





## Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Charles B. Murray

TO : Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division DATE: November 26, 1952

FROM : Director, FBI

CRIMINAL DIVISION

SUBJECT: H. B. MOORE, aka.  
ESSAU COPELAND - VICTIM  
CIVIL RIGHTS

DEC 2 - 1952

RECEIVED

~~Reference is made to \_\_\_\_\_ memorandum dated \_\_\_\_\_.~~

There is enclosed one copy of the report of Special Agent C. Dallas Mobley dated 11-17-52 at Atlanta. The investigation which has been requested by you has now been completed and no further investigation is contemplated unless requested by you.

E.C.N.

✓  
Enclosure

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DEC 2 1952

CIVIL RIGHTS SECTION

NEW

✓

144-19-189	
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE	
25	DEC 1 1952 E.C.N.
RECORDS BRANCH	
CRIM.-CIVIL RIGHTS SEC.	



# FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

CRIMINAL DIVISION

DEC 2 - 1952

Form No. 1

THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT **ATLANTA**

RECEIVED

REPORT MADE AT <b>ATLANTA</b>	DATE WHEN MADE <b>11/17/52</b>	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE <b>11/5,6,12,13/52</b>	REPORT MADE BY <b>C. DALLAS MOBLEY</b> <div style="text-align: right;">bsh</div>
TITLE <b>H. B. MOORE, aka Bill Moore, Georgia State Revenue Agent; ESSAU COPELAND - VICTIM</b>			CHARACTER OF CASE <b>CIVIL RIGHTS</b>

**SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:**

Victim's relatives reported to DAN DUKE, an Atlanta attorney, that Sheriff S. H. GILL of Meriwether Co. and his deputies had murdered and robbed victim. Preliminary investigation discloses that victim, a Negro bootlegger, died from injuries received from auto wreck during a chase by the subject, a state revenue agent. Investigation by the GBI and the Ga. Crime Lab discloses above allegations are unfounded. Sheriff GILL and his deputies were not present and did not participate in the incident. Examining physician states that victim's body bore no signs of physical mistreatment and victim had not been shot. Medical report showing victim died from brain concussion and internal injuries confirmed by autopsy. Victim's arrest record set out. Physical description of subject reported. Results of GBI and Ga. Crime Lab investigation summarized.

Oct 28-55

- C -

**DETAILS:**

**AT ATLANTA, GEORGIA**

The following investigation was conducted by SA ALDEN F. MILLER and the writer:

**Predication**

**DANIEL DUKE, Attorney at Law, Volunteer Building, advised**

APPROVED AND FORWARDED:	SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE	DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES
COPIES OF THIS REPORT  <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> 3-Bureau (Encls.-8)  1-USA, Atlanta ✓  2-Atlanta (44-494) </div>		<div style="font-size: 1.5em; color: red; margin-bottom: 10px;">144-19-189</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  25 DEC 1 1952  RECORDS BRANCH  CRIM. CIVIL RIGHTS SEC. </div>

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SA JOHN PAUL SLAYDEN on October 31, 1952 that he had been contacted by victim's relatives who reported that victim had been murdered and robbed by Sheriff S. H. GILL and his deputies of Meriwether County.

Mr. DUKE claimed that victim ESSAU COPELAND, a Negro who resided near Shiloh, Georgia (Harris County), had on the night of October 29, 1952, gone to the home of a white man identified as BUCK LATHAM of Shiloh, Georgia, where he had received from Mr. LATHAM approximately \$300 as a crop settlement. Mr. DUKE stated that apparently victim was a tenant farmer and Mr. LATHAM was his landlord. On this occasion victim was driving his personally owned 1941 Chevrolet sedan.

Victim's relatives told Mr. DUKE that JAMES COPELAND, victim's stepson, had discovered victim's car in a field approximately four miles from LATHAM's residence. As JAMES COPELAND approached the car, Sheriff S. H. GILL of Meriwether County appeared and told him to "get going". JAMES COPELAND did not see victim on this occasion but reported to his family what had happened.

According to Mr. DUKE, JAMES COPELAND and other unidentified Negroes later returned to the scene and found that the tires on victim's car had been shot. They also claimed that there was evidence of a scuffle near the car and that the victim's pocketbook was found empty.

Mr. DUKE stated that he had been informed that victim died on October 30, 1952, and that his head was covered with bruises that had been inflicted by some blunt instrument.

Mr. DUKE stated that it was his understanding that the Sheriff of Meriwether County had been chasing victim on this occasion as a suspected bootlegger but had failed to discover whiskey in victim's car following the wreck of same.

