

A Result of Ray's Plea

Unanswered Questions in King Slaying

Memphis

James Earl Ray's plea of guilty to the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. put the lid on a court trial which may have aired puzzling questions about his escape from prison, his motive in killing Dr. King and his flight from justice.

Ray was sentenced to 99 years in prison. His attorney, Percy Foreman, said his goal was to save Ray's life and that he was satisfied that there was no conspiracy. Ray said he disagreed that there was no conspiracy, but that he wasn't going to fight the sentence.

His imprisonment without the searching inquiry a trial would have produced leaves a number of key questions unanswered.

FANTASY?

How did Ray pay his way? From the time of his escape from Missouri State Penitentiary at Jefferson City on April 23, 1967, until his capture in London on June 8, 1968, it is estimated that he spent at least \$10,000.

He had traveled to Toronto, Montreal, Atlanta, Birmingham, New Orleans, Puerto Vallarta, Los Angeles, Memphis, Portugal and London. He reportedly robbed a Montreal house of prostitution of \$800 and a London bank of about \$400.

Published accounts from prison of Ray's version of his flight say he was contacted in Montreal by a light-haired or blond Latin man named Raoul. The man, Ray said, gave him thousands of dollars. But the Royal Canadian Mounted Police say no evidence of such a man has been found. Was this a fantasy or was there a person named Raoul?

Minutes after Dr. King was shot as he stood on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, one police



THE REV. DR. KING
Why the sudden change?

radio channel was occupied with details of a fake pursuit of a white Mustang, which apparently concentrated police attention in directions away from the logical routes of flight to adjoining Arkansas or Mississippi.

Police said the broadcast was a hoax, but there has been no public explanation of the coincidence that the white Mustang of the hoax was the same kind of car which Ray used.

MOTEL

Dr. King had housed himself previously in the white-operated Rivermont Motel, but he moved into the Negro-operated Lorraine on the day he was slain. How did Ray know for certain that Dr. King was there and that he had a room opening onto a balcony that was exposed to possible attack from a number of positions across the street?

How did Ray pick the rooming house on Main Street and how did he know that the best vantage point would be from the hallway bathroom, from which the fatal shot was fired? He had

been offered a room with a kitchenette in another part of the establishment, but it would have looked out on Main Street, away from the Lorraine suite.

Of the aliases Ray used, three were of living men all residing within the Toronto area: Paul Bridgman, Ramon George Sneyd, Eric Starvo Galt (Galt's actual middle name is St. Vincent).

Did someone select the names? What were the odds that Ray could select at random such names and then find sufficient information to be able to use them, such as he did in seeking passports and other official documents in the names of Bridgman and Sneyd?

LICENSE

While in Birmingham, before the King assassination, Ray bought a white Mustang for \$1995 cash. Later, when he was in Los Angeles, two unexplained events involving the car's license occurred.

On Feb. 28-29, 1968, the Alabama Highway Patrol received a telephoned request for a duplicate license for "Galt," as Ray was known. The duplicate was sent to a Birmingham rooming house on March 1, with a request for 25-cent fee. The quarter was received by the highway department on March 6. Who placed the call? Who sent the quarter? Why?

In an Atlanta rooming house which Ray left before the slaying, he left behind a map which bore his fingerprint and had four places circled on it? Dr. King's home, the headquarters of the

Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Dr. King's church and a housing area where the white Mustang was found abandoned after

the assassination.

Who furnished the information for the map? Did Ray figure it out on his own, or were others involved?

PRIFLES

Before the killing, Ray went to the Aero Marine Supply Company near the Birmingham airport, where he bought a .243 Remington rifle. He returned the next day to get a more powerful Remington Gamemaster.

Why would he have risked making an exchange which

would fix his appearance in the minds of others? Why would he have decided on a more powerful weapon? The .243 would have been just as deadly, say some hunters.

Ray's published accounts of his escape from the Missouri State Penitentiary say he scaled the wall with the aid of a long-handled kitchen tool. Examination of the inside of the wall indicated that his story was a highly fanciful account.

Had he indeed gone over the wall at the point he claims, he still would not have been out of the prison because there is an additional supervised area he would have had to negotiate.

Prison authorities still contend that he escaped inside a breadbox with the aid of one or perhaps more prisoners. If so, who helped him?

DOCUMENTS

After the slaying, Ray managed to obtain a passport in Toronto under the name of Ramon George Sneyd. There are conflicting versions of just how his passport was obtained, especially since the Bureau of Vital Statistics in Toronto has no record of sending a duplicate "Sneyd" birth certificate to him.

A birth certificate was mailed to Ray, as "Paul Bridgman," but it was returned, undelivered. Without any document to show his

gal, Ray was safe from the long arm of American law. The United States has no extradition agreement with Portugal involving such capital cases and he would have been safe there. He went to London. Why? Associated Press



JAMES EARL RAY
A lot of coincidences