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HARTFORD, Conn. ap - The Federal Bureau of Investigation is looking into the claim of two girls that they saw a man in San Juan International Airport who they believe to be the man accused of killing Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., an FBI spokesman said Thursday.

The story of the girls' encounter with the man whose face and actions closely resembled that of James Earl Ray, alias Eric Starvo Galt, was reported in Thursday's edition of the Hartford Times as told by the girls to a Spanish columnist for the paper. The two, Lucy Eneida Gomez, 19, and Carmen Ana Maldonado, 16, informed the FBI on arrival here Tuesday of their experience while buying tickets at the San Juan airport Thursday.

A man shoved into the line ahead of them at the Pan American Airways, they said. He had a nervous habit of pulling his right earlobe and constantly bit his lower lip and was bug-eyed when talking with the ticket agent.

The girls said the man asked for a ticket to Jamaica or "anywhere in South America," Lucy said. When informed of a vacancy on a flight to Miami, she related, "he said, 'No, I don't want to go to the States.'"

Lucy said she and her friend noticed the similarity between the man's appearance and photographs of Ray that had been published in Puerto Rican newspapers.

The FBI spokesman would say only that the report had been received and passed on to "the proper authorities," including those in Puerto Rico.

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