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King Killer Hunt Pressed by FBI

WASHINGTON—The FBI's failure to apprehend the assassin of Dr. Martin Luther King has led to reports that J. Edgar Hoover is not interested in catching the murderer. The reports are based partly on the fact that Hoover and King were not on good terms, Hoover publicly having branded King as "the most notorious liar in the world."

We have checked into the operations of the FBI in this respect and are convinced that it is conducting perhaps the most painstaking, manhunt ever before undertaken in the United States. Its men have checked every bar ever patronized by



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James Earl Ray, every flophouse he ever stopped at, every cantina in Mexico he ever visited. It has collected an amazing array of evidence, all linking Ray with the murder.

That he has not been found may be due, first to the possibility that he himself was murdered by those who hired him to kill King; or, second, that he is hiding in some remote Mexican village.

If he has money—and apparently he had—Ray might be able to live in a distant part of Mexico indefinitely. The Mexico City police are efficient and cooperative but police in the remote areas are not. In some villages few Mexicans can read or write and radio news of the outside world does not penetrate.

WHAT THE FBI has established about King's assassin

was that he was a professional killer who had studied the suspense writing of Ian Fleming and Ayn Rand. His pseudonym, Eric Starvo Galt, for instance, was taken from both authors.

Yet, while a student of crime, he was also a bungler. For he left behind the murder rifle with his fingerprints on it and, wrapped around the rifle a bedspread which contained strands of his hair. He also left behind a blue zipper bag containing a brush with hair matching those on the bedspread.

All the evidence we have been able to gather points to the probability that Ray was hired to kill Dr. King. He broke out of the Missouri State Penitentiary April 23, 1967, after boasting to fellow prisoners that he intended to make a big "score" on the outside. He remarked to one inmate that he might try to collect a rumored \$1 million bounty that supposedly had been offered by a "businessmen's group" for the death of Dr. King.

Four months later, Aug. 30, 1967, he opened a safe deposit box in the Birmingham Trust National Bank and suddenly began passing out crisp \$20 bills like a big spender. He paid \$499 for dancing instruction, then quit after only a few lessons. He spent \$395 for mail-order photographic equipment that he didn't

know how to operate.

He shelled out money for a bartending course but showed no interest in working behind any bar. He also took a course in lock-picking from a correspondence school in Michigan. His white Mustang cost \$1,995, which he paid in cash. He drove it from Mexico to Montreal, from Los Angeles to New Orleans.

Occasionally, he slipped \$20 to bar girls and prostitutes. In Mexico he lived with a prostitute in small towns like Jalisco and Puerto Vallarata, where prices were cheap. Once he posed in sun glasses for a picture with his Mexican prostitute. In Los Angeles, he advertised in the hippie newspaper that he would like to meet "a passionate married woman." He also paid \$1 to the Swinger's Club for the names and addresses of five girls.

All told, Ray spent an estimated \$10,000 in seven months. Yet he never held a job and, so far as the FBI can tell, committed no crimes following his escape from the Missouri penitentiary. Previously, he had been involved in a long list of filling station and other robberies. After his escape he became a loner, in some respects became another Lee Harvey Oswald. Meanwhile, he sought to establish a new identity as Eric Starvo Galt.

It seems likely that Ray planned the murder of Dr. King for several months. He finally purchased the Remington rifle in Birmingham on March 30, then moved to a

boarding house in Atlanta. In his room, agents found a map of Atlanta with four locations circled.

They were Dr. King's residence, his headquarters at the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Ray's boarding house and the spot where he abandoned his Mustang after the murder. In the middle of the map was also a clear thumbprint from Ray's right thumb.

Evidently, Ray changed his mind about waylaying King in Atlanta and followed him to Memphis instead. After all the elaborate planning and the careful creation of a new identity, Ray left behind in Memphis the murder rifle, binoculars and a bag full of toilet articles.

IF WHITE extremists put up the blood money it was probably not the Ku Klux Klan or the Minute Men, for they are an impatient lot who would not have waited for several months for Ray to get results.

Black extremists also have not been ruled out. They might have sought to get rid of King in order to remove the prophet of nonviolence.

NOTE: Ray was the product of a broken home. He was the eldest of eight children. His father deserted Ray's mother and various people adopted the children. When the FBI approached the father, they discovered that the elder Ray had not seen his son for 17 years. "I would be the last one he would come to for help," the father said.