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Tallahassee, Florida  
May 25, 1941

Hon. Spessard L. Holland  
Governor of Florida  
State Capitol  
Tallahassee, Florida

Subject: Re: Death of A. C. Williams  
(Negro) by violence in  
Gadsden County Florida  
on May 13, 1941

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Dear Governor:

I beg to report the following facts on the above subject.

On May 11, 1941 at about 2:30 A. M. Plice Officer Dan Davis who is Assistant Chief of Police for the City of Quincy, Florida while cruising in the Southern Section of Quincy, known as the Seaboard Section heard two gun shot reports and he immediately went in the direction from which these reports came. Going there he saw a negro running. He gave chase and the negro ran behind a chicken house and then into a negro house very close by. Officer Davis knocked on the door and they admitted him. There he found three negro men in the room and one he recognized as A. C. Williams, the negro he was chasing. He arrested him on suspicion, thinking he had fired the shots heard. As he was coming out of the house with Williams, Officer J. J. Rowan (Constable) and E. M. Potter, City Police Officer drove up in their car as they were out searching for a negro. Officer Davis turned Williams over to Officers Potter and Rowan and asked them to put Williams in jail as he was going to search for the gun, that he thought Williams had fired. While he was searching, Officers Rowan and Potter returned to where he was searching. They had with them a Mr. Bell. Mr. Bell stated that someone had broken into his house and had stolen two watches and one dollar and fifty cents. The money being a one dollar bill and a fifty cent piece and had tried to rape his twelve year old daughter, Thelma Bell. Officer Davis then searched behing the chickeh house where Williams ran and found there two watches, identified by M r. Bell as being his watches that were stolen from his house a short while before. When Officer Davis searched Williams before turning him over to Officers Rowan and Potter he took off Williams person a one dollar bill and a fifty cent piece, two five cent pieces and black handle case knife or kitchen knife. The Officers Davis, Rowan and Potter went to the home of Mr. Bell and talked to the family. The child, Thelma Bell looked to be a child about twelve years old and showed scratches and bruises on her face and neck and told Officers Davis, Rowan and Potter "he woke me un in the bed, he was in the bed with me and

feeling of me, I said who is this. When I said that he put one hand over my mouth and started choking me."

In this room there were two beds, Thelma Bell's smaller sister was asleep in the other bed and was awakened by the sounds of her sister screaming and struggling. The smaller girl screamed and awakened the father Mr. Bell. Both girls recognized the man as being a negro as he ran out of the room. The father Mr. Bell came into the room and the negro was gone. Mr. Bell did not see the negro but he rushed to the door and shot his gun twice. More to summon help than anything else because he did not see the negro. This was about 2:30 A. M. Sunday Morning May 11, 1941.

Sunday Morning May 11th at about eight o'clock, Officer Davis (who being a night police Officer for the City of Quincy) reported the incident to his superior office Chief of Police Ed. Wynn. At one o'clock Sunday P. M. May 11, 1941 Mrs. Bell, the mother of Thelma Bell telephoned to Dr. S. E. Wilhoit (Dr. Wilhoit a very prominent physician of Quincy, Florida) saying that she wanted to see him. He asked what he could do for her. She said she could not tell him over the telephone. Dr. Wilhoit told her to come to his office. She did so and brought Thelma Bell with her. Dr. Wilhoit examined Thelma Bell and his examination disclosed that she (Thelma Bell) had been raped and that she was scratched and bruised about the face and neck.

About 2:30 A. M. Monday morning May 12, 1941 while Officer Davis was proceeding diagonally across the street from Lovetts Store to the Quincy State Bank directly under the street light a car, a ford sedan with four doors drove very close to Officer Davis and stopped. Two men jumped out of the car, one from the back seat and one from the front seat. Both were wearing a mask and armed each with a pistol. Each man siezed Officer Davis by an arm, disarming him and each placing a pistol in Officer Davis' side, told him to get into the car and not make any trouble. There were two other men in the car. Officer Davis asked the four men "what is this all about". They said "we want A. C. Williams and no trouble". At this point Officer Davis says that when he got into the car that the smell of whiskey was very strong. They proceeded to drive to the county jail in a round about way, traveling six blocks, when the jail was only two and one-half blocks by direct course. They drove directly to the front door of the jail, over the walk and lawn. There was no guard or night man on duty at the jail. Upon arriving at the jail, the four men demanded that Officer Davis unlock the jail and upon opening the front door Officer Davis reached in and switched on a light, whereupon one of the masked men stuck his gun in Officer Davis' side roughly, saying "turn off that dam light, we will furnish all the lights for this party". Then one of the masked men remained at the front door of the jail, one in the car, and two men each with a pistol in Officer Davis' side demanded that Officer Davis unlock the cell doors. He did<sup>so</sup> and the two masked men handcuffed A. C. Williams

him hands behind/and shoved Davis into the cell and took A. C. Williams with them, slamming the door to the cell block. This left Officer Davis free to come out of the cell and into the corridor, but he was locked in the cell block. Officer Davis immediately began to call for help. Sheriff Luten who lives in a cottage near the jail heard Officer Davis's cries, but thought it was a drunk in jail that some of the City Police Officers had put in jail, as the City used the County Jail for City prisoners. After a short while of hearing the cries decided to investigate. Whereupon he found that it was not a drunk but Officer Dan Davis. He immediately went into the jail and turned Officer Davis out. When Sheriff Luten let Davis out, Davis said "they have got that negro out and gone with him". At this point Sheriff Luten says that he thought Officer Davis was talking about a negro whom he was holding in jail for safe keeping for the Sheriff of Jackson County Florida.

Sheriff Luten together with Officers Davis, Boyd, Chief of Police Wynn began searching for the four masked men and A. C. Williams. Officer Boyd found a plow line tied to a limb of a tree on a cliff near the warehouse of the G. F. & A. Railroad Companies, East Quincy Station. Upon making investigation Sheriff Luten together with the Police Officers discovered blood stains on the ground directly under the plow line dangling from the limb. Further investigation they discovered marks on the ground apparently made by someone crawling and dragging with blood stains here and there. Then to a point under the G. F. & A. Warehouse which was a distance of about forty or fifty feet from the tree from which the plow line dangled.

The Sheriff and Police Officers searched under and around the warehouse in the bushes and weeds in the vicinity of the G. F. & A. warehouse for A. C. Williams but were unable to find him. Sheriff Luten then went to the home of the mother of A. C. Williams and inquired of his whereabouts. Whereupon she insisted that she had not seen him or heard of him since Saturday night before and nothing further was heard of A. C. Williams until Monday night May 12, 1941. A. C. Williams' mother came to the home of Sheriff Luten and told him that A. C. had come home and was shot and needed a doctor. Thereupon Sheriff Luten immediately called Circuit Judge E. C. Love on the telephone and asked for an interview, going to Judge Love's house. After talking with Judge Love Sheriff Luten decided to call Dr. S. E. Wilhoit and together with Dr. Wilhoit went to A. C. Williams' mother's house and there found that A. C. Williams was not in his mother's house but in the house next to her house. Examination made by Dr. Wilhoit showed that A. C. Williams had been shot ten times. Three of these shots pierced him in the upper chest and lungs. The other seven shots were in the legs and arms. Dr. Wilhoit advised that A. C. Williams had a fifty fifty chance to recover if given proper attention. Thereupon the Sheriff

made arrangements with Will Webb a local undertaker to take A. C. Williams to the negro hospital at Tallahassee, Florida at once. This was after midnight May 12, 1941. There were several negroes at the house where A. C. Williams was laying and Sheriff Lutten asked them if they would assist Will Webb, the negro undertaker with A. C. Williams. Dr. Wilhoit had given A. C. Williams a hypdermic. Sheriff Lutten and Dr. Wilhoit the only two white persons there, then left and went to their respective homes. Will Webb and the three negro men put A. C. Williams into the ambulance and started to the hospital at Tallahassee, Florida. There were no other persons present - no indication of any mob or any gathering whatever. It was after midnight and no suspicion of anything as the ambulance proceeded on its way to Tallahassee.

About four miles east of Quincy on Florida State Highway #1 someone waving a flashlight stopped the ambulance. Only two men were seen by Will Webb. These two men were masked and armed with pistols. They told Webb that they wanted A. C. Williams and no trouble. They took A. C. Williams and placed him in the back of their car. Will Webb drove back to Quincy with the ambulance and met Officer Dan Davis. Both Webb and Officer Davis went to Sheriff Lutten's house and reported what had happened. This was way after midnight. No trace could be found of A. C. Williams or the car which took him away.

Will Webb says that as he was leaving Quincy en route to Tallahassee with A. C. Williams a car passed him. He does not know whether it was the same car that took A. C. Williams away from him or not. This was about two A.M. Tuesday, May 13, 1941.

About five o'clock A.M. Tuesday morning May 13, 1941 Chaff Chason (a white man) who is in the logging business telephoned to Sheriff Lutten that a dead negro was lying face up on the bridge over Withlacoochee Creek, which is on the road from Quincy, Florida to Attapulcus, Georgia five miles north of Quincy, Florida. Sheriff Lutten, together with his son, went immediately to this spot where they found the dead body of A. C. Williams. Sheriff Lutten returned to Quincy immediately where he got Dr. Wilhoit and again examined the body of A. C. Williams. This examination showed no additional bullet wounds, but did show that he had been shot in the arm and side with bird shot. Sheriff Lutten notified State's Attorney Orion Parker of Tallahassee, Florida, who came to Quincy and attended the inquest and examining witnesses and making a personal investigation.

I have discussed this case with many people of prominence in Quincy and I find no mob sentiment. The largest number involved was only four persons. There has been no crowd or gathering of any great number of people. The sentiment of the general public is they feel that the officers did their duty.

In talking to Sheriff Lutten he said "I had no idea that A. C. Williams would be further molested after placing him in the ambulance; that no one except he and Dr. Wilhoit and the three negroes present knew anything about the transfer of A. C. Williams from Quincy to Tallahassee". It was after midnight, everything was quiet, no one on the streets,

and, therefore, he did not think it necessary for him to go or to send a guard with A. C. Williams to the hospital.

There have been several rumors, not originating in that county, that the body of A. C. Williams was taken to the school house with a sheet over it and shown to the colored students there, and was told that the same thing would happen to them if they committed such a crime.

I find no foundation of facts to this rumor.

The body of A. C. Williams, immediately following the inquest, was taken to the home of his mother. She refusing to accept the body, was then taken to the county convict camp where a coffin was made and Will Webb, the colored undertaker, prepared the body for burial and was buried by him in the colored cemetery. (my personal opinion is that the mother was afraid to accept the body).

If you desire further information in the matter please advise me.

Respectfully yours,

MAURICE H. TRIPP (Signed)

MAURICE H. TRIPP

STATE OF FLORIDA, COUNTY OF GADSDEN

At an investigation into the seizure of one A. C. Williams from the custody of the Sheriff of Gadsden County, Florida made by Orion C. Parker, State Attorney for the Second Judicial Circuit of the State of Florida, on the 12th day of May, 1941.

T R A N S C R I P T

P R O C E E D I N G S

(At Quincy, Fla.)

Dan Davis, having been first duly sworn, testified as follows:

EXAMINATION BY MR. PARKER:

Q Your name is Dan Davis? Daniel, isn't it?

A Just Dan.

Q You are on the police force here in Quincy?

A Yes, sir.

Q You were on duty last night?

A Yes, sir.

Q That would be the night of May 11, wouldn't it?

A Yes, sir.

Q Just tell me, Dan, what happened last night with particular regard to the negro, A. C. Williams?

A Well, last night about - . It was after twelve o'clock, I know, as best I can put it. It must have been around quarter after twelve or twelve-thirty, me and Mr. Parker - he is the other night policeman -

Q Only two?

A Yes, sir.

Q What is his name?

A Porter. Me and Mr. Porter were up town and started to make our regular rounds, checking up. He went one way and I went the other.

Q Walking?

A Walking. I had done checked about a block or a block and a half and started across the street from Carmen's store and started across to the Quincy State Bank across the street. I saw a car coming down the street, coming from towards the traffic light. It pulled up side of me and stopped right quick. It was a 4-door car. A man on the right hand side jumped out and one in the rear and nabbed me and told me to get

in the car. They took my gun and handcuffs.

Q Did they throw a gun on you?

A Yes, sir, each one. One threw it in one side and one in the other.

Q Did you make an effort to pull your gun?

A No, sir. I didn't have a chance, Mr. Parker, because it was pulled so quick.

Q You didn't know what they were up to?

A No, sir, I never once thought about the negro. After they had put me in the back seat, - there was another man sitting over here in the rear. Whenever I asked them what they wanted, what was they up to, and here's the remarks they made me: "We just want that goddamn negro out of the jail and we don't want any fuss about it."

Q Which one did the talking?

A I don't know who he was. He was a big fellow.

Q What happened then?

A They came on to the jail.

Q Drove you to the jail, five of you?

A That is right. Five.

Q Did you see another car?

A No, I didn't see another car. Whenever I opened the jail door to go inside, right on the left hand side is a light switch and I reached to turn on the light and he stuck the gun hard on me and said, "Cut it off. We will furnish the light for this party. I went on and one of the fellows had a flashlight and they flashed it round to where I was trying to put the keys in the door to open the door and with his light that is where I got my light.

Q Flashlight?

A Yes, sir.

Q How many doors did you have to unlock to get him? Did you know where he was?

A Yes, sir. I put him in Saturday night.

Q How many locks did you have to go through?

A Four locks. The first one was the front door, the second one -. That was the drawer where we keep the big key. Right there is where I

left these keys hanging in the lock. I left them in there and some of them took them out and left them on the front doorsteps.

Q Where is the third lock?

A That is where we keep the big keys to the cells. The fourth is where you unlock it for the prisoners to come out. After I opened the cell, they forced me on back in and to show them where he was.

Q You saw them take A. C. Williams out?

A I did.

Q Is that the negro that was put in for breaking into Bell's house and assaulting his daughter?

A It is.

Q When was he put in jail?

A Sunday morning about two-thirty.

Q He had been in jail about twenty-four hours?

A Yes, sir.

Q Same cell?

A Yes, sir.

Q Who put him in?

A He and Mr. Rowan, \_\_\_\_\_ Porter, and Mr. Boyd.

Q Four of you?

A Yes, sir.

Q That was Sunday morning at two a.m. on the eleventh that A. C. Williams was put in jail?

A Yes, sir. After they had got the negro, I started back out with them behind them and one of these fellows reached round as I started out the door and caught me right here and gave me a shove and slammed the door.

Q Which door?

A It was in the hall where you open the cells.

Q He locked you in. He didn't lock you in the negro's cell?

A In the hallway.

Q Did you have a weapon on you?

A No, sir.

Q What became of your gun?

A Mr. Lutten found it when they came up to let me out.

Q Didn't you have some handcuffs?

A I havn't seen them since. They put them on the negro themselves.

Q You saw them?

A I saw them put them on.

Q Could you tell whether they were white or black?

A No, sir.

Q Did they have on a mask?

A Yes, sir.

Q What kind of mask?

A I couldn't see a thing. They had a black mask.

Q A hood, would you say?

A Yes, sir, a hood.

Q Did it cover their whole heads?

A Yes, sir, down into their collar.

Q What did they look like?

A I don't know.

Q You say they were what size men?

A I tell you one of them fellows that got out of that car was a hell  
of a man.

Q Bigger than you?

A All four of them.

Q Were any other cars or any other persons participating?

A There wasn't any other car that I saw.

Q Did all four go in the jail with you?

A All four.

Q They followed you through all those different acts?

A Yes, sir.

Q Did they all have guns?

A Yes, sir, they all had guns. One had one in my back and one in my side.

Q Constantly kept a gun in your back and in your side while you were going through those different acts.

A Yes, sir. They left the car running in the front. They didn't stop out front, but pulled up on the lawn.

Q So they didn't have far to go?

A When they stopped they opened the door for me and said, "Crawl out."

Q They call you by name?

A No, sir. I don't know whether they knew my name or not.

Q All have masks on and no skin showing to see whether they were white or black?

A Yes, sir.

Q What about their hands?

A I didn't notice. I saw the gun.

