N.Y. TIMES
10 APR 68

HUNT FOR KILLER SPANS WIDE AREA

Check in Mexico Reported —False Trail Possible

By MARTIN WALDRON
Special to The New York Times

MEMPHIS, April 9 — The killer of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. may have left a trail of false clues to confuse his pursuers.

Shortly after the murder, the police said they had never seen a case where there was so much evidence left behind.

The assassin not only left fingerprints and hand prints in his room and in the toilet from which he shot Dr. King, but he also left a blue piece of luggage and a rifle on the sidewalk outside.

Today, agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation were reported to be looking in such widely diverse areas as Birmingham, Ala., Memphis, Chicago, and Mexico for the young, long-nosed man believed to have shot the civil rights leader.

In Birmingham, at the request of the F.B.I., airline agents shuffled through passenger lists at Delta and Southern Airlines for last week, checking several names.

Gun Stores Checked

F.B.I. agents in Birmingham were also reported to be checking the records of gun shops.

Within minutes after Dr. King's slaying, the Memphis police had confiscated the Remington 30.06-caliber rifle that the assassin dropped outside the rooming house from which he fired the fatal shot. The rifle was new.

A new weapon such a sthis can almost always be traced from the manufacturer to the retailer by its serial number.

The cashier at a Birmingham gun store visited by F.B.I. agents said that the rifle was not sold by that store. "That's just a rumor," she said. "We didn't sell the rifle. They're just questioning everybody who sells guns."

In Mexico City last night, the United Press International quoted police officials as saying that they had been asked to help in the search for Dr. King's assassin.

Copies of a sketch made from the descriptions furnished to the police at Memphis were distributed to officers at the United States-Mexico border and inside Mexico.

Travel Permit Reported

The investigation apparently spread to Mexico after the Mexican consul at Memphis, Rolando Veloz Canales, reported to the police that a young man resembling the police sketch, which he had seen in a Memphis newspaper, had got a Mexican travel card on the day before Dr. King was killed.

"I remebered him because of his long nose," Mr. Veloz said.

A long sharp nose was the one thing most witnesses remembered about the young man who checked into the shabby rooming house about three hours before Dr. King was shot to death on the balcony of a nearby motel.

The address and telephone number given by the man on his application for the Mexican travel permit were improper.

The address given for a Chicago street needed either a north or a south to make it complete. The telephone number given was for Antioch, Wis.

The age given by the young man on his application was 21 years.

"I thought he might be a little younger," said Mr. Veloz.

Most of the witnesses at the rooming house who saw the man believed to be the assassin of Dr. King said that he was in his late 20's.

The name given to Mr. Veloz may have been fictitious.

Mr. Veloz said that the man produced an Illinois voter registration certificate as proof of his citizenship. No such name as the one on the voter certificate was contained in the Illinois files of registered voters.

A white Mustang automobile was parked in front of the rooming house at the time of the assassination.

Two witnesses said that the man who ran from the rooming house immediately after the shooting left in the opposite direction from the Mustang.

Other witnesses indicated they believed that the man had doubled back. They said they saw the Mustang being driven off at a fast rate of speed a moment or so after the man had come out of the rooming house.

There was also a report by the police that a white Mustang and a blue Pontiac were seen on a highway leading from Memphis shortly after the shooting, with occupants of the two automobiles exchanging shots.