

SUPPLEMENT # 12
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR, MC, 39
Homicide No. 3367
Thursday, April 4, 1968, 6:00PM

RE: INTERVIEW OF CUSTOMERS IN JIM'S GRILL
418 S. MAIN ON APRIL 4, 1968

REPORTED BY: LT. J. D. HANBY
DET. C. A. GREGORY

On Sunday, April 7, 1968 at 9:45AM, Capt. R. A. Cochran gave us a list of names and addresses that were supposed to have been in Jim's Grill, 418 S. Main at approximately 6PM, April 4, 1968. He said to interview each one and get an oral or written statement.

On Sunday, April 7, 1968 at 10:15AM we went to where 187 1/2 S. Main was supposed to be, but found it to be a bad number. This number was given by George Harding, MW, 51.

On Sunday, April 7, 1968 at 10:30AM we went to 418 S. Main street, Jim's grill where we found the owner, Loyd Jowers, MW, 41, residence 2176 Jesse St., phone 358-6650, business phone 526-9910. In talking with Mr. Jowers he stated that he had been questioned many times by the City police and the FBI, but was willing to cooperate and do whatever he could to assist us. We asked that he start in the beginning of his activities and he stated that he opens up every morning around 5:50AM and remains at 418 S. Main street until around 10AM when he leaves and goes to 153 S. Calhoun, the check off cafe, which also belongs to him. He stays there until the noon hour rush is over, which is around 1PM and goes home and rests until around 3:30PM.

On April 4, 1968 he arrived at 418 S. Main street approximately 3:50PM and he attempted to park in his usual place, which is directly in front of 418 S. Main, but on this particular date he was unable to do so as there was a white Mustang with out of state plates very clean in appearance, parked in his parking place. He recalled it distinctly, because it upset him and he cursed under his breath, because someone did have his parking place. He said the license plates on this Mustang were light in color, but he did not know the state. He said his first impression was that they were Mississippi license plates. He stated that he went on into the restaurant and nothing unusual occurred until around 6PM. He said he was standing at the cash register, which is in the front end of the building, when he heard a loud noise, which sounded like it came from the rear of the building or the kitchen. He left the cash register and walked back to the kitchen and as he got to the left booth he stopped and asked Harold Parker, MW, 48 if he had heard the noise in the kitchen and Parker told him he had. He said he walked to the back room and looked around and did not see anything that had fallen and returned back towards the front of the restaurant, but before he got to the cash register he was stopped by Jesse Jackson, who was sitting at the bar and served him a glass of beer and then walked on up to the cash register. It was at this time that he noticed the Mustang was gone, in fact it was the first time that he had looked out to check on the Mustang since he arrived at 3:50PM. A

About this time a State Highway patrolman opened the door to the restaurant with his pistol in his hand and ordered him to lock the doors and not to let anyone enter or leave. He said his first impression was the Negroes were rioting again and did not associate the noise he had heard previously with the Highway patrolman or the rioting. He said that shortly after the Highway patrolman came in he saw a lot of policemen in front of his cafe and a short time after that approximately 25 minutes from the time the trooper first ordered him to lock the door the same trooper came back in with other police officers and stated that Martin Luther King had been shot. The customers were given tickets from the order books or checks and told to write down their names, addresses and places of employment. After each one did this the officers questioned each customer as well as himself. At around 9PM he was instructed to open the door and when he did most of his customers went home, but there were a few who remained until he closed around 10:15PM.

He stated that at no time did he recall seeing anyone in or about the Mustang parked out in the front.

After receiving this information from Mr. Jowers and finding out from him that he had not given a written statement pertaining to the above he was brought to the Homicide office by bus and at 11:55AM, April 7, 1968 he did give a written statement pertaining to the above.

In his written statement it was brought out that he knew the majority of the men that was listed on the piece of paper given to us by Capt. Cochran and he stated that most of them worked for Taylor Paper Co. which is nearby. Three of them works for N. E. Carter & Co. and that they were regular customers of his, but that he did not know anything about them personal.

He further stated that David N. Wood, MW, who was also on this list told him after the excitement was over that when he first came to the cafe, time unknown, he had backed into a parking place directly in front of a white Mustang, that was parked in front of the cafe and when he got out of his car he walked between the Mustang and the rear of his car and that he had noticed that the Mustang did not have a license plate on the front, nor did it have a city tag or inspection tag. He further told him that the car had black walled tires.

We left Headquarters and took Mr. Jowers back to 418 S. Main and got in service at 1:25PM.

We took the list given us by Capt. Cochran and rushed them rather than skip about and at 1:40PM, April 7, 1968 we went to 1066 Poplar, Apt. 3 to attempt to locate James A. Walker, Jr. No one was at home.

At 1:54PM we went to 1054 Noda to attempt to locate Harold Parker, MW, 48 and found no one at home.

At 3:12PM we went to 935 Parkhaven to talk with Barry Tabbs and Steve Cupples and found no one at home.

At 3:16PM we went to 1592 S. Highland to interview Billy Ray Beard, MW and found no one at home.

At 3:27PM we went to 3972 New Willow Rd. to talk with Kenneth W. Foster and found no one at home.

At 3:45PM we went to 3639 Aldemais Rd. the home of Franklin Ray and was admitted by Mrs. Ray and Franklin. There was another MW sitting there with them, that they introduced as Steve Cupples, who was also on our list to check and who lives at 935 Parkhaven. In interviewing Steve Cupples, MW, 21, 327-7006, employed at Taylor Paper Co. 420 S. Front street he stated that he parked on the west side of Main street directly across from Jim's grill at 418 S. Main street. As he crossed Main street he noticed a white Mustang parked in front of Jim's grill, but he could not recall if he walked in front or behind the Mustang to get in the grill. He stated that he recalled that he was thinking the car, Mustang, was dirty, as he had to brush against the front or back of it to get past and looked to see if he got any dirt on his clothing. He didn't recall anything other than this about the Mustang. He further stated that he arrived at Jim's grill around 5:15 to 5:30PM. He played the pin ball machine with several other Taylor Paper Co. employees, but did not see nor hear anything unusual until the officer came into the front door with his pistol in his hand and ordered the owner to lock the door and to not let anyone leave or enter. He was unable to add anything to the above to assist in our investigation.

We then interviewed M Franklin Ray, MW, 21, phone 323-9725. He stated that he did not see or hear anything and could not give us any information at all as he was not paying attention to what was going on until after the police officer came in and ordered the owner of Jim's grill to lock the door.

We then systematically returned to 3972 New Willow road, 1592 S. Highland, 1054 Noda, 1066 Poplar, Apt. 3 and still no one was at home.

As Mr. David M. Wood had agreed to meet us in the Homicide office between 3 and 4PM for the purpose of giving a written statement we returned to Headquarters and found that he had not called or come to the office and he was again contacted by phone, but was unable to get any one to answer.

As most of the ones we wanted to talk to are employed at Taylor Paper Co. 420 S. Front or M. E. Carter & Co. it may be possible to talk with all of them at one time on Monday, April 8, 1968.