is to say, *so far*, it is just circumstantial. Whatever the truth of the matter, there is an increasingly uneasy doubt in the minds of many that looms over the "official" explanations not only of the King assassination but also in the deaths of John and Robert Kennedy. In all three cases a crazed, demented "lone assassin" (Lee Harvey Oswald, Sirhan Sirhan & Ray) is said to be responsible. But in each case assassination researchers have over the years unearthed evidence pointing to the loose ends and contradictions in such explanations.

In the case of James Earl Ray, at the hearings in fall, 1974, and elsewhere, the curious circumstances surrounding his guilty plea, and many mind-boggling inconsistencies in the State's case against Ray have come to light. If Ray comes to trial a host of contradictions will have to be dealt with: Several eyewitnesses claim they actually saw the assassin shoot King, and not from the rooming house where the State says Ray fired the rifle; the bullet cannot be clearly linked to the gun that officials say killed King; Defense lawyers claim that there are no eyewitnesses linking Ray to the rooming house where he supposedly fired the gun; stories concerning several shadowy figures who may link Ray as a fall guy in a conspiracy will have to be explained.

In many ways, the evidence that surfaced at the hearings last fall overshadowed the original purpose of the hearings. The Sixth Circuit Court granted Ray an evidentiary hearing before U.S. District Judge Robert McRae Jr. to try and show that he did not receive "effective assistance of counsel," and that he was driven into pleading guilty against his will.

Ray's key witnesses at the hearing were his two brothers, John, 41, and Jerry, 37. Both had many dealings with Ray's attorneys. From the original idea of cooperating with author Huie, giving him the "inside story", in exchange for a portion of the proceeds from the book to pay for his defense, as Ray maintains, Huie and the book began to take priority over his case problems ensued. For example, Jerry Ray told of a meeting with William Bradford Huie in November, 1968, "Huie said that Hanes was having trouble with James, because James wanted to get on the stand. Huie said if James took the stand, it would be public knowledge, and he wouldn't have a book . . ."

Ray apparently became increasingly sceptical of Huie, fearing that the interests of the book were being placed above those of his legal strategy. Ray fired Hanes shortly before his trial of No-



vember 12, was supposed to take place, and it was postponed. As Ray explained in a letter from prison, "I recalled Mr. Hanes because he was working to my detriment with Mr. Huie in attempts to help the state convict me." Ironically Hanes has apparently all along contested the State's scenario that Ray was a lone gunman and killed King from the rooming house.

Percy Foreman, whose performance in murder cases, as reportedly he is not shy about pointing out, has made him almost a legend, was contacted by Ray's brother Jerry. Foreman, a six-foot four inch domineering figure, who Jerry Ray says asked to be called "The Texas Tiger" quickly began engineering the defense. According to Ray's brothers, Foreman told them when he entered the case in November, 1968 that the contract with Huie would be easy to break, and that there wasn't much evidence against James Earl Ray and it would be an easy trial. Ray's relations with Foreman appear to have been less than ideal. Jerry Ray recalled that James Earl Ray complained that he could never get a word in with Foreman; that Foreman had him write out any questions he had.

After breaking the contract Hanes had with Huie, Foreman cut himself in to a similar deal. For his services, Foreman received 60% of the royalties for Huie's book "He Slew a Dreamer." At some point after he took over the case, Foreman changed his tune, and began pushing for Ray to plead guilty. Foreman, as Ray's current lawyers claim, "badgered and browbeat" him into pleading guilty. Ray testified that Foreman pressured him into changing his plea and said that if he (Ray) didn't plead guilty, he would be sent to the electric chair. On the other hand, Foreman told Ray, it is alleged, that a guilty plea would assure Ray a pardon in about two years.

Testimony during the hearings in October, 1974 revealed that in the eight months before entering the guilty plea, while Ray was being held in jail in Memphis his mail was opened, photocopied, and handed over to the prosecutor; that two T.V. cameras and a hidden microphone monitored Ray's actions inside the cell; lights were kept on twenty-four hours; and two guards were stationed not five feet away from him at all times. Bernard Fensterwald, Ray's attorney claims that this alone was a serious violation of the Sixth Amendment of the Constitution which guarantees the right to confer with counsel without interference from the state. Moreover, while Foreman represented Ray during this period, he (Foreman) allowed communication between Ray and author William Bradford Huie, without any protection against the power of any information being subpoenaed—which is exactly what happened shortly after Foreman had renegotiated the

book contract with Huie.

