

Puzzles In King Manhunt

By GAYLORD SHAW
Associated Press

MEMPHIS — Investigators appeared yesterday to be re-examining the possibility that more than one person was involved in the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King.

They seemed puzzled about conflicting reports on the number of getaway cars involved and about police radio transmissions telling of a high-speed chase — which apparently never took place — through northeast Memphis 30 minutes after a sniper killed Dr. King with a single rifle shot.

The FBI, conducting what it calls the most massive manhunt in its history, maintained silence on all aspects of the investigation. But Atty. Gen. Ramsey Clark issued a new statement that dropped earlier references to "one man on the run."

Sixteen hours after Dr. King was slain April 4, Clark said evidence "indicates a single individual" was involved. "there is no evidence of a widespread plot," he said.

In a seven-line statement issued in Washington Friday night, Clark said the FBI was devoting all its resources to the investigation, "working around the clock

— Turn to Page 14, Col. 1

pursuing every lead." He said it was impossible to predict when an arrest would be made.

Another Justice Department spokesman noted it took 12 days to make arrests in the May, 1963, slaying of Mississippi civil rights leader Medger Evers and more than five months in the 1964 slayings of three civil rights workers in Mississippi.

In the 10 days since Dr. King's slaying, the lights

Mississippi Klansmen Absolved in Slaying

ATLANTA — (UPI) — The White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan have been ruled out, at least for the present, of any part in the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King.

Sources close to the FBI investigation said yesterday the Klan, accused in the past of plotting murders in Mississippi, apparently had no part in the assassination in Memphis, April 4.

The only possibility the White Knights may have

involved is if a new member of the Klan group, not yet identified by FBI informants, took part in the slaying.

The FBI deems that possibility very remote, it was learned, because of the extensive FBI infiltration of the White Knights during the past four years.

Elimination for the present of the White Knights from the investigation was made after members were checked for their whereabouts on the day of the slaying.

Sources said it took the FBI four days to account for the activities of each of the nearly 500 Kluxers on that Thursday.

No rumors or tips from within the White Knights ranks have come to the FBI to indicate the Klan had any knowledge that Dr. King was to be murdered.

"This state (Mississippi) was turned upside down in four days," a source close to the investigation said.

have burned all night, night after night, in the corner suite on the eighth floor of Memphis' new federal building.

NO COMMENT

There, dozens of FBI agents have methodically sifted through what is described as "very substantial" physical evidence.

Exactly what this evidence is has not been officially revealed, but sources report some of the major items are palm and fingerprints, an overnight bag believed to contain clothing and a high-powered rifle with a telescopic sight.

Robert Jensen, 52, special agent in charge of the Memphis office, wore a strained smile as he faced reporters. "All I can say is no comment," he repeated to all questions.

Jensen wouldn't even say how many agents have been sent into Memphis. But in a five-minute period late one night, reporters watched 15 agents hurry in or out of the suite through an unmarked side door.

FBI agents have interviewed hundreds of persons in Memphis, Birmingham, Atlanta and elsewhere, in most cases telling them to keep their mouths shut. They have taken over the records of two rooming houses and at least one gun shop. They have poured through documents in state and local government offices throughout the South.

FBI IN CHARGE

Spokesmen for the Memphis police insist their department still is working closely with federal agents. But from all indications, the FBI has taken over the investigation completely.

At police headquarters, Fire and Police Director Frank Holloman, for 25 years an FBI agent, hands inquiring reporters a mimeographed statement:

"The successful investigation of this case is the overriding consideration and for that reason I have no comment to make concerning the case at this time."

Then, politely but firmly, he refuses to answer questions. So do other officers.

Holloman held five news conferences within 24 hours after Dr. King was shot and freely answered inquiries. Since then, he has been stonily silent.

INTERVIEWS

This is an account of the events that have taken place as pieced together from scores of interviews:

On April 4, Dr. King held a day-long planning session in his \$13-a-day room — No. 306 — at the Lorraine Motel. He had come here to lead a march in support of striking sanitation workers.

He told the Rev. Samuel Kyles of Memphis that he was weary of restaurant food.

"I want some soul food," he said.