Q That gun sort of frightened you?

A Yes, sir. It was kind of unexpected. I wasn't expecting that.

Q Who all besides you had keys that would take you through the jail?

A All of us.

Q Every policeman can go through every cell?

A Yes, sir.

Q And the City is using the jail just like the Sheriff is using it?

A Yes, sir.

Q That is by arrangement between the City and the Sheriff?

A Yes, sir.

Q Did they take anything but your handcuff and your pistol?

A My keys. They left my keys lying on the front door steps.

Q They didn't treat you rough? They didn't hurt you in anyway?

A No, sir.

Q Did they ask for any other prisoner? Exactly what words did they use when they told you what they wanted?

A They said they wanted that goddamn negro out of jail.

Q Did you know who they wanted?

A Well, I had an idea and one told me the negro that was locked up the night before.

Q Did they use any other words to tell you who they wanted?

A No, sir.

Q You didn't recognize any of those men's voices?

A No, sir. Didn't but one of them talk. He was the only man that opened his mouth and who he was I don't a bit more know than you do. That is the truth.

Q And you don't know how he was dressed?

A I don't know. I do know he had on dark clothes.

Q What about the car they were in? What kind of car was it?

A A Ford 4-door. It was either a 1940 or 1941 model.

Q What kind of tag?

A I don't know. I havn't seen any tag. They didn't ever let me get to the rear of the dar at all.

Q You see any ropes or accessories that are usually used in lynchings?

A No, sir. I saw the guns and that was all I seen. Mr. Parker, it was done so quick you could hardly think and I wasn't expecting anything like that to happen. I hadn't heard a word about it.

Q Were these men all about the same size?

A Well they was two of them looked to be round the same size.

Q How tall?

A Well, I don't know. That big man that got out of the automobile was a whopper.

Q Was he the spokesman for them?

A He was the one that did the talking.

Q You could tell by his voice that he was a white man?

A Yes, sir, by his voice.

Q The others didn't say anything?

A There was three of them and they didn't open their mouths. Whenever they got to the Court House, the motor choked down and they cranked it up and left it running. The big man had a gun and another had a gun. The big man stayed with me all the time.

Q And never took the gun out of your back?

A No, sir. He had ahold to me with one hand and that stuck in my back with the other and the other man that was right side of me had a gun on my side and holding a flashlight.

Q How many flashlights were there?

A I didn't see but one. I had my flashlight in my hip pocket and they never bothered it. I believe I stayed in jail every bit of twenty-five minutes before I could get anybody to help me and I hollered at the top of my voice to get out.

Q Who let you out?

A Mr. Luten. I woke him up.

Q The Sheriff?

A Yes, sir.

Q You think you were in there twenty-five minutes from the time they left?

A I believe I was in there every bit of twenty-five minutes.

Q You hear them pull off with the negro?

A Yes, sir. And whenever this man gave me a shove and locked the door he said, "Keep your mouth shut." I didn't do that, but I did until they left.

Q Did you know this A. C. Williams? the negro that they got?

A Yes, sir, I knew him.

Q How long had you known him?

A Well, ever since I have been on the police force.

Q How long has that been?

A About six years.

Q You are well acquainted with him?

A I knew him. We have had him up several times for investigation, things that we suspicioned him of.

Q Ever been convicted of anything, to your knowledge?

A Not to my knowledge.

Q You are positive it was A. C. Williams that they got?

A I know it was. Yes, sir.

Q Did they tell you what they were going to do with him?

A No, sir, they did not. Only thing they told me was, "We want that goddamn negro out of the jail that we locked up the night before." The man that did the talking said, "that goddamn A. C." He knew him I reckon. I am satisfied that everyone of those fellows knew me, but I didn't know them. They didn't do a bit of harm, didn't hurt me no way or anything.

Q Did you know anything about the negro, A. C. Williams, going in Bell's house and assaulting a girl?

A Yes, sir.

Q Tell from the beginning what you know about the case against A. C. Williams.

A Well, I was out around Mr. Bell's house Saturday night.

Q What are his initials?

A Mr. Bell's?

Q Do you know what his first name or initials are?

A I believe it is W. D. but I am not sure about it. I was looking for another negro. I had had a call out there and during my rounds out there I was about a block from Mr. Bell's house when I heard a gun fired twice and the shot sprinkled my car.

Q Police car? Was it a shot gun?

A Yes, sir, sprinkled my police car. So I speeded the car up and made a block, and whenever I turned up an alley there I saw this negro run across the street. I turned the corner there and followed this negro running across the street.

Q From Bell's house?

A Yes, sir.

Q How far was it from Bell's house?

A A block and a half when I caught him. I threw this big searchlight here and never took it off him. He run behind a chicken house, a little hen house. I knew he was back there but I never saw him. I knew he jumped behind it. After a while, I reckon about a minute after he ran behind this chicken house, he jumped back and run back of this negro's house which was about the length of this car from the chicken house.

Q Could you tell who he was by seeing him in the light?

A Yes, sir.

Q You knew it was A. C. Williams?

A Yes, sir.

Q You heard him say to the negro, "Let me in quick"?

A Yes, sir, he was at the negro's doorsteps and it wasn't nothing but a two by four house. He says, "Let me in quick".

Q Talking to the negro?

A Talking to the negro in the house.

Q In the house?

A Yes, sir. His name was Fred Stephens, so he called Fred and Fred opened the back door and let the negro in and I was calling Fred at the front, and directly I said, "Open the door". He said, "Who is that?" I said, "Mr. Davis, the night policeman" and he opened the door and I shined my light in there and I saw this A. C. Williams in there. He had done gone inside.

Q He had gone inside?

A Yes, sir. Just a little two-room house. I told Fred, "That is the negro I want right there", and I called him and said, "Come in here, A. C." He came in and I searched him. About that time, Mr. Rowan and Mr. Porter drove up. We were all out in that section looking for another negro that we had a call about. We searched him and got a little kitchen knife off him and One Dollar and a Half in money.

Q Off A. C.?

A Off A. C. One dollar bill and one fifty-cent piece and two nickels and a dime, I believe. I am not sure about the dime. And I told Mr. Rowan to hold him for a minute, watch him for me, and I went behind this chicken house where I saw him run. Behind that I found one pocket watch and a wrist watch. The pocket watch was a South Bend, one of these high priced South Bend watches, and a Bulova Wrist Watch.

Q Women's or man's wrist watch?

A Man's wrist watch. I come back to the car and showed the watches to Mr. Rowan and Mr. Porter and told them to carry the negro down and lock him up and come back out there, that I thought he was the one that did the shooting.

I really did, because that was why I thought he was running. I didn't know at that time that he had broken into Mr. Bell's house. So they brought him on up, started to jail with him. We went by Mr. Bell's house and Mr. Bell was coming out his front door. He stopped them and told them that his house had been broken into, two watches store and a dollar and a half, and whoever it was had tried to rape his daughter, a little twelve year old girl. So they brought the negro on and locked him up.

Q Did you come with them?

A No, sir, I was still out there looking for the gun. They came back out where I was and called me to the car and told me that Mr. Bell's house had been broken into. I showed Mr. Bell these watches and he identified them as being his pocket watch and his wife's wrist watch and said -. I am telling what he said now. He said that the negro also had got one dollar and fifty cents, a dollar bill and fifty-cent piece, and we taken that off the negro too. I reckon that was his.

Q Did he tell you about the little girl?

A Yes, sir.

Q What did he say about that?

A We went back to Mr. Bell's house, then, and the little girl said -

Q What is her name?

A Thelma.

Q Thelma Bell?

A Thelma Bell, twelve years old, told me that the negro woke her up in the bed with her, feeling of her. She went to scream and he slipped his hand over her mouth and grabbed her under the throat and choked her, got between her legs and tried to force his thing in her. That is what she said. That is all I know about it. This negro told Mr. Rowan and Mr. Porter that he won these watches in Jacksonville in a skin game.

Q The wrist watch and the pocket watch?

A Yes, sir. We came back to town, got Mr. Boyd up town here and went back to Mr. Bell's house. We went to the screen door there to say if he stuck an ice pick in there or how he got in. Mr. Bell said he couldn't swear that the screen door was locked. He could have come on in the screened porch and got in the kitchen there. This knife I took off him was a little, old, kitchen knife. I little case knife with a black handle in it. We figured he got that out of the kitchen to lift the wood latch on the inside of the girl's room to go in there. We got the knife - . Mr. Bell's wife identified the knife. We tried it to see if it would work. They showed us another just like it. It did work.

Q What statement, if any, did the negro, A. C. Williams, ever make to you or in your presence relative to going into Mr. Bell's house and assaulting the little girl?

A None. No, sir, he did not.

Q Didn't admit or confess anything?

A He didn't admit it, no, sir.

Q Who shot those two gun shots?

A Mr. Bell. He was looking for the man that had broken in his house. I thought it was the negro. I knew it was a shot gun and I was looking to see where he throwed it down.

Q About how far in feet was it from Bell's house to where you first saw the negro running?

A Just a block and a half, right where he run across the street. In other words, to where he run across the street to this negro's house.

Q How many feet from Bell's house?

A A block and a half.

Q Three or four hundred feet?

A Yes, sir, about that. Four hundred and fifty, including the street.

Q Ever see anybody else in that neighborhood?

A Never saw a sole. No, sir.

Q The negro denied getting the watches from Bell's house?

A Yes, sir, he denied it. Said he got them in a skin game in Jacksonville. Yes, sir, but Mr. Bell and Mrs. Bell identified them as being their watches.

Q Did Bell or his wife ever identify the negro? Seeing the negro in their house?

A No, sir. They didn't see him. What run the negro out was there was another little girl sleeping in the same room and she heard Thelma gasping for breath and she screamed and that was what woke up this girl's mother and father. He had been all over the house and he hadn't woke up a sole.

Q Did you examine closely to see whether the negro broke in that house anywhere or go through a window?

A He didn't break any windows.

Q Probably through the screen door.

A Yes, sir. There was a crack about like that. You could pull the screen door back and there would be a crack in it. I figured he must have took a little, old knife, or something like that, and jimmied into the girl's room. In the bed where the little girl and the negro was -

Q Where Thelma was sleeping?

A Yes, sir. He left a tire iron, about eighteen inches long.

Q Where in the bed?

A Right in the middle of the bed, under the sheet.

Q You don't have any idea that he would have struck the little girl with that eighteen inch tire iron if she had screamed?

A Well, I don't want that to be put down, but I believe it was his intention. Why else would he have come in that bed with her with a weapon like that if he didn't intend to use it?

I didn't see anything else he would have had it for. That was my belief about it.

Q He was already in the house?

A Sure, he was already in the house.

Q He wouldn't have needed it to pry a window or door open?

A No, sir.

Q What time of night was it that this affair happened at Bell's house?

A I don't know. I caught the negro right at about two-thirty.

Q Right at about two-thirty? That is Sunday morning, May 11?

A That is right. Two-thirty.

Q What size negro was A. C. Williams? About how tall and about his weight?

A He was about five feet ten inches and weighed about one hundred and fifty or one hundred and sixty pounds.

Q About five feet, ten inches?

A About that. He might not have been quite that tall. That is just guessing.

Q Just a few more questions. Where was Policeman Boyd during the time that these four men here stopped you on the beat and put you in the car and took you to the jail? Where was Boyd, if you know?

A Well, I am going to explain it. We started checking up there at the corner of Love and Hearin Building round back of the store. I went one way and he went the other, the way we always do. That is the way we always do. Whenever we met, we usually meet about half way. In other words, I check about one half and he checks about half.

Q You mean checking the floors and seeing there is nothing out of place or looking screwy?

A Yes, sir. What block he was in whenever it happened I don't know.

Q Did you see any person on the streets or at any place during the time these four men were requiring and forcing you in the car with them and took you to the jail to get this negro?

A Not a soul. There was a bunch of cars parked down near the picture show. They went in the midnight show. But there was nobody on the street.

Q If there had been, could they have had a better opportunity to identify any of these four men than you did?

A No, sir. I got closer to them than anybody did.

Q They all had a black hood over their heads? It was a hood rather than a mask and tucked in the collar?

A Yes, sir.

Q All the way round?

A All the way round.

Q You didn't have any idea that the Klu Klux had you?

A No, sir. I didn't. I never thought about any Klu Klux. The only thing I thought of was I was being kidnapped. I never thought about anything else. The negro never crossed my mind. Me and Mr. Lutem had been talking that night about the negro, A. C. Williams. We never suspicioned the first thing about a mob. I didn't, and if he did he hadn't said a word to me about it. The only remarks I made to them was when they forced me into the car. I said, "Gentlemen, what is that about?" The remark they made to me was, "We want that goddamn negro out of the jail and we don't want any fuss about it." And whenever I went to the jail, the first light I switched on he stuck that gun a little deeper in my back and said, "Cut it off, Buddy. We will furnish the light for the party."

Q They forced you into the car in the beginning with one man holding a gun in your back and one in your side?

A I saw the two guns.

Q Did you ever make an effort to draw your gun?

A No, sir. They took my gun standing on the street, before they ever put me in the car. That was the first thing they done. They throwed the gun on me and grabbed my gun out of my holster and took my handcuffs at the same time.

Q Do you think there is any chance to get any finger prints off that gun?

A No, sir.

Q Did you use it the rest of the night?

A Yes, sir.

Q Did you make any effort to assist these other officers?

A Yes, sir, I did. I told Mr. Luton the way the car was headed and everything. They switched the lights off when they picked me up and never switched them on and they kept the motor running in front of the jail.

Q Do you know anything else that you think you want to tell me?

A No, sir, I sure don't.

Thelma Bell, having been first duly sworn, testified as follows:

EXAMINATION BY MR. PARKER:

Q Tell us your name?

A Thelma Elizabeth Bell.

Q How old are you?

A Twelve.

Q You live here with your mother and daddy?

A Yes, sir.

Q Night before last, what room were you sleeping in?

A That one right there.

Q The bed near the door that we were looking at?

A Yes, sir.

Q Where was your sister sleeping?

A In the bed on the other side of the room.

Q Tell us if anything happened during the night, night beforelast, which would be Saturday night or Sunday morning early, May 11. Just tell what happened.

A When I woke -

Q What woke you up? You had gone to sleep?

A I was already sleeping and I felt something and I woke and screamed and he choked me and then he put his old hand over my mouth.

Q Who did?

A That negro, and I tried to spit and he ran out then and I came in here and called mother and daddy.

Q Now, you had gone to sleep?

A Yes, sir.

Q And you were waked by some colored man being on top of you?

A No, sir, he wasn't on top of me.

Q Where was he?

A On the side.

Q Which side?

A Left side.

Q Between the two beds?

A Yes, sir.

Q How did he waken you? What caused you to waken?

A I just felt something.

Q Where? Just tell me what he did. Where did he first feel you?

A I don't know.

Q Was he between your legs?

A No, sir.

Q What was he doing? Did he have his hand some place between your legs?

A No sir.

Q What was he doing?

A He was trying to do something ugly.

Q Just tell us what he was trying to do? It might embarrass you but just go ahead and tell me. We are all friends of yours. Was he up on the bed?

A Yes, sir.

Q Was he lying on top of you?

A No, sir.

Q Was he down between your legs?

A No, sir.

Q Well, just tell me where he was?

A He was lying on my side and I was on the other side.

Q Facing you?

A No, sir.

Q What was he trying to do?

A He was trying to rape me.

Q Did you feel anything hard down between his legs pressed up against you?

A No, sir.

Q What was he doing when you woke up in bed? What was he doing?

A He was trying to do something ugly.

Q Well, tell me how he was trying to do it. With his hand or with his penis or what, Was it with his penis?

A Yes, sir.

Q What was he trying to do with it? Did he have it up between your legs some place?

A No, sir.

Q Where did he have it? Did he have it between your legs or where did he have it?

A I don't know how to tell it.

Q Did you know it was a colored man?

A No, sr, I didn't see him.

Q Did he run when you hollered?

A Yes, sir, he choked me before he ran.

Q Before he ran?

A Yes, sir.

Q He woke you up to do what to you, Thelma? Just tell me what he was doing to you?

A I don't know what he was trying to do, only rape me.

