

# Sniper Kills Dr. Martin Luther King In Memphis

By CHARLES THORNTON  
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The Commercial Appeal  
Special to the Observer  
Newspapers

MEMPHIS, Tenn., April 5—A sniper shot and killed Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as he stood on the balcony of a downtown hotel here.

The most intensive manhunt in the city's history was touched off minutes after the shooting.

Violence broke out in Memphis, this, Nashville, Birmingham, Raleigh, N.C., Washington, New York, and other cities as news of the assassination swept the nation.

NATIONAL leaders including President Johnson and aides close to the slain 39-year-old Nobel Peace Prize winner urged the nation to stand calm and avoid violence.

But the entire nation was tense.

The slaying of Dr. King brought Tennessee National Guardsmen back into Memphis.

The entire 11,000 men in the state guard were on duty today.

All schools will be closed today. Parents were urged to keep their children at home.

A rifle bullet slammed into Dr. King's jaw and neck at 6:01 p.m. He died in the emergency room at St. Joseph's Hospital here at 7:05 p.m.

King, 39, a native American Civil Rights leader, was alone on the second floor walk of the Lorraine Hotel at 406 Mulberry when the bullet struck.

Police estimated that more than 150 descended on the Lorraine Hotel in South Memphis, sealed off the area and rushed to immediately broadcast a description of the sniper; a white male, 30 to 32 years old, five feet 10 inches tall, about 165 pounds, dark to sandy hair, medium build, rusty complexion, as if he worked outside.

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The suspect was wearing a black suit and white shirt. The weapon which was thought to have been used was a Remington pump action .30, 06 caliber, telescope mounted rifle. The rifle was found nearby.

Dr. King returned to Memphis Wednesday morning to map plans for another downtown march—scheduled for next Monday—in support of the city's striking sanitation workers.

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speed chase in which a blue Pontiac was being pursued by a white Mustang out the Austin Peay Highway here. Shots were reported fired between the two cars. A white Mustang seen near the scene of the slaying was still being sought by police early today.

Officials of Dr. King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), some of whom were standing near him on the narrow balcony of the hotel when he was shot, continued to urge his nonviolence teachings.

His chief lieutenant, Dr. Ralph Abernathy, went to the Mason Temple last night to address a gathering of Dr. King's followers.

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the mourning group. "If we respect his leadership, if we appreciate the service that he rendered, then we must do all in our power to carry forth the work that he completed."

"It is a riot of violence would erupt in Memphis tonight Dr. King in Heaven would not be pleased."

A few had other ideas. "He died for us and we're going to die for him," a young man shouted.

Early Friday morning, Mr. Holloman said police believed the murder weapon was a .30 caliber pump action Remington rifle equipped with a telescopic sight. Such a weapon was among those stolen Tuesday night from Dowdle Sporting Goods Co. in Memphis.

About 15 weapons were taken in the burglary. "The distance over which the bullet traveled before it struck

Dr. King was 205 feet three inches at a down angle," Mr. Holloman reported.

HE ALSO DETAILLED "other evidence...that may help his family in the investigation. The shot was fired from the window of a common bathroom at the end of the hall on the east side of the building at 420 South Main, directly across from the Lorraine Hotel. The suspect checked into the boarding house between 3 and 3:30 p.m. yesterday. His room was close to the bathroom.

"We do know he bought a pair of binoculars Thursday afternoon in Memphis. The man was seen to run from the 420 South Main building and discard a gun and a suitcase at 424 South Main. He simply faded. Nobody saw him get in the car but a white Mustang was seen to flee.

"The evidence we now have indicates that only one man was physically in the area of the bathroom."

Mr. Holloman would not reveal where the binoculars were purchased and said he did not know if the same used by the sniper is his real one.

The gun found at the Main street address was turned over to the FBI for ballistic tests. Mr. Holloman said his office is working closely with the FBI on other aspects of the investigation.

Former FBI officer Holloman also said the investigation was "impacted by the riot situation which developed almost immediately."

"The bullet knocked him off his feet," said the Rev. Jesse Jackson, executive staff member of SCLC. "It sounded like

a stick of dynamite or a big firecracker."

The Rev. Mr. Jackson said Dr. King had walked out of his room ahead of several friends on the way to a dinner engagement at the home of the Rev. Samuel B. Kyles.

His LAST WORDS were in reply to his chauffeur, Solomon Jones, Jr., on the street below. "I went out to start the car" Mr. Jones reported "Dr. King was on the porch. I yelled up at him it was cool and that he had better put his topcoat on. Dr. King said, 'OK, I will.' He smiled and then I heard the shot."

"He just fell back. I turned around and I saw a man jump out of the thickets across the street. He ran toward Main. We all scattered."



Dr. King

## Doctors Lose Fight To Save Negro Leader

Special to the Observer  
Newspapers

MEMPHIS, Tenn., April 5—Dr. Martin Luther King, his head wrapped in a towel and an oxygen mask over his face, looked small on the stretcher as he was wheeled into the emergency room of St. Joseph's Hospital at 6:16 last night.

His eyes were closed and the only sound was from the resuscitator which was pumping oxygen into his dying body.

Several of Dr. King's aides, his attorney, Chauncey Eskridge, and his chauffeur, Solomon Jones, Jr., leaned over the fire department ambulance stretcher. Their eyes were red-rimmed and all were silent.

AS THE STRETCHER disappeared behind the swinging double doors, Mr. Eskridge leaned on the desk in the waiting room and put his head in his hands. "Why, why would anybody want to do this," he cried. "I just don't understand it."

He did not go into the room where a team of doctors were treating a gaping wound in Dr. King's neck. "I just can't go in there," he said.

Other members of Dr. King's party emerged from the room and leaned against the walls, most were crying. Police arrived within minutes after the ambulance and quickly posted guards at every entrance to the hospital.

Two patrolmen with shotguns guarded the entrance to the emergency room and allowed only police officers and aides of Dr. King into the room.

before a police officer advised him not to make any statement and he returned to the emergency room.

Mr. Jones, who was talking with Dr. King as the shot rang out, fought back tears as he described the assassination to the newsman. "I ran up the fire escape after the shot and when I got to him he looked like he was dead. I was in shock and the others pulled me away. I did not see the wound."

"A WHITE MAN was the first to comfort him with a towel. I think he was staying at the hotel."

Doctors remained silent on the condition of the Nobel Peace Prize winner for an hour and 15 minutes.

A priest who had been in the emergency room walked into the hall at 7 p.m. "He must have been dead when he arrived. Oh, the terrible wound," he said pointing to the right side of his neck.

At 7:30 several doctors lined up in front of the reception desk in the emergency room and all of Dr. King's party was called into the emergency room of a gunshot wound in the neck."

AS THE CROWD of newsmen ran for telephones a lone Negro woman sank into a chair in the waiting room and put her head into her hands. "I didn't have to go back there to find that out," she moaned. "Dr. King's body remained at the hospital until shortly before 9 p.m. when he was carried to the morgue at John Gaston Hospital in the same ambulance which had brought him to the hospital two hours and 45 minutes before."

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