

Why all the reference to the unpub-
lished \$10 million + some to
Franko: Up (again!) Huh, too
credits them & not me.

"According to Ray" should be
"according to Huh" & where
is Huh paying Ray's past
lawyers not only on 2000

This is new man business that
is playing him from at is
childish & has to stop & there
is a really strong possibility
of trouble - from bad p-n,
from Ray & from me. It is
a shabby business to use

my work as young & where
honest & appropriate to justify
it with official Army to
instead amount ~~of~~
your base as the other side
~~There~~ There has been a
hacking of your work

There
No mention any book &
none of this is original
They will see, Further work
will not. Common sense
no title prevail.

James McKinley
7309 NW Maple Lane
Kansas City, Missouri 64151

"This thing with me will be resolved by death and violence."

Malcolm X

"I'm not fearing any man. . . . Mine eyes have seen the glory
of the coming of the Lord."

Martin Luther King, Jr.

John Kennedy's unfathomable death created in many Americans a terrifying expectancy. If that could happen, what would not? We sensed that the potential for political murder had been only partially discharged with Kennedy. Somehow it was still suspended above the nation, a nearly palpable menace awaiting its moment. Who would be next, we wondered?

The answer surprised us. Our next two assassination victims were not, as always before, powerful white politicians. Instead, the assassins struck black reformers. Black men, in fact, who in different ways--the one as incendiary, the other as dreamer--were protesting the injustices they believed white politicians had caused or tolerated.

The first to die, Malcolm X, put his bitterness succinctly. Of Kennedy's assassination he said, "Chickens coming home to roost never did

make me sad; they've always made me glad." The chickens Malcolm had in mind were not just in ghettos; he felt they had also winged in from Southeast Asia and the Third World. It didn't matter that Kennedy at the time of his death was preparing wide-ranging civil-rights legislation, or that his inheritor, Lyndon Johnson, was sponsoring bills that in time would inspire some black leaders to hail him as the greatest civil-rights President since Lincoln.

That was not enough for Malcolm, or for Martin Luther King. They wanted justice now, freedom now. Like the ^{preacher's} sons they were, they exhorted their disciples to demand just that. But before they could see those demands met, each was dead, and soon, each's cause faltered. Assassination had again removed a leader and deflected, perhaps thwarted, his movement. For those who kept faith with Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, it was small comfort that the ultimate effects of their deaths were unknowable. Better to turn, in grief and wrath, to assassination's only other constant, the questions of just who killed them, and why.

With Malcolm X it seemed simple. On Sunday afternoon, February 21, 1965, three men attacked Malcolm while he was addressing a congregation of his Organization of Afro-American Unity in the Audubon Ballroom, at 166th street and Broadway, New York. The assassins were well-drilled. Two stood up about eight rows from the rostrum. "Don't be messin' with my pockets," one hollared and while Malcolm asked them to cool it, his bodyguards moved that way. Then smoke billowed from a man's sock, soaked in lighter fluid and set afire in the aisle. As Malcolm and his 400

Z JFK

violence
cost soul

followers stared at the confusion, a man rushed the stage with a sawed-off double-barrelled, twelve-gauge shotgun wrapped in a gray jacket. The blasts caught Malcolm in the chest, blowing him backwards over a chair. The other two men moved up and pumped shot after shot from a .38 and .45 into his body before all three ran to escape. Two made it, but a body-guard's pistol felled one just outside. The crowd broke his leg and would have killed him if the police hadn't come to the rescue. They soon identified him as Talmadge Hayer, a.k.a. Thomas Hagan.

In the ballroom, Malcolm X was dead. His pregnant wife Betty Shabazz wailed over his body, and another woman keened, "Oh, black folks, black /folks, why you got to kill each other?" That was it, obviously. Malcolm's lieutenants were sure Elijah Muhammad had ordered this killing, and that Black Muslims had carried it out. Sixteen months ago Elijah had suspended Malcolm from the Muslims, ostensibly for his remark about Kennedy, but really, they thought, because Muhammad feared the startling charisma of Malcolm, feared that Malcolm's new organization would attract more blacks than the Muslims, and above all, feared that Malcolm would tell what he knew about sub-rosa Muslim activities.

Malcolm himself had thought the Muslims might kill him. They were responsible, he'd said, for the fire-bombing of his house just six days before he went to the Audubon. That was their gratitude for all he'd done. He'd built the Muslim organization in New York. He'd enrolled their most famous recruit, the young heavyweight Cassius Clay. He'd articulated for them the black man's rage as no-one had. "If ballots won't work, bullets will," Malcolm had once proclaimed, and now he feared

hegemony?

he was to be the proof of that sentiment. That seemed ironic. He, born Malcolm Little, the man who in his youth *was* convinced that white racists had burned his home and killed his father, who as "Big Red" (for his reddish hair and light skin, the legacy of a "white rapist" grandfather) had gotten through zoot-suits and process-hair, through dealing cocaine and grass, *through* burglary and six years in the slammer where he'd learned about Islam and become converted, and then made it up close to Elijah's side, this man was now to be killed not by the "white devils" he excoriated but by his one-time brothers. *Still*, even Malcolm *admitted* they had reason. After he'd left the Muslims, Malcolm accused the 67-year-old Elijah of sexual promiscuity (anathema to Muslims) with teen-age "secretaries," and declared he would, if threatened, tell what he knew; for example, about deals the Muslims had made with the Ku Klux Klan and the American Nazi Party. Such things could badly damage the sect. "The die is set, and Malcolm shall not escape," Elijah opined. No wonder that Malcolm wrote, "Some of the followers of Elijah Muhammad would still consider it a first-rank honor to kill me."