Ray's lawyers contend that Foreman made no real attempt to build a solid defense. This appeared to have been borne out by the testimony of Russell X. Thompson, a local Memphis lawyer who had worked on the case with Hanes. Thompson had done a thorough study of the evidence, conducting interviews with witnesses, taking photos and surveying the scene of the crime, etc., and amassed a file of information. Foreman was made aware of the file, but made no attempt to attain it. This, plus other evidence not pursued seem to bear out Ray's claims. John Ray told of a visit to his brother James shortly before he pleaded guilty, and said James Earl Ray felt "boxed in" by Foreman, and finally gave in, probably for fear that Foreman would present a shoddy defense otherwise.

Strangely, author Huie's views on the Ray case shifted in midstream. It has been disclosed that the original title of his book as written in the contract was to be "They Slew a Dreamer," and it was later changed to the singular (He). In fact, in the first of several articles Huie wrote on the case for *Look* magazine (entitled: "The Story of Ray and the Conspiracy to Kill King," Huie traced Ray's movements from the time he escaped from a Missouri jail a year before the assassination, to various odd jobs and his contact in Canada with the mysterious "Raoul" for whom Ray ran various smuggling jobs. Ray claims that, "I personally did not shoot Dr. King, but I may have been partly responsible without knowing it," as he testified at those Oct. '74 hearings.

Some of the details of Ray's story have changed slightly over the years, he has never waived from maintaining that his role was merely peripheral. His story is interesting, because it seems to fit more neatly with the evidence than does that of the prosecution. Ray claims that at the time of the assassination he was simply on another mission for his contact man, Raoul, who it appears, was part of an international smuggling ring. At the time, according to Ray, Raoul had instructed him buy the rifle which was eventually found at the scene of the assassination. The gun was to be a "sample" to be shown to a gunrunner with whom Raoul was arranging a deal. Ray had suggested that he felt the original plot was hatched in either New Orleans or Los Angeles, where, Ray has said, "... I think much of the evidence lies."

Percy Foreman has indicated that he's convinced Ray was acting alone, and author Huie switched his earlier view supporting a conspiracy, writing that he had "made a serious mistake." The state of Tennessee has gone along with this view. But Ray's first lawyers, the Hanes's, testified to the contrary. "I felt

then, and I feel now, that there is a conspiracy," said Hanes Jr.

Ray's current lawyers, along with many newsmen covering the hearings thought things were going in favor of Ray. But Judge McRae ruled on February 27 that Ray was not coerced into a guilty plea: While he admitted that Foreman was "arrogant and overbearing" and was a "braggart," Judge McRae denied that Ray's rights had been violated even by the intercepting of his mail and heavy security. Ray's lawyers wasted little time filing an appeal, and still feel that at some point the case will go to trial, but it will probably be well into 1976 before a final ruling.

If the case comes to trial, the prosecution would have to convince a jury that, beyond a reasonable doubt, Ray actually pulled the trigger, as Ray was charged with murder and not conspiracy to commit the act.

The state's case goes something like this: Ray, the lone nut, acting from racist and publicity-seeking motivation shot Dr. King from a downward angle from a bathroom window on the second floor of a rooming house behind the Lorraine Motel, where King was staying. Ray then put the rifle into a case, and threw it along with a transistor radio and other items on to a bedspread which he wrapped into a bundle and ran thru the hall and out of the building. He was spotted by a man living in the rooming house, and panicked. He threw the bundle in the entrance to the Canipe Amusement Company, which was next door, jumped into his white Mustang and dashed out of town.

This scenario is, to say the least questionable. First of all, there were several eyewitnesses who claim that not only did the bullet not travel downward, but that they saw the shot come from some bushes behind the rooming house, not a bathroom window. Solomon Jones, King's chauffeur to whom he (King) was leaning over to speak with at the moment he was shot, has said that King seemed to be lifted by the bullet—implying an upward trajectory.

