

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : SAC (44-1987)

DATE: 4/12/68

FROM : SA FRANKLIN L. JOHNSON

SUBJECT: MURKIN
CR

*See Suggested
Assignment —
WORK MEMO*

RE: INVESTIGATION AT FIRE STATION
AND VICINITY

Lt. W. S. SCHULTZ, Homicide Bureau, Memphis Police Department, who was contacted by this Agent on 4/10/68 in an effort to identify the Deputy Sheriff who was described by three witnesses at Canipe Amusement Company as being the first person to walk south on Main Street after Unsub departed from the vicinity of Canipe's, advised that there were a number of officers on duty and physically located at the fire station, Main and Butler, at the time of the murder of Dr. KING. All of the officers at the fire station immediately came outside and a number of them ran out of north exits to the fire station, then running east, over a fence and down about a 10' concrete retaining wall which is located on the west side of Mulberry Street.

A number of these officers continued running to the scene of the shooting at the Lorraine Hotel. However, after the first group of officers arrived and received information indicating that the shot had probably been fired from the rear of one of the buildings on the 400 block of Main Street, the officers on the scene began to point and shout to the general location of the rooming house at 422 1/2 South Main Street, and thereafter other officers who had started to the scene of the shooting at the Lorraine Hotel, some of whom were already in the vicinity of the above-mentioned concrete retaining wall, turned around, ran west to Main Street, then north on Main to the vicinity of Canipe Amusement Company and the rooming house.

One of these officers, VERNON VERNARD DOLLARHITE, white male, age 23, who has been a Deputy since January 1967,

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has been interviewed by this Agent. In substance, he jumped over the above-mentioned fence, scaled down the concrete retaining wall, ran to the Lorraine Hotel, then after other officers were on the scene he continued running from the Lorraine Hotel in a counterclockwise manner to Main Street, stepped inside Jim's Grill momentarily, then proceeded to the vicinity of Canipe's, walking past Canipe's at first and later returning to the doorway at Canipe's, then stationed himself on the west side of Main Street opposite Canipe's.

Officer DOLLARHITE advised that when he first passed Canipe's walking south, he met at least two uniformed officers of the Memphis Police Department and immediately thereafter a number of other officers arrived in the area around Canipe's.

In view of the proximity of the fire station to both the Lorraine Hotel and the rooming house and Canipe's, and the possible relevance of the movements and activities of the officers and others at the fire station, it is suggested that we have a separate project for reporting the activities of this group of men.

There are several points which may be entirely cleared up by reviewing the police statements and where necessary conducting additional interviews with this group of men, including:

1) One person located in U. S. Fixtures has reported seeing a young white male wearing a brown jacket, running south on Main Street past U. S. Fixtures within a couple of minutes after the shooting. I know of no other witnesses who have reported a man running south on Main right after the shooting, and the possibility exists this might be an officer. Witnesses at Canipe's definitely place a uniformed detective (undoubtedly DOLLARHITE) as the first pedestrian to appear in the vicinity of Canipe's after the Unknown Subject dropped the package.

2) - KING's chauffeur, according to information received at the conference 4/12/68, has reported seeing an individual with some type of "hood" up on the bank west of the Lorraine Motel, which individual then walked or ran west toward Main Street.

3) It still has not definitely been established whether the Mustang had pulled away from a point just south of Canipe's prior to the time Officer DOLLARHITE arrived on the east sidewalk of Main Street at Huling or whether there is some possibility that the Unsub came out of the rooming house, dropped the package, got in the Mustang and drove off during the time that Officer DOLLARHITE had stepped into Jim's Grill to tell all those present to remain there until officers interviewed them. With regard to this point, however, the best judgment at this time is that the Unsub had left the area before DOLLARHITE ever arrived on Main Street.

In going through the copies of police statements which have been sent to this office, we have located copies of statements of 14 officers who were at the fire station. On 4/12/68 Lt. SCHULTZ advised that he still has some interviews to conduct with persons who were at the fire station, including some firemen.

