

Memorandum of Interview With Former
Patrolman Vernon V. Dollahite of the
Shelby County Sheriff's Department;
Federal Building, Memphis, Tennessee,
July 6, 1976

Former Patrolman Vernon V. Dollahite, Shelby County Sheriff's Department, was interviewed by team members Folsom and Walker on July 6, 1976. Former Patrolman Dollahite, who is now an officer with Metro Helicopters, stated that on April 4, 1968, he was working as a member of Tactical Unit No. 10, under the command of Lt. Judson Ghormley. The "Tact" Unit, consisting of three squad cars and 12 men, arrived at Fire Station No. 2, located at S. Main and E. Butler Streets, shortly before 6:00 P.M. Dollahite said the purpose of going to the fire station was to take a break and possibly to get gas for the squad cars.

Dollahite stated that around 6:00 P.M., while he was getting a cup of coffee in the kitchen area of the fire station, he heard a shot and then heard men in the fire station yell that Dr. King had been shot. Dollahite said he immediately ran out the north side entrance of the fire station, ran east toward the Lorraine Motel, climbed down the retaining wall at the rear of the fire station, and continued across Mulberry Street into the driveway of the Lorraine Motel. Upon entering the driveway Dollahite dropped his service revolver and stopped momentarily to retrieve it. He then proceeded to the area in the parking

lot beneath the balcony where Dr. King's body lay and saw the people gathered there pointing to the rear of a group of buildings on the west side of Mulberry Street.

Dollahite stated that he then ran out of the Lorraine Motel parking lot and turned north on Mulberry Street. He observed the roof tops in back of buildings on Mulberry Street as best he could, but did not see anyone. Dollahite was joined on Mulberry Street by an officer named Maley and they continued running north to Huling and west on Huling toward South Main Street. Officer Maley stopped to check out a driveway on Huling, but Dollahite continued running to South Main and turned south. Dollahite said he got a glimpse of an individual (later identified as Guy W. Canipe) who stepped out of a doorway on Main Street and quickly went back inside the building. Dollahite continued running until he came to Jim's Grill where he stepped inside briefly and told the customers to remain in the restaurant until the police had arrived. Dollahite then continued running south on Main Street with his service revolver drawn. As he passed Canipe's Amusement Co. he saw a suitcase and rifle wrapped in a blanket lying in the doorway and saw Guy W. Canipe and two black men inside the store, but he continued running to the corner of the building (about 30 feet) to see if he could observe anyone. After seeing a group of officers running north on Main, Dollahite said he told a black officer to stand guard over the articles wrapped in the blanket.

Dollahite estimated that it took approximately one minute and 50 seconds from the time he heard the shot until the time he arrived at the corner of South Main and Huling. At that time he did not see anyone on the street, nor did he see a car leave the area at a high rate of speed.