It had apparently happened. Soon after the shooting police arrested two Black Muslims as Hayer's accomplices. Thomas (15X) Johnson *was* eventually tried as the shotgunner Norman (3X) Butler was charged with being the other gunman. Both had reputations as enforcers for the Muslims (Butler was out on \$100,000 bond for shooting another Muslim defector when Malcolm was assassinated). In 1966, the three were convicted of the murder and sentenced to life. A rougher sort of justice moved faster than that. Within thirty-six hours of Malcolm's death the Muslim's Mosque Number 7 in

Harlem burned beyond repair, and for months after Malcolm's allies publicly, if futilely, threatened to kill Elijah. But at least everyone agreed. The Muslims--atleast some Muslims--had assassinated Malcolm X.

That verdict still seems fair, even considering that no firm evidence ever led beyond the three accused assassins (Elijah repeatedly denied any personal or organizational responsibility). Of course, there were rumors of other people who wanted Malcolm dead. His half-sister thought the "power structure of the West," maybe the CIA, might have done it because ^{if} Malcolm had lived ^{he} would have changed American society so much. James Farmer, former CORE director, said Malcolm could have been killed by Harlem narcotics interest, because of his crusade against drugs (Malcolm remained a Moslem, adhering to their strictures about intoxicants). Others have said, yes, but it was the Red Chinese who did it, or maybe Turks or Arabs, all of them exporters of drugs which were heavily used by black, a habit Malcolm hoped to end. There were also speculations that Malcolm was betrayed by his bodyguards, most of whom were once Black Muslims. But no proof of these conspiracies emerged, and they entered the limbo of incredible assassination theories.

We were left with the only irreducible fact: Malcolm X was dead. Many called that good riddance, remembering his hysterical rantings against whites, his calls for a separate black nation, his exhortations to blacks to buy guns and "get the white monkey off your back." Yet near the end Malcolm seemed to have changed. He professed a new idealism, a brotherhood of all ^{the} oppressed instead of a war between the darker and the

Roberts

paler races. He thought the Muslim separatist philosophy produced "zombies." He said he was glad to be free of his hysteria, of "the sickness and madness of those days . . . it's a time for martyrs now. And if I'm to be one, it will be in the cause of brotherhood." Unfortunately, he did not die in brotherhood's name, but in a climate of violence which his early hate-mongering may partially have made. Only his magnificent autobiography suggests what Malcolm might have become in other climes. Sadly, the violent weather was to hold, a fact deplored at the time of Malcolm's death by Martin Luther King, who ruefully said such violence "is not good for the image of our nation and not good for the Negro cause." That was three years before Memphis, where King became a genuine martyr to brotherhood.

MORE TO COME

It was there, of course, that Martin Luther King and James Earl Ray came to be paired as saint and criminal in the pantheon of American assassinations. Yet as with Lincoln and Booth, Kennedy and Oswald, there are vital questions surrounding that pairing, so many that we truly know only two things.

First, we know that at 6:00 p.m. on April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King ~~was~~ *was* leaning on the railing of the balcony of Memphis's Lorraine Motel into the sights of a 30.06 rifle. One minute later a ~~shot~~ *bullet* flipped through his right jaw and into his throat and body, killing him with a single shot which ended his dream of social equality, which burned Detroit and Washington, which launched a world-wide search for his killer, and which eventually brought in a ~~skinky~~ *S* petty criminal escaped convict and lifelong-loser variously called Eric Starvo Galt, Harvey Lowmyer, John Willard, John L. Rayns, Paul Bridgman, Ramon George Sneyd, but known to us soon and ever since as James Earl Ray.

Second, we know that even if James Earl Ray did kill King--and there is reasonable doubt that it could be proved--he has been victimized, almost framed, *legal* by judicial irregularities, the cover-up of important facts in the slaying, and a failure by the FBI and Memphis police to investigate thoroughly the possibility of a conspiracy. *h.s own lawyers*

To understand those two things, we must begin with Martin Luther King. King was in Memphis to lead a protest march in support of Local 1733, the all-black union of garbage and sewer workers. The 1300 men had gone on strike in February, asking for a fifty-cent an hour raise, workmen's compensation, an insurance program. Memphis officials refused. Inevitably, trouble built. The town seethed with race hate. Memphis's black leaders called for Dr. King, the Nobel apostle of non-violence.

pay note them

On March 18th King arrived from Anaheim, California, where he'd given a speech the day before. (James Earl Ray, then underground in Los Angeles

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had noticed it.) In Memphis, King exhorted fifteen thousand people to join in a work stoppage. It happened, but the agent was a freak show storm, not aggrieved citizens. One plan frustrated, King consented to lead a march on March 28.

It was a disaster. Militant youths, the "Invaders," broke King's non-violent rules and some windows. They looted stores, touched off a riot in which police killed a 17-year old boy. Cops moved in, plucked King and Ralph Abernathy and Jesse Jackson and others out of the melee and took them to the fashionable Rivermont Motel. (During the recent revelations of FBI harassment of King, we found that the Bureau tried to leak the news that King was staying in a white establishment, so as to embarrass him. In turn, one of Ray's ~~current~~ ^{9!} attorneys has speculated that the FBI really wanted to drive King out of the Rivermont to the Lorraine where he could be more easily killed.) Anyway, things were more volatile than ever. Could King come back for a second march if they'd cool off the kids? King again agreed. They'd march on Friday, April 5. Thus it was that King returned to Memphis from Atlanta on April 3, and checked into the black-owned Lorraine Motel. Lots of people knew it, what with the TV and radio coverage. In room 306 he waited for his bullet.