"I heard the shot and turned around and saw a man with a white sheet on his face in some bushes over there," Jones said less than an hour after the shooting. When the gunman "hunkered down again" as if he were going to fire another shot, Jones ducked for cover, and when Jones looked up again, the man in the bushes had gotten up and slipped into the crowd. Aside from Jones, Harold "Cornbread" Carter, who lived in the rooming house also claims to have seen the gunman in the bushes, and on top of this, two police detectives who were spying on King reportedly also thought the shot came from the bushes. It is also true that the path between the bathroom window where the bullet that killed Dr. King allegedly came from and

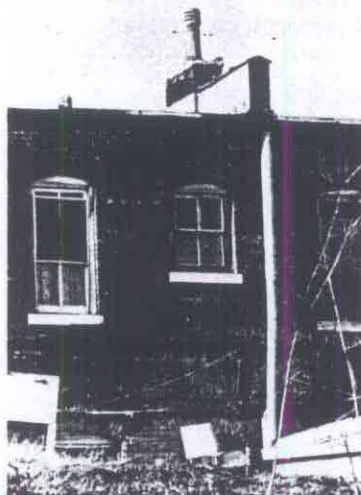


where King was standing was crowded with foliage—trees and bushes—which would have hindered any would-be assassin.

The state's only witness that could place Ray in the rooming house at the time of the killing was one Charles Q. Stevens. Hugh Stanton Jr., who was a Shelby County (Memphis) Public Defender at the time of the shooting, and now is ironically, the County Attorney General in charge of prosecuting Ray has admitted that Stevens, "would have been an easy witness to discredit. He had somewhat of a drinking problem . . ." Stephens changed his story several times, making it fit Ray only *after* Ray became a suspect. One investigator told me that Stephens identified the suspect as Ray when a British reporter gave him \$50 dollars and a fifth of whisky. Most importantly, at the time of the shooting, according to the testimony of Memphis taxi cab driver James McGraw, Stephens was so drunk that McGraw refused to allow Stephens in his cab. One observer on the scene on the day of the assassination recalled that the next day Stephens didn't even remember that someone had been shot! Even his (Stephens) own common law wife, Grace Walden, publicly disputed Stephens' story. Ms. Walden claims that she did see a man run from the bathroom, but he was a much smaller man than Ray, about 125 pounds (Ray's), she claims.

And what of the physical evidence? Testimony about the ballistics (Could the bullet be traced to Ray's gun?) and the bundle of items, the main piece of evidence against Ray, appeared far from conclusive.

The bundle which was found just outside the rooming house contained several items, which at first glance tend to incriminate Ray. Inside the bundle were, the 30.06 caliber rifle (the alleged murder weapon) with Ray's finger prints on it, a suitcase containing clothing, some of which was Ray's (and some clothing that belonged to a man about 125 pounds, such as that described by Grace Walden) a radio with Ray's prison serial number on it and some binoculars that Ray apparently bought that afternoon in Memphis. All of this would be, of course, very incriminating for Ray except for one crucial fact: Martin Luther King was shot at 6:01 pm. The bundle was found at about 6:03 pm. If, as the state claims, Ray left the bundle, he would have had to put the rifle into its sheath, and then into a cardboard box, *after* returning to his room from the bathroom. Then he would have had to gather his belongings into the suitcase, wrap them in the bedspread run down the stairs, and into his Mustang in less than two minutes. Ted Ghormley testified that he found the bundle, "probably more than a minute and less than two minutes" after the shot. Pre-



**TOP:**  
*Sniper's view of murder scene.*

**CENTER:**  
*Assassin's roost.*

**BOTTOM:**  
*The room where King last stayed.*

viously another Memphis official said that he found the bundle some fifteen minutes after the shot.

Moreover, Ghormley said, "There was not a soul on Main Street when I found it, walking or in a moving vehicle." If Ghormley's testimony is true, and one lawyer says he has known Ghormley for 30 years and describes him as "an honorable man", then it would indicate that the bundle was left *before* the shot was fired, and hence, would have no bearing against Ray. One researcher told me that experiments conducted to see if it were possible to have left the bundle there two minutes after the shooting show that to be, "an extremely fast man." Curiously, a story in the *Washington Post* just two weeks after the assassination quoted official sources describing the bundle as a "red herring" in the case.

