

STATEMENT OF: Mrs. Bessie Ruth Brewer, FW, 44, residence: 422 1/2 South Main, #2, telephone: 527-0167, Occupation: Resident Mgr. 422 1/2 S. Main, taken at Central Police Headquarters, 9:25PM April 4, 1968. Made to, FBI Agent Robert F. Boyle, and Lt. T. H. Smith, Memphis Police Department.

Questioned by: Lt. T. H. Smith

Typed: Kenneth L. Beaudoin.

Relative to: The shooting of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., that occurred Thursday April, 4, 1968 at approx. 6PM at the Lorraine Hotel, 406 Mulberry, Memphis, Tennessee.

Q. Mrs. Brewer did you rent a room within the past few days to a Male White, that occupied Apt. 5B, at 422 1/2 S. Main ?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Do you know the name of this subject ?

A. Just the name he gave me, John Willard.

Q. When did you rent the room to John Willard ?

A. Between 3PM and 3:30PM today.

Q. For how long did Mr. Willard rent this room ?

A. For one week.

Q. Did he pay you in advance ?

A. Eight dollars and one half dollar \$8.50.

Q. In what ~~denomination~~ denomination bills did he pay for the room ?

A. He gave me a \$20.00 bill and two quarters, and I gave him a ten and two ones in change.

Q. Did he sign a register for this room.?

A. No sir, I make out the receipts myself.

Q. Did he give you an address ?

A. No sir.

Q. I will ask you to state in your own words the exact conversation as you can recall that took place between you and Mr. Willard ?

A. He just knocked on the door and asked me did I have a room, and I said, "Yes.)" AND he asked to see it, so I showed him #8, and he said he did not like that for he didn't need the stove and the refrigerator. He just needed a sleeping room. And then I showed him 5B then, and he said that was fine. We just went back to the office, and he gave me the money, and I thanked him and he walked out. That is the last time I saw him.

Q. Did he look at the rooms that you showed him pretty good ?

A. He just stuck his head in room #8 and it wouldn't do. And when he looked in 5b, he said that was fine.

Q. Where is room 8 in relation to 5 B ?

A. Room 8 would be South west of Room 5 B and in another part of the building.

Q. Did Mr. Willard check the bathroom facilities before renting a room ?

A. He did not, he just asked where it was and I showed him.

Q. At the time the subject Willard checked in did he have an automobile ?

A.

Page Two: Statement of Mrs. Bessie Ruth Brewer

A. I don't know. He didn't have anything when he came in.

Q. Did you see the subject Willard leave the building and obtain any type of luggage?

A. No sir.

Q. I will ask you to give us as detailed a description of the subject Willard to the best of your knowledge as you can?

A. I didn't pay much attention to him. He was a tall man, and close to 6 foot. I know he had to be around 35, and I suppose he weighed somewhere in the neighborhood of 180 lbs. He was medium build, and he was tall and carried his weight well, and a real neat looking guy. During the time I was talking to him he had a smile or a sneer on his face. He did not look like he had been outdoors a lot. I thought he was wearing just a sport jacket, dark, it was a short jacket, for when he reached in his right hand pocket for his money he did not have to pull it back. He just pulled out the one bill. I didn't notice any rings or watches on him, and did not pay any attention to his shoes, pants or shirt, whether he had a tie or a hat. I am sure he did not have a hat, but I got the impression he did not need a hair cut. I did not notice him having a mustache or sideburns, and did not pay any attention to his teeth while he was smiling, and he talked like everyone else around here. He was clean shaven. Now one thing he did say, when I had pointed out where the bathroom was. I told him everyone around here was usually quiet, and told him this guy right next to you usually drinks, and he said, "I take a beer once in a while while myself." I told him that was all right as long as he stayed in his room and kept quiet.

Q. Did he give you any indication as to his business or why he was wanting a room at this location?

A. He just said he wanted a sleeping room for he would not be in the room in the day time, just at night.

Q. Did you hear a gunshot during the afternoon of April 4, 1968?

A. Yes sir, I was watching Rawhide on Television. I had just finished washing dishes and I had just sit down. My husband came in at 5:25PM and we had eaten and I was washing dishes, and while I was washing dishes he had been sitting down watching Rawhide.

Q. What did you do immediately after you heard the shot?

A. I told him that it was a shot, and we run to the back door, me and my husband. That would be the South, back exit, and my husband stepped outside the door on the porch, and Mr. ~~Griffith~~ Reeves was right behind us, and I saw a policeman standing next to the stone wall, North of where we were. And the policeman told us to get back in and shut the door. And we went back in and shut the door, and sat down in the hall.

Q. Did you hear any noise from other individuals in the building after the gunshot and after you proceeded to the S. E. Exit of the building?

A. I didn't hear anything from the building, but we heard all this screaming and hollering out in the back.

Q. Do you think it would be possible for you to recognize this man again, if you were to see him?

A. I don't believe I could.

Q.

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