Did James Earl Ray fire it? The physical evidence proves no more than that James Earl Ray was involved in Martin Luther King's assassination-- something Ray has admitted, saying "I personally did not shoot Dr. King, but I believe I may be partly responsible for his death." Furthermore, other evidence-- which Ray's 1969 guilty plea (forced out of him by his ^{Mr. Percy Foreman} lawyer, he says) prevented from being tried in a court-- suggests a conspiracy as much as it does a lone killer. ^{less} But in either case King ^(is) at the Lorraine on April 4. Where is Ray? For a time ~~no more~~ ^{less} than three hundred feet away, in a rooming house at

1/2/68

418½-422½ Main Street,

was

The room, 5B

in the north section of the divided building, a flophouse special featuring a chipped iron bedstead arched at each end like a leer. On the bed was the April 4 edition of the Memphis Commercial-Appeal. In it was a report of Martin Luther King's speech the previous night, of his vow to march, and more, of an incandescent prophecy. ". . . Some began to talk about the threats that were out, of what would happen to me from some of our sick white brothers. . . . Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it really doesn't matter with me now. Because I've been . . . to the mountain-top!" Then his people heard him say, ". . . Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now," and then on, his voice building, until he shouted, his broad face varnished in sweat; "So, I'm happy tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. . . . Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord!" The adulation washed over him. It must temporarily have cleansed him of the fear he'd recently admitted to close associates and friends, the fear which festered with every threat on his life since the first attempt in 1958, with every confrontation, with the fact of his surveillance by the FBI (and the Memphis police, even now, as he spoke and at the motel from a fire station across the street). He may, too, have been shed for the moment of his correct suspicions that J. Edgar Hoover's animosity had led to illegal wire-taps, to a letter suggesting he commit suicide, to the gossip spread about alleged sexual misbehavior.

All that is sure, though, is that the next day anyone in room 5B could push aside the yellow and green-flowered plastic curtain and see the balcony at the Lorraine, could see room 306. James Earl Ray may have looked there,

for certainly he was in the room at times, between about 3:30 and 5:30 on April 4. However, no-one, would have taken a shot at King from that window. You'd have to lean half out for any sort of accuracy. But there was a bathroom a door away from 5B. From it a man could get a clear diagonal shot across the weedy, bushy back yards and Mulberry Street, if he could get the rifle out the window and stand in, and with one foot up on the edge of the cratered bathtub. And if he weren't interrupted. ^{or Reilly} In this rooming-house the toilet got a lot of use, as it does in places inhabited by heavy drinkers. One such lived directly next door, in 6B, named Charles Quitman Stephens. Charley had seen James Earl Ray around 3:30 that afternoon, he later said, and he'd come out inot the hall when Mrs. Bessie Brewer, the manager was showing this fellow 5B. He told police and newsmen that he could also identify James Earl Ray as the neat, "sharpfaced" man whom he'd seen in the failing twilight run down the hall after the shot, carrying a bundle, running, he thought, from the bathroom which had been locked at odd times between 3:30 and the shooting. Oddly, his common-law mate Grace said Charley had to be wrong, that the running man she'd seen through her door looked nothing like Ray, and that Charley didn't see the man until he was clear down the hall rounding the corner for the downward stairs.

Could it have been Ray? No-one denies he was in the rooming house. Or that he had with him a 30.06 Model 760 Remington Gamemaster slide-action rifle fitted with a Redfield 2x7 telescopic sight. At about four o'clock, he'd also bought a pair of Bushnell 7x35 binoculars at the York Arms Company ^{nearby} ~~a half-mile~~ away, ^{J/} perhaps for observing King. And the binoculars, along with the rifle (one spent casing in the chamber and none in the four-shot clip), eleven other 30.06 cartridges including five military rounds, a green and brown bed-spread, plastic a Browning Mauser Rifle black-cardboard box, and a 15x20 inch blue/overnight case

earl/ray

Denial

not on rifle

J/

J/3/

transistor radio

filled with toiletries, a white T-shirt (size 42-44), a pair of darned gray and white paisley undershorts (size 34), a transistor radio, two cans of Schlitz, a pair of pliers and a tack hammer make up the famous "bundle of evidence" which Ray is said to have dropped in the door of the Canipe Amusement Company at 424 Main Street after the fatal 6:01 p.m. shot.

Ray also was in the bathroom or, more properly, Ray as John Willard, the name he'd given Mrs. Brewer. His palm print, the police said, was on the wall

the police saw also

above the bath-tub where he'd leaned against the wall to get in the tub to take the shot. It did not turn out to be his. In the 21174 tub is was claimed that were three The scuff marks of shoes were ~~clearly~~ *clearly* visible ~~in the tub, too,~~ *in the tub, too,* and there ~~was an~~ *was* identifiable James Earl Ray fingerprint on the rifle. In room

5B the FBI picked up fibers from the bed-spread as well as hair samples, the straps from the binocular case, and other bits of physical evidence proving that Ray was in 5B.

Superficially,

Altogether, the weight of physical evidence against Ray seemed *convincing.*

Atlanta police were told about his car. They told the. It also was

A week after the killing ~~the police and FBI even found his car in Atlanta,~~

~~with him in it.~~ loaded with stuff, clothes and camera gear and even a white sheet, there in

a 1966 Polonoid American and Company

the 1966 white Mustang said to be parked by Canipe's on south Main Street when

have been

King was killed and in which Ray made his escape, driving from Memphis to Atlanta,

and Detroit, a cab to Windsor, Ontario and

and then abandoning in favor of a bus to Cincinnati, *a train to Toronto,* and then

planes to London, Lisbon, and back to London where he was caught ~~in~~ *in* June, 1968.

