

FBI Sketches Of Assassin Identified

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Birmingham, Ala.

An elderly boarding house keeper said yesterday that he had identified for FBI agents two sketches of a man known to him as Eric Starvo Galt, the mysterious figure whose name has become involved in the investigation of the slaying of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis.

Peter N. Cherpes, 72, speaking to newsmen only after obtaining permission from the FBI to break a secrecy pledge, said he identified Galt last Tuesday or Wednesday from drawings — one profile and one full face — as the man who boarded at his place last year for six weeks, from August 26 to October 7.

Cherpes told reporters the profile sketch was similar to one drawn by a Memphis newspaper artist, with help from an eyewitness.

BULLETIN

Galt's name entered the case last Thursday when the FBI office in Miami put out a "locate and notify" bulletin on him over Florida police communication facilities. The bulletin was canceled a few hours later without explanation.

Then, Thursday evening, a white Mustang similar to one believed to have been the car used by the sniper in fleeing Memphis was found abandoned on a residential street in Atlanta. The car, registered to Galt, had been there since the day after the shooting.

Cherpes said Galt had such a car during his stay at the boarding house.

When Galt registered, Cherpes said, he listed his address as Pascagoula, Miss., and he said he planned to stay three or four months.

"He told me," said Cherpes, "that he was on a vacation. I thought that three

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or four months was an unusually long vacation, and I asked him about it.

"He said he had been working awfully hard and needed a long rest." He explained that he had been working at an iron works in Pascagoula." Cherpes said Galt told him when he registered that he had been working at the Ingalls Shipbuilding Corp. in Pascagoula.

SPOKESMAN

In Pascagoula, a spokesman for Ingalls shipyard said that company records show that no one by the name of Galt has been employed there.

The spokesman said the FBI has meticulously checked company personnel records and photographs of employees.

Galt stayed only six weeks, Cherpes said, and gave no explanation why he cut short his stay. Cherpes said Galt volunteered that he was going to Mobile, saying he had a job "in the ships."

"Galt was a quiet fellow," Cherpes recalled. "Didn't have much to say. Looked at color TV in the sitting room a lot. Oh, he was pleasant and would speak when spoken to, but he didn't talk about himself much. I think he told me he was divorced.

"He ate all of his meals

here, excepting the last week, when he ate out. I don't know where."

The boarding house has accommodations for 18 roomers. Galt stayed in No. 14 on the ground floor and parked his car on the street, Cherpes said.

APPEARANCE

"Galt was a good-looking man," said Cherpes. "He spoke with a Southern accent and dressed well." Cherpes added that Galt usually wore a suit with shirt and tie. The outfit that Cherpes remembers best was a plaid suit, "a sport suit."

Cherpes said he would have estimated Galt's age at from 25 to 30. Galt's driver's license, issued in Birmingham last September 6, listed him at 36 and described him as being 5-feet-11, 175 pounds, with brown hair and blue eyes.

Galt, Cherpes recalled, never had any callers during his stay nor any telephone calls.

HABITS

"He didn't go out much," said Cherpes, "only once in a while. He usually turned in early."

Asked if Galt paid his weekly bill in cash, Cherpes said, "Yes, he did. Adn on time."

Registration papers on the white Mustang indicate Galt purchased the car from a

Birmingham salesman August 26, the same day he rented the room.

FAVOR

Cherpes said he drove Galt to the State motor vehicle testing facility on the day Galt was issued a driver's license. He said Galt asked him to do so as a favor.

"Actually," said Cherpes, "I really can't tell you anything more about him. I haven't seen him since he left here in early October. He was carrying two suitcases."

The .30-06 Remington hunting rifle, found near the murder scene and believed to be the death weapon, was sold in Birmingham, according to the manufacturer's serial number records.

STORE

The operator of the sporting goods store where the rifle presumably was purchased has refused to comment excepting to note that his sales records were seized by the FBI.

For more than a week dozens of FBI agents have been showing the sketches revealed to Cherpes to persons ranging from gunstore dealers to Birmingham bar girls.

Cherpes, however, so far as can be reported, is the first person to identify the man known as Galt. The FBI maintained its "no comment" policy.

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