

FBI Charges Conspiracy In King Assassination



CPI Telenote

The FBI issued two photographs of the suspect, Eric Starvo Galt. The open eyes on the right photo were sketched in by the FBI.

Eric Galt Named in Warrant

United Press

Washington

The FBI declared yesterday that Dr. Martin Luther King was the victim of a conspiracy to kill him.

It named 36-year-old Eric Starvo Galt as a partner in that conspiracy and issued a warrant for his arrest.

The announcement by Atty. Gen. Ramsey Clark was the first official confirmation that officials believed the slaying of Dr. King in Memphis on April 4 was no the work of one man acting alone. Clark had first ruled out conspiracy.

The FBI said the conspiracy involved at least one other man, "an individual whom he (Galt) alleged to be his brother."

It said the plot originated on March 29 — seven days before the slaying — and that Galt was reported to have been in Memphis on the day of the slaying and the day preceding.

'LONER'

The FBI portrayed Galt as a poorly educated loner with a taste for country and western music, vodka, beer and dancing. It said he spoke with diction reflecting a "rural" background and that he claimed to have worked as a cook on Mississippi river vessels and as a merchant seaman. He had taken lessons in dancing and was a graduate of a bartending school.

The FBI statement said Galt purchased a 1966 white Mustang in Birmingham, Ala., on Aug. 30, 1967, and drove 19,000 miles between then and when it was found abandoned in Atlanta, Ga. on April 11.

Without explaining how it knew, the FBI said Galt drove the car to Los Angeles, New Orleans, Birmingham and Mexico before going to Memphis and, after the killing, to Atlanta.

The FBI made public two photographs of a man it identified as Galt and said he used the aliases "Harvey Lowmyer" and "John Wil-

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lard." In one photograph his eyes were closed; in the other, a print of the first, an FBI artist has sketched in opened eyes.

The FBI refused to say where or how it got the picture or the detailed information about Galt's activities, some of it dating back four years. The announcement was handed to reporters at the Justice Department and no questions were permitted.

The FBI complaint filed in Birmingham charged that Galt and the other man "entered into a conspiracy which continued until on or about April 5, 1968, to injure, oppress, threaten or intimidate Martin Luther King Jr."

"In furtherance of the conspiracy," the FBI charged, Galt purchased a rifle in Birmingham on or about March 30.

FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover said a 30.06 caliber rifle equipped with a telescopic sight was found near a rooming house on South Main street in Memphis immediately after Dr. King was shot. The rooming house overlooks the Lorraine motel where King was staying.

Hoover said FBI agents had determined that the rifle and telescopic sight had been purchased from an unidentified gun dealer in Birmingham on March 30.

Galt was described as a white man, between 5 feet 8 inches and 5 feet 11 inches in height, weighing between 160

and 170 pounds, with a medium build. He was said to be a neat dresser.

The FBI said he had brown hair which he wore in a brush cut, blue eyes, a straight and narrow nose, and straight and clean teeth. It said he had given his birth date as July 20, 1931.

The fugitive was further described as having a nervous habit of occasionally pulling at an earlobe with his hand. His left ear protrudes farther from his head than his right, the FBI said. The FBI added he should be considered armed and dangerous.

DANCER

He was described as an avid dancer who took lessons 1965; in Birmingham during September and October, 1967, and in Long Beach from December, 1967, to last February.

Galt left Los Angeles last December 15, the FBI said, and drove the white Mustang to New Orleans, where he claimed he contacted either an engineering or a contracting company. The FBI did not explain why he had done so.

It said Galt went to New Orleans December 19 and returned to Los Angeles last December 21. While in Los Angeles early this year, the FBI said, Galt took a course at a school of bartending and was graduated on March 2.

Earlier information in the case suggested strongly that Galt's identity was carefully contrived seven months before Dr. King's murder to help disguise the real killer.

IDENTITY

Galt first began establishing an identity for himself on Aug. 16, 1967, when he rented a room at a boarding house at 2608 Highland avenue in Birmingham.

On Sept. 6, 1967, Galt and the boarding house manager, Peter Cherpes, went together to get Galt an Alabama driver's license. Galt told authorities then that he had a Louisiana driver's license but lost it and that he was an unemployed shipyard worker, his last job being at Indalls Shipbuilding Co. at Pascagoula, Miss.

However, checks of Louisiana records and employment records with Ingalls, as well as merchant marine.

Coast Guard and Seaman Union records found no trace of Galt.

Later in September, Galt received a prepaid package in the mail from Chicago. Cherpes said it weighed 20 to 25 pounds and was about two feet long and one foot wide.

RENT

Cherpes says Galt told him the next day that the box contained the wrong merchandise and he was going to send it back.

In October, Cherpes said, Galt gave him one week's rent in advance and said he was going to Mobile, Ala., to find a job. Employment records in Mobile held no signs that Galt searched for or found work there.

Cherpes said Galt told him he would not be back but that he expected a letter from Chicago and wanted Cherpes to hold it for him. Cherpes said he never saw or heard from Galt after Oct. 7, 1967.

In late February or early March, Cherpes said, the Chicago letter for Galt came. Cherpes held it for a week then returned it in the mail, he said.

CAR

While in Birmingham, Galt kept a safe deposit box at the Birmingham Trust National Bank. The FBI believes Galt used money from it to buy a 1966 white Ford Mustang last August 30 from a car salesman, William D. Paisley of Birmingham, for about \$2000.

The same kind of car was seen fleeing from the Memphis flophouse after Dr. King was shot. A Mustang impounded in Atlanta by the teread to Galt in Alabama.

A final clue to Galt came last March 1 when the Alabama Highway Department at Montgomery received a phone call from a man identifying himself as Eric S. Galt. He said he lost his driver's license and wanted a duplicate mailed to him at the Birmingham rooming house.

The duplicate license was mailed the same day. With it went the standard Alabama bill of 25 cents to cover the costs of issuing the duplicate license.

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