Authorities would prove it was Ray's car, after they proved it was Eric Starvo Galt's and that Galt was Ray. Establishing that could not convict Ray, however,

First mention

J/ since he says it was his car. Moreover, that indefatigable assassination researcher Harold Weisberg--a main force behind current efforts to secure Ray a new trial--believes he has evidence showing puzzling things about the car,

Ray's and held others

like that it was almost bare of fingerprints although there were several of Ray's ~~left in Memphis,~~ and that there were cigarette butts in it when Ray didn't smoke, and there was mud on the passenger side when Ray was supposedly alone, and there was a white sheet on the back seat, and some of the clothes didn't fit Ray. As we'll see in tracing alternate explanations for the crime, these items could be important.

But to return to the car, it had been odd that no all-points bulletin was issued to stop a white Mustang. *said he a white car* Mr. Canipe had watched ~~one~~ roar past his door after he'd seen someone drop the bundle. The Tennessee State Police said they never got a request for an APB, and the Memphis police said that was because they had no proof the "young white male, well dressed" in the white Mustang had killed King, even though, yes, they had at 6:08 broadcast a local call to stop such a car. Trouble was, there were lots of white Mustangs in

Memphis, at least four hundred, and besides after the killing there was a phony radio broadcast about a wild chase up in north-east Memphis with a white Mustang running away from a blue Pontiac, with three white men shooting at the Pontiac. *what turned out to be* *as* Police *prosecutors* explained that/a schoolboy prank which had come too late (at 6:35 p.m.) to be part of a conspiracy. It was interesting, though, that the broadcast diverted attention from the southern routes out of Memphis which Ray admitted he took.

Besides the fingerprints and car there were mountains of other evidence pointing to Ray as the man who murdered King. Eyewitnesses were to identify him as the man who, on March 29 in Birmingham, Alabama (fresh from Los Angeles via New Orleans, Selma and Atlanta), had purchased a .243 Remington Gamemaster rifle, ordered it fitted with a 2x7 variable power scope, bought some

cartridges, and given his name as Harvey Lowmyer, 1807 South Eleventh Street, Birmingham, Alabama. The next day, *though*, Mr. Lowmyer brought the rifle back to the Aeromarine Supply Company and asked for a heavier rifle, a 30.06 because his "brother" had said the .243 wasn't big enough for the hunting they planned in Wisconsin. The obliging clerk, Don Wood, gave Lowmyer the same Remington model in a 30.06, fitted it with the scope, *same exchange the* added cartridges, and put everything into a ~~black~~ Browning box because the scope made the rifle too *wide* big for the Remington box. Mr. Lowmyer seemed grateful, Wood said. So were the FBI since through the rifle and Wood they could identify Lowmyer as Galt as ~~Willard as~~ Ray, hence as the murderer because hadn't that 30.06 killed King?

That would be contested in later proceedings since the FBI's ballistics expert Robert Frazier (who had worked on the John Kennedy killing, too) *W/* could say only that the deformed slug was "consistent with" the rifle--a meaningless statement since the same would be true of any of about nine million 30.06's in America. (Some firearms identification texts and experts say the slug was not too mutilated to link with a specific weapon, since a full 3/8 inch of its base remained, or a "perfect evidence slug" as Ray's first lawyers called it.)

*credit
H.W.
no other
reports
of slug*

Actually, all that was certain was the shot itself. The police *secret* saw that from their observation post in the fire station across from the Lorraine. Someone put King in his sights *when* at ~~5:59~~ as he stepped out on the balcony, *scattered* leaned on the railing for a chat with his colleagues and disciples ~~arranged~~ below in the Lorraine's courtyard by the white Cadillac that was to take him to a soul-food supper. There was the driver, Solomon Jones, and his aides, the Reverends Andrew Young, James Bevel and Hosea Williams, and Jesse Jackson just come down the metal staircase from the balcony to the courtyard. There they all were,

*Arnt
5:59*

gazing upward at King, as the shot's crescendoing echo sucked the air from their ears and hearts, and they saw their spiritual leader jerk to his right, then fall, it seemed slowly, backwards into a little offset on the balcony, like a descending balloon or perhaps a dream, fall to lie in the blood pumping from a fist-size hole in his right jaw, from the slug which tore downwards and to his left, which severed his spine and all his major nerves, killing him as a functioning human being in that one instant. The police swarmed from their watching posts into the Lorraine, but it was too late. King's disciples pointed across Mulberry Street, but no-one was caught.

The blood from their
fire hoses started up to

to W 4th Main Street

violent *proced*

F *odd* *cost/100* *LA 1ms?*

In the first shock of King's death, while disturbances raged in 125 American cities, speculations about his killers reverberated. Maybe it was militant black groups like the Panthers or Revolutionary Action Movement, who were tired of Gandhian methods. Maybe white racists like the Klan. Or pro-Vietnam hawks like the Birchers or Minutemen, fed-up with King's dovish talk. Maybe the CIA or FBI, sick of King's alleged Communist leanings. Perhaps to stonewall such talk, Attorney General Ramsey Clark, after consulting with President Johnson, flew to Memphis where the morning after the killing he announced that the killer had left behind a remarkable amount of physical evidence, that there was no evidence of a conspiracy, and that "all of our evidence at this time indicates that it was a single person who committed this criminal act."

and the FBI

with cities at large

This was untrue, but expedient in the inflammable racial and political situation. Nothing in the physical evidence of Canipe's and 5B excluded two or more assassins. ~~But Clark did not want to repeat the morass of doubts Oswald and Ruby and Shaw and the rest had created.~~ *wanted to put the fires out and not that essential persisted.* Better to announce at once that one man did it, then let a massive investigation take place behind the secrecy,

It was massive, since at the end, when they brought in the lone killer Ray, it was the result of 3000 FBI agents, the police of several countries, and about two million dollars. Who was this man, and had he done it alone?

James Earl Ray ^{is} was the kind of man for whom Martin Luther King spoke.

