

Birmingham Man Says F.B.I. Drawing of Mystery Figure in Dr. King Inquiry Resembles Ex-Roomer

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BIRMINGHAM, Ala., April 15—The manager of the Economy Grill and Rooms, a Birmingham boarding house, said today that Eric Starvo Galt, the mystery man in the murder case of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., left his rooming house on Birmingham's South Side in early October last year.

The manager, Peter N. Cherpes, 72 years old, said that he had not seen Mr. Galt since then.

Mr. Galt, who drove an automobile similar to the one believed used as a gateway car after Dr. King was shot by a sniper on April 4 in Memphis, has been the subject of a nationwide search by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Mr. Galt's car, a white Mustang, was impounded in Atlanta last Thursday by Federal agent

Mr. Cherpes, who was asked by the F.B.I. not to discuss Mr. Galt, broke his silence today after reporters had repeatedly asked him questions over the weekend.

He said that last Tuesday Federal agents showed him some drawings of a man who bore a close resemblance to Mr. Galt.

Reporter Shows Drawing

A reporter for The Birmingham News showed Mr. Cherpes a drawing from The Memphis Commercial Appeal.

The drawing was made from descriptions given by residents of a Memphis rooming house from which, the police said, the shot that killed Dr. King was fired.

Mr. Cherpes said that the drawing, a side view of a long-nosed man, had less resemblance to Mr. Galt than did the full-face drawing shown him by the Federal agents.

The Federal investigating agency has not yet released a drawing of Mr. Galt, although it has several hundred men in the United States searching for him.

Mr. Cherpes said that Mr. Galt, who gave his age as 36 years, checked into his rooming house in late August last year.

"He was a very quiet man

and kept to himself," Mr. Cherpes said.

He said that Mr. Galt, who said he was divorced, told him that he had been working at the Ingalls Shipyard at Pascagoula, Miss., and that he was going to take a vacation of several months.

At Pascagoula, A. C. Weeks, an official of the shipyard, said that it had never hired a man by the name of Eric Galt.

Mr. Cherpes helped his boarder to get a driver's license in early September.

He said that he had driven Mr. Galt to the highway patrol testing station.

A duplicate of Mr. Galt's driver's license was believed to have been the identification given at a Birmingham gun store in March of this year when a 30-'06-caliber Remington rifle was bought. The rifle was found on a Memphis street outside the rooming house from which Dr. King had been shot.

Although Mr. Cherpes said that he had not seen Mr. Galt since October, a duplicate of Mr. Galt's driver's license was mailed on March 1 of this year to 2608 South Highland Avenue, Birmingham, the address of the Economy Grill and Rooms.

Capt. T. L. Payne of the Alabama Highway Patrol said tonight that the driver's license division received a telephone call in late February from a man who identified himself as Eric Galt and said that he had lost his license.

Captain Payne said that the man was told to send 25 cents to cover the cost of a duplicate license.

The duplicate license was mailed March 1 to the South

Highland address, Captain Payne said, and the 25 cents received by the driver's license division on March 6.

In an earlier interview, Mr. Cherpes said that during the six weeks that Mr. Galt had lived at his boarding house he had had no visitors but had received a package from Chicago.

He said that Mr. Galt had said that he planned to return the object, which had come in a package two feet long and about one foot wide.

"He said it was the wrong size," Mr. Cherpes said.

Mr. Cherpes also said that in early March of this year a letter in a blue or green envelope came for Mr. Galt, but that he returned the letter after about a week when Mr. Galt did not show up to claim it.

The rooming house manager said that the letter appeared to contain a check.

Mr. Galt checked out of the rooming house in early October, telling Mr. Cherpes that he was going to Mobile to try to find a job. He returned after several days and picked up his belongings, saying that he had got a job, Mr. Cherpes said.

No warrant has been issued for Mr. Galt's arrest, and a source in the F.B.I. emphasized that he was wanted purely for questioning. The source said that it might be that Mr. Galt would never be charged.

In Louisiana today, state officials said that Mr. Galt had never got a driver's license there, although he had said on his application for an Alabama license that he had got one in Louisiana in 1962.

Every development in the investigation thus far has suggested that Eric Starvo Galt is a fictitious name.