Q Could you feel anything hard down between his legs or did you feel anything?

A Well, I don't know how to answer it.

Q Was he on top of you in any way?

A No, sir.

Q You say ~~1/2~~ you were on this side? Sleeping on this side?

A I was on my right side, facing the door.

Q Facing West?

A Yes, sir.

Q And which way was he facing?

A Facing west, I reckon.

Q Was he lying down with you?

A Yes, sir.

Q Was he close to your back?

A Yes, sir.

Q And he put his hand over your mouth?

A Yes, sir.

Q Didn't say anything to you?

A When I wakened I said, "Who is this?" and he didn't say anything and when I screamed he put his hand over my mouth.

Q Was he under the sheet with you?

A I don't know whether he was or not. I didn't ever see him.

Q He was hugging you up to him, was he?

A Yes, sir.

Q Did he have his arm around you?

A Yes, sir.

Q Just had his arm around you? Was he feeling your breasts?

A No, sir.

Q But he was lying up to you close as he could?

A Yes, sir.

Q Did you feel anything hard pressed up against your back?

A It was a truss, I think.

Q You mean you thought he had on, was wearing, a truss?

A Yes, sir.

Q He never did get over between your legs?

A No, sir.

Q Did he ever try to get between your legs?

A No, sir.

Q Is that when you screamed?

A When I wakened I screamed and he put his hand over my mouth and I had to spit.

Q What caused you to have to spit?

A Because it didn't smell good.

Q What didn't?

A He stunk.

Q You mean whoever this was in bed with you stunk?

A Yes, sir.

Q He had an odor to your body? Was he up close to your face?

A No, sir.

Q Could you tell whether it was a man or woman in bed with you?

A It was a man.

Q Could you tell whether it was a white or a negro man?

A I couldn't tell.

Q Did he ever kiss you or try to?

A No, sir.

Q Who discovered the iron, the piece of tire iron, in the bed where you were? Did you?

A I believe it was mother. I don't know.

Q Did you put it in bed?

A No, sir.

Q You didn't go to bed with a sixteen or eighteen inch tire iron with you?

A No, sir.

Q Do you know a negro man by the name of A. C. Williams?

A No, sir.

Q About all you know, then, Thelma, is that when you were wakened - you had been sleeping - you felt this man in bed with you, close up to your back, just as close as he could get, and you screamed and he put his hand over your mouth? When did he get up out of bed and run?

A Well, he choked me before he ran.

Q Then what happened?

A I got up out of bed.

Q Which door did he go out of?

A That back door to my bed. I tried to get out that door but it was latched and I couldn't.

MR. PARKER:

All right. Thank you very much.

Mrs. Annie Bell, having been first duly sworn, testified as follows:

EXAMINATION BY MR. PARKER:

Q What is your name?

A Mrs. Bell.

Q What is your first name?

A Annie Bell.

Q You are the mother of Thelma?

A Yes, sir.

Q Tell me what you know about this?

A Well, when they woke me they were standing right there at that time.

Q How did they wake you?

A By the screaming.

Q Who?

A Thelma and 4(3) the two girls there. I said, "What happened?" when they woke me up. Thelma said, "Momma, somebody choked me." I said, "Thelma, are you dreaming?" She said, "No Ma'm, I wasn't dreaming." She said it was a man that "Choked me and he tried to do something else ugly". I said, "Thelma, Lord have mercy!" We jumped up and she like to have fainted, she was near going in spasms. I put on my glasses and saw my watch was not here. I said, "Lordy, where is my watch?" My husband jumped up and said, "My watch is gone." I said, "Look and see if your money is gone." He said, "Yes, my money is gone." I got my glasses and put them on and she told me he was trying to do something ugly, that was the only way she knew to put it. She said, "Momma, I am nasty." I looked and she was as nasty there as she could be, and I let her bathe in cold water first and then I heated some water and put some lysol in it.

Q You mean in her sexual parts?

A Yes, sir.

Q You saw it with your own eyes?

A Yes, sir.

Q Was there any secretion from the male part?

A I didn't see any. She said she felt nasty. I examined her to see if she was lacerated and she wasn't. I took her to the doctor and he asked me if she was lacerated and I told him she wasn't. They promised to have the negro examined and didn't do it. The doctor told me to watch her and bring her back three days and I gave her a bath in lysol this morning and I am going to keep it up. I was afraid he had syphilis or gonorrhoea.

Q Did you go to the bed where your daughter was lying?

A No, sir, I didn't. We were scared to death. We went in this morning. There was a box of matches struck everywhere. The police seen them. I didn't sweep them up. Matches were struck all over the place.

Q That didn't waken you?

A No, sir. He must not have had on any shoes. My baby, 4(3), seen him. She said he had thick hair. He didn't have on any shoes.

Q Was this door between where we are sitting and your daughter's room, was it latched?

A No, sir, it wasn't latched.

Q Was it open?

A No, sir, I pulled it to when I went to bed because the windows were up, but I opened that door at the end of the hall there.

Q You say the door right next to the bed where your daughter was sleeping was pushed to?

A But somebody came and latched the door from this side.

Q Which would be the outside of the room in which she was sleeping? Was there any evidence in the bed of intercourse of any kind?

A No, sir. We didn't see anything because she had a quilt and sheet over her. We didn't see any signs.

Q Who found the tire tool in the bed where she was sleeping?

A One of the policemen. He said, "Let's go to the bed and see if we can find clues. I said, "Lord, have mercy! He was going to kill my young girl."

Q You didn't examine the bed before that?

A No, sir.

Q What all did you miss from the house?

A Mine and my husband's watches.

Q What kind of watches were they?

A Mine was a Bulova.

Q Wrist watch?

A Yes, sir.

Q What kind was his?

A I don't know but it was a big one.

Q How much money did you miss?

A A dollar and something. To tell you the truth, I don't know. And this knife. They found it in his pocket.

Q You know that knife?

A Yes, sir, I know it. They asked, "Mrs. Bell, whose knife is that?" I said, "It is mine."

Q Did you identify your watch?

A Yes, sir, I knew it was mine.

Q How about your husband's.

A Yes, sir, I knew it was his.

Q When did your husband shoot the gun twice?

A After we got up. He went around the back after the girls woke us up to see if we could see him and he said, "Let me shoot this.", and he shot it twice.

Q After you got up?

A Yes, sir. He just slipped his pants on. I didn't take time to put on anything. There wasn't but one drawer that he didn't open up. He opened the safe and cabinet drawers and pulled out everything and left them wide open, and all those drawers and my locker and went through everything.

Q He must have had a dual motive, theft and rape?

A I believe he threw something over us to make us sleep.

Q You a hard sleeper ordinarily?

A When I went to bed Friday night I couldn't go to sleep until late. My husband said, "I wish you would go to sleep. What is the matter with you?" I said, "I don't know. I just can't sleep."

4(3) having been first duly sworn, testified as follows:

EXAMINATION BY MR. PARKER:

Q Your name 4(3)

A 4(3)

Q How old are you, 4(3)

A Ten.

Q Ten years? Is Thelma your sister?

A Yes, sir.

Q Night beforelast, where were you sleeping? In the same room where she was?

A Yes, sir.

Q Tell me what you know about this man coming in the room where you and your sister were?

A After she hollered he had hold of her and he choked her.

Q Did you hear him shake her?

A Yes, sir, I heard him.

Q What woke you up?

A She woke me up screaming.

Q What did she say?

A Nothing.

Q Just screamed?

A Yes, sir. I screamed and he went out. He slipped out the back door.

Q That is the south door to that room?

A Yes, sir.

Q Could you tell who it was?

A I don't know his name but Daddy said it was A. C. Williams.

Q You knew it was a negro?

A Yes, sir.

Q How did you know it?

A Because I saw his hand.

Q Did he go real close to your bed in going out?

A Yes, sir.

Q He went between your bed and hers?

A Yes, sir.

Q Was the moon shining into your room?

A Yes, sir.

Q Was the moon shining bright?

A Yes, sir. Not so bright.

Q You knew it was a negro. Did you know who it was?

A No, sir. I knew it was a negro man.

Q Did he walk or run?

A Run.

Q How long did he stay after you and your sister screamed?

A Just one munite. Long enough to choke her and then he ran out.

Q Did you and your sister come in to wake up your mother?

A Yes, sir.

Q How did you come in?

A Right through this door here.

Q Were they sleeping?

A No, sir. They had on the light and said, "What is the matter?"

Q You know what waked your father and mother?

A Well, we screamed and they woke. We come over here.

Q You know this negro, A. C. Williams? Never seen him before?

A No, sir.

M. P. Luten, having been first duly sworn, testified as follows:

EXAMINATION BY MR. PARKER:

Q Your name is M. P. Luten?

A Yes, sir.

Q Sheriff of Gadsden County?

A Yes, sir.

Q You sleep in the little home that is built adjoining the jail?

A Yes, sir.

Q Last night, were you wakened? What time did you retire?

A I retired last night about quarter past eleven and I was wakened about one o'clock, I reckon, by somebody hollering.

Q In the jail?

A I don't know where it was. It was on the outside. I couldn't go to sleep because of the hollering and I figured it was just a drunk negro out there and I got up and went out on the walk out the front door and he hollered again and I discovered it was somebody in the back of the jail and I went through the house and when I got out back somebody hollered, "Doc!", just as loud as he could holler. Of course, he meant Doc Johnson there. I said, "What in the hell do you want", and then Dan said -

Q Dan Davis?

A Yes, sir. Dan said, "Mr. Luten, this is Dan. They have got me locked up up here", and just as soon as he made that statement I knew what had happened, and I got my keys and went in the jail and turned on the lights. There was no lights in the jail whatsoever. When I turned on the lights

in the office, the safe was open. I saw the drawer was open where they kept the first key. I turned on the light and went on upstairs and the key was in the door. The door was slammed to but the keys were in the slot. I opened the door for Dan to get out, and that is the end of it. Dan said, "Mr. Lutten, the mob got me and locked me up in here and got that negro out of here."

Q What negro?

A A. C. Williams. "They got my pistol and my handcuffs and my keys." I said, "Dan, your pistol is down in the office and the handcuffs on that negro." I didn't know it, but that was what was in my mind. He said, "Yes, I saw them put the handcuffs on the negro." Raymond came up and found the keys on the doorsteps going into the jail. There was a negro up there that I am holding for Marianna on a charge of murder. He was in the cell with him. They didn't bother the other negro. I think Dan showed them this A. C. Williams and that was all they wanted and all they got.

Q Any other inmates of the jail except this Marianna negro see them when they came to get him?

A No, sir, because they were downstairs.

Q Is the Marianna negro in there now?

A Yes, sir.

Q Can we talk to him? What is his name?

A I don't know.

Q Did you talk to him about it?

A No, sir. I went down a little after one o'clock last night and I havn't seen him since. I didn't have time.

Q What did you do when you found out these things had happened?

A Well, I got busy and rode down the road.

Q Call your deputies in on the case.

A I did.

Q Did you make an investigation?

A I did.

Q What did you discover?

A We found where somebody had been shot.

Q Where was that?

A G.F. & A. Depot.

Q How far is that from the jail?

A A half to three quarters of a mile. When we found that we found where the negro had crawled under the house. There was blood fifteen feet under the warehouse.

Q How far was that from the tree you showed me where they undoubtedly shot the negro?

A About fifty feet from the tree.

Q What did you find as to bullets?

A We found a plow line and one end of it tied about four or five feet from the bottom and the other end laying on the ground. I examined it and decided it was shot in two. I left there then and come back up town with Mr. Wynn. We drove - no we didn't, either. We drove from there on out that road because the car headed from the jail east. We went out to about a mile and a half on that road. I came back to town and drove out here to Luten's looking for a policeman out there, Mr. Porter, and asked him if he had seen any strange looking cars come out there or anything unusual. While I was out there, Raymond Boyd called me and told me he had found where the negro was hung. I came back then and called my deputies. It was getting light then.

Q Did you take bloodhounds down?

A Yes, sir. I got \_\_\_\_\_, the dog man, and we went from that tree right under the house.

Q Where you saw the blood?

A Where I saw the blood leading. And she went up to that brick concern where scales are built in and she couldn't get it anywhere else

and we finally went out on the other side where we couldn't pick it up any more.

Q Did you find the body of this A. C. Williams?

A No, sir.

Q You don't know what had become of him?

A Don't know what had become of him.

Q Had you placed a formal charge against him?

A No, sir. He was put in there Saturday night or Sunday morning about two-thirty and it was going to be done today.

Q The charges were going into Mr. Bell's House and assaulting that little girl?

A Yes, sir.

Q The City officers were using the jail the same as you do as Sheriff?

A Yes, sir.

Q Under what arrangements?

A Well, just the consent of the County Commissioners. They don't pay any rent for it or anything like that. They only pay me for feeding.

Q How much?

A Sixty-five cents per day.

Q The City pays you as Sheriff with the agreement of the County Commissioners sixty-five cents a day for feeding certain prisoners that are kept in the jail?

A That is only done this way. If they put a prisoner in there Saturday night, I feed them Sunday and they go to court Monday at three o'clock and I don't feed them any more.

Q In other words, they don't keep men after they are convicted in this jail?

A Yes, sir, they keep them there but they put them to work.  
They usually pay out or make bond.

Q What access does the City have to that jail?

A They have a key.

Q All the policemen have a key?

A Yes, sir.

Q Any one of them can go in there?

A The policeman and the deputies and myself have a key.

The constable is the only one that isn't allowed to have a key.

Q How many police?

A Five.

Q And how many deputies?

A Two.

Q And yourself. That is eight keys that take you through  
the jail?

A Yes, sir.

Q Then any one of those eight men could be forced to the  
jail to liberate a prisoner and turn him loose? You don't  
have a jailor that is full time?

A No, sir. I do it and my deputies do it.

Q Let me ask you this question with an idea of remedying the situa-  
tion that apparently exists here similar to the one that existed in  
Tallahassee several years ago. Is it possible to keep a jailor in the  
jail at all times, day and night, to let officers in with prisoners  
and take them out from the inside? Is that possible?

A No, sir, because I couldn't pay it. Sometimes I could and  
sometimes I couldn't.

Q They don't pay a jailor for you?

A The pay thirty dollars for a jailor down there. If it  
is thirty-one days in the month they pay thirty-one dollars, because  
the jail has to be cleaned up every morning of the world.

Q That is for janitor service?

A Yes, sir. That is the only thing they do. They pay for janitor service.

Q If these eight keys were taken away from all of you and one man was put in to let prisoners in and out, in that way you could get away from having all those keys and avoid trouble like you had last night. If you hire a man and put him in day and night, because that is what it would mean, day and night, you could take the keys away from the others. Take them away from all the others. Has there ever been a discussion, Sheriff, that you know of relative to hiring a full time jailor or two people to stay in the jail day and night?

A No, sir.

Q The objection to it would be that it would cost extra money?

A Yes, sir. That would be a fine thing, if you could do that.

William Pittman, having been first duly sworn, testified as follows:

EXAMINATION BY MR. PARKER:

Q What is your name?

A William Pittman.

Q How old are you?

A Twenty-nine.

Q What are you in here for?

A For investigation.

Q From where?

A Marianna.

Q Holding you as a suspect for murder, aren't they?

A Yes, sir.

Q Were you in here all last night?

A Yes sir.

Q What cell were you in last night?

A The back one.

Q Who was in that cell with you last night?

A A colored boy.

Q What was his name?

A Well, I didn't know him.

Q Was he the one they came in and got last night?

A Yes, sir.

Q Was his name A. C. Williams?

A Well, I wouldn't know.

Q How long had he been in there with you?

A Sunday morning, just before day.

Q He had been in there with you less than a day, then?

A Well, I would imagine it is round three-thirty or four o'clock when they put him in there.

Q What happened last night?

A Well, about twelve-thirty, I guess it was, or something like that, some fellow came in there and called him.

Q What fellow?

A White fellow.

Q Could you tell they were white men?

A As far as I could see, it looked like they were masked.

Q Had hoods over their heads?

A Yes, sir.

Q What color?

A Well, from where I was it looked like they might have been tan, like.

Q Dark color?

A Yes, sir.

Q How many men came up here?