Poor. Pissed-off. Imprisoned in a world he never made. From ^{his} ~~the~~ beginning on March 10, 1928 until now, in the Tennessee State Prison, Jimmy Ray's life taught him to get before you're gotten. His father was a shiftless sort, a

menial laborer, good mostly for siring nine children on Ray's hapless mother before leaving her so she could complete an ugly ruin with alcohol. The Ray children grew up in an agony of embarrassment and poverty. Eventually, Jimmy

and his brothers Jerry and John became convicts. One sister went mad. Even so, as a teenager Jimmy Ray seemed to have a nail-hanging hold on America's

vertical mobility. He learned the ^{leather-} ~~the~~ dying trade in Alton, Illinois, and was neat, shy with girls, polite, reliable and frugal as hell. Then, when World

War II ended, he lost that job, and six weeks later joined the Army (on the enlistment form, he said his father was dead). After basic he became an MP

in Germany (and, some say, admired the defeated Hitler's racial policies), an occupation which didn't inhibit considerable boozing, a little dope, lots

of fighting and trouble. In December, 1948, Ray was discharged for "lack of adaptability to military service."

From then until he was arrested for the King murder James Earl Ray ^{lived in} was a ~~Sammy Click~~ of the netherworld, scrambling for all he was worth. If he ever heard anything like the messages of peace and brotherhood coming from a black Baptist minister, and his son Martin, in Atlanta, his record doesn't show it:

January 1, 1949: arrested Alton, Illinois, for traffic violation.
 July-December, 1949: \$1.10 an hour laborer, Chicago rubber factory.
 1949: 90 days, Los Angeles County Jail, burglary of typewriter.
 April, 1950: arrested for vagrancy, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.
 April, 1950-May, 1952: \$1.00 an hour laborer at various Chicago firms.
 1952: Convicted of robbing Chicago taxi driver; served two years in Illinois State Prison.
 September, 1954: charged with burglary, Edwardsville, Illinois.
 March, 1955: arrested with an accomplice and convicted for stealing and cashing U.S. money orders in Hannibal, Missouri; sentenced to three years in federal prison at Leavenworth, Kansas; released, April, 1958.
 April, 1958-October, 1959: odd jobs, St. Louis, Alton and thereabouts; used some aliases; suspected of robbery of Alton store but never charged.
 October 10, 1959: with an accomplice robbed a Kroger supermarket in St. Louis; caught in 20 minutes with \$120.00 loot and sentenced to twenty years in Missouri penitentiary at Jefferson City, Mo., under habitual-criminal statutes; acted as own attorney at end of trial; accomplice got seven years.
 November, 1960: unsuccessful escape attempt, Missouri penitentiary.
 March, 1966: unsuccessful escape attempt, Missouri penitentiary.
 April 23, 1967: escaped from Missouri penitentiary.
 June 8, 1968: arrested in London as Ramon George Sneyd, a Canadian, for the assassination of Martin Luther King.

5/

Obviously, only the last event varies the pattern of small-time thievery.

King's murder also differed in that a rifle was used. In his stick-ups, Ray sometimes brandished a pistol, but he never fired it. After his escape from the Missouri Penitentiary, Ray carried a pistol, was captured with one on him. But other than his Army ^{IN} ~~experience~~ ^{training} twenty-two years before, there's no evidence ~~ever~~ he used a rifle. Why would he choose one to kill King? It's been suggested that in prison Ray was entranced by Lee Harvey Oswald's feat, that maybe he went to school on it and decided on a long-range murder for a trouble-maker he hated. George McMillan, ^{who has been working on a book in 8 years,} a writer whose forthcoming book assumes Ray's guilt, quotes men in stir with Ray as saying he was rabid about "Martin Luther Coon," and vowed to get him. McMillan also claims Ray's brother Jerry said that Jimmy,

S/

who often contacted Jerry after his escape, was wild for Wallace, and that on the morning of King's assassination, Jerry got a call during which Jimmy said, "Big Nigger has had it." (Jerry Ray has denied these statements.) McMillan further says that Ray financed his post-escape peregrinations with money made in prison and sent outside to Jerry, about \$7,000.00 in all, *which Jerry also denies*

How much of this is incontrovertible? The escape itself--Ralph Abernathy thinks "James Earl Ray may have been let loose" to kill King--was peculiarly successful for Ray. He hid in a box carrying bread loaves, was trucked outside the walls and then departed the truck (the authorities put out a routine \$50.00 reward leaflet, but it had someone else's fingerprints on it--another detail that suggested to some that Ray had been let out, maybe that he wasn't supposed to be caught). But other attempts hadn't gone so well.

Convicts at Missouri *this writer has interviewed* said Ray was laughable in those adventures, once playing the "mole" and hiding in ventilators only to crawl out hours later into a guard's arms. Another time he tried to scale a wall with a pole, but fell back into the yard and hurt himself. (After the King affair, when ~~Ray~~ was finally transferred out of solitary in Nashville into the *maximum* ~~medium~~-security Brush Mountain prison, Ray again tried to escape. This time he hid in a team tunnel and got scalded out, and he picked the wrong tunnel--the other one in the yard led outside.) As for his wheeling and dealing at Missouri, one fellow-inmate *said*, "He was the kind of guy who'd bring in \$10.00 worth of dope and sell it for \$20.00. This is while some guys are making ten grand a year in pills." Still other convicts have said Ray made plenty,

Was Ray the kind of con who could plan and execute the King murder, then

escape to two foreign countries? It's true you can learn a lot inside the walls about new identities and passports. In the months before King's death, Ray did travel in Canada and Mexico, as well as extensively in the United States. Yet before, Ray always had been a bungler. Dropping evidence at Canipe's would be his style, but eluding all the FBI agents would not. Perhaps, then, he was so deeply motivated by racism or something that he became inspired. Certainly both in prison and out, Ray exhibited deep inferiority feelings, which he tried to allay through weight-lifting, dance-lessons, bartending-lessons, hypnosis-lessons, even plastic surgery which changed the distinctive shape of his nose, and maybe they finally all worked to make him more confident and efficient. (Or, some suspect, such activities were simply aids to the new identity he needed after killing King.)

