

1
STATEMENT OF: Rev. Bernard Scott Lee, Male Negro, 32, residence: 334 Auburn Ave., Atlanta, Georgia, Occupation: Minister, taken at Central Police Headquarters 11:05PM April 4, 1968, by Lt. Tom Marshall, and Agent G. V. Johnston, FBI.

Questioned by: Agent G. B. Johnston

Typed: Kenneth L. Beaudoin.

Relative to the fatal shooting of Martin Luther King Jr., that occurred Thursday April 4, 1968 at approx. 6PM at the Lorraine Motel, 400 Mulberry, Memphis, Tenn.

Q. Rev. Lee when did you come to Memphis .

A. On the 3rd of April.

Q. Did you come with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. ?

A. I did.

Q. Have you been staying at The Lorraine Motel since being in Memphis ?

A. Yes I have.

Q. What was your room number, and who was in the room with you ?

A. I was registered in Room 205, and I was staying in that room alone.

Q. Dr. King was in what room ?

A. He was in room 306, the floor above me., and one door south of my unit.

Q. What time did you return to your Motel prior to the shooting ?

A. We had not left the premises of the motel all day. I was in my room at about 4:30PM., preparing for dinner. It was around 4:45PM or 4:50PM when I was in the Courtyard with other members of the Staff(SCLC staff) and local community people. And as I recall I was standing three feet from the steps on the North end of the Courtyard leading to the second floor of the Motel., and I saw Dr. King come out of his room, it must have been nearly 5PM and he walked out on the balcony and I recall two local female workers following one of our staff cars in the Courtyard for parking. And I turned to look at them and I heard a shot, and it came from across the street directly in front of Dr. King's room. And immediately I distinguished the shot from that of a firecracker. I knew full well it was not a firecracker. I knew it was a high calibre weapon that had been fired., from the sound. And I base this judgement on my experience in the United States Air Force, having fired an M-2 carbine, and the 22 calibre rifle. When I turned my attention toward the balcony I saw Dr. King fall back. Rev. Young climbed the northerly steps leading to the second floor balcony of the Motel proceeding toward Dr. King. I was not more than a foot behind him., in reaching Dr. King. We saw Dr. King lying prostrate on his back in a pool of blood., which came from the wound.

As near as I could tell the bullet had torn out a section of the right side of his face, between the high cheekbone and the lower bone of the jaw. After viewing Dr. King the Policemen rushed to the spot where Dr. King was lying within minutes. I requested of the Policemen present with other verbal request from members of our staff to call an ambulance. While I was on the balcony with Dr. King after the shooting I saw a white man to the best of my knowledge wearing uniforms of the Memphis Police Department and with shotguns across the street to the West., where I heard the shot come from.

Q. Rev. Lee, at the time you heard the shot, did you look in the direction that the shot sounded from ?

A. I did.

Q. Did you see anyone on the building or in a window ?

A. I believe from the instant look I gave the area I saw no one.

Q.

Page Two (statement of Rev. Bernard Lee)

Q. Rev. Lee, from your experience with firearms can you state from the sound of the blast, that the shot was from a high powered rifle rather than a shot gun?

A. On the basis of my experience in the Armed Forces and using the M.2 rifle, which I would consider to be a high powered rifle, the shot I heard sounded like a shot from a weapon such as the M-2, which I have fired on a rifle range. I do not believe this shot was fired from a small arm, or a shot gun.

Q. How many shots did you hear?

A. I heard one shot.

Q. Did you see anyone fleeing the area adjacent to the Lorraine Hotel at the time of the shooting?

A. I did not notice anyone fleeing the adjacent area of the motel. The only movement I was in a position to observe was that of Rev. Young and myself running up the northerly situated steps to the second floor balcony where Dr. King was lying.

Q. At the time of the shooting was there anyone else on the balcony with Dr. King to your knowledge?

A. I saw no one, on the balcony in front of Dr. King's room, with him at that time, or at the time prior to the shooting.

Q. Rev. Lee will you identify by name every person that you recall being in the area of the Lorraine Motel at the time of the shooting?

A. I recall seeing in the Courtyard of the Motel Rev. Andrew Young, Atty. Chauncey Eskridge, Rev. Solomon Jones, . There were others of the SCLC staff, and local community people. But their names and faces are not clear to me at this time.

Q. Rev. Lee do you have any other information or can you recall any further details which you would like to add regarding the shooting of Dr. King? and which might be of value to this investigation?

A. Quite frankly I think I have given you all of the information relative to Dr. King's assassination that I clearly recall now. After that there was the putting him on the stretcher, and going with him to the Hospital. I was in the car directly behind the ambulance. Rev. Young rode in the front seat of the ambulance between the driver and the attendant. And Rev. Abernathy rode in the ambulance in the rear section with Dr. King. That was it.

Q. Was Dr. King conscious at any time after the shooting when you were in his presence?

A. When I reached Dr. King he was unconscious. Rev. Abernathy came out of the room No. 306 that he and Dr. King shared and knelt beside Dr. King. It was at that moment that I heard Dr. King attempt to speak, and it was merely sound coming from Dr. King, which we could not understand what he had tried to say.

Q. Rev. Lee were you looking in Dr. King's direction at the time of the shooting?

A. No, I was not.

Q. After the shooting and after giving a ~~short~~ perusal of the vicinity did ~~they~~ turn to look in Dr. King's direction.

A. I did.

Q. What was the position of Dr. King's body at that time?

A. Dr. King's body was nearly on the floor of the second floor.

Page Three (Statement of Rev. Bernard Lee)

A. (continued)

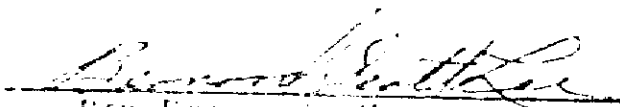
when I saw his hands raised and he was shouting.

Q. At the time of the shooting, was Dr. King carrying on any conversation with anyone to your knowledge?

A. No.

Q. Was Dr. King facing toward the west at the time of the shooting?

A. My last look at him before the shooting, he was facing west, and when he was falling he was still facing west.


Rev. Bernard Scott Lee.