A Well, I couldn't say because they were on this side of the door.

Q You mean they were in the hall and you couldn't see them.

A It was just like you would walk to that cell there.

Q You were in that cell, were you?

A Yes, sir.

Q Just you and this A. C. Williams?

A Yes, sir.

Q Did you see Mr. D<sub>e</sub>n Davis, the policeman?

A Well, I seen him after he come and hollered.

Q What woke you up? Were you sleeping when they came in here?

A No, sir.

Q Was he sleeping, this other boy?

A Yes, sir. I don't know whether he was or not.

Q What was said?

A They called his name,

Q How did they call it?

A A. C. They said, "Come here". That was all.

Q You knew that was a white man's voice?

A Well, I wouldn't swear it was a white man except they speak a little better English than negroes.

Q How many came round to where you could see them in the hall?

A About two or three.

Q Do you know about how many were in this party?

A No, sir.

Q What did A. C. do after they called him?

A Nothing.

Q Say anything?

A No.

Q Did he go?

A Yes, sir.

Q How was he clothed? What kind of clothes did he have when he went to them?

A Well, he had on his trousers and I don't know the color of his shirt.

Q Have on a shirt?

A Yes, sir.

Q Shoes?

A No, sir.

Q Socks?

A Yes, sir.

Q When he left, did he wear a hat?

A No, sir. Wore a cap.

Q Left with a cap?

A I say he wore a cap. They came this morning and got his cap.

Q Who got his cap?

A I don't know.

Q Did he have to put on those clothes or did he have them on when they came?

A He had them on.

Q You hadn't gone to bed?

A Yes, sir. Just lying down with those things on.

Q Did you know what they were taking him for?

A I didn't know.

Q How long after they took him before you heard Mr. Dan Davis holler?

A Well, I heard some rattling or shaking on the door and it wasn't very long before he started hollering.

Q What did he say? Who did he holler to?

A Doc, something. I don't know. I don't know these people round here.

Q Was this boy, A. C. Williams, in the cell with you from the time they put him in here with you until the time they took him out?

A I don't think he was. I think he was first downstairs.

Q When did they take him up and put him in with you?

A Well, he told me - . He didn't tell me what time. All I know is the time they put him in there.

Q Night before last, Sunday morning before day, about three or four o'clock? He was in there until they came and got him?

A Yes, sir.

Q He wasn't changed cells before they got him last night?

A No, sir.

Q Were there any other men upstairs?

A Not that I know of.

Q Just you and him?

A Yes, sir.

Q Wasn't anybody else up here that could have seen these men?

A Well, I don't know.

Q Were there any other men up here?

A No, sir.

Q You couldn't see him from downstairs?

A I don't know.

Q Just you and him?

A Yes, sir.

Q Did you get up off your cot to look at these men?

A No, sir. They left the door open just like it is now and I didn't care about getting up. There might have been another.

Q Didn't A. C. Talk about this trouble that he had, going into Mr. Bell's house and trying to rape a white girl?

A No, sir. The only thing he told me about was around Tampa someplace he was hoboeing and they got him and put him in jail about ninety days, or something like that.

Q He didn't say anything about this case?

A No, sir.

Q Did these men have on hoods?

A The one or two that I saw had hoods over their head.

I hereby certify that the above and foregoing pages represent a true and correct transcript of the proceedings of an investigation made by Orion C. Parker, State Attorney, into the unlawful seizure of one A. C. Williams from the custody of the Sheriff of Gadsden County, Florida

/s/ Pat Campbell  
Pat Campbell, Official Court Reporter  
2nd Judicial Circuit of the State of Florida

STATE OF FLORIDA, GADSDEN COUNTY  
FIRST JUSTICE OF THE PEACE DISTRICT

In the Matter of the Inquest on the Body of  
A. C. WILLIAMS

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At an Inquest held on the 13th day of May, 1941,  
on the body of A. C. Williams before R. E. L. McFarlin, Coroner,  
in the City of Quincy, Gadsden County, Florida, beginning at ten  
o'clock in the morning.

PRESENT:

O. C. Parker, Jr., State Attorney, appearing on  
behalf of the State of Florida

T R A N S C R I P T

P R O C E E D I N G S

Dr. S. E. Wilhoit, having been first duly sworn, testified as follows:

EXAMINATION BY MR. PARKER:

Q Your name is S. E. Wilhoit?

A Yes, sir.

Q Doctor and physician by profession?

A Yes, sir.

Q You've lived here in Quincy a number of years?

A Yes, sir.

Q Were you called last night, and, if so, what hour, to see A. C. Williams, a negro man that had been shot?

A Around eleven o'clock.

Q Do you know who called you?

A Mr. Luten, the Sheriff.

Q Just tell this Jury where you went and what you found.

A The Sheriff called me around eleven - I don't just remember the exact time - and told me to meet him at \_\_\_\_\_ Lunch Stand up by the Seaboard Depot in ten minutes, so I went on up there and he was sitting there in the car, he and Ed Wynn, and he told me he wanted me to go down and see this negro. He said follow him, so I followed him around to the negro quarters where A. C. Williams - I believe his name is - was.

Q Where did you see Williams?

A In the house opposite his mother's, what is known as Thomas and \_\_\_\_\_ quarters.

Q Was he at his mother's house?

A No, sir. Opposite his mother's house. His mother said she didn't have room.

Q His name was A. C. Williams?

A Yes, sir.

Q What was his condition when you examined him?

A His pulse was good. It wasn't rapid. From examination of the body -

Q Do you remember what his pulse was?

A His pulse was round eighty.

Q Might be near normal?

A Yes, sir, nearly normal. Surprising, because you could tell he had lost a lot of blood. Blood was all over his shirt.

Q Was he still clothed?

A Well, they pulled his breeches off. They said he crawled in.

Q What did you find from your examination?

A They had pulled his pants off and there was a shot through the buttocks, two wounds through the buttocks, and he had one through his wrist. Just flesh wound there, on the right wrist.

Q Right or left?

A I don't know. One of the wrists. It was on his right wrist. All of the shots were on his right side.

Q Two shots in his buttocks? From the back or side?

A His side. Flesh wound in his right wrist, one through his arm and one through right arm and two through the chest and shoulder joint.

Q How were those bullets all ranging?

A From front to back, the ones in the chest, and the ones here in the side.

Q Two chest wounds from the front ranging through the body to the back? Did they go all the way through?

A Two went through and the other in the shoulder was under the skin. You could feel it.

Q The bullet wounds in the arm, did they range through the body?

A Only one was up here and went through the lungs and ranged out his back.

Q What other wounds did you find?

A He had a severe wound in the back of his head?

Q What kind of wound was it?

A Four or five inches in diameter.

Q What kind of weapon made it?

A Looked like he had been pummelled or beaten with some kind of instrument.

Q Was the skull crushed?

A No, sir.

Q Was that a dangerous wound?

A Well, it was dirty and had to be cleaned and I couldn't tell you. The outer layer of the skull was crushed. If the whole skull had been crushed it would have shown up in the pupils of his eyes. They reacted normally.

Q What condition, generally, was he in last night about eleven?

A I thought he was in damn good condition.

Q What were his chances of living?

A Well, I didn't see why he shouldn't unless he got some infection or complications.

Q Normal pulse?

A Yes.

Q Respiration good?

A Yes.

Q Loss of blood was the biggest item?

A Yes, sir.

Q Transfusion would have built that up?

A Even with the loss of blood he was in pretty good condition.

Q Talk to him any? Seem to be conscious?

A Yes.

Q Did you talk to him about the case?

A No. He was hurting pretty badly and I gave him a hypo of morphine. They told me to call up the A & M Hospital and send him over by order of Judge Love.

Q Did you talk to the hospital?

A Yes. I talked to Dr. Foote and told them I was sending a man over that had been shot and he would be over by twelve or twelve-thirty. We had to get the undertaker and I knew it would be an hour or an hour and a half before he got to Tallahassee.

Q You did all in the way of first aid that could be done for him?

A Well, he had something tied on his head, gauze or something.

Q He did have gauze?

A It wasn't regular gauze. It looked like sheese cloth you use on tobacco sheets.

Q It wasn't sanitary, was it?

A No.

Q Did it appear that any other doctor had seen him?

A No. He had some rags tied on his thighs.

Q Where he was bleeding most from?

A I couldn't tell. He wasn't bleeding then. The blood was mostly dried blood, mostly from head wound.

Q What size negro was this?

A He looked like about twenty-two and weighed about one hundred and sixty pounds.

Q You only saw him the once last night?

A I saw him this morning.

Q You saw him after he was dead?

A He was dead when I saw him.

Q Where did you see him?

A I saw him on the bridge about five or six miles from town.

Q Is that Little River?

A Withlacoochee Creek.

Q What additional wounds did you see other than these described as having been seen the night before?

A There were some bird shot in the arm and right side of the chest. And some on the left side. Looked like one load of shot, bird shot.

Q Small shot?

A Yes, sir.

Q About what size, would you say?

A Looked like Number Five, or something like that.

Q Packed pretty close together?

A Yes, sir.

Q Fired at close range?

A The gun wadding was lying on the bridge four or five feet from him so he was shot at close range.

Q They went in the right side of the chest?

A Most of them went in his forearm and some went in the right side of the chest and some in the left side of the chest. It doesn't look like that would have killed him, but it did.

Q Did the shot penetrate the lungs?

A I don't know.

Q It looks like if it was fired close enough to him for the shot to have been packed close together it would have penetrated the lungs. That would have caused bleeding in his mouth or nose?

A Not always. It would if the shot hit where the blood goes in the bronchial tubes. However, he wouldn't necessarily have a blood hemorrhage through the nose or mouth if it was deep at the time. Sooner or later it would cause a hemorrhage.

Q Find any other wounds?

A No.

Q Think that was sufficient to cause his death, these bird shot?

A Sure it would.

Q It was the same negro you saw at eleven o'clock the night before?

A Yes, sir.

Q What time did you make your last examination?

A Eight o'clock this morning.

JUROR:

I would like to know this. They said they heard twelve or fifteen shot down there. Didn't hit him with nothing but the bird shot?

MR. PARKER:

They could have shot twelve or fifteen times and still not have shot at him.

A The shot weren't in him. How many times they shot, I don't know about that. They didn't shoot him so much because he was only shot in the right forearm and chest.

MR. PARKER:

I want all of you jurors to feel free to ask questions.

Is there anybody else who knows anything about this case?

Will Webb, having been first duly sworn, testified as follows:

EXAMINATION BY MR. PARKER:

Q State your name?

A Will Webb.

Q Will, how old are you?

A I am about sixty-four years old.

Q What kind of business are you in?

A I have a funeral home.

Q You are a mortician?

A Yes, sir.

Q How long have you been running a funeral home?

A Since 1928.

Q Right here in Quincy?

A Yes, sir.

Q Live here in Quincy a long time?

A Yes, sir.

Q Last night, were you called on by some person to transfer a negro man by the name of A. C. Williams some place?

A That is right.

Q Just tell the jury about who called you and just what you did do?

A Well, the Chief of Police gave me orders to take him to Tallahassee.

Q Take who? A. C. Williams?

A Yes, sir.

Q Tell us what you did?

A It was between twelve-thirty and one o'clock.

Q Last night?

A Yes, sir.

Q Go ahead and tell this jury what you did. Who went with you, what instructions you had?

A Well, I had four other men, excusing myself.

Q To do what?

A To help me take care of him.

Q Tell us what you did.

A Of course, I left here and went down the road.

Q Who went with you?

A Four other men.

Q You were carrying this man, A. C. Williams, in your ambulance?

A Yes, sir.

Q What kind of make is that?

A Henny Meter Motor Company.

Q Never heard of it.

A This is one of the good ones.

Q You had him in this ambulance and who was driving?

A I was driving myself.

Q Who was with him beside yourself?

A Sam Singleton, Jessie Lee Hill, and two other boys that left the house with me.

Q Did they go on with you?

A Yes, sir. They were in there when we left the house.

Q Did they go all the way with you?

A As far as we went.

Q You and A. C. Williams and Sam Singleton and Jessie Lee Hill and two more colored men?

A I think one of them was this boy's brother. I won't know just exactly. I know there was two that left the house with me.

Q This boy's brother and another?

A Yes, sir.

Q How were you riding in the ambulance?

A Well, there was three in the back and two in the front.

Q Who was in front with you?

A That Jessie Lee you call him.

Q Jessie Lee Hill?

A Yes, sir.

Q Now, Will, don't get excited. Just go on and tell us what happened.

A I am not getting excited. I am just going to tell the truth. The boy has been working with me six or eight months and I don't know his name. I just call him Bud all the time.

Q Tell us what happened?

A Well, I just crossed the railroad below Lippman.

Q Below what?

A Below Lippman.

Q You know where Trine's old sawmill is?

A Yes, sir, it is at Lippman. I crossed the railroad-

Q It is about four miles from here?

A Yes, sir. Well, maybe I had gone fifteen or twenty feet across the railroad. I saw a little light going that way and I slowed up.

Q What do you mean? A man flagging you?

A Yes, sir.

Q Was there a car in the road?

A Yes, sir.

Q How was it standing?

A Right in the road on the pavement, this was.

Q Where was the man with the light?

A He was behind the car.

Q Car facing the other way?

A Car facing that way.

Q All right. You crossed the railroad driving. Who did you say was driving?

A I was driving myself.

Q You saw a car parked on the pavement proper, headed east, and a man back of it with a flashlight apparently trying to wave you down?

A He waved me down.

Q Was the road blocked?

A No, sir.

Q Why didn't you continue to drive on?

A My side was blocked.

Q Why didn't you continue on the other side?

A Not with that man waving that light.

Q What did you do?

A I stopped.

Q Where?

A Right in the road behind that car.

Q Then what happened?

A He told me he wanted that fellow he had in there and he had to have him and didn't want no trouble about him, and I seen it locked just right. I said, "You won't have no trouble. You can get him."

Q You say you looked and it looked just right and you told him he could have him? Well, did you see some guns?

A Yes, sir.

Q Tell us about them?

A I couldn't see much, just some guns waving around like that.

Q Did he point it at you or stick it in your side?

A No, sir.

Q Who was the man?

A I couldn't tell you.

Q How was he clothed?

A I couldn't say. He had that gun hanging down.

Q Was it a revolver or gun?

A A gun.

Q A shot gun?

A Looked like that.

Q Did the man have anything over his face?

A Something across here. I seen that when he first came up and never seen it no more because I was looking at that thing he had in his hand.

Q How much of a mask did he have on?

A I don't know. I was scared.

Q Will, don't get so scared that you can't tell this jury what happened.

A I am not scared about telling the truth. I saw the thing when he first came up and I never did see anything else.

Q Was there anybody else with him?

A Yes. A man over on that side but I never saw him because I was looking at this.

Q How do you know he was there?

A Well, I saw him.

Q Did he have a gun, too?

A He must have had.

Q Was there anybody there but those two men?

A I never saw anybody else.

Q Anybody in the car in front of you?

A If there was I didn't see them.

Q What happened to the boys with you?

A Well, those boys got out when they went around to the door and I didn't even see that.

Q What happened?

A I was in front when they took him out.

Q What did they do with him?

A They put him in a car.

Q Did you see them?

A I saw them when they put him in the car.

Q How many were in the car?

A I think it was those two boys.

Q Boys? You mean they were boys?

A Well, I call them boys. They weren't no great big ones. I will tell this Jury I was looking at that gun and my eyes got crossed and I wanted to get away from there. I didn't feel just right. I didn't know what it was all about and when they got through they told me -. They told me they didn't want no trouble, and I told them, "You aren't going to have any with me", with that thing he had in his hand.

Q Did you know those boys? What makes you call them that?

A Well, they were more -. You know how a man talks.

Q It sounded like a boy's voice?

A Yes, sir.

Q How old would you judge him to be?

A I would be afraid to say.

Q How much of a covering did they have over their faces?

A They had something tied over their faces.

Q You say they had something over their faces?

A When I first looked, looked like just here.

Q Across his nose?

A Yes, sir.

Q Across his eyes?

A No, sir.

Q Were those men white or black?