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But was Ray a racist? His brothers admit they are. Jerry openly displayed his feelings, once working for J.W. Stoner, a dwarfish, gimpy misanthrope who helped form the black-hating National States Rights Party, and whom Jerry tried to retain as a lawyer for Jimmy after Ray's guilty plea netted him 99 years. John Ray also admits he dislikes blacks. As for Jimmy, he refused to live in the integrated "honor" dormitory at Leavenworth. While loose in Los Angeles he volunteered in March 1968, to work for Wallace (Jerry, again, supposedly said Jimmy thought if King were out of the way Wallace could be elected easier) He had a bar-room fight over "niggers" there, and also wrote for information on emigrating to Rhodesia. A John Birch leaflet was found in a room in Atlanta allegedly rented by Ray just before the killing (along with a map, complete with Ray's fingerprint, on which were marked the locations of King's church and home). And in England, after the assassination, Ray reportedly made inquiries about signing on as a mercenary

1?
1?
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no

in Rhodesia or the Congo. Yet these facts, however suggestive, don't prove Ray killed ^{or} for race reasons. A man who spent seven years in the Missouri penitentiary with Ray has a different feeling about that.

"I'd say he was about as close to me as he was anybody, which wasn't too close. He was an extreme introvert. He didn't mix . . . he was only interested in gettin' out. Any fucking way he could . . . he couldn't stand the lock-up, he hated it. Time drove his shit, just to speak frankly. You know about King, let's assume that ~~Ray~~ was down South . . . well, he goes on down there and he talks to two or three politicians, who are pretty influential people, and they could probably convince me that they could get me out of it, or get me out of the country. A guy gets pretty fucking desperate out there on escape, you know. . . . In my opinion (if Ray did kill King) it wasn't out of any racist motive. If he was a racist, I can honestly say I never heard this guy, not one time did I ever hear him say one word about or against a black man or a nigger. Not one time . . . He wasn't hostile, but now, man, you knew it was there . . . His smile came easily. But he had a temper. That great little ingratiating smile was pretty superficial."

We know that a man can smile and smile and be a villain. We can believe that Ray, like lots of poor-whites in border states, didn't much like his black brethren. We know he was a thief--"penny ante" his warden said--with severe inferiority and anti-social feelings that might generate a fantasy of greatness achieved through murder. We know that both as a small boy and grown-up criminal he could create alibis. Does all that add to the murder of Martin Luther King? And if Ray did it alone, why?

name

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There are, as with our other assassinations, several answers. The first is Ray's own, most of which he sold after his arrest to an Alabama writer named William Bradford Huie for money to fund his defense (Huie's publication of much of Ray's tale, ^{which Huie and Rupp lawyers published} In Look before the trial date, would these days be considered prejudicial, a point stressed in Ray's petitions for a new trial). The second comes from the prosecution's adherents. The rest emanate from students of the crime who are sure Ray could not have done it as the State said, and so--as with John Kennedy's assassination--pursue every rumor, trace every lead, and speculate endlessly about them. All these versions are complicated by questions about the case's judicial and investigative procedures.

Ray's account to Huie--documented in I-followed-Ray's-footprints style--portrays a bold and ingenious criminal, who comes to the bad end of being framed by a mysterious man called Raoul. (Huie himself first believed that story of conspiracy but then concluded Ray had done it by himself.) The story admits ^{but may be with some help} ~~99%~~ ^{said it could prove} of what the State of Tennessee would ~~try to prove~~, differing only in the crucial detail of where James Earl Ray was when King was murdered. On that point, ^{no} in fact Ray has switched several times, as we'll see. But the rest was clear in his mind. ^{only "switch" when he worried about Huie's bad political publicity}

We track Ray as he escapes on April 23, 1967, and probably with his brother's help makes his way to Chicago (McMillan believes the next day he told John and Jerry he was going to kill King). He works for two months as a dishwasher. To his employers, this slim, quiet man is John Rayns, a model employee who didn't seem at all to mind the Negroes he worked around. When he quit in late June, the owners were sorry to see him go, but they wished him well at his new job in Canada.

But Ray didn't go directly to Canada. With \$450.00 and a \$200.00 Chrysler, whose title, with his temporary driver's license, gave him a bit of tenuous I.D.--he went to the St. Louis area where brother John had a saloon. When the Chrysler broke down he sold it for \$145.00 and bought a \$200.00 red Plymouth.

In Canada Ray/Rayns becomes Eric Starvo Galt. Huie believes Ray chose the name after passing the city of Galt between Detroit and Toronto. However, there is an Eric St. Vincent Galt in Toronto, a writer, whose middle-initials, St. V., when scrawled in signature look like Starvo. Did Ray get that odd name there, and if so, why and where was he looking at Galt's signature? (It's possible he sought out Galt's signature as he later, after King's death, supposedly sought out Canadians who resembled him and whose names he could use in getting a passport.)

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Anyway, he first headed for Montreal where he hoped to find a Canadian citizen to act as guarantor of a passport which he could use to get someplace "from which I could never be extradited." (He didn't know then that his prison information was out-of-date: Canadian law no longer required such a guarantor.) He also needed money. To get it, Ray told Huie, he robbed a whorehouse on July 18 of \$1,700.00, though he later admitted it was a supermarket.

