

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date April 12, 1968

MARRELL MC CULLOUGH, residing 270 Gaston, Apartment 6, Memphis, Tennessee, telephone 947-4265, who is employed as a warehouseman by the Summerall Electric Company, 345 S. Parkway, Memphis, telephone WH8-4455, advised as follows:

MC CULLOUGH is a native of the state of Mississippi and has lived in Memphis, Tennessee, since approximately February 1967. He had been present at the Lorraine Hotel and Motel, 406 S. Mulberry Street, Memphis, from approximately 5:55 p.m. until approximately 8:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 4, 1968, and was present when Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR., President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), was shot.

He explained his presence as follows:

MC CULLOUGH, who is a Negro, had been a sympathetic supporter of the Memphis sanitation workers who had been on strike in Memphis beginning February 12, 1968.

Beginning around the early part of March 1968, MC-CULLOUGH, in his spare time, has engaged in various strike support activities sponsored by a group of Memphis Negro ministers who have adopted the name Community on the Move for Equality (COME). He has worked with this group and other supporters in the Memphis community engaging in sympathy marches and other strike support activity which is primarily centered in the headquarters of the Minimum Salary Division of the AME Church, 276 Hernando, Memphis, and at the Clayborn Temple AME Church at 280 Hernando.

Around March 18, 1968, the SCLC sent various of its staff to Memphis to assist the COME group in strike support activity, and in fact, Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR, made a public speech in behalf of the sanitation workers at Mason Temple on the night of March 18, 1968. Dr. KING returned to Memphis on the morning of March 28, 1968, to lead a mass downtown Memphis strike support march, and after a major disturbance occurred in the Beale Street area of Memphis resulting in considerable

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 by SA HOWELL S. LOWE ^{HS}
SA WILLIAM H. LAWRENCE ^{WHL}:LP Date dictated 4/12/68

property damage by some of the marchers, the SCLC staff left various of its members in Memphis to further organize the strike support activity. Shortly after March 28, 1968, Mr. MC CULLOUGH became acquainted with two members of Dr. KING's staff; namely, Rev. JAMES ORANGE, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Rev. JAMES BEVEL, of Birmingham, Alabama, and Chicago, Illinois, and he has worked with them on various projects since that time.

On the afternoon of April 4, 1968, MC CULLOUGH, who has a blue 1967 Volkswagen, 1600 series, fastback, drove to the Lorraine Motel accompanied in his car by Rev. JAMES ORANGE and Rev. JAMES BEVEL, and he fixed their arrival at the motel in the car at about 5:55 p.m. He parked his Volkswagen in the motel parking lot which would be on the east side of Mulberry and just south of the old hotel portion of the Lorraine Hotel and Motel. His car had been followed by a white Pontiac Tempest, exact model number not recalled, driven by CLARA ESTER, a student at LeMoyné College and who he understands resides at 396 LaCledé, Memphis, and another young lady, MARY HUNT, who lives on Baltimore Street in the Orange Mound area of Memphis and who he believes attends Memphis State University. These young ladies had also been working in some of the strike support activity sponsored by COME, and they had been with BEVEL, ORANGE and MC CULLOUGH at the Clayborn Temple prior to coming to the Lorraine Motel.

They parked their car behind the Volkswagen, and at that point, BEVEL, ORANGE and MC CULLOUGH and HUNT and ESTER got out of their cars and stood around the parking lot area. MC CULLOUGH recalled seeing numerous other people on the north end of the parking lot area which is directly in front of the new motel portion of the Lorraine and recalled seeing a Negro singing group managed by JAMES BEVEL known as the "Bread Basket Group." He did not know any of their specific identities.

MC CULLOUGH was first aware of the presence in the vicinity of Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. when he got out of his car and observed Dr. KING standing on the second floor balcony of the motel almost directly in front of Room 306, which had been Dr. KING's room during his recent visit to Memphis. Dr. KING was leaning over the rail which runs in front of an outside walkway running the length of the second floor motel portion, and MC CULLOUGH noticed no one else on the balcony with him at the time.

At this point, which would probably have been close to 6:00 p.m., either shortly before or shortly thereafter, Mr. MC CULLOUGH walked back toward the car driven by CLARA ESTER and Rev. BEVEL and Rev. ORANGE walked north on the parking lot toward the group of people who were standing there.

Suddenly, MC CULLOUGH heard an explosive sound and recalled that he was standing and facing north when he first heard it. He was standing south of the position occupied by Dr. KING and noted that the rail on which Dr. KING had been leaning runs north and south, and that KING would have been facing Mulberry Street, or to the west with his back facing the doorway of the motel and to the east. MC CULLOUGH was unable to adequately describe the sound other than it was rather loud and had a seeming echo to it. He has served in the U. S. Army and would offer an opinion based on his Army experience and limited knowledge of firearms that the noise which he heard was a gunshot sound.

Immediately thereafter, someone in the crowd, identity not recalled, by MC CULLOUGH stated in essence, "Dr. KING has been shot." MC CULLOUGH pointed out that he had been facing north when he heard the sound, and upon hearing the person say something to the effect that Dr. KING had been shot, he looked easterly and upward toward the rail where Dr. KING had been standing and observed Dr. KING falling backward in a southeasterly direction. It appeared as though Dr. KING may have been grasping with one of his hands for his throat area, although MC CULLOUGH could not be positive as to the physical movement, if any, of Dr. KING's hands. Almost immediately, MC CULLOUGH turned his head in a westerly direction looking across Mulberry Street, which runs north and south, and saw no one either on the ground or in any of the buildings which face east toward the Lorraine Hotel and Motel. He saw no one in the area in the vicinity of the motel with a gun or a weapon of any sort.