A I don't know. I couldn't swear he was white or swear he was black, because he could have done something to his face. I couldn't see them in the dark.

Q Well, you had a light there?

A No, I didn't have no light.

Q How about the light from the cars?

A The cars were all cut off then.

Q You don't know whether his face was white or black?

A It was kind of light skinned. Could have been a white man or could have been a colored.

Q You just don't know?

A I don't know.

Q In other words, when you saw that shotgun you didn't see anything else?

A I wanted to come back home.

Q Did you come back home?

A At eighty miles per hour.

Q But the man had already told you he wasn't going to bother you?

A He told me he didn't want no trouble and I told him he wasn't going to get any from me.

Q What happened to the crew you had in the back with  
A. C.? Did you bring them back with you?

A Brung them back.

Q Will, you reckon they were scared as you were?

A You know a man just walked up and you see a thing like  
that and know a man wasn't joking, you would forget what  
you know.

Q Which way did they go with that car with A. C.?

A Straight an out towards the river. I seen that when  
I was backing up.

Q You didn't follow them?

A You know I didn't follow them. God, No!

Q Will, they picked the wrong man to take A. C. to the  
hospital?

A Sure did.

Q Was he alive when they took him out?

A He was alive when I put him in there.

Q When they took him in the car, do you know whether he  
was alive or not?

A I don't know.

Q Did he say anything?

A Not that I know.

Q When they left, how many got in the car?

A I seen one in the car.

Q Will, you said there were two in the car.

A I thought there was two. I am pretty sure there was two.

Q What size? How tall?

A About as tall as me.

Q Will, stand up. You are six feet tall?

A Yes, sir.

Q You say these boys were as big as you?

A Those wasn't no boys. They were grown folk. I had boys with me.

Q Okg, you are talking about them?

A These were grown men.

Q Will, you mislead me by making me believe and I think this jury believe that these were young boys?

A I am talking about the boys that were with me.

MR. PARKER:

Do any of the jurors have any questions they would like to ask?

JUROR:

Will, you know who it was that put him in the other car?

A No, sir.

JUROR:

Didn't you recognize any of these other parties?

A No, sir.

Q Don't even know whether they were colored people or white?

A No, sir, I sure don't. I don't know who put him in that car.

Sam Singleton, having been first duly sworn, testified as follows:

EXAMINATION BY MR. PARKER:

Q Your name is Sam Singleton?

A Yes, sir.

Q How old are you, Sam?

A Thirty-one years old.

Q Did you make a trip last night with Will Webb in his ambulance to take A. C. Williams to the hospital?

A Yes, sir.

Q What time?

A About twelve-thirty when we left the house, the nearest I could guess it at.

Q Was this A. C. Williams alive at the time?

A Yes, sir, alive.

Q Where were you riding?

A In the back.

Q With the body?

A Yes, sir.

Q Tell the Jury what happened?

A Well, I went to take him. There was a couple of boys in the back, his brother and another. They went to help carry him when he got to the hospital where he could go up the steps. I couldn't see out the front. Just as we crossed the railroad, - I don't know how far -

Q Is that out by Trine's saw mill?

A That is right by Trine's sawmill. We stopped and I looked out and saw them waving.

Q With what?

A A light.

Q Flashlight?

A Looked like it. They come up and they knew Will because they called his name and they said, "We got to have him and we don't want no trouble." I was in the back and I was glad to get out.

Q How did you get out?

A Out through the back door.

Q Before they got A. C. Williams?

A Yes, sir.

Q Did you see them come up?

A Yes, sir.

Q Were they white or colored?

A They looked like white.

Q Have anything over their faces?

A Yes, sir.

Q What did they have?

A Seemed pocket handkerchief tied over their faces,  
looked like.

Q Could you tell whether they were colored or blacks  
or white?

A They were white, I guess.

Q Don't you know whether they were white or colored?

A Well, I couldn't swear they were white or colored,  
because I couldn't see their face.

Q Did you see their hands?

A I saw it.

Q Was it white?

A It looked like it was white.

Q But they had a handkerchief across their faces?

A Yes, sir.

Q Did they have any guns?

A Yes, sir.

Q What kind?

A A shot gun, as far as I could see.

Q Level it on you or stick it in you?

A They held it back off.

Q You say this fellow knew Will. What makes you think  
that?

A He called his name.

Q Did you know that man's voice?

A No, sir.

Q Never heard it before?

A Not that I know of. Will said, "You aren't going to have no trouble."

Q Then what happened?

A They gave orders to take the boy out.

Q When what happened?

A I walked round to the other part and wanted to get in there where Will and this other boy was and couldn't get in there. I was just trying to get out of the way.

Q Who took him out of the ambulance?

A His brother and another boy.

Q Who took him to the car?

A They got the same two to take him.

Q A. C.'s brother and this other boy take him out of the ambulance and take him over to the car?

A Yes, sir.

Q What did A. C.'s brother and this other boy do after they took him out of the car?

A They taken him and got back in the car.

Q The white men didn't touch A. C., then?

A No, sir.

Q Why didn't you help?

A They didn't tell me to.

Q Did you have any guns with you?

A I didn't even have a safety pin.

Q How many of these men were there?

A I seen three.

Q All three come over to the ambulance?

A Two of them came to the ambulance.

Q Where was the other?

A The other one - . I seen the three that got out. Two come to the ambulance and the other was on the side.

Q You didn't see any more?

A No, sir.

Q Where was that car parked?

A In the middle of the road. Right in the middle of the highway.

Q Which way did they go?

A Went straight towards the way the ambulance was headed.

Q West east towards the river?

A Yes, sir.

MR. PARKER:

Any of you gentlemen have any questions?

Jessie Lee Hill, having been first duly sworn, testified as follows:

EXAMINATION BY MR. PARKER:

Q Your name Jessie Lee Hill?

A Yes, sir.

Q Are you any kin to A. C. Williams?

A No, sir.

Q Did you go some place with Will Webb in his ambulance last night to take A. C. Williams to the hospital in Tallahassee?

A Yes, sir.

Q What time?

A I don't know exactly what time.

Q All right. Tell the jury what happened while making that trip.

A Well, after we were going across this railroad out here we were stopped by some white men. I guess they were white men.

Q What happened?

A They talked to Mr. Will Webb.

Q What did they say?

A They told him, "We have got to have this negro."

Q What did they say?

A They told him, "We have got to have this negro."

Q Where were you?

A Up in the front with Will.

Q How many men did you see?

A Two. They had these guns.

Q What kind of guns?

A I don't know. Shot guns.

Q Did they point them at Will or any of you?

A No, sir. I couldn't see them.

Q Could you see the faces of these men?

A No, sir, I couldn't see them.

Q Why?

A They had a mask or something like that on.

Q Could you tell whether they were white or colored?

A No, sir.

Q You never heard their voices before?

A No, sir.

Q What else did he say besides, "We have got to have this negro."

Did he speak to Will?

A Yes, sir.

Q Seemed to know Will?

A Yes, sir.

Q Most of the people know Will, don't they?

A I don't know.

Q He is pretty well known among whites and blacks, isn't he?

A Yes, sir.

Q What did you do after they said, "We have got to have this negro"?

A I just sat in my seat.

Q You know whether A. C.'s brother and this other boy took him out and put him in the car?

A Yes, sir, they took him out.

Q A. C.'s brother?

A I don't know. I didn't know them. They took him out and put him in the car.

Q Then what did they do?

A Turned around and came back.

Q Then what did the men do?

A Drove off.

Q In which direction?

A Towards Havana.

Q East towards Havana? That is east, isn't it?

A Yes, sir.

Q What did you do?

A Drove on back.

Q Did you drive back fast?

A No, sir, not so fast.

Q Will said you drove eighty miles an hour. Is that correct?

A We might have drove fast. I wasn't paying much attention.

I don't think it was that fast.

JUROR:

How many men were there besides you and Will?

A Three

MR. PARKER:

Any further questions, gentlemen?

Ed Wynn, having been first fully sworn, testified as follows:

EXAMINATION BY MR. PARKER:

Q Your name is Edmund Wynn?

A Edgar Wynn.

Q They call you Ed, don't they?

A Yes, sir.

Q You are the Chief of Police of the City of Quincy, Florida?

A Yes, sir.

Q How long have you been Chief?

A About four years.

Q Chief, did you see this negro, A. C. Williams, that had been shot the night before last night?

A Yes, sir.

Q What time did you see him and where?

A About eleven o'clock.

Q Where did you see him?

A Right in front of his mother's house, - where his mother lived.

Q What was his condition when you saw him?

A Dr. Wilhoit and Mr. Lutten were there, and the negro was laying on his left side and the room was very crowded.

Q Very crowded?

A There was three or four negroes in there and there was two beds. Dr. Wilhoit went in and examined him and pulled some rags off and I saw where he was shot. Through the right hip and through the arm, and I couldn't tell where else.

Q Dr. Wilhoit examined him closely?

A Yes, sir.

Q Did this negro make any statement to you or Lutten?

A No, sir. Only one question was asked the negro. The

Doctor asked how he felt and he said pretty bad. Another thing he asked, where it hurt at, and he said the one on his hip hurt him worst.

Q Did you ask him any questions at all about who shot him?

A No, sir.

Q Did Mr. Luten ask him?

A Not while I was in there and I was in there all the time.

Q Was he in any condition to be asked any questions?

A He talked mighty weak.

Q You don't know how long he had been in that house where he was?

A No, sir, Mr. Luten woke me up between eleven and twelve and said I want you to go out with me.

Q The night before last, when this negro was taken out of jail, do you know anything about that to your own knowledge?

A No, sir.

Q Dan Davis work under you?

A Yes, sir.

Q Dan Davis was on duty the night before last?

A Yes, sir.

Q All the policemen have keys that give them access to the jail?

A Yes, sir.

Q And you use them by permission of the Sheriff?

A Yes, sir.

Q You pay him room and board for keeping the prisoners?

A One dollar and a half for putting them in and sixty-five cents a day for board.

Q Use the same jail, the City and the County?

A Yes, sir.

CORONER:

I would like to know how you all got out there in the first place?

A How we got out there? You mean Mr. Luten and I? We went out in his car. He came to my house and woke me up.

Q Do you remember him saying somebody told him that they were out there?

A The only thing he told me, "That negro is at his mammy's house and I want you to go out with me."

MR. PARKER:

Are there any further questions?

M. P. Luten, having been first duly sworn, testified as follows:

EXAMINATION BY MR. PARKER:

Q Your name is M. P. Luten?

A Yes, sir.

Q Sheriff of Gadsden County, Florida?

A Yes, sir.

Q I want to start with your evidence, Mr. Luten, the Sunday night. Do you have any personal knowledge of the arrest and placing of A. C. Williams in jail by the City policeman on Sunday? Sunday morning, the eleventh?

A No, sir. Only what they told me the next morning.

Q You do know whether you did see this A. C. Williams in jail?

A In jail, yes, sir.

Q He was in jail all day Sunday?

A Yes, sir.

Q Was he booked with any charge then?

A No formal charge. In other words, Mr. Rowan was with them and he was the man that told me they locked him up in jail.

Q Mr. Rowan your deputy?

A No, sir. Constable. In other words, I wouldn't have had anything to do with him until they got him in the Justice of the Peace Court and then turned him over to me.

Q It wouldn't have been customary to get a charge placed against him on Sunday?

A No, sir.

Q What informal charge was placed against him there in jail?

A Breaking and entering.

Q Do you know whether there was a charge of assault on this little Bell girl?

A No, sir, I don't know that. In fact, I didn't pay much attention to it. Never gave it a thought. Never thought about it all day Sunday.

Q Sunday night or Monday morning, tell the jury what happened.

A About twelve or quarter to twelve I kept hearing somebody holler and it woke me up and I thought they would quit directly and they just kept on.

Q You live near to the jail?

A Yes, sir. I went out in front and got near abouts outdoors and I heard this hollering, calling somebody, saying "Doc! Doc!" so I went through the house and out in the back yard and of course passed the corner of the jail, and about the time I got up there somebody called, "Doc! Doc Johnson!" Doc Johnson is the one who runs the yard down there. I said, "What do you want?" I figured somebody was up there. Dan said, "Mr. Lutten, they locked me up in here." I went in the jail. No lights were on and I turned the lights on. When I passed through the office,

Dan's pistol was laying on the desk in the office there and I looked for the keys. The safe door was down there. I saw the key was gone so I knew it was in the door upstairs.

Q In your mind?

A In my mind, and sure enough that key was up there and I unlocked the lock and Mr. Davis walked out and said, "They got my keys and my pistol and handcuffs and put the handcuffs on him. When I got to the edge of the door one put his hand on my chest and shoved me back and slammed that door." That is the end of it.

Q You looked for the negro?

A Yes, sir.

Q Find him gone?

A Yes, sir, found him gone. I got out and worked on that thing until daylight.

A No, sir.

Q Did you find where somebody had been shot?

A Mr. Davis and Mr. Porter looked and found a rope where somebody had been shot and I went on down and found this rope and a lot of blood. Looks like they throwed it over the limb and tied it round the tree three or four feet from the ground. You could track the blood there from where it left to C. F. & A Depot there.

Q How far is that from the tree where you found the rope?

A Seventy-five or eighty feet.

Q Could you track it away from the warehouse?

A From the brick wall to where the scales were on the ground. It looked like somebody came out of that place. He didn't go round and I imagine he came out the same place. I went and got Pete \_\_\_\_\_, the dog man, and got the dog and started at the foot of the tree, and that dog went from

that tree to that brick wall under the warehouse and we fooled around over an hour and we couldn't pick it up anywhere.

Q Any bullets in that tree?

A Ten or twelve. Grazing the tree and in the tree together.

Q Could you tell whether it was a rifle or shot gun?

A Thirty-eight bullet, it looked like, and one shot with a shot gun.

Q A few of those shots cut the rope?

A Yes, sir.

Q You have still got that rope?

A Yes, sir. I looked for that negro yesterday morning, off and on, the best I could. I had my two men out looking for him. I went to the River before traffic got started and me and Mr. Stephens went out to his mother's house to see if he had come. I felt like he wasn't dead and would go home. About ten or ten-thirty last night, some one came to my house and told me A. C. had come home and he was in bad shape. I told her, "I will come out there and bring a doctor and see what I can do with him." I talked to the Judge first. He said, "You get Will and if he can stand a trip to Tallahassee get Will and let Will take him to Tallahassee." I went from Judge Love's house and called Dr. Wilhoit and asked him to meet us at the Seaboard Depot and I lead the way and me and him and Mr. Wynn went in there and looked over the negro and he looked like he was getting along fine. His right arm was \_\_\_\_\_ right bad. Looked like it was broken. Dr. Wilhoit examined him and gave him a hypo. We went on and we got Will Webb. I took Mr. Wynn home and I went to bed.

Q What instructions did you give Will Webb?

A Told him Dr. Wilhoit was going to call the hospital and he was to take him over there.

Q Do you have any hospital for negroes here in Quincy?

A Well, Dr. Stephens has a little something down there but it don't amount to much. About twelve-thirty, I reckon, or maybe one o'clock, Dan Davis came to my house last night and I walked out there and there was Will Webb, and I said, "Will, what is the matter?" He said, "Mr. Luten, they got me at Trine's Mill just across the railroad and took A. C., away from me." He seemed to be scared and I told him, "Don't be worried. If it had been anybody else it would have been the same thing. You couldn't help it." I went on back home and answered the phone the rest of the night, you might say. This morning about daylight, Sheriff \_\_\_\_\_ called me and said there was a dead negro on the middle of Withlacoochee Bridge. I got in my car and went over there and there was this same negro.

Q A. C. Williams?

A Yes, sir. He wasn't shot any more with bullets but he was shot with a shot gun. This shoulder and brest here, and the same thing in this arm but a very little. They were pretty close together from along here and about one-half his brest. There wasn't a bullet or little shot on him from down there to this width of his stomach.

Q No bullet? No pistol or rifle bullet since you saw him last night?

A No, sir.

Q Were there any empty shells on the bridge anywhere?

A Didn't see any empty shells. Saw some gun wadding.

Q How close was that?

A There was two pieces. One pretty close to his right foot and the other was within two feet of his body.