After the robbery Ray bought all sorts of glad-rags, sent for some sex manuals, enrolled in a locksmithing correspondence course, and went to the exclusive Gray Rocks Inn in the Laurentian Mountains where he met and seduced a beautiful Canadian divorcee whom he hoped would swear he was a Canadian citizen.

Ray admits all this, but he adds "Raoul." And Raoul is all. If he exists, Ray's defense can hold. According to Ray, he hung around "the boats" looking for a way out of the

NON-SENSEFUL
+ not true

country. He frequented a waterfront tavern called the Neptune. He says there he put out word that he might be available for nefarious goings-on, if fairly riskless, since he needed capital and I.D. One day a sandy-haired, mid-thirtyish French-Canadian named Raoul showed up, saying he might have some things for Galt to do, just little things at first, mind you, but then more and bigger, ending with lots of cash and all the papers Galt might need to get away to places with no extradition treaty with the U.S., say, Rhodesia or wherever.

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And so, Ray says, began the association with Raoul which continued sporadically over the next eight months until Raoul told Ray to meet him in Memphis on April 4 at 422½ South Main Street, and where Ray says, ~~Raoul or somebody~~ *he did not kill King* must have killed King.

Does Raoul exist? The prosecution said no, that Ray was a loner always. No Raoul, just Ray suddenly turned clever, and if their sole eye-witness, Mr. Stephens couldn't exactly say it was Ray he'd seen running from 5B--and his mate Grace Walden had said no, *Smaller?* the man was blond, stocky, older than Ray, in an Army jacket and plaid shirt--look at all the circumstances.

Circumstances that unreal like a cops-and-robbers movie scripted by Ray but subtitled by his accusers, their alternate versions winding down to the shot which blew away King. The star, James Earl Ray, speaks first:

I'm Eric Starvo Galt in August, 1967, smuggling packages, heroin?, for Raoul into the U.S., modest fee, \$750.00, then being told to sell the old Plymouth and go to Birmingham, Alabama where Raoul would meet me, get the better I.D., give me money, a suitable car, and if I needed Raoul, here was a New Orleans telephone number. He said there was \$12,000 in it eventually, and it was risky in the U.S. but things hadn't worked out with the passport *they would*

why?

No, the opponents say, not that way. He went alone to Chicago and signed the Plymouth over to Jerry and then went by train to Birmingham where he took dance lessons, lived in rooming houses, bought the white Mustang for \$2,000 cash, got a Galt driver's license, bought surveillance-style photo equipment, movie stuff, just living there until October 7.

Raoul met me in Birmingham. We bought the car after I found it and he OKed it. He gave me \$500.00 to live on and \$500.00 for camera equipment he discribed to me, told me to lie low and stay out of trouble. I got Galt I.D. for driver's license and car registration.

Uh-uh, Ray was living on his prison and robbery earnings, and probably wanted those cameras--he bought a Polaroid, too--for pornography, to make money. He was just indulging himself, building up his self importance, and he probably really liked being in Wallace country.

I left Birmingham October 6th and went to Nuevo Larado where Raoul met me and we smuggled a tire full of something across the border, and he gave me \$2,000 in twenties and said he'd need me for other jobs, to keep in touch via that New Orleans number, why not stay in Mexico awhile and I said fine, there or Los Angeles.

Bull, Ray just lazed about in Mexico, mostly Puerto Vallarta, making it with three different whores, posing as a writer, setting up to smuggle a bunch of grass into California.

I'd like to go back there when I get out, it was good, I even proposed marriage to an Alicia but it didn't work, so I left with some marijuana but got rid of it before crossing the border.

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He took it into L.A. by himself, and those halycon days were spent as much as anything else with that Polaroid photographing himself because he was obsessed with wanting to be in the Ten Most Wanted criminals with his picture in all the post offices, he was so insecure, see, like Oswald, and he was studying his photos so he could get his prominent features--the end of his nose and his right ear lobe--altered by plastic surgery so when the great crime occurred, he couldn't be recognized.

non-sequitur
didn't ?

Sure, I stayed in L.A. from November 18, 1967 until March 17, 1968. Had two apartments at different times, and took bartending and dancing lessons because if I lived in South America they'd come in handy. Stuck with the locksmithing. Applied for two jobs but didn't have a Social Security card. Tried to learn about self-hypnosis, that's where those self-improvement books I had in England came from. Told the telephone company I was a Wallace worker so I'd get a phone quick to use looking for a job. Had trouble with some people in a bar called the Rabbit's Foot over race.

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Hell, he told them since they loved niggers so much he'd take 'em on down to Watts and see how they liked it. And he inquired about going to Africa. The hypnosis was strange, he actually gave those doctors his real name, since he believed he'd tell the truth when hypnotized anyway.

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I went to New Orleans December 15 after Raoul wrote me at General Delivery saying come for a conference, they had a job for me. Charley Stein rode with me, he's the cousin of a girl I met; to bring his sister's kids back to L.A. The ride was a favor, but I made them register for Wallace before we left. Anyway I saw Raoul and he told me to be ready for a job in two or three months, hinted that there was some big businessman involved. He gave me another \$500.00 in twenties.

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Typical lie. He went because he was into some solo dope deal and Charley Stein saying he made several long-distance calls to New Orleans along the way doesn't change it since he always kept in touch with Jerry anyway, so maybe they weren't to New Orleans. And Raoul never wrote him. He decided to go the night before they left because he called that morning and cancelled his appointment with the hypnotist, so again, no Raoul.

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On March 5, I had the tip of my nose cut off so I couldn't be recognized in any of these deals because Raoul wrote in February and said the deal was on for about May 1, the one we'd talked about, running guns, so I was to meet him in New Orleans about March 20 and finally I'd get the twelve grand and papers.