#### Results of Preliminary Investigation

##### AT GREENVILLE, MERIWETHER COUNTY, GEORGIA

Sheriff SUTTON H. GILL of Meriwether County was interviewed at his residence located in the Meriwether County Jail on November 5, 1952, at which time he furnished the following information:



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At approximately midnight on October 29, 1952, Sheriff GILL received a telephone call from H. B. MOORE (BILL MOORE) a state revenue agent assigned to Meriwether and Harris Counties. MOORE informed the Sheriff that he had received information from an informant that the victim, a bootlegger, was expected to appear in or near Warm Springs, Georgia, on the night of October 29, 1952, with a load of liquor. MOORE and BILL HALL, the town marshal at Warm Springs, Georgia, were in possession of the license number of victim's automobile (Georgia 1952 tag E/S-43552) and accordingly were on the look out for this automobile.

MOORE told the Sheriff that on spotting victim's car he attempted to stop victim but that victim had failed to halt and had driven through Warm Springs, Georgia, at an excessive rate of speed. MOORE told the Sheriff that he followed victim's car on the Columbus to Warm Springs Highway at an extremely high rate of speed to a point three or four miles Northwest of Warm Springs, Georgia. Victim, while driving at a rate of speed estimated by MOORE at ninety miles an hour, had attempted to make a turn which resulted in his car being completely wrecked and demolished.

MOORE informed Sheriff GILL when he approached the car the same was empty and he noted that an extra tire apparently in the trunk of the car had been thrown from the car. He replaced this tire and while doing so noticed an old blanket inside the car. Sheriff GILL stated that he told MOORE to contact the Town Marshal BILL HALL at Warm Springs, Georgia, for assistance in conducting a search of the area in an effort to find victim's body.

Sheriff GILL identified BILL HALL, the town marshal at Warm Springs, Georgia, as a deputy sheriff of Meriwether County.

Sheriff GILL stated that on the following day he had assigned his Deputy CECIL PERKINS to conduct an investigation of the above accident. He stated that PERKINS' investigation had disclosed that the victim who had the reputation for a bootlegger was driving a car at an excessive rate of speed at the time of the accident. The subject admitted to Deputy PERKINS that he had fired two shots in an effort to stop the victim who was known to him as a bootlegger. Deputy PERKINS had been unable to locate any bullet holes in victim's automobile and had learned from Dr. LAWSON JOHNSON of Manchester, Georgia, that the victim had died from brain concussion and internal injuries and had not died from bullet wound or any physical violence.



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Sheriff GILL stated that his investigation clearly indicated that the subject was not at fault and that the victim had died as a result of his own illegal acts in attempting to escape from and outrun a state officer. Sheriff GILL confirmed that victim's car contained no whiskey at the time of the wreck but that in the trunk was located an onion sack which is the type generally used by bootleggers for hauling cans of non-tax paid illegal whiskey.

Sheriff GILL stated that he had learned that Dr. HERMAN E. JONES, Director of the Georgia State Crime Laboratory, and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation had conducted an investigation in this matter at the request of DANIEL DUKE, an Atlanta attorney.

AT HAMILTON, GEORGIA

D. B. PHILLIPS, Chief of the Harris County Police Department, was interviewed in the Harris County Courthouse on November 5, 1952, at which time he furnished the following information. On the night of October 29, 1952, at around midnight he had received a telephone call from subject known to him as a state revenue agent requesting that he assist in locating ESSAU COPELAND, a Negro resident of Shiloh, Harris County, Georgia. Mr. PHILLIPS stated that since COPELAND, the victim, was a resident of his county and was known to him personally he had driven into Meriwether County to the scene where victim's car had been wrecked. He stated that he assisted state revenue agent MOORE and BILL HALL, Town Marshal from Warm Springs, Georgia, in conducting a terrain search in an effort to find victim.

Mr. PHILLIPS stated that shortly after 1:00 a.m. on November 1, 1952, they found victim's body in the weeds some thirty or forty feet from where his automobile was lying. Victim had been covered by a blanket and was unconscious. Mr. PHILLIPS stated that he assisted subject and Officer HALL in removal of victim to the hospital at Manchester, Georgia. He stated that he had examined victim's automobile and failed to note any bullet holes in the car. He stated that from the skid marks on the pavement it was obvious to him that the victim had wrecked his car while driving at an excessive rate of speed.

