

# Ray 'Paid If He Killed King'

(Special to the States-Item)

HOLLYWOOD — The songwriter who accompanied the man charged with the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on a six-day auto trip to New Orleans last December says that from his "understanding of him, if he did kill King, he was paid for it."

Charles Stein, whose mother lives in the French Quarter, in New Orleans, added that he thinks James Earl Ray's life was in danger.

"IF HE WAS paid for the job, his life is definitely in danger. Double danger . . . from the people who paid him and from Martin Luther King's followers."

The 39-year-old Stein said he accompanied Ray, whom he knew as Eric Starvo Galt, to New Orleans and back in a white Mustang driven by Galt. While in New Orleans, Ray stayed at the Provincial Motel, 1024 Chartres, where he registered as Galt.

Stein stayed with a married sister, who was living in the Quarter at the time.

Stein, a bearded rock 'n' roll songwriter, said he got the ride in exchange for signing his name to former Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace's list to qualify for California's June 4 presidential primary ballot.

STEIN BROUGHT his sister Rita's two children back to Hollywood when he returned from New Orleans. He said he had met Galt in a Hollywood blvd. cocktail lounge and thought he was "some kind of politician."

However, a Wallace campaign coordinator said campaign files showed none of the names Galt or Ray on them.

On the trip to New Orleans, Stein said Ray told him he sold "some joint in Mexico, said he'd been there five years. But he couldn't talk Spanish except 'si' and 'como

esta,' things everybody knows. I thought he just liked to kid around and let it slide.

"I didn't even know the cat. I suspect he went to pick up some bread, you

know, money. He was taking care of his business. He was going to see some people in New Orleans, a contractor or an engineer as nearly as I can recall. He

didn't talk much. If you asked him a personal question he'd just answer the question and stop. It was like parrying, in fencing.

"HE TOLD ME he was in the Army—he didn't say when. He was up on politics; he thought politics was a business to make money."