"You know where to get it," Kyles replied. "Come home and eat dinner with me." Dr. King said he would enjoy that.

So 23 minutes before sunset, Dr. King stepped onto the balcony in front of his room.

Two hundred - five feet and three inches away, a man wearing a black business suit, white shirt and narrow black tie stood in the bathtub of a flophouse's second-floor communal bathroom. Giving his name as John Willard, a man had rented room 5-A three hours earlier from manager Bessie Brewer, paying a week's rent — \$8.50 — in advance, using a \$20 bill.

Now he looked out of the bathroom window, across a pile of junk in a vacant lot, just above the tops of scrubby trees growing along an embankment and onto the balcony of the Lorraine Motel.

He squinted through the telescopic sight of a .30-06 Remington pump action rifle. Ka-blam!

One shot rang out.

The bullet ripped into Dr. King's neck.

"Oh!" he gasped as he crumpled to the concrete balcony floor.

It was 6:01 p.m.

40 OFFICERS

Dr. King had not asked for protection, but Police Director Holloman had stationed about 40 officers in the vicinity. Some apparently were

posted in the vacant lot across Mulberry Street — the lot behind the Main Street flophouse.

The officers, wearing blue helmets and carrying rifles, immediately sealed off the area of the motel. But the killer already was making his way through the Main Street entrance to the rooming house, one block away.

White Mustangs are common in Memphis. Two of them, both 1966 models, were parked within 100 feet of the rooming house entrance at 6:01 p.m. Fifteen minutes later, both were gone.

Some witnesses said the killer walked calmly down the steps to the street, turned left and dropped a rifle in the next doorway, and continued several feet to the Mustang bearing a red and white license plate. Red and white plates are used in both Arkansas and Alabama.

At 6:45 p.m., a police dispatcher began relaying calls about a chase in northeast Memphis — eight miles away — including a white Mustang and a blue Pontiac.

A white male driving the Mustang, the police radio crackled, was "responsible for this shooting."

EIGHT CALLS

Eight calls, supposedly from a police lieutenant, were relayed by the dispatcher during the next 22 minutes. At one point, the dispatcher reported, the driver of the Mustang was firing on the pursuing Pontiac.

"I was not involved in any

chase," the lieutenant said afterward. A college student with a citizens band radio in his car later said he was relaying details of the chase to the lieutenant. He said the voice he was monitoring identified himself as the occupant of the blue car chasing the Mustang.

The student said the transmissions he received never faded, indicating the calls came from a stationary transmitter.

By week's end, police appeared to have concluded that the chase, for whatever reason it was reported, was a hoax.

Early Friday morning, 12 hours after the shooting, an Atlanta housewife looked out of the window of her apartment in the Capitol Homes project — 383 miles to the southeast — and saw a "nice looking man" step out of a 1966 white Mustang.

Six days later — on Thursday afternoon — Federal agents swooped down on the abandoned Mustang.

The car bore a license tag from Jefferson County — Birmingham — Ala., No. 1-38993. Two Mexican inspection stickers were pasted to the front windshield. The floor was littered with cigarette butts and covered with mud.

Between 5:15 and 5:30 p.m., the car was towed to the Federal building.

NO RECORD

At 5:22 p.m., the Florida police teletypewriter ticked

out a "locate and notify" message. It was an FBI alert for Eric Starvo Galt, 36. The bulletin said Galt was driving a 1966 white Mustang hardtop with Alabama tag No. 1-38993.

Four hours later, the message was withdrawn with the explanation it was "erroneous."

Records in Alabama show Galt applied for a driver's li-

cence last Sept. 5. The application describes him as 5-11, 175 pounds, with blue eyes and brown hair — roughly the same description given by witnesses for the man seen fleeing the Memphis rooming house.

The document says Galt is an unemployed merchant seaman. The Maritime union has no record of an Eric Galt.

His address was listed as 2068 Highland, Birmingham, a two-story stucco house with a neon light that flashes in red, "rooms."

Other residents of this house say they have not seen Galt in three months, although a duplicate drivers' license was mailed to him at that address last March 1.

The FBI refuses to say why it is seeking Galt.