Mr. PHILLIPS stated that victim was known to him as a Harris County bootlegger who operated primarily in Meriwether County. He stated that he had arrested victim on September 4, 1952, for possession of non-tax paid liquor and that a case was pending on this matter in the Harris County Superior Court at the time of victim's death.



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Mr. PHILLIPS examined the records of the Harris County Superior Court and stated that in 1945 at the General Term of Court victim had pleaded guilty to driving an automobile while under the influence of whiskey and had received a \$100 fine which was paid.

Mr. PHILLIPS stated to his knowledge victim apparently was a part time farmer whose principal income was derived from bootlegging. He stated that he and other Harris County officers had made numerous efforts in the past to catch victim but had been unsuccessful with the exception of one case they had made on him in September, 1952.

AT LAGRANGE, GEORGIA

RUBIN SMITH, Special Agent, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, was interviewed at the Georgia State Patrol Barracks on November 5, 1952, at which time he furnished the following information:

Mr. SMITH stated that on Sunday, November 2, 1952, he had assisted Dr. HERMAN JONES, Director of the Georgia State Crime Laboratory, in an investigation of the incident resulting in victim's death. Mr. SMITH confirmed that this state investigation was made following a complaint received from DAN DUKE, an Atlanta attorney.

Mr. SMITH stated that he had examined the scene of the wreck of victim's car on old Highway 88 approximately four miles west of Warm Springs, Georgia, in Meriwether County. This examination took place at approximately 4:00 p.m. on November 2, 1952. Various unidentified Negro relatives of victim were present. All four tires and wheels were missing from victim's car at the time of this search. Victim's car was lying in a ditch on the right side of the highway approximately three hundred steps from where the vehicle had left the highway.

The skid marks made by this vehicle had been measured and it was estimated from the skid marks that the vehicle was traveling a minimum of 72 miles per hour at the time of the wreck. Since the vehicle rolled approximately three hundred steps after leaving the highway Mr. SMITH estimated that the vehicle could have been traveling at a much higher rate of speed. The car had turned over two or three times.



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Mr. SMITH observed a spot in the adjoining field fourteen steps from the automobile where victim's body had been lying. The grass and weeds were broken at this point which clearly indicated that a body had been lying at this location. There were signs of blood in the grass. A barbed wire fence separated this spot from victim's automobile.

Twenty-four steps from victim's automobile there was found a spot on the ground where victim's body had been recovered. At this spot blood was found on the ground and again the grass and weeds bore signs of having been pressed down.

A Negro identified as BILL NELSON, a relative of victim, pointed to the spot where the victim's body had been found. This is the spot that was twenty-four steps from the automobile. NELSON stated to Mr. SMITH that a blanket was on the victim's body when it was found.

Mr. SMITH stated that he had searched the scene as well as the victim's car and had failed to discover any signs of scuffling or physical violence. There were no bullet holes in the automobile.

During the above search, a Negro identified as JOE COPELAND, brother of victim, told Mr. SMITH and Dr. JONES that the right front tire of victim's car had been shot out and that a bullet was found inside of the tube and casing. JOE COPELAND then produced two tires 16 by 600 which he claimed were taken from the front of victim's car. He stated that the rear tires were practically new and since victim had owed money on these tires they had been returned to the unidentified merchant.

JOE COPELAND turned over to Mr. SMITH and Dr. JONES a bullet which he claimed was found in the car. He also pointed out to Mr. SMITH holes in the car which he said were bullet holes. These holes, according to Mr. SMITH, were old and were obviously not bullet holes.

The tire which JOE COPELAND claims was from the right front wheel of victim's car was not broken and bore only two small holes that were visible to the naked eye.



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Mr. SMITH stated that the result of his investigation to date indicated that the victim was a bootlegger and was known to subject MOORE and other officers in Meriwether County. According to Mr. SMITH, the results of his investigation to date were substantially the same as those by the Sheriff's Office of Meriwether County as herein reported.

Photographs of victim's automobile taken at the scene of the wreck and the skid marks were made by GBI Agent SMITH.

Mr. SMITH stated that he was present on November 2, 1952, at the time Dr. HERMAN JONES performed an autopsy on victim's body which was then located in the People's Funeral Home in Columbus, Georgia. Mr. SMITH stated that at the time of this autopsy he personally examined victim's body stating that the same bore no bullet holes or other signs of physical violence. He disclosed that the autopsy reflected that victim died from brain concussion and internal injuries.

