

# NEW ORLEANS STATES-ITEM

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DREW PEARSON

## King Plot Theory Exploded by FBI

WASHINGTON—It now looks as if the FBI has exploded the generally prevalent theory that the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King involved a conspiracy.

The conspiracy theory has long been held, as a result of the large amounts of money spent by James Earl Ray, the suspected killer, and the manner in which he was able to travel around the United States, Canada and Europe. It was believed his operations would have been impossible without help from other conspirators who were out to murder King.

For instance, Ray rented a safe deposit box in the Birmingham Trust National Bank on Aug. 30 of last year, and suddenly began passing out crisp \$20 bills. He paid \$499 for dancing lessons. He also paid \$395 for mail-order photographic equipment that he didn't know how to operate.

He shelled out money for a bartending course, though he showed no interest in working behind any bar. He also took a course in lock-picking from a correspondence school in Michigan, which cost about \$400.

His white Mustang cost \$1,995, which he paid for in cash. He drove it from Mexico to Montreal, from Los Angeles to New Orleans, and always seemed to have enough cash.

Occasionally Ray slipped \$20 tips to bar girls and prosti-



DREW PEARSON

tutes.

All told, Ray spent an estimated \$10,000 in seven months. Yet during this time he never held a job. After the King murder, the suspect went to Canada and then to England, where he also seemed to be in the dough. He had plenty of money to spend on clothes and airplane fare.

So the big question was: Where did he get the money?

For a long time the FBI toyed with the possibility that Ray was financed by a white supremacy ring. He had boasted to fellow prisoners that he intended to make a big "score" on the outside and that he might try to collect a rumored \$1 million bounty that a business group supposedly had offered for the death of Dr. King.

Now, however, the FBI has found a robbery where Ray probably got his money. On July 13 the Bank of Alton, in Upper Alton, Ill., was robbed of \$22,000. Alton is across the Mississippi River from Missouri, and it was from the Missouri State Penitentiary that Ray escaped on April 23, 1967, three months before the July 13 robbery in Alton.

The holdup was pulled off by two robbers who wore stocking masks. Their faces could not be identified. How-

ever, the FBI has been checking very carefully, and one of the robbers answers the description of James Earl Ray. He had the same long hair, the same height and the same physical makeup.

At first, the FBI was inclined to be skeptical. However, rechecking the Alton bank robbery has convinced them Ray was involved and that this was where he got the money on which he lived so extravagantly prior to the King murder.

The idea that a group conspired to murder King and paid Ray to do it has now been dropped.

Note 1: The FBI has also traced a British bank robbery to Ray.

Note 2: Arthur J. Hanes, the American lawyer who turned up in London to defend Ray, has been connected with various other cases involving racial violence. He was the attorney defending the Ku Klux Klanmen in the Viola Liuzzo case, has a flair for publicity and it's believed he went to London on his own. There is no evidence that he is being paid by conspirators.

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SOME AUTHORITIES have questioned the authenticity of the Che Guerara diary which he kept before his death in the Bolivian mountains. We can report that the diary is completely authentic.

Cuban dictator Fidel Castro got hold of it by purchasing bootleg excerpts from Bolivian officials, then piecing the excerpts together. A few pages were missing from the version which he released to friendly publications around the world, including Ramparts magazine in this country.

Parade magazine's enterprising editor, Jess Gorkin, organized a consortium of publications which sought to purchase the rights to the diary from the Bolivian government. Gorkin sent Andrew St. George, a bring-em-back-alive correspondent, to Bolivia to translate the diary and research the story behind it.

Actually, some of the other documents captured with Guevara are much more revealing than his diary. He lugged them around the jungle in a waerproof jungle pack and a portable field safe made of special, high-impact plastic.

The papers included the outline of a book Guevara planned to write on the evolution of man's political thinking, going back to the ancient Greek philosophers; also an original story entitled "Passing the Test," which he wrote in the jungle.

The bloodthirsty guerrilla leader also packed poetry with him to occupy his leisure moments. His favorite poet apparently was Ruban Dario, although some verses appear to have been written by Guevara himself.

He also rated his Cuban officers in a confidential "rating book," which indicates he may have found the characters for his short story among his own guerirlla band. In a typical comment on one officer, Commandante Marcos, Che wrote: "He will not perform at the expected level, he is undisciplined, antistudy and arbitrary."