Q When you went out to his mother's house, or opposite his mother's house, did you ask him any questions about who it was that took him out of the jail the night before?

A No. The reason I didn't, Dr. Wilhoit tried to talk to him and he couldn't get anything out of him, so I didn't try, and you couldn't understand what he was trying to tell Dr. Wilhoit.

Q When this first trouble happened, did you have any inkling of any sentiment on the street against this negro?

A No, sir, not a bit in the world. I hadn't heard a thing about it.

Q Nothing was said or done that you know of to put you on notice?

A No, sir. If I had of heard it I would have acted different.

Q What happened last night? Did you have any inkling that these negroes might have trouble getting him to Tallahassee?

A The only ones that knew about it were myself, Judge Love, Mr. Wynn, and Dr. Wilhoit

Q No other outside people?

A There were four or five men at the house besides the negro woman out there at the house.

MR. PARKER:

Any of you gentlemen have any questions for the Sheriff?

Dan Davis, having been first duly sworn, testified as follows:

EXAMINATION BY MR. PARKER:

Q Your name is Dan Davis?

A Yes, sir.

Q You are a member of the City Police Department of the City of Quincy, Florida?

A Yes, sir.

Q How long have you been with the Police Department?

A About six years.

Q How old are you, Dan?

A About thirty-three.

Q Were you on duty night before last? That would be Sunday night?

A Yes, sir.

Q Tell the Jury if one or more people, men, forced you to the jail to release a negro man by the name of A. C. Williams, and, if so, give them the full particulars.

A Well, I was checking up round back of the stores and was crossing the street here at the Quincy State Bank and a car pulled up, Met me going about twenty-five miles an hour. When it got even with me it stopped and two men jumped out and grabbed me.

Q Did they throw a gun on you?

A Yes, sir. When they got out of the car, each man had a gun.

Q Disarm you?

A Yes, sir, disarmed me and put me in the car. One of the men crawled in by me and one was sitting in the back already. I asked them what they meant, what was they up to, and they said they just wanted that goddam negro out of the jail and they didn't want any fuss about it.

Q How many men were they?

A Four.

Q What kind of car?

A It was a four-Door Ford, but I don't know what model. It

was either a 1940 or 1941.

Q Did you see that tag?

A No, sir.

Q After they told you they wanted that goddam negro and didn't want any fuss, what happened?

A They carried me to the jail and drove over the curb and parked in front of the door and left the motor running and asked me to get out. One put a gun in my side and one in my back. The one on the left side had his gun in one hand and had a flashlight there. When we got in and I switched on the light and whenever I did one of them said, "Cut it off, Buddy. We will furnish the light for this party."

Q Did they say what negro they wanted?

A I asked them what negro and he said A. C. Williams.

Q Who was doing the talking?

A The big man was doing the talking and I don't know who he was.

Q Did you know where A. C. Williams was?

A Yes, sir. I locked him up.

Q When?

A Saturday night.

Q What time?

A About two-thirty.

Q That would be Sunday morning, the eleventh, about two-thirty?

A Yes, sir.

Q They told you they wanted that goddam negro? They what did you do?

A I went on up and got him by their forcing me up there. Three men went with me and one stayed downstairs and inside.

Q Where was A. C. Williams?

A Upstairs on the south side in a cell.

Q Who was with him?

A I don't know.

Q It was another negro?

A Yes, sir.

Q When you called him -

A I didn't call him?

Q Who did?

A I don't know. Whenever I opened the cell door he said, "A. C., come here", and he walked to the cell door and they grabbed him. They had my handcuffs. They walked out and I started behind them and one of the fellows pushed me back about as far as from here to there.

Q Was he a big fellow?

A Pretty big fellow. And he slammed the door and locked me in.

Q That was in the block of cells where the negro was?

A Yes, sir.

Q What did they do?

A They left with the negro.

Q What happened then?

A I started hollering. I didn't start hollering till they were down because they told me not to.

Q You obeyed orders?

A Yes, sir.

And they left my gun downstairs. Mr. Lutten found it when he came in. And they took my keys out of the drawer. There is a little key there that I always left hanging there. They took the keys and went out and I reckon they locked it. They left my keys right on the front doorsteps.

Q Didn't bother any body but A. C.?

A No, sir.

Q How long was it before you woke the Sheriff up?

A They said it was twenty-five or thirty minutes. I know I was doing some hollering.

Q Have you gotten your handcuffs back?

A No, sir.

Q Don't know where they are?

A No, sir.

Q You saw them put them on the negro before they left?

A Yes, sir. Saw them put them on.

Q Were these white men or colored?

A Well, from the way they were talking I would say they were white but I couldn't see them.

Q What did they have over their face?

A It looked like black cloth. Sort of a hood over the head and tucked in the collar.

Q How large a peephole for their eyes?

A I couldn't say. I guess they could see.

Q Ever call you by name?

A No, sir, the only thing they called me was "Buddy".

Q You don't go by that name?

A No, sir. I did then.

Q You don't know by what they said or by the way they acted whether they knew you or not?

A There wasn't but one spoke during the whole time to me. He was the big fellow that was covering me.

Q You weren't hard to cover?

A No, sir.

Q Two guns, one in your side and one in your back? And when you switched the light on he said, "Turn it off, Buddy. We will furnish the light for this party."

A I switched it off.

Q You on duty last night?

A Yes, sir.

Q See anything unusual happen around town, any commotion or anything?

A Didn't see or hear anything until this negro came back and told about it.

Q Will Webb?

A Will Webb.

Q Did you recognize his voice?

A No, sir.

Q Was it a familiar voice?

A No, sir.

Q All you could say that he was a white man?

A Yes, by the way he talked.

Q This V-8 4-Door Ford, was it in good shape or battered up or what?

A Well, I couldn't tell. I wasn't looking at the car very much.

JUROR:

Do you know they were white men or just from the voice?

A I couldn't swear other than from the voice.

JUROR:

Couldn't see their hands?

A No, sir.

JUROR:

Didn't hear any shooting?

A No, sir, I sure didn't. That fellow next to the camp said he heard it but I was locked up in jail with the windows down and I reckon I hollered fifteen minutes I reckon before I ever discovered the windows were down. I heard an old negro answer me downstairs and he said, "Oh, they aren't going to let you out up there. Go to sleep."

JUROR:

You didn't go to sleep, did you, Dan?

A No, sir.

When Mr. Lutten answered - he must have been out in the yard - he said, "Why don't you go to sleep." I said, "Sleep, hell. You come up here and let me out."

JUROR:

Were you locked up in the cell where the darky was?

A No, sir. They locked me in the hall, where the little hallway was.

Q What about these handcuffs ~~what~~ that you saw them put on him? Do they automatically lock?

A Yes, sir.

Q Who had the key? Did they leave it with you?

A Left it on the doorsteps. Here it is here. "Exhibiting key.) This one here.

Q This looks like an awfully simple key, but I guess it is hard to get them off without it?

A You can't get them off without it.

JUROR:

How did they ever get them off him?

MR. PARKER:

I don't know. They got them off him.

William Pittman, having been first duly sworn, testified as follows:

EXAMINATION BY MR. PARKER:

Q Night before last you were shut up in the jail here, the County Jail?

A Yes, sir.

Q They brought you from Marianna and put you here?

A Yes, sir.

Q Whereabouts were you?

A In the back cell.

Q Upstairs?

A Yes, sir.

Q On the south side?

A Yes, sir.

Q Who was in that cell with you night before last?

A The colored boy. I don't know him.

Q A. C. Williams, the one they came and got out?

A Yes, sir.

Q What time was he put in there?

A Between three-thirty and four o'clock, the best I can tell.

Q He was in good shape, wasn't he?

A I guess so.

Q He wasn't shot up?

A No, sir.

Q What happened night before last? Tell the Jury what happened.

A I couldn't say. <sup>~</sup>Some man came up there and called his name,

A. C. or H. C., I think.

Q You didn't know the boy?

A Never say him before.

Q What did they say to him?

A They said, "Come along".

Q Did he go?

A Yes, sir.

Q Who unlocked the door?

A I couldn't tell.

Q Did they come out in front of the cell where you could see them?

A One did. The other was back in the corner.

Q They were out in the hall and you were in the ~~next~~ cell next to the hall?

A Yes, sir.

Q Could you tell whether they were white or colored?

A By the way of speaking you could tell they were white.

Q How?

A The average white man speaks a little better English than the colored.

Q Did they have something over their face?

A One had something over his face.

Q Didn't it excite you?

A That is the reason why I didn't pay much attention to them.

Q Were you lying down?

A Yes, sir.

Q Where was A. C.'s bunk?

A Just across the cell from me.

Q Was he dressed?

A He had on his pants and shirt.

Q Did he go out that way?

A Yes, sir.

Q Did he say anything about this case he had been locked up for Sunday morning during the time he was in there?

A No, sir.

Q Did you ask him about it?

A Yes, sir.

Q What did he say?

A He said he hadn't done anything. He was on the street and they picked him up.

Q You didn't recognize those men?

A No, sir.

Q Don't know whether they were white or black?

A No, sir.

Q. Was it a big man that came where you could see him?

A Well, he was pretty big.

Q Have a gun?

A I didn't see a gun

Q Do you know how many men were there?

MR. PARKER:

This boy was the only man in the jail that could have possibly seen him. That is the reason he is brought here.

A No, sir.

Q You don't know anything more than that?

A Yes, sir.

MR. PARKER:

That is all he told me yesterday morning.

MR. PARKER:

What is the will of the Jury about waiting to have the other two negroes that were along with Will brought here to be examined?

Anybody else have any information that might put some light on this question?

Horace Courtney, having been first duly sworn, testified as follows:

EXAMINATION BY MR. PARKER:

Q Horace, were you along last night with Will when they tried to take A. C. Williams to the hospital?

A Yes, sir.

Q Where were you riding in that ambulance?

A In that thing they carry dead people in.

Q There wasn't any dead people in there?

A No, sir.

Q A. C. Williams was in there?

A

A Yes, sir.

Q What happened?

A A car stopped and Will said, "I better stop."

Q A car stopped?

A A car had already stopped. He got out and told all of us three to get out and so we got out. One man was standing up there and I don't know whether he was colored or white, and he told us to give him A. C. He said, "Where is he?"

Q Did he say, "Where is he?", or did he say, "Where is A. C.?"

A He said, "Where is A. C.?", Will Webb told him, "He is back here."

Q How did they get A. C. over to this other car?

A I don't know.

Q Didn't you help carry him?

A I didn't touch him.

Q What were you doing?

A I was just standing up there looking at him.

Q Who moved him?

A A boy named Sam Singleton.

Q Did A. C.'s brother help move him? Two of you boys moved him?

A No, sir, it was one. I didn't tote him.

Q Where did they put him?

A I don't know. We didn't stay to look, I was so scared.

Q Did you see a gun?

A No, sir.

Q What scared you?

A I was just scared that time of night. It was about two o'clock.

Q It wasn't two, was it?

A I know the first train had run.

Q You don't know who came and got him?

A No, sir.

Q What did the man say to Will Webb?

A They were up on the front and we were on the side.

Q Didn't hear him speak to Will?

A No, sir.

Rufus Williams, having been first duly sworn, testified as follows:

Q What is your name?

A Rufus Williams.

Q Rufus, how old are you?

A Sixteen.

Q How old is A. C., the boy that got killed?

A I don't know, sir.

Q Was he your brother?

A Yes, sir.

Q Look like you?

A No, sir, brighter than me.

Q Bigger than you or littler?

A Bigger.

Q Stand up and let me look. When did A. C. come home last night? What time?

A About six o'clock. Something after seven, I think.

Q Last night?

A Yes, sir.

Q How did he get home?

A He was crawling.

Q From what direction did he crawl from?

A From towards the school.

Q He came from that way crawling? He couldn't walk?

A No, sir.

Q What did you do, help him in the house?

A We laid him on the porch. Mother didn't have any place to put him.

Q Did you go with the ambulance to take him to the hospital?

A Yes, sir.

Q Tell us what happened?

A All I know, we were going and somebody jumped out of that car.

Q Didn't know the people?

A No, sir, I am just off the chain gang.

Q What were you up for?

A Breaking bubbs.

Q What kind of bubbs?

A Light bubbs.

Q Round town?

A No, sir, out at the schoolhouse.

Q What happened when this fellow came to the car, the ambulance where you were?

A Didn't do nothing but tell us to take him out.

Q Did you help?

A Yes, sir.

Q What did you do?

A They made us put him in the other car.

Q Did you help put him in the other car?

A Yes, sir.

Q Who else helped you?

A A boy called Sambo.

Q Was that Sam Singleton?

A It was a boy called Sambo. That is all I know.

Q Was he alive when you put him in?

A He just said, "Oh, Lord", like that.

Q What happened when you put him in this car?

A After I put him in the car I ran back and got in the car.

Q Then what happened?

A We turned round and came back to town.

MR. PARKER:

Any other questions?

Is there anyone else that knows anything about this case? Does the Jury know of any other evidence that we want?

(Whereupon, the Jury, having been charged by the Coroner, retired to its deliberations.)

I hereby certify that the above and foregoing pages represent a true and correct transcript of the proceedings at the inquest on the Body of A. C. Williams.

(Signed) PAT CAMPBELL  
Official Reporter, 2nd. Jud. Cir.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 17th day of May, A. D. 1941.

(SEAL)

(Signed) PATRICIA G. DODD  
Notary Public, State of Florida  
At Large.  
My Commission expires Oct 13, 1944

WB:FGF:llh

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August 5, 1942

Mr. U. S. Falls,  
Regional Vice-President for Missouri,  
The National Negro Business League,  
2810-12 Easton Avenue,  
St. Louis, Missouri.

Dear Mr. Falls:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of August 1, 1942, concerning lynching crimes in the United States and urging the passage of an anti-lynching law.

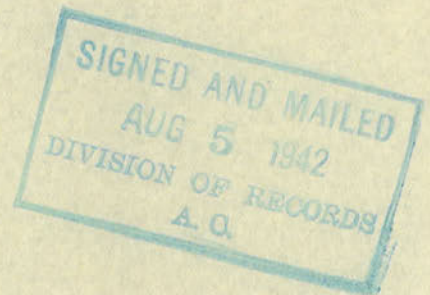
Your comments have been carefully noted. The legislation mentioned in your letter, of course, requires the action of Congress, and it is suggested that you may wish to call it to the attention of your representatives in Congress.

Respectfully,

For the Attorney General,

WENDELL BERGE,  
Assistant Attorney General.

W. B. R



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August first, 1942

158260-70

AUG 6 1942

DIVISION OF RECORDS

COMM. DIV. - ROTNEM



Attorney General Francis Biddle  
United States Department of Justice  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

This acknowledges, with thanks, your letter of July 16 in reference to the investigation of the lynching of Willie Vinson at Texarkana.

At the same time, I also wish to thank you for your personal interest in the Cleo Wright case which has come to a close with no indictments or convictions. These murderers and lynchers have defied our county, state and federal, yes our own federal, governments.

The investigations by these three branches of our own government have clearly demonstrated that wherease we have a system of law and order that the criminal codes of the backwoods lynchers are so well organized, bold and daring that our law enforcement system is unable to cope with them. Yet, they have committed their crimes in the broad daylight, and have done their dastardly deeds boldly and unmasked in small communities where everybody is known to everybody else.

Oddly enough, when Negroes committ crimes they are caught and punished. We do not object to such speedy justice. They should be punished to the full extent of the law, the same as any other citizens. But when the law of this land fails to protect a prisoner simply because of his color it is patently clear that no man or woman is safe, white or black, as mobs, composed of cowardly men, in

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ORGANIZED 1900

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TO PROMOTE THE COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEGRO

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FOR MISSOURI

- 2 -

most instances, will take advantage of any unprotected man or woman, white or black.

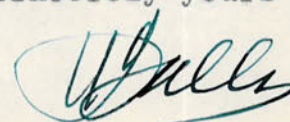
This racial attitude is again clearly demonstrated when the white leaders of the world fail to protect the Chinese people from the imperialism of Japan. Who cared about the yellow people before the white English might became in danger?