AT MANCHESTER, GEORGIA

Dr. LAWSON JOHNSON, Johnson's Hospital, advised that victim was brought to his hospital at approximately 2:00 or 3:00 a.m. on the morning of October 30, 1952, and the victim's body was brought to the hospital by BILL MOORE known to Dr. JOHNSON as a state revenue agent and BILL HALL, the town marshal at Warm Springs, Georgia. Approximately ten or fifteen unidentified Negroes accompanied victim's body.

Dr. JOHNSON stated that victim at the time of his admission was unconscious and in a state of shock. He was not X-rayed and no autopsy was performed at the hospital. His left arm was broken (chewed up) and he had several rib fractures on both sides. His body was covered with dirt and grass and appeared to Dr. JOHNSON as a "typical wreck victim". Victim had a long scalp wound on the front of his head and forehead approximately six inches long.

Dr. JOHNSON stated that victim died in his hospital at approximately 10:00 p.m. on October 30, 1952. He died as a result of a brain concussion and other internal injuries sustained in the above described wreck. Dr. JOHNSON stated that victim's body bore no signs of physical mistreatment. No bullet holes were found. According to Dr. JOHNSON, the victim's wallet was intact at the time of his admission to the hospital but that no money was contained therein. He stated that he had been informed by subject MOORE that victim had wrecked his car while being chased by subject as a bootlegger at a rate of speed estimated at ninety miles per hour.



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Dr. HERMAN E. JONES, Director of the Georgia State Crime Laboratory, was interviewed in his office on November 12, 1952, at which time he furnished the following information. Dr. JONES stated that he had received a telephone call from DANIEL DUKE, an Atlanta attorney, on Sunday November 2, 1952, reporting that victim's death had resulted from illegal acts by the local law enforcement officials in Meriwether County. DUKE gave Dr. JONES substantially the same complaint as originally furnished the Atlanta Office of the FBI.

Dr. JONES stated that he together with GBI Agent RUBIN SMITH had gone to the scene of the accident and had conducted certain investigation. He stated that he could find no bullet holes in victim's automobile and from the skid marks on the highway it was obvious that victim's car was traveling at a rate of speed in excess of seventy miles an hour.

Dr. JONES stated that a Negro identified as JOE COPELAND, victim's brother, had appeared at the scene of the wreck and had insisted that victim had been shot through the body and that the right front tire of victim's car had been shot which had resulted in the wreck. According to Dr. JONES, victim's car had been stripped of its wheels and tires at the time of his investigation.

JOE COPELAND, above mentioned, then produced and turned over to Dr. JONES two tires and tubes which he claimed had been removed from victim's car. He also furnished Dr. JONES with a bullet which he claimed was found in the right front tire from victim's car. He also pointed out two small holes in the tire casing which he claimed were made by this bullet.

Dr. JONES stated that he had compared this bullet with JOE COPELAND claims was removed from the right front tire of victim's car with specimen bullets fired from a .38 calibre Smith and Wesson revolver, Serial No. 24651 which is owned by the subject. This ballistics test according to Dr. JONES disclosed that the ammunition was different although it was the same calibre. This ballistics test disclosed that the bullet claimed to have been found in victim's right front tire could not have been fired from subject's revolver.

The bullet alleged to have been found in this tire according to Dr. JONES was slick on the flat side clearly indicating that it had been carried in someone's pocket for a long period of time.



Dr. JONES stated that he fired numerous test shots into tire casings and tubes in an effort to determine what effect a bullet would have to tires on both standing and moving vehicles. He stated that from his experience as well as the experience of Georgia State Highway Patrol the average automobile tire would be torn to pieces if a bullet were fired into it while the vehicle was traveling at a rate of speed from seventy to ninety miles an hour. Further, the walls of the tire casings would be cut by the rim and the thread structure would be broken down from the weight of the car under these circumstances.

Dr. JONES stated that he had examined the right front tire and tube which JOE COPELAND, victim's brother, had voluntarily turned over to him and which he claimed he had removed from the right front wheel of victim's car. Dr. JONES stated that the tire had two small holes through the worn tread which in his opinion could not have resulted from a bullet as alleged by victim's brother, JOE COPELAND. He stated that his examination of the tube within this particular tire disclosed the presence of one clean cut hole which in his opinion could not have resulted from penetration by a bullet.

In summary, Dr. JONES stated that the results of his investigation had failed to substantiate the original allegations made by victim's relatives to DANIEL DUKE, an Atlanta attorney.

Dr. JONES stated that he had performed an autopsy on victim's body on November 2, 1952, in the People's Funeral Home at Columbus, Georgia. The autopsy was with the consent of victim's relatives.