He stated that his interviews to date, however, indicate that there were a number of officers who had proceeded from the fire station toward the Lorraine Motel, but after seeing that other officers were already at the scene or after learning that the shot had come from the rear of one of the buildings on Main Street, turned west, going back to Main Street. He stated he was also of the opinion that the dress of the officers may have varied considerably, as he noticed that when he interviewed them, some of them were wearing light colored upper clothing and of course some of them were wearing helmets. He stated that he had gained the impression that within a couple of minutes after the shooting was reported, the tactical units in the area had sealed off the entire area around the scene of the shooting and the rooming house. He stated that none of the officers had reported seeing any pedestrian traffic other than those individuals grouped around KING's body at the Lorraine Motel. No officer reported seeing any pedestrian walking or running in the vicinity of the rooming house. He therefore is of the opinion that the Unknown Subject had come out of the rooming house and left the area before the first officer ever arrived on the scene.

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SUGGESTION:

It is suggested that the investigation at the fire station be made the subject of a separate project and that the Agent assigned to this, work with Lt. SCHULTZ.

Attached hereto are copies of 14 statements taken by the Police Department from the following named officers:

- 1) VERNON VERNARD DOLLARHITE
MW, 23
Patrolman, SO
3330 Dawn Drive, Apt. 12
358-8067
- 2) J. E. GHORMLEY
MW, 40
Lieutenant, SO
4124 Bonnie
386-6034
- 3) W. J. BERRY
MW, 32
Patrolman, SO
1544 Rebecca
323-7112
- 4) CHARLES ELVIN STONE
MW, 24
Fireman, City of Memphis
584 Orchard
358-3571
- 5) W. A. DUFOUR
MW, 37
Patrolman, SO
3044 Coleman Ave.
452-2416
- 6) RONALD WESLEY MALEY
MW, 23
Patrolman, SO
4683 Montgomery, Millington, Tenn.
872-3524

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7)

CARROLL D. DUNN
MW, 31
Patrolman, Memphis PD
4946 Teal
363-3645

8)

WILLIAM E. GROSS
MW, 39
Patrolman, Memphis PD
4728 Tutwiler
683-0463

9)

TORRENCE N. LANDERS
MW, 33
Patrolman, Memphis PD
4085 Reenie
386-5206

10)

R. N. BAKER
MW, 24
Patrolman, SO
53 North Humes
324-9934

11)

EMMETT E. DOUGLASS
MW, 31
Patrolman, Memphis PD
1236 Inman Cove
324-3026

12)

JASON CARL MORRIS
MW, 23
Patrolman, Armour Station Patrol
2251 South Parkway East, Apt. 3
458-5226

13)

BARNEY G. WRIGHT,
MW, 39
Patrolman, Emergency Squad, Memphis PD
4264 Dunn
327-6477

14)

a PD "Supplement" #3 by Lt. T. H. SMITH
and Detective R. R. DAVIS, who arrived
on scene about 6:13 p.m. and conducted
some preliminary interviews.

It is suggested that at this time there is no basis for reinterviewing in detail every one of these officers, but that rather in reporting on the activities emanating from the fire station, the Agent coordinating the matter could attribute to Lt. SCHULTZ information as to the complete name, position, department, address, etc., of each person he has interviewed, with a very brief summary (few lines) as to what that officer did and where he went after the shooting, thus accounting for these officers in this manner unless there is some reason to go back and conduct a more detailed interview with them. DOLLARHITE, it is to be noted, has already been reinterviewed and this Agent will submit the FD-302. There are other officers that the Agent may desire to reinterview, such as TORRENCE N. LANDERS (see attached statement), who climbed up into the lot or grassy area behind the rooming house (possibly the man with the "hood" described by the chauffeur); Lt. J. E. GHORMLEY (see attached statement), who started toward the Lorraine Motel but turned around and ran back toward Main Street, then proceeding to the front of Canipe's; and WILLIAM E. GROSS (see attached statement), whose movements were similar to those of Officer GHORMLEY's.

In interviewing these persons, among other points which should be covered are:

- 1) Identity of the very first officer seen by them to be at or near Canipe's.
- 2) How each of the interviewees was dressed and whether there were other officers wearing any type of upper garments which might be described as white or light colored and which would resemble the "hood" as mentioned by KING's chauffeur.
- 3) Whether there was any officer (besides Officer DOLLARHITE) who ran on Main Street past U. S. Fixtures moments after the shooting; if so, how that officer was dressed.

On 4/12/68 I discussed with Lt. SCHULTZ the need to clarify some of the above points, and he stated he would be most happy to assist an Agent in clarifying the above information and in recontacting where necessary any of the above-mentioned persons he has interviewed. Noted that he still has several interviews to conduct.

*e.g. in uniform
or some special
upper garments
helmet, light jacket
etc.*