When that Brass Hatted Big Mouthed Italian dictator raped the Black People of Ethiopia, not a white finger was lifted to save them because they were merely Black People. These folk, dark though they be, with centuries of culture, were to be civilized by the Murderous Beast from Rome.

International law and order was allowed to break down because black and yellow people, alone, were the victims..the only ones concerned. Therefore, the encouragement granted by the white leaders of the world gave impetus to the rest of the world, and, today we stand at bay throughout the world while Hitler and the Italian dictators are reaching for our throats. So will it be in America, if lynchers are given the green light, that a monster, a big and powerful creature like Frankenstein will seek to slay its master, and no one will be safe.

May God help America to wash her bloody hands and be a true democracy and not a hypocrite as the rest of the world. We need an anti-lynch law with real teeth in it.

Very sincerely yours



U. S. FALLS & SON  
FISH AND OYSTER DEALERS  
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FRESH FISH

RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED



Attorney General Francis Biddle  
Department of Justice  
Washington, D.C.

9

REGISTERED  
NO 189947

WB:ELA:AE

158260-70

August 14, 1942

The Los Angeles Forum  
1478 West 37th Street  
Los Angeles, California

Gentlemen:

Attention: Mr. John H. Owens  
Corresponding Secretary

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter dated August 5, 1942, addressed to the Attorney General, concerning the alleged lynching of Willie Vinson in Texarkana, Texas, and the alleged assault committed on Roland Hayes in Rome, Georgia.

By direction of the President of the United States the Department of Justice has been instructed to investigate the alleged lynching of Willie Vinson in Texarkana, Texas. You are assured that in the event such investigation discloses a violation of some Federal criminal statute, prompt prosecutive action will be taken.

With reference to the alleged assault on Mr. Hayes, you will be pleased to know that the Attorney General has directed that when such matters appear to involve a violation of some Federal criminal statute investigation shall be immediately undertaken, looking toward a prompt and vigorous prosecutive action.

Respectfully,

For the Attorney General



WENDELL BERGE  
Assistant Attorney General



# The Los Angeles Forum

OUR MOTTO: — "The Greatest Good For The Greatest Number"  
(SINCE 1901)

MASONIC HALL

~~1209 1/2 Central Avenue~~

~~AT 218 1/2 STREET~~

1478 - W. 37th Street,  
Los Angeles, Calif., August 5th, 1942.

My dear Mr. Attorney-General:

The Los Angeles Forum, the oldest civic organization on the West Coast, has taken note recently of the continued crimes of violence being committed against persons of citizens of African descent.

We refer specifically to the recent brutal lynching of Willie Weems at Texarkana, Tex., and the beating of Roland Hayes, internationally famous tenor of African descent at his home town of Rome, Georgia.

It would appear that the protection of the life and persons of these individuals under the Constitution would become a matter for Federal concern.

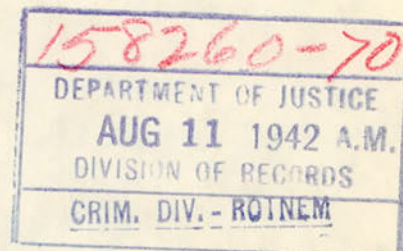
It would appear that the persons creating such incidents could be prosecuted under Federal Statutes.

May we request that your department closely scrutinize all such matters brought to its attention.

Very truly,

*John H. Owens*  
The Los Angeles Forum,  
by John H. Owens, corresponding secretary.

To The Attorney General,  
Department of Justice,  
Washington, D. C.



*JH*  
ENCLOSURE PRO

158260-70

AUG 4 1942

CRIM. DIV. - ROTNEM

158260-71

File J. B. O'B.

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED URGE YOU TO TAKE QUICK ACTION AGAINST THE MURDERERS OF WILLIE VINSON IN TEXAS ON JULY 13th, 1942, SO THAT FUTURE BRUTAL ACTS OF THIS NATURE MIGHT BE PREVENTED. THE LYNCHERS OF WILLIE VINSON ARE GUILTY OF AN ACT OF TREASON BY HELPING TRAITORS AND SABOTEURS IN THIS COUNTRY IN SPREADING THE SEED OF DISUNITY--AT A TIME WHEN ALL THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, BOTH NEGRO AND WHITE ARE FIGHTING TOGETHER VALIANTLY FOR VICTORY OVER THE FASCIST COUNTRIES. THE NEGRO PEOPLE HAVE AT ALL TIMES FOUGHT TO SAFEGUARD THE AMERICAN NATION, AND NOW AS NEVER BEFORE WE FEEL THAT THE ABOVE ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN.

CRIMINAL DIVISION

OFFICE OF THE  
SHERIFF  
AUG 3 - 1942  
Berge  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

NAME

ADDRESS

- | NAME              | ADDRESS              |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| Thomas Johnson    | 1242 N 7th           |
| Robert Sawyer     | 1246 N 7th St        |
| William Carter    | 694 W 9th St         |
| W. Lee G. Galt    | 439 Guelon           |
| Anna Mitchell     | 1252 N 7th St        |
| John M. Bay       | 913 W 9th St         |
| T. B. Wilson      | 1248 N 7th St        |
| Ada Wilson        | 1248 N 7th St        |
| Carrie Rice       | 1252 N 7th St        |
| William M. Wilson | 232 W 11th St        |
| Gene Cross        | 1312 N 7th St        |
| Resnie Jackson    | 724 A W Highland Ave |
| Calvin Jackson    | 224 E Highland Ave   |
| Mr. Henry C. Reed | 29 S 1st St          |

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ON AUG 14 1942

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BYRD KELSO, Divisional Chairman  
C. H. SMITH, Divisional Sec'y.-Treas.  
94 WEST MAIN ST. - SEATTLE, WASH.

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RT. 4, BOX 5, OLYMPIA
- FOURTH---  
EVELYN GARDNER  
1102 GARFIELD AVE., YAKIMA
- FIFTH---  
MEL BUTLER  
206 LINDELLE BLDG., SPOKANE  
C. A. DRINKARD  
525 METHOW ST., WENATCHEE
- SIXTH---  
REPRESENTATIVE E. L. PETTUS  
1109 1/2 BROADWAY, TACOMA

RESPECTFULLY REQUESTED  
FOR ACKNOWLEDGMENT  
AND CONSIDERATION

*M. E. Smith*

Secretary to the President  
Seattle, July 29, 1942.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt  
White House,  
Washington, D.C.

RECEIVED

AUG 8 1942

CRIMINAL DIVISION

158260-70  
DEPT. OF JUSTICE  
AUG 8 1942 A.M.  
RECORDS  
CRIM. DIV. - ROTNEM

Dear Mr. President:-

We are back of you 100% in your war program, and the fight against Hitler, and what he stands for. One thing constantly stands out as a bar to the war effort. That is, the poll tax in the South, and discrimination against negroes. We appreciate your forthright recent statement condemning discrimination against negroes in defense industries, or anyone because of race, creed, or color, and your statement indicating opposition to the poll tax, in eight Southern States which bars negroes and poor white people from voting.

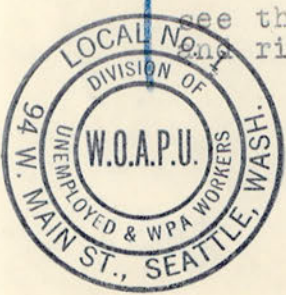
Recently, a negro in Texas, was lynched. Another one, in Virginia, executed on questionable evidence. His only crime being trying to get money due from an employer, and he being accused of killing him, when the employer drew a gun first. Again, a negro soldier was killed in Arizona, when he went in a public place, as he supposed, and found negroes were barred. That plays right into Hitler's hands, it seems to us, and sets a bad example for the rest of the world.

We wish you would reiterate your statement against the obnoxious poll tax, and against discrimination of people in defense industries, because of race, color, or creed, and to Jim Crowism in general, and do everything possible to see that such things are stopped, and that due process of law, and right to liberty, and happiness, be denied to none.

Respectfully,

*M. E. Smith*  
M. E. Smith, Recording Secy.

FILED  
BY *SLG*  
ON AUG 10 1942



JOHN EDGAR HOOVER  
DIRECTOR

CC-285 ✓



Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice  
Washington, D. C.

*Mr. Rotnem*  
*Mr. Meyers*  
PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL  
BY SPECIAL MESSENGER

158 260 - 70

Date: JUL 24 1942

To: Assistant Attorney General Wendell Berge

From: J. Edgar Hoover - Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

Subject: Unknown Subjects  
Willie Vinson, Victim  
Civil Rights and Domestic Violence

There are attached hereto photostatic copies of news items which appeared in the July 16, 1942, and July 18, 1942, issues of the "Daily Worker," official organ of the Communist Party, concerning the lynching of Willie Vinson, thirty-one year old negro worker in Texarkana, Texas, on July 13, 1942.

The above is being furnished you for your information and no investigation concerning the same is being conducted by this Bureau unless specifically requested by you.

Enclosure

FILED  
BY SRG  
On JUL 29 1942

158 260 - 70  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
JUL 28 1942 P.M.  
DIVISION OF RECORDS  
CRIM. DIV. - ROTNEM

*File.*  
*Request for info.*  
*already sent*  
*OR*

FOR DEFENSE



BUY  
UNITED STATES  
SAVINGS  
BONDS  
AND STAMPS

*R.H.B.*

# One of Vinson's Lynchers

# Known; Why No Action?

By Ben Davis, Jr.

The lynching of Willie Vinson, 31-year-old Negro worker in Texarkana, Texas, on Monday was even more brutal than the press associations said it was.

I have just received, at the writer's request, an account of the horror from Mr. Carter Wesley, outstanding Negro leader in Texas and publisher of a chain of Negro weeklies in that state. Mr. Wesley's telegram sheds additional information on the extent and character of this murderous blow against the Negro people and the war effort.

Vinson denied his guilt to the last. In fact, he was seized and lynched as he screamed his denial and as he earnestly pleaded for his life. Vinson was taken from a hospital where he had been left unguarded.

He was dragged through the streets of Texarkana, in a wounded condition from one of the mobsters' bullets. First they started to hang Vinson to a tree, but later decided to hang him to a winch on the cotton gin—all deliberations being made in cold blood and with plenty of time to spare.

The whole Negro community was intimated—that is, the lynchers

## Now Prosecute Him!

*The Daily Worker intends to make available to the Department of Justice in Washington and to the Governor of Texas the name of Vinson's assailant with a view to his immediate apprehension and prosecution.*

*The Daily Worker joins with the Negro people and all patriotic white Americans in demanding that the lynchers of Vinson be brought to justice and executed as traitors to the nation. It demands further that such lynchings as that of Odell Waller and Private Jessie Smith of Flagstaff, Arizona, be avenged by our national government through passage of anti-lynch and anti-poll tax legislation, through the enforcement of Negroes' rights to prevent such lynchings.*

tried to. Negroes were even denied the right to have church meetings and gatherings, and the mob shot up the Negro section. In fact, as Mr. Wesley's wire further states, two leading Negro citizens in the town were previously threatened.

The man who shot Vinson is well-known in the town. Yet no arrests have been made of him. Indeed the Sheriff left the state after issuing a whitewashing statement to the effect that there were no clues to the lynching.

The Daily Worker urges its readers and all others among the patriotic labor and anti-fascist movement to demand speedy action against the lynchers and to urge the Federal Government to take immediate steps to abolish the Jim-crow system which seriously endangers our fight for victory over Hitler.

This is a clipping from  
page 5 of the  
Daily Worker for

July 16, 1942  
Clipped at the Seat  
of Government.

# A Disgraceful Incident

## Why Doesn't Biddle Act?

**—An Editorial—**

IT IS a national disgrace that, at a time when our country is patriotically fighting Hitlerism, the world-famous Negro artist, Roland Hayes and his wife, should be subjected to a Hitlerite assault in the land of their birth.

Mrs. Hayes was compelled to suffer jim-crow indignities in a public store in Rome, Georgia. Instead of the police prosecuting the offenders and insuring Mrs. Hayes in her Constitutional rights as an American citizen, they slugged and arrested Mr. Hayes



ROLAND HAYES

for protesting the outrage.

When Mr. and Mrs. Hayes associated the treatment they received by the police officials with Hitlerite "racism," they were 100 per cent correct. Such injustice, particularly in the poll tax areas, are of long standing against the Negro people and they adversely affect the win-the-war morale of colored peoples all over the world. These injustices must be wiped out now, as a mortal danger to national unity in our common effort to win the war.

If such a crime can take place against such an outstanding Negro American, one who has brought great honor not only to his people but to his country, one can imagine with the deepest horror and indignation what happens to the average Negro citizen in the poll tax areas. Lynch-minded officials, imbued with the "white supremacy" poison of Gov. Talmadge, could not get away with their arrogant oppression of poor Negro and white Southerners if the Pepper anti-

This is a clipping from  
page 6 of the  
Daily Worker for

July 18, 1942

poll tax bill was protested out of the death-grasp of the House Judiciary Committee and enacted into law.

The outrage against Roland Hayes focuses attention on the three recent lynch-murders of Negroes—the Odell Waller case, the killing of Private Jessie Smith in Flagstaff, Arizona, and the barbarous slaughter of Willie Vinson in Texas. All of these dramatic expressions of the jim-crow system have aroused the country, and as never before white Americans are urging full citizenship of the Negro people in industry and elsewhere as a necessity for winning the war.

Yet Attorney General Biddle—who can persecute the staunch anti-fascist labor leader Harry Bridges and libel the Communists—seems paralyzed when it comes to vigorously upholding the rights of the Negro people. Some time ago, Biddle made a gesture toward apprehending the lynchers of Cleo Wright at Sikeston, Missouri. What has become of it? What has been done about the lynchers of Willie Vinson, and about the responsibility of the white-washing sheriff in Texarkana, Texas? Why does the Department of Justice fail to see that Negro Americans have their rights under the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments? What about prosecution of the lynch-minded officials who flagrantly violated the citizenship rights of Roland Hayes?

Biddle's failure to go after the Coughlins, the anti-Semitic gangs and the Ku Klux persecutors of the Negro people is a definite hindrance to the war effort and to the anti-jim crow policies laid down by President Roosevelt through the Fair Employment Practice Committee.

Greeting the excellent slogan of the Los Angeles NAACP conference—"Victory is vital to minorities"—Pres. Roosevelt said: "Minorities are vital to victory" and stated to the Negro gathering: "your government will accept its responsibility to you." It is in this spirit that labor and all other patriotic Americans will insist that the Department of Justice sternly deal with the Fifth Column enemies of the Negro people and of our united war effort.

# City CIO Demands Lynchers Punished

By Eugene Gordon

The Greater New York Council, CIO, Thursday night voted to wire a demand to Governor Coke R. Stevenson of Texas and Attorney General Francis Biddle that the known lynchers of Willie Vinson last Monday be punished forthwith.

The Council, representing 250 locals with an overall membership of 500,000, called upon all locals to send similar telegrams.

In the meantime the Welfare Local (Local 1) of the State, County and Municipal Workers of America, CIO, gave an indication of the activity in that organization when, at a membership meeting in the Manhattan Industrial High School Thursday night, it wired the President to issue an order demanding that "all instigators of lynchings be brought to justice" and that all agencies of the federal, state and local governments be required to protect Negro rights.

George Marshall, chairman of the National Federation for Constitutional Liberties, said yesterday in telegrams to President Roosevelt and Governor Stevenson:

"We cannot allow Hitler's lawlessness to continue to dominate the Southern poll-tax states, nor can we continue to allow the desecration within our borders of the four freedoms to which we, as a people, have pledged our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor.

"It is a gruesome paradox that the state which produced one of the first great heroes of this war, son of a Negro sharecropper, is the state in which mob violence and tyranny have been allowed to run rampant to an extent that threatens the lives and morale not only of Negroes but of all Americans."

Mr. Marshall requested the President also to take immediate steps "to guarantee the rights of Negroes to live without fear of lynching and to participate fully in the war against fascism." A separate wire, to the Department of Justice urged "an immediate investigation."

This is a clipping from  
page 4 of the  
Daily Worker for

July 18, 1942

# Why No Action On Lynchings? Biddle Asked

(Daily Worker Washington Bureau)

WASHINGTON, July 17.—A delegation from the Negro Labor Victory Committee, which recently held the huge win-the-war conference in Harlem, yesterday asked Attorney General Biddle to take immediate action to stop the wave of lynch terror against Negro Americans.

