

FBI Draws Blank in Search

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The mysterious Eric Starvo Galt almost certainly is the lone subject of the FBI's investigation into Martin Luther King's assassination despite an FBI complaint charging that Galt conspired in the slaying with his alleged brother.

A Federal source pointed out to a Los Angeles Times reporter that the complaint alleging a conspiracy would

have been based on nothing more substantial than testimony by a witness that he had heard Galt say he and a brother planned to kill Dr. King or to use the rifle believed to be the murder weapon.

The FBI apparently knows little about the man called Galt — probably not even whether he has a brother. The complaint charges that "on or about March 29, 1968, at Birmingham.....Galt and an individual whom he

alleged to be his brother, entered into a conspiracy which continued until on or about April 5, 1968," to violate Dr. King's civil rights.

The civil rights law does not authorize Federal prosecution unless there is evidence of a conspiracy.

Several sources have said Galt purchased two rifles from a Birmingham sporting goods store on March 29 and made a remark to the sales clerk that could have formed

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the basis for the conspiracy charge.

He reportedly purchased a .243 Remington rifle, then returned later in the day and exchanged it for a 30.06 rifle declaring that he and his brother had decided the .243 was a heavier cartridge load and not suited for their hunting purposes.

Dr. King was fatally injured by a sniper on April 4 while standing on a balcony outside his Memphis motel room. A white Mustang registered in Galt's name and resembling one witnesses said fled the assassination scene was located abandoned in a public housing parking lot in Atlanta on April 11.

Indications are that Galt left a cold trail, but a Federal source in Birmingham close to the investigation said the government has "a very strong case" if the subject can be apprehended.

The assassin left a trail of clues, including the 30.06 rifle equipped with a telescopic site, but the FBI apparently has been unable to establish whether Galt is his real name or to locate anyone who knew anything about him prior to recent years.

Meanwhile, the search for Galt continues.

In Birmingham, one witness, Jimmy Phillips, told reporters he had informed FBI agents that a man who looked like Galt visited a gas station where he (Phillips) worked last February and talked with him for about an hour.

Phillips said that from the conversation he judged Galt was from Georgia. He added that the white Mustang Galt was driving had Georgia license plates on it, although earlier it had Alabama plates. The Mustang abandoned in Atlanta had Alabama plates.

Shown the FBI photo of the subject, Phillips said, "it looks like him."

The filing of the conspiracy complaint and issuance of an FBI press release on the investigation Wednesday apparently were designed to solicit public help in locating Galt.

Such a news release normally would include information about a subject's birth date, places of residence, education and occupation, but the release on Galt contains scant background information and some of it was based solely on what Galt had told other persons.