Sure, that was about when he decided to kill King, it was building in him, all the Wallace-hatred, the desire to make the Top Ten, and Ray had heard enough when King was in L.A. March 16 and 17 and he'd had the nose job, so he stayed out his rent like the tightwad he was and took off to go find King and shoot him, sure that's the way it was.

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That's the way it is for each and the frames click madly as Galt leaves L.A. He drives to New Orleans, then to Birmingham to meet Raoul except, he vows, he got lost and had to spend the night of March 22nd in Selma (Wrong! the accusers say, you were stalking King who was close-by), then to Birmingham to meet Raoul and on to Atlanta to that hippie rooming house where we heard about the gun deal (no! you were alone and after King, marking his haunts those days on a map) . . . then faster, faster, the images melting . . .
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I bought the .243 and then exchanged/ like Raoul told me in Birmingham the 29th and 30th (you did it alone!), and then by slow stops to Memphis, just me,

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stopping to test-fire this gun they were going to use for a sample, Raoul said, for the buyers in Memphis who'd take that kind and hundreds of cheap foreign rifles . . . (sorry! you went back to Atlanta for King, but found he was going to Memphis the 4th, so you went the 3rd) . . . No, no, Raoul met me near Memphis in a Mississippi motel on the 2nd and took the rifle and told me to go the 3rd to Memphis and stay at the Rebel motel . . . (yes, you did, but you got there the 3rd, signed in, we have your handwriting, and found where King was and went the next day to kill him) no, Raoul came to the room 5B with the gun (but Mrs. Brewer doesn't remember anyone asking where "Mr. Willard's" room was), and I went to South Main, I've told you, and bought the binoculars and about five o'clock he sent me out ^{as he could} for a beer. I guess they ^{made} didn't want me there for the deal, and I went to Jim's Grill downstairs. (you can't describe the place and no-one remembers you there) . . . and then I was on the sidewalk and heard this shot and here came Raoul and dumped the bundle and jumped in the car and covered himself with that white sheet and we took off, then stopped a few blocks away and Raoul jumped out, the last I saw of him, and I was scared and took off for Atlanta. . . . (you say that? why, then, did you through your lawyers change your story later and say you were at a filling station with the Mustang, getting a low tire checked?) OK, I made up that sheet business because ~~I was scared, trapped,~~ Huie was pressing me to confess so his book would sell but I can prove it, there's a filling station attendant and some others who'll say they remembered the car and me, ~~at about 5 o'clock,~~ no, I didn't kill King, didn't fire that shot. And then, freeze-frame of King falling.

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Every scene after that is anticlimactic, although fascinating. Ray admits he drove alone to Atlanta the night of April 4, and abandoned his car. He then returned to Canada, arriving in Toronto on the 8th. He lived again in rooming houses in which he read of the riots, the grief, the universal condemnation of King's murder (if Ray or someone had expected white America to applaud, they were disheartened). Ray says he was fleeing in fear that Raoul and those who had set him up would now come and kill him, that he hadn't even known King was dead until he heard it on his Mustang's radio.

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Fleeing he certainly was, and in ways the prosecution said were con-wise and the conspiracy buffs say are sure signals he had help. Again, he needed money and I.D., however he got them. Ray has said he went to the library and looked up Toronto births for 1932, chose two males and giving his rooming house addresses, applied for birth certificates in their names: Paul E. Bridgeman and to verify a general resemblance, he floated in their neighborhoods and made sure they were medium-height, medium weight, dark haired. A clever scheme. Too clever for Ray, the conspiracy theorists say, especially since Ramon George Sneyd--in whose name Ray easily got a passport through a travel agent--was a policeman, and did not that imply an international conspiracy? Some people wonder, too, about Mr. Bridgeman's story that he got a call from someone who said he was checking to see if Bridgeman had a passport. But James Earl Ray said he did that.

Ray has said he went to the library and looked up Toronto births for 1932, chose two males and giving his rooming house addresses

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In any event, on May 6 Ray as Sneyd flew to London on a \$345.00 21-day excursion ticket. He cashed in the return and went on to Lisbon, there to try to escape to Angola as a mercenary. It was none too soon, for now the world knew that Galt, Lowmyer and Willard were really James Earl Ray. His picture

had been in the paper, and police of several countries had been alerted (if, as the prosecution says, it was fame he sought, he must have been gratified). Even so, it had taken the FBI a long time--until April 19--to identify Ray, despite the mound of evidence at Canipe's. In fact, it hadn't been until April 18, when agents tracking Ray came upon his room in Atlanta and his thumb print on the map, that they started checking the fingerprint files of Federal fugitives. Ray was among them because of his money-order caper. Of the 53,000 cards, his was the 700th up. Lucky FBI. (But why hadn't they immediately checked the serial number on the portable radio left in the bundle? They'd have found that. Ray bought it in the Missouri pen and that would have told the Bureau who had dropped all the stuff. Maybe, then he would have been picked up in Canada. Or did someone not want him picked up, as many have asked?

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Yet he was picked up. There was nothing for Ray in Portugal except booze and whores, so he came back to England on May 17. There, it's said, he suffered headaches and lived in cheap hotels while trying through a Daily Telegraph reporter to get information on mercenary recruiting centers in Belgium. Apparently almost broke (an odd circumstance if he was financed by a conspiracy) Ray seems on June 4th to have robbed a savings bank of \$240.00. On the 8th he went to Heathrow for a flight to Brussels, but there Detective Sergeant Phillip Birch of Scotland Yard, on the look-out for someone using Ramon George Sneyd's passport with Ray's picture in it, brought his hand down firmly on James Earl Ray's shoulder. It was over. Ray handed over his cheap .38 and was taken to Brixton prison, where one man reported he uttered some of the few pitiable words anyone ever heard him say: "Oh, God, I feel so trapped."

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