The autopsy showed, according to Dr. JONES, that victim died from brain concussion and internal injuries sustained in the above described automobile wreck. Dr. JONES stated that there were no bullet holes in victim's body and that the body bore no signs of physical violence or mistreatment.

#### Physical Description of Subject

The following physical description of subject was obtained from Dr. HERMAN E. JONES, Director of the Georgia Crime Department Laboratory:

Name	H. B. MOORE, aka BILL MOORE
Age	25



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Height	5' 7"
Weight	145 lbs.
Build	Medium
Complexion	Fair
Eyes	Blue
Hair	Blond
Occupation	Georgia State Revenue Agent
Assignment	Meriwether and Harris Counties, Georgia
Residence	Warm Springs, Georgia.

Description of victim

The following physical description of victim was noted by Dr. HERMAN E. JONES, Director of the Georgia State Crime Laboratory, at time of autopsy on November 2, 1952:

Name	ESSAU COPELAND
Age	Unknown, estimated approximately 50
Residence	Shiloh, Harris County, Georgia
Height	5' 11"
Weight	180 lbs.
Build	Medium
Race	Negro
Characteristics	Hairline styled mustache.

D. B. PHILLIPS, Chief of Harris County Police, Hamilton, Georgia, advised that the victim according to the records of Harris County Superior Court as ESSAU COPELAND was indicted for driving under the influence of intoxicating liquors at the January Term of Court 1945. A plea of guilty was entered and he received a sentence of twelve months or \$100 fine. The fine was paid.

Victim as ESSAU COPELAND was arrested by the Harris County Police Department on September 4, 1952, for the illegal possession of non-tax paid liquor (bootlegging) case pending before Grand Jury at time of victim's death on October 30, 1952.

ENCLOSURES TO BUREAU: The following photographs made on November 2, 1952, by Dr. HERMAN E. JONES, Director of the Georgia State Crime Laboratory:

- (1) Scene showing skid marks of victim's automobile on highway approximately four miles west of Warm Springs, Georgia
- (2) Photograph of rear end of victim's automobile which fails to disclose the presence of bullet holes.



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- (3) Rear left side of victim's car. No bullet holes shown.
- (4) Trunk of victim's car showing no bullet holes.
- (5) View of victim's car showing wrecked condition.
- (6, 7, 8) Photographs of victim made at the time of autopsy at the People's Funeral Home, Columbus, Georgia, on November 2, 1952. Hole and string on left side of stomach is trocar entry made by undertaker.

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CBM:JXK:et

144-19-189

Typed 12-31-52

January 2 1953

J. Ellis Mundy, Esquire  
United States Attorney  
Atlanta, Georgia

Re: H. B. Moore, aka Bill Moore  
Essau Copeland, victim  
Civil Rights

Dear Mr. Mundy:

Reference is made to the report of Special Agent C. Dallas Mobley, dated November 17, 1952, at Atlanta, Georgia, in the captioned matter. A copy of this report apparently has been furnished to you.

The Department is of the view that the reported facts do not indicate a violation of Section 242, Title 18, United States Code. Accordingly, in the absence of your suggestion to the contrary, the file is closed.

Respectfully,

For the Attorney General

CHARLES B. MURRAY  
Assistant Attorney General

cc- Records ✓  
Chron.  
Kilbridge  
Section





United States Department of Justice

ADDRESS REPLY TO  
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
ATTENTION OF  
ASSISTANT SHOWN BELOW

UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA  
ATLANTA 1

Lamar N. Smith-kms

OUR FILE

January 5, 1953

Cor. #47,957

CRIMINAL DIVISION

JAN 3 1953

RECEIVED

Honorable Charles B. Murray  
Assistant Attorney General  
Department of Justice  
Criminal Division  
Washington 25, D. C.

Re: H. B. Moore, aka Bill Moore  
Essau Copeland, victim  
Civil Rights  
Your File: CBM:JXK:et 144-19-189

Sir:

This acknowledges receipt of your letter of  
January 2, 1953, relative to the above entitled matter.

This office concurs in your opinion that the  
reported facts do not indicate a violation of Section  
242, Title 18, U.S.C.A.

We are, therefore, closing our file as of this  
date.

Respectfully,

*J. Ellis Mundy*  
J. Ellis Mundy,  
United States Attorney.

*File*  
*1/8/53*  
*J.X.K.*

144-19-189	
11	JAN 7 1953
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JAN 8 1953

CIVIL RIGHTS SECTION