Wayne Chastain, now a Memphis lawyer who was a reporter for the *Memphis Press-Scimitar*, and has been investigating the Ray case for some seven years and has written a book on the case which is to be published by 1976, told me in an interview that, "it (the bundle) was designed to frame James Earl Ray. That's the only obvious inference you can draw. That bundle was there *prior* to the shot."

What about the bullet? Could it be traced to Ray's rifle? The FBI has failed to produce conclusive evidence, saying publicly only that the bullet "was consistent" with Ray's rifle. This has no legal meaning, as it only means that it could have been fired by the said rifle. Wayne Chastain says that although there are two crucial ballistics tests, neutron activation, and spectrum analysis which would determine whether or not the bullet came from the rifle. Although the FBI said that they couldn't conduct such tests because the bullet fragment was too small, in 1970 a discovery motion by Ray's attorney Bernard Fensterwald obtained evidence showing that the bullet, according to Chastain, was *large enough*. Testimony by Herbert McDonnell, a ballistics expert, at the hearings last fall also disputed the state's contentions. McDonnell said that the bullet was large enough to be tested, and that it was not possible to fire the rifle from the bathroom as the state claims. He said, "To get the proper angle, the rifle would have stuck six inches into the wall."

There are a host of other points which hint at a conspiracy: Mrs. Bessie Brewer, who managed the rooming house said she could not identify Ray as the "Mr. Willard" who rented Ray's room (Room 5) from her; Bertie Reeves, a rooming house border also said Ray was not the man who rented the room, and that the shot came from the bushes. Harry Locke, another roomer at the time, says there were three men in Room 5 about two hours before the shooting.

But the really bizarre story which be-



gins to tie all the loose ends into what may be a far-ranging conspiracy concerns a mysterious figure who has been identified under various pseudonyms, and has become known as the "egg and sausage man." Underneath the rooming house in Memphis is "Jim's cafe," a greasy spoon-type skid-row cafe. According to Lloyd Jowers, the manager of the cafe, about an hour and a half before the killing, a well-dressed, straight-laced appearing man who fit into the atmosphere about as well as Henry Kissinger in Watts, entered the cafe and ordered eggs and sausage. About an hour after the man left the cafe, Jowers and a waitress heard an exploding sound in the back of the cafe. Jowers and the waitress think the "egg and sausage man" may have killed Dr. King. They reported the man to the police, who told them to call if he ever showed up again.

Jowers was, to say the least, surprised when the next morning (a Friday) the same man entered the cafe carrying a large suitcase, and again ordered eggs and sausage. Jowers called the cops and they picked the man up.

Here is where the pieces begin to fit together. About six days after the assassination Memphis attorney Russell X. Thompson was visited in the early morning by a strange visitor who had called him the previous evening and arranged a meeting. The man identified himself as Tony Benavides. The meeting lasted about 75 minutes, and the man, casually smoking Cuban cigarettes, performed gun tricks. The man was described as about six feet tall, dark, muscular, and Thompson was reportedly surprised when he took off his hat, to see that his visitor was blonde (Ray has described Raoul, his contact man as "a blond Latin"). The man who called himself Benavides said he knew how the King assassination really occurred, not the way it was reported in the press. He claimed that his "roommate" had shot King, not from the rooming house, but from a bushy area. He said that there were too many trees in the way (from the bathroom) and the angle of the bullet didn't fit, as he saw it, as he claimed to have been on the scene. More than jibing with the accounts of the many eyewitnesses, Benevides also said, according to Thompson, "I believe my roommate killed King. It will be my lousy luck that the police will arrest me and charge me with King's murder. *They picked me up last Friday.* Was Benevides the "egg and sausage" man? Moreover, about four hours after the Benevides meeting, a man with a similar description told a not altogether dissimilar story to two Memphis clergymen. The man identified himself as J. Christ Bonnavelche.

Lloyd Jowers and a waitress have reportedly identified the "egg and sau-

sage" man as Benavides, alias Jack Armstrong. Armstrong is a code name that researcher Wayne Chastain, whose book expected to explain many of these details, has given to this figure. Chastain's line of inquiry suggests that, as many followers of the case surmise, Armstrong was either a member of the murder team or possibly may have been the triggerman. Armstrong is described by Chastain as a "soldier of fortune," gunrunner, fought against the Arbenz regime in the 1954 coup (which was a CIA operation), in Korea, and is suspected of being a CIA contact agent—somehow hired by CIA case officers for specific jobs. Interestingly, Benavides said that Robert Kennedy would be shot if he won the California primary, which is what happened a few months later.