He saw no one running from the area in any direction.

A few seconds later, he recalled seeing a group of what he felt were Memphis Fire Department employees running from the rear entrance of the fire station which faces Main Street and whose rear entrance faces Mulberry Street and which is located just south of the motel, noting that these firemen seemed to be running toward the vicinity of the motel.

ME 44-1987

When MC CULLOUGH looked upward again at the point where Dr. KING had fallen, he was first conscious of seeing Rev. JESSE JACKSON, an SCLC staff member from Chicago, looking out a doorway of a motel room just south of the room previously occupied by Dr. KING. JACKSON would have been looking in a westerly or actually a northwesterly direction, because he was looking toward KING's prone body.

Almost instinctively, MC CULLOUGH ran up the outdoor iron and cement stairway which leads to the balcony from the ground level and which is located about two or three motel doors south of where KING's body rested. He turned north on the balcony upon reaching the second floor level, running toward Dr. KING's body, and noticed that Dr. KING was lying prone in a crosswise position with his head pointing in a southeasterly direction and his feet pointing in a northwesterly direction, his feet being located adjacent to the protective railing.

Mr. MC CULLOUGH was the first person to reach the body of Dr. KING, and he knelt down to Dr. KING's prone body. Almost simultaneously, one of the Negroes at the motel, identity not recalled, handed MC CULLOUGH a towel which MC CULLOUGH used to apply pressure to the wounded area of Dr. KING's body, which he recalled was on the right side of his face in the immediate area of his cheekbone and running down into his upper neck area. The wound was recalled by him to be a large wound, not unlike a tear. The flesh on Dr. KING's face on the right side thereof appeared to be torn backward toward the rear of his head area, and the wound appeared to start around the middle of his cheekbone and continue downward into his upper neck area. He also recalled seeing splotches of blood, possibly pinhead in size, in the immediate vicinity of the large wounded area, and his first impression was that these may have been minute pellet wounds, although he now feels that they were probably mere blood splotches or spots.

MC CULLOUGH attempted to apply pressure to the wound in an effort to stop the bleeding, as the bleeding was quite profuse at this time, and as he knelt down and observed Dr. KING's body in its prone position with his back facing the concrete floor and the front side of his body facing upward, the wound would have had to have been caused by a bullet or projectile coming toward Dr. KING from a northwesterly direction since it entered the right side of his face and since KING

ME 44-1987

was last recalled being seen by him looking directly west as he stood against the hand rail. It was his definite impression at the time, and he still holds to this impression, that the shot would have come from one of the buildings to the northwest. There is a series of old buildings located just west of the motel whose fronts would face on S. Main Street, which is the next north-south street west of Mulberry.

From the second story position of Dr. KING when he was shot, coupled with the position of the wound beginning around his cheekbone area and dropping down toward his neck area, he believes the shot in all probability would have come from one of these buildings at an elevated level rather than from the ground area surrounding the buildings.

MC CULLOUGH also recalled that as he applied the pressure around Dr. KING's cheekbone and upper neck area with the towel, he was aware of an unusual odor which was similar to the odor which one smells when a firecracker is exploded.

Shortly thereafter, he was conscious of the fact that CLARA ESTER and MARY HUNT had come up onto the balcony and were standing near him. By this time, there was no doubt in MC CULLOUGH's mind that Dr. KING was dead. There was no movement in his body, and his eyes were immobile and he believes they were open, although he could not be certain of this. He estimated he applied the pressure for one to two minutes, and by this time, a number of Negroes had gathered around the body, and he recalled seeing Rev. RALPH B. ABERNATHY, Dr. KING's chief aide. ABERNATHY knelt down and began applying pressure with the towel which had originally been held by MC CULLOUGH.

At this point, Rev. ABERNATHY relieved MC CULLOUGH, as MC CULLOUGH noted that CLARA ESTER and MARY HUNT were crying and appeared to be shaken considerably at the sight of Dr. KING's body. He was afraid they would become hysterical and he thereafter walked with them away from the area. They walked down the outside motel stairs to the south of Dr. KING's body onto the parking lot area and stood around.

ME 44-1987

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By this time, it would probably have been a few minutes after 6:00 p.m., and he observed a large number of members of the Memphis Police Department and possibly the Shelby County Sheriff's Office in the immediate area. One of the officers, identity not recalled, asked all of the people in the immediate area to remain and not leave.

He estimated that he stood around the parking lot area in the immediate hotel and motel area until close to 8:00 p.m. and when no one had asked him specifically not to leave he left and returned to the Clayborn Temple.

He had been to the motel on Wednesday, April 3, 1968, with some of the SCIC people and representatives of the COME group, and at no time while around the Lorraine Motel did he recall seeing any individuals he could consider to be suspicious or who may have given the impression they were observing the area other than the fact that he had from time to time seen law enforcement officers in the area. He was unable to pinpoint the exact times when he had seen this.

MC CULLOUGH concluded that he knew of no suspects and had not recalled having heard any of his associates mention any suspects or any suspicious persons who may have been frequenting the area of the motel during the day or two prior to Dr. KING's death.