

6416 S. York Ave.

Statement of **CHARLES BURRIDGE, JR.**, Age, 49, Residence, 123 W. Madison Street, Chicago, Illinois, Home Phone, 732-2286, Occupation, Lawyer, Business Phone, Area Code, 312, 372-1100, made at Central Police Headquarters, on Friday, April 3, 1968, at 11:05 a.m., to Lt. T. E. Smith, Mr. Larry Hutchinson, of the Attorney General's Office, Agent Joe C. Hester, of the FBI.

TYPED BY: WILLIE FRANK MILLER

QUESTIONED BY: LT. T. E. SMITH

Relative to the SHOOTING of **DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.**, that occurred on Thursday, April 4, 1968, at approx. 6:00 p.m., at the Lorraine Hotel at 406 Halberry.

- Q. Mr. Burridge, where were you in relation to Dr. King at the time he was shot?
- A. Standing in the courtyard underneath the balcony, directly below him.
- Q. Did you see Dr. King at the time he was hit?
- A. No, I did not.
- Q. Was he in your sight at the time he was hit?
- A. He was in my sight.
- Q. Did you hear the shot when it was fired?
- A. I did.
- Q. Do you know what time that shot was fired?
- A. About 6:10 to 6:15 p.m.
- Q. How are you basing your time?
- A. At the time I got to the hospital, I looked at the clock and it was 6:30.
- Q. How many shots did you hear fired?
- A. One.
- Q. Where was Dr. King standing at the time the shot was fired?
- A. On the balcony in front of the door to his room.
- Q. From which direction did the shot seem to come?
- A. The shot came from my rear, and to his, toward his face.
- Q. I assume then that you were standing with your back to Halberry Street, facing the hotel, is that correct?
- A. That's correct.
- Q. At the time the shot was fired, did you look and try to determine where it had come from?
- A. I did.
- Q. Could you make a determination?
- A. Yes.
- Q. In your opinion, where did the shot come from?
- A. From the area of the houses overlooking Halberry Street, or from the high grass in the yards which were behind the houses overlooking Halberry Street.
- Q. At the time you were observing this area, did you see anyone in the area that could have fired the shot?
- A. I did not.
- Q. How long had you been standing in the courtyard prior to the shooting?
- A. About five to ten minutes.
- Q. I will ask you to state in your own words exactly what you saw and knew of this shooting

- A. About a quarter to six, I walked into the courtyard and Dr. King came out of his room, he was putting on his shirt, and he said, "We're going to dinner together, tell Jessie Jackson to get dressed". Dr. King then turned and went back into his room. About this time, Jessie Jackson came into my view and I delivered the message that Dr. King had given to me. Jessie went into the room and a few minutes later, he came out, wearing a coat and carrying a briefcase, and he said to him, "Are you dressed prepared to go to dinner", and he answered in the affirmative. About this time, Dr. King came out of his room again, had taken steps toward the railing, and he might have put his hands on the railing, both hands. When from my right rear, I heard a sound something like firecrackers, and I looked to my left rear, momentarily, to see if someone were behind me, and when I looked back toward Dr. King again, I saw him laying on the balcony on his back. I turned around and ran back to Mulberry Street, to look both ways, and saw, about a block away, going away from my right, it appeared to be a gray Cadillac, I think. The license plates I could not read, and I think the plate numbers were red. That was the only car that was on that street. I looked both directions. Then I looked directly in front of me, and across the street is a retaining wall about 7 1/2' / 8' 7' high, and above the wall I could see the rear of some houses with common wall, or rowhouses. One window was open and the window was propped open with a stick. I saw no person in the rear yards, nor from any of these windows. Within a matter of three minutes, from my left front, six to eight Uniform Police jumped from the wall to my left front, and within a matter of I would say a minute or two a police car came from my right and stopped directly in front of me. Within a matter of moments, the ambulance came and I ~~was~~ the ambulance attendant, go up on the balcony, place the body on the cot, then carry the cot down the stairs, and as they approached the ambulance I stood at the ambulance door and looked at Dr. King as they were placing him in the ambulance. As the ambulance prepared to leave, Rev. Bernard Lee and I jumped into a Cadillac driven by Mr. Jones, and we got behind the ambulance and accompanied the ambulance to the hospital. Before I departed, however, I saw Dr. Abernathy get into the rear of the ambulance.
- Q. Name the other persons that were standing in the courtyard with you at the time of the shooting?
- A. This Mr. Jones that drove the Cadillac to the hospital, I saw some ladies, who were screaming when somebody hollered, "Dr. King has been shot", that's all I remember who were on the ground floor with us. Jackson was on the balcony, along with Rev. Young and Rev. Abernathy.
- Q. Do you know the first name or the business of this Mr. Jones that drove you to the hospital?
- A. I think he works for the Lewis Funeral Home, I just discovered that.
- Q. Earlier in the statement, you recalled seeing a window open in the houses across Mulberry was this window that was open and propped with a stick facing Mulberry or one of the other directions?
- A. It was facing Mulberry.
- Q. Was this window on the first or second floor?
- A. It was on the second floor.
- Q. What was near this window?
- A. If I remember correctly, the house had two windows in it, I don't remember which side of the building this window was on, but as I was facing the building, it would have been on my left.
- Q. Did you arrive in Memphis with Dr. King?
- A. No, I did not.
- Q. How long have you been in Memphis?
- A. I arrived this morning about 11:30.
- Q. During the time you have been in Memphis, have you ~~never~~ spent some time in Dr. King's room?
- A. Not in his room, but in another room with him.
- Q. Are you also registered there at the Lorraine Motel?
- A. I have not had the opportunity to register, because when I came in I immediately met with Dr. King and went to the Federal Courthouse for the hearing that was pending.

Page 3: Statement of CHARCKY WHEATON, MO, 49.

Q. Are you familiar with the different sounds of different firearms?

A. Generally, yes.

Q. The shot that you heard, could you determine if it came from a hand gun, rifle or shotgun?

A. It did not come from a shotgun, it came from a rifle.

Q. Do you know of anyone that wished to harm Dr. King?

A. My answer would be in the negative.

Q. Do you have any other information which you feel might help us identify Dr. King's killer?

A. No, I do not.

Q. Do you know the purpose of Mr. Jones being in the area?

A. Yes, I think that some undertakers lent some cars to Dr. King's party, and he is one of those drivers.


