

Arrest Only Deepens Mystery

Who Paid Ray? Who Planned

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Was the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King a conspiracy carried out by a man hired months in advance and paid thousands of dollars?

Or was it the work of a lone assassin with a personal vendetta against Negroes? If a conspiracy, who else is involved?

If not, where did James Earl Ray get the money he spent so freely during the months before his arrest?

Authorities in the United States, Canada and Great Britain searched for answers to these questions today.

In London, a receptionist at a hotel where the fugitive stayed, described him this way:

'SHY, UNSURE'

"He was very quiet, nervous, pathetically shy and unsure of himself."

Yet, during a period of wild spending on the West Coast last fall — where Ray went to a bartending school and took modern-dance lessons — he acquired a reputation as a loud-mouth racist.

Ray has a criminal record dating back to 1949.

But as a criminal he was not very successful, often bungling jobs by leaving behind telltale evidence, or rushing into bad jobs that netted him little, if any, money.

Is this, then, the same man whom the FBI says unaided meticulously established a second identity, plotted the murder of Dr. King, shot him in downtown Memphis, fled the country and for two months eluded the largest manhunt in recent history?

The FBI says yes, publicly discounting the conspiracy theory.

Attorney General Ramsey Clark, in repeated statements, said the bureau has no reason to believe the killing of Dr. King was part of a conspiracy.

CLARK WRONG?

Clark said during the second week of April that Ray was still in the country. It is known, however, that Ray already fled to Toronto.

If Clark was wrong about that, some people are asking, could he also be wrong on the lone assassin theory?

Within the larger question of whether Ray was capable of carrying out such a complex crime are intriguing smaller ones.

The investigation might well start on April 23, 1967, when Ray hid on a truck that was leaving the prison. After repeated attempts to escape, he finally succeeded.

Little is known of Ray's whereabouts between then and early July, 1967, when he turned up in Montreal, and rented a room.

This is where he first used the name Eric Starvo Galt in an attempt to establish a second identity.

Ray-Galt kept the room until late August or early September. Canadian authorities say that during this time he made several trips to Toronto.

On Aug. 26, 1967, Ray rented a room at the Economy Grill and Rooms on Highland Avenue in Birmingham, Ala., again using the name Eric Starvo Galt.

PAID \$1995

The next day he spotted an ad in the local newspaper offering a 1966 white Mustang. Galt drove the car around the block and decided to buy it.

Galt returned on Aug. 29 and paid for the car in cash, \$1995 drawn from his safe-deposit box in the Birmingham Trust National Bank.

Where did the money come from?

The next segment of Ray's life unfolds last fall in California, where again he was spending money. He paid, in cash, \$456 for the dance lessons and \$250 for bartending school.

On Dec. 15, he drove to New Orleans. Accompanying him was a song writer named Charles Stein, who said that at one point Ray stopped to make a telephone call to "an important New Orleans industrialist."

The identity of the industrialist has not been established.

Ray graduated from bartending school in California on March 1. At the same time, in Birmingham, somebody picked up a letter mailed to him at the Economy Grill.

NEW MYSTERY

The letter was from the Alabama Highway Patrol, containing a duplicate license Ray had applied for.

The letter was returned to the patrol with the 25 cents it had requested.

Who picked up the letter and sent it back? Nobody seems to know.

On April 3, Ray apparently checked into the Rebel Motel in Memphis after a flight from Birmingham. The next day he also rented a room at the nameless rooming house

behind the Lorraine Motel where Dr. King was shot.

Here again there is mystery.

The woman who rented Ray a room at the rooming house said he came in without luggage, paying her with a new \$20 bill.

But moments after Dr. King's murder, Ray was spotted walking away with a blue suitcase and a rifle wrapped in a bedspread.

MAJOR QUESTION

Later, on the sidewalk not far from the rooming house, the luggage and gun were found.

Were they placed in the house by someone other than Ray? Again there is no answer.

Perhaps the most perplexing question now being asked by FBI and Canadian authorities is how Ray was able to slip out of the country.

And, once in Toronto, how was he able to get two phony birth certificates and a passport?

During the next two months Ray — living as Ramon George Sneyd — was seen with two men whose identities have not been established.

And, during this period, he was again spending money in a somewhat lavish fashion.

Where did he get the money?

Nobody seems to know.

Escape?