Some assassination researchers believe that Armstrong may be the same man who appears in one of the appendices to the Warren Commission volumes on the JFK assassination as an associate of Jack Ruby's in a gunrunning operation against Castro. This testimony was taken from a dancer in Ruby's Dallas nightclub. The Warren Commission, whose members included Gerald Ford, dismissed her testimony and all such possible links of Ruby and Oswald to the CIA, Cuban mercenaries and right-wing extremists. Wayne Chastain, who has traced the background of Armstrong, has not been able yet to discover what became of Armstrong. Apparently he was released by the Memphis police, cleared by the FBI, and has not been heard from since.

Whether or not such possible links to the CIA and/or the JFK assassination exist or not; certainly the evidence of CIA activities that has come to light in other areas suggests that such a possibility is hardly as far-fetched as many would have thought a few years ago.

To maintain the somewhat simplistic notion that Ray was a crazed racist and killed King not only is a doubtful idea, but fails to answer many questions. First of all, reports of Ray's racism are not consistent. While some who hold the no-conspiracy view have produced some at least circumstantial evidence that Ray may have been a Wallace-sympathizer and hated Blacks, there is also evidence to the contrary. It has been reported that during the time after he escaped from prison, Ray held a job as a dishwasher in Chicago, and no one remembered any racism towards his 22 Black co-workers. Dr. McCarthy DeMere, a physician who took care of Ray while he was in jail testified that not only did Ray answer, "... I wasn't by myself" when DeMere asked him if he killed King, but also that when asked by DeMere if he minded having Black guards Ray replied: "Absolutely not, I served time with them, and I have no prejudice." If racism were a motive, then, as one

long-time Memphis reporter observed, 80% of the Memphis police force might be suspect.

Moreover, if, as some claim, Raoul, who Ray claims was his contact man, is a figure of his imagination, where did Ray, with no visible means of support get the \$12,000 or so, fake passport to travel across the globe to England, Canada, and Portugal? Also, Ray used three aliases: Eric S. Galt, Paul Bridgman and George Sneyd in the two months after the murder before he was captured. All three men are not only real people, but all have a strange physical resemblance to Ray. If Ray was all alone, he was certainly quite resourceful to come up with these identities.

While it is still not clear who exactly Raoul is, who Benavides is, or who Armstrong is (although they may all be one and the same), other recent events also hint at a conspiracy. In 1974, Robert Livingston, one of Ray's attorney's was contacted by a man, who reportedly claimed to be an intermediary for the two real killers. Reportedly, the two hit men were ready to testify against their employers, as they were not fully paid off. Reports had it that the employers were several prominent, wealthy men, who wanted King dead for "national security" reasons. In exchange for immunity, the story goes, they would produce enough evidence to clear Ray and convict the bosses. Ray, reportedly refused any such deal, and after some strange meetings with Livingston. The meetings ended in a stalemate, and nothing more has so far come of it.

The less than determined effort by the Justice Department and FBI in pursuing conspiracy leads has led some observers to fear a high-level cover-up. For example, it took a year and a half and an extended legal battle to get a copy of Ray's 1968 extradition hearing, which is supposedly public record. When the assassination researcher who had sought the record, finally attained it, it seemed no mystery why it was so difficult: The file contained much factual information and evidence that go against the state's case. More recently, in late July, an attempt to investigate allegations that Dr. King was a victim of a conspiracy yielded no immediate fruit, and an Atlanta Public Safety Commissioner in charge of the investigation criticized the FBI.

A. Reginald Eaves, who led the investigation, said that Atlanta detectives were following leads mentioned in a deposition which alleged that two Atlanta men were overheard discussing killing King a week before the assassination. Curiously, Mr. Eaves said, "... local FBI officials here in Atlanta who normally cooperate with us seemed unwilling to share information concerning the case." Eaves said that their detectives

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## DREAMER

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were denied information that the FBI had in its files, and the investigation to produce any new evidence of the inquiry, and no indictments were handed down after the inquiry. This, despite the fact that Eaves was quoted during the investigation as saying, that information checked at that point, "proved to be about 95% accurate." Again, whether that inquiry would have tied into the many loose ends or answered questions remains to be seen, but certainly such incidents can not but add to the lingering doubt surrounding the case.

The most eyebrow-raising event fueling the notions of a conspiracy was revealed by none other than the FBI itself, when the COINTELPRO documents were disclosed. The COINTELPRO memos, a copy of which was obtained by *PLAYERS*, leave little doubt that the dimensions of J. Edgar Hoover's campaign against a growing and increasingly unified Black activism rival the most sordid Watergate disclosures.

Only weeks before King was shot Hoover expanded the COINTELPRO to deal with virtually the entire civil rights movement. Curiously, Rev. Samuel B. Kyles, a Memphis Baptist pastor at whose house Dr. King was headed for dinner when he was killed has said the "there were forces in this country that did not want Dr. King's Poor people's campaign to succeed." Rev. Kyles spoke of King's political development saying, "It's one thing to talk about the right to eat a hamburger in a restaurant, or get a job here or there, but it's an altogether different matter to bring together the poor peoples of America—the Appalachian whites, Chicanos, Blacks—and move them on Washington." Rev. Kyles said that when, "... you start talking about redistribution of the wealth—that's dangerous and frightening to some people."

With this in mind, and the fact that, according to the NY Times (8-8-75), the FBI is spending a "secret \$82.5 million a year for its intelligence gathering and counter espionage activities," it is interesting to look at the "long-range goals," as they are listed, of the COINTELPRO: "1. Prevent the coalition of militant black nationalist groups. In unity there is strength; a truism that is no less valid for all its triteness. An effective coalition of black nationalist groups might be the first step toward a real 'Mau Mau' in America, the beginning of a true black revolution."

There are several other points such as "preventing violence" by "pinpointing potential troublemakers and neutralize them," and "discrediting" black nationalist groups in the eyes of "the responsible negro community," "to the white community," and to "Negro radicals." But perhaps the most telling point is goal

#3. This was to, "Prevent the rise of a 'messiah' who could unify and electrify, the black nationalist movement. (Deleted, but fairly obvious reference to Malcom X) might have been such a 'messiah;' he is the martyr of the movement today... (Deleted, probably King) could be a very real contender for this position should he abandon his supposed 'obedience' to 'white,' 'liberal doctrines' (nonviolence) and embrace black nationalism. (Deleted) has the necessary charisma to be a real threat this way."

COINTELPRO, plus recent disclosures of the wiretapping, bugging and harassment of Dr. King by the FBI have outraged many in Congress, and injected a new air of credibility to conspiracy theories that had sometimes been casually dismissed. Several former FBI agents have urged Congressional committees investigating intelligence activities to probe the anti-King campaign, and Black Congressman Ron Dellums (Dem.-Calif.) has said that COINTELPRO was one of the main reasons why he got on the House committee to investigate intelligence. Dellums seemed to reflect the uneasiness on the part of many Americans, particularly Blacks when he said, "I have never for one moment believed that these were isolated acts (Kennedy and King murders). I have always believed they were a con-

spiracy." Dellums has already, along with several other Black Congressmen, co-sponsored a bill that would re-open investigations into the Kennedy, King and Wallace shootings.

One former FBI agent, who actually worked in the FBI's counter-intelligence bureau in Atlanta that was harassing King, and is a 21-year FBI veteran, said that he believes a right-wing conspiracy may be responsible for King's death. Arthur Murtaugh, who participated in the investigation of the King murder, says he observed the FBI "washing out evidence" in the Ray case. One investigator told me that Murtaugh, who monitored black activities, "strongly suspects" that if the FBI had given his counter part who was monitoring right-wing activities as much money and manpower that they gave him, evidence of a conspiracy in the King murder probably would have been uncovered.

To be sure, if after all the disclosures, theories about government and/or right-wing involvement in political assassinations are gaining credence in the aftermath of Watergate and other revelations, the FBI must blame no one but itself in light of COINTELPRO. But at any rate, if the powers that be are so certain that Ray was the "lone nut," granting a trial of his case would certainly clear the increasingly heavy air surrounding the case.

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