The delegation was headed by Ewart Guiniere, Secretary of the Victory Committee, and Miss Dorothy K. Funn, a leading member of the Committee and of the Teachers Union. They saw Biddle as a wave of indignation was arising from Negro citizens and progressive trade unionists, growing out of the fact that Biddle has failed to prosecute the lynchers of Cleo Wright in Stkeston, Missouri, and has apparently failed to take any action whatever to apprehend the lynchers of Willie Vinson in Texarkana, Texas.

One of the specific proposals made by the two delegates from the committee was that Biddle ask the President to issue a proclamation

(Continued on Page 4)

(Continued from Page 1)

guaranteeing the citizenship rights of Negroes.

They said that Biddle had promised to discuss the situation with President Roosevelt.

Another delegation from the Negro Labor Victory Committee conferred during the day with Wendell Lund, director of the War Production Board's Labor Production Division.

This group asked Lund to take steps to see to it that war contracts are awarded to the Spring Products Company in Long Island.

The plant will be sold at auction next week and 450 workers thrown out of their jobs unless prompt action is taken.

Four hundred of the 450 workers are Negroes.

This is a clipping from  
page 1 of the  
Daily Worker for

July 18, 1942

WB:FGF:lw

158260-70

July 23, 1942

George Earl Hoffman, Esq.,  
United States Attorney,  
Pensacola, Florida.



Dear Mr. Hoffman:

Re: Alleged lynching of A. C. Williams,  
Quincy, Florida, May 12, 1941

Reference is made to your letter of July 14, 1942, embodying your report on the above entitled matter and transmitting a report made by a special investigator for the Governor of Florida, a report of the investigation made by State Attorney Orion C. Parker, and a transcript of the inquest before the coroner of Gadsden County, Florida.

Your report has been carefully considered, together with the attached materials. As you note, the behavior of the law enforcement officials in Quincy, Florida, may be subject to criticism on the basis of ineptitude and negligence, but it does not appear that any willful or intentional refusal to protect A. C. Williams was involved. The fact that the sheriff notified the judge of the second judicial circuit after the first seizure of Williams indicates that he was acting in good faith and was seeking to make proper arrangements for the custody of his prisoner. The Department is satisfied from your able report that criminal proceedings against the police authorities of Quincy are not warranted.

Although an investigation for the purpose of assisting the local authorities might have been worth while at an earlier time, it is felt that such steps should not be taken at this time. You are advised therefore that the file in this matter is being closed.

Respectfully,

For the Attorney General,

WENDELL BERGE,  
Assistant Attorney General.



7.9.7. B

TERMS OF COURT

Pensacola—First Mondays in May and November.  
Marianna—First Monday in April.  
Tallahassee—Second Monday in February and the Tuesday after the first Monday in September.  
Gainesville—Second Mondays in June and December.  
Panama City—First Monday in October.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

NORTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

Pensacola  
July 14, 1942

RECEIVED  
JUL 18 1942  
CRIMINAL DIVISION

158260-70  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
JUL 18 1942 A.M.  
DIVISION OF RECORDS  
CRIM. DIV. - ROTNEM

The Attorney General,  
Washington, D. C.

ATTENTION: Mr. Rotnem,

Re: Department of Justice File No. WB-FGF-158260,  
Lynch murder of A. C. Williams, near Quincy,  
Florida, May 12, 1941.

Sir:

During the past month of April, 1942, the above matter was the subject of some discussion between the writer and Mr. Rotnem in his office in the Department at Washington. In response to the Department's letter of May 21, 1942 and its wire of June 27, 1942, I advised the Department under date of June 30, 1942 that I had completed my investigation for preliminary report and same would go forward in a few days, after necessary copy work could be performed.

This young negro on May 11, 1941, was arrested and detained on a technical charge of breaking and entering and placed in the county jail of Gadsden County at Quincy, Florida, from which he was taken by a band of four masked men as delineated in a report of the investigation made by special officer, Maurice H. Tripp, in his report of May 25, 1941 to Honorable Spessard L. Holland, Governor of Florida at Tallahassee, Florida. Immediately upon the happening of this event, Governor Holland assigned Special Investigator Tripp to the case. I had an opportunity to discuss this matter with Governor Holland at Tallahassee, Florida on June 26, 1942. It appears that during the investigation, Governor Holland received a letter of complaint, dated May 17, 1941 from the "Harlem People's Club", signed by Peter Landon, 1 West 125th Street, New York City. It is also noted that under date of May 14, 1941, a letter was addressed to the President at Washington, D. C., signed "Harlem People's Progressive Club", signed by Peter Landon. It is to be noted that the addresses given in the letters of complaint are identical. Although the same person signed the letters, name of the organization is varied by omitting the word "Progressive" in the first instance.

Governor Holland, immediately upon hearing of this

FOR DEFENSE



lynch murder, directed special officer Maurice H. Tripp to conduct an investigation and report to him. This was done with promptness and efficiency.

The Governor advises me that the sheriff was also before him for an interview on the subject shortly after it happened and the sheriff's report to the Governor was reduced to letter form, a copy of which is enclosed.

Testimony was taken at the coroner's inquest held May 13, 1941 at Quincy, Florida, at which time the witnesses were interrogated by Orion C. Parker, Jr., State Attorney for the second Judicial Circuit of Florida. Prior to that date, the State Attorney conducted a preliminary investigation on May 12, 1941 and the testimony taken in that investigation was also reported. The identity of the guilty persons involved were not established. Governor Holland stated to me that he did not regard the file in this case as closed and he was hopeful that a break might come somewhere in the case so that evidence would become available to establish the identity of the guilty parties. It has been the subject of attention from time to time up to the present and there has been no evidence pointing to the guilty parties.

The Civil Liberties Unit in the Department would probably get a better picture of the situation in this case by reference to (1) copy of the report made by special investigator, Maurice H. Tripp, (2) copy of the transcript of testimony at the preliminary investigation on May 12, 1941, made before Orion C. Parker, State Attorney for the Second Judicial Circuit of Florida, (3) copy of the testimony taken under the supervision of Orion C. Parker, State Attorney at Quincy, Florida at the Coroner's inquest, May 13, 1941, and (4) copy of the sheriff's letter of report to the Governor.

Governor Holland has loaned me his file in the matter and I have selected some of it to make copies, and I therefore, am privileged by his courtesy to enclose to the Department two copies of each of these four items. I am sending two copies of each, because in the typing work done in the office, it was easy enough to make an additional carbon copy. If the Department desires to use one copy in any letter to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for reference, the extra copies would be handy.

The Governor had a considerable amount of correspondence with persons whose attention was attracted by the publicity in this case and as a sample of the correspondence, I am enclosing copies of communications passing between Mrs. Henry Havens, 2845 Corinthian Avenue, Jacksonville, Florida, Chairman of the Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching, and Governor Holland, which correspondence passed during the month of October, 1941. The formal letter of report of Orion C. Parker, State Attorney, dated May 19, 1941 is also included in the Governor's file in which it is noted that Mr. Parker stated that no evidence had been secured showing any particular persons being involved in the lynching and that it was his full intention to continue this investigation for the purpose of apprehending the guilty parties. With the Governor's permission, I have prepared copies of the correspondence, together with copies of the letter of complaint from the "Harlem Peoples Club", signed by Peter Landon of New York City and duplicate copies of each are enclosed herewith.

It would be of interest to the Department in consideration of this matter to know that a few years ago, under order from the Bureau of Prisons in this district, we have not been using the Gadsden County jail for Federal prisoners, because of the loose and careless way in which the jail was operated. The town of Quincy is the county seat of Gadsden County, Florida. The town does not have a municipal jail. Persons arrested for violation of city ordinances, breaches of the peace and the various municipal offenses were locked up in the county jail under an arrangement between the County of Gadsden and the City of Quincy. They do not have an organized police force with the ordinary police station personnel. An officer making an arrest, would carry his prisoner to the jail and lock him up. In the operation of this jail, it was found that the sheriff carried out this policy, allowed members of the police force to each carry an individual key. It is my understanding that this situation has been remedied and this condition does not exist at this time, however, that was the situation when the four men in an automobile came along side of the city policeman at Quincy and took him over to the county jail where he opened the doors and the masked men took the negro from his cell.

Governor Holland advised me that when the sheriff appeared before him in person to give some explanation about the matter, he suggested that the sheriff place his explanation in

written form and that this letter of explanation, signed by the sheriff, was filed and is part of the Governor's file.

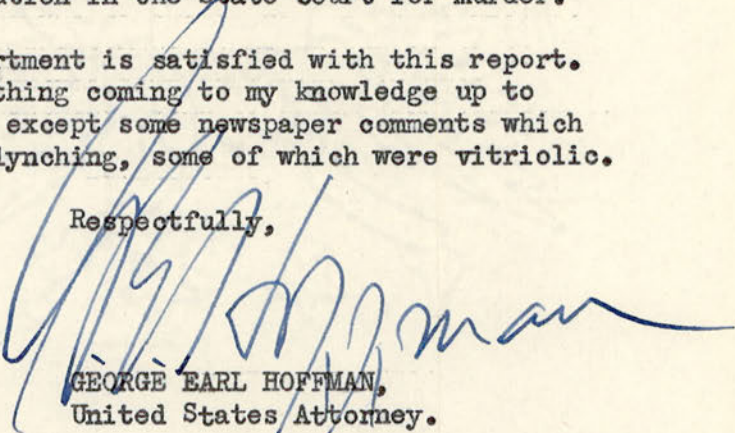
It appears that when the negro first got away from his captors and was dangerously wounded and was able to make his way home, the sheriff was notified by the family and likewise Honorable E. C. Love, Judge of the Second Judicial Circuit who lives in Quincy. Judge Love was United States Attorney for this District in the first Wilson administration and is now on the Circuit bench and highly respected in this state. Judge Love was consulted by the sheriff on the matter with reference to the best procedure for the relief of the wounded negro and it was suggested that the best procedure was to get him as soon as possible to the hospital at Tallahassee, about 23 miles distance from Quincy, where he could receive proper and full medical attention. Accordingly the sheriff made arrangements and had an ambulance company at Quincy call for the negro for the purpose of taking him to Tallahassee to a hospital. A short way out of Quincy, the ambulance was stopped and presumably the same men again took him in charge and completed their felonious work of killing the boy.

In consideration of the matter, Governor Holland also had the benefit and advantage of the advice of Circuit Judge Love. So far as can be learned, the only persons who knew the boy was at his home, and was to be moved from his home to the hospital in the ambulance, were the doctor, Judge Love, the sheriff and the ambulance driver. When the boy was placed in the ambulance for transportation to the hospital at Tallahassee, no armed guard or deputy sheriff was placed over him. The failure of the sheriff to take the necessary precaution to protect this negro from further violence merits criticism and any feeling on his part that the wrath of this small group of men had been spent, would hardly be an excuse. The situation was one that really justified and required an armed guard and protective custody in its best sense. The sheriff's failure to do this is perhaps directly responsible for the second episode in this unfortunate affair. The ease with which this negro was taken in custody by this four man mob from the county jail, was occasioned by the promiscuous distribution of keys to the jail, without the maintenance of a proper guard personnel at the jail.

It might be possible in this case for the Federal Bureau of Investigation to break through the present lack of identification and establish some evidence of the identity of the parties. If evidence could be gained that was sufficient to identify the parties committing the crime, beyond a reasonable doubt, even though the investigation was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation with the object of prosecution under the provisions of Federal law for the protection of civil liberties, the same might be done thoroughly enough to provide sufficient evidence of identification to justify and warrant a criminal prosecution in the State Court for murder.

I hope the Department is satisfied with this report. I have incorporated everything coming to my knowledge up to the date of this writing, except some newspaper comments which occurred right after the lynching, some of which were vitriolic.

Respectfully,



GEORGE EARL HOFFMAN,  
United States Attorney.

GEH:JHB  
Enclosures.

1 West 125th Street  
New York City  
May 17, 1941

Governor Spessard L. Holland  
Executive Mansion  
Tallahassee, Florida

Your Excellency -

We urge full and immediate investigation of the brutal lynch death of A. C. Williams which occurred between Quincy and Tallahassee Sunday the twelfth of May.

Undoubtedly you are familiar with details of this murder, symptomatic of the daily unprotected attacks against the Negro people. This expression of reactionary unAmerican conduct is but one more instance of the failure to guarantee the Constitutional rights of the Negro people, to assure them equal protection of the law, to protect them against the thoroughly undemocratic discrimination practiced in the State of Florida and other sections of the country.

The culpability of law enforcement officials in the death of Williams is made clear in press dispatches reproduced in New York papers. The criminal failure of jail attendant Officer Dan Davis to protect the prisoner when an 'unidentifiable' mob entered and seized Williams; the equally criminal failure of Sheriff M. P. Lutten to provide guard for the ambulance carrying the wounded Williams to a Tallahassee hospital demand their immediate suspension from duty and their prosecution in the courts of law as accomplices in this lynch murder. Their disclaimers of ability to identify members of the mob added to the apparent ease with which members of the mob ascertained Williams' removal by ambulance and its route to the hospital raise the grave suspicion of collusion.

We further urge vigorous and prompt investigation to ascertain members of the murder mob, their apprehension and arrest and immediate trial for this brutal killing. Surely you will not permit State law enforcement officials to terminate investigation with the statement that Williams met his death at the hand of 'person or persons unknown'. This whitewash formula is an insult to the ability of your police officials, and is accepted everywhere as evidence of an unwillingness and not inability to apprehend the murderers and bring them to justice.

Only by swift detection and punishment of the culprits and vigorous measures to guard against repetition of this lynch death can you give the rest of America assurance that citizens of Florida enjoy the constitutional rights of all Americans. Terror and discrimination against the Negro people in Florida are proof that democracy has failed in your state. We urge immediate executive action to assure democracy in Florida...today.

Sincerely yours,

HARLEM PEOPLES CLUB

By: /s/ Peter Landon

October 9, 1941

Mrs. Henry Havens  
2845 Corinthian Avenue  
Jacksonville, Florida

Dear Mrs. Havens:

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of October 2 with reference to the lynching that occurred in Quincy toward the end of the session of the Legislature. It is true that in my former answer to you I stated that as soon as the investigation was complete, I would let you know the outcome. I am sorry to say that though we have had three separate investigations made of the affair, we have not yet been able to get to the bottom of the matter. For your own personal information, I beg to advise that we have had undercover investigators in the Quincy community on several occasions for considerable periods of time, but they have been unable to find out anything of importance or anything linking any known persons with the crime.

The reports following each of the three investigations and the private reports made to me by investigators and by several of the good citizens of Quincy and of Gadsden County, whose help I have asked in the matter, have all indicated that there was no active or passive participation in the matter on the part of the Sheriff, but that the root of the trouble seems to have been in the careless custom of many years under which no jailer resided at the jail and under which many keys to the jail were held by the several county and city officials who placed prisoners there from time to time. I have not been willing to come to this conclusion and have not done so, as I still hope that the true facts may break, and we shall continue our investigations diligently.

In the meantime, I have felt, however, that because of the dearth of results, it would be untimely to make any public statement on the matter. The investigations will continue, and we shall hope that eventually we can discover and announce the actual facts lying behind the terrible occurrence.

I am sorry that I cannot be with you at your meeting here in Tallahassee on the 10th of November, but I shall be making an Armistice Day speech on the Lower East Coast on the 11th and will be on the road the 10th or possibly earlier. Another engagement of long standing will keep me in the Miami Area through the 14th. Please extend my greetings to the members of your association and my congratulations on the work which they are doing.

I beg to remain

Yours faithfully,

SLH:elm

ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN WOMEN FOR THE  
PREVENTION OF LYNCHING

Florida Council  
Mrs. Henry Havens, Chairman  
2845 Corinthian Ave.

Jacksonville, Fla.  
October 2, 1941

Governor Spessard Holland,  
Tallahassee, Florida.

My dear Governor Holland:

Some months ago, I wrote you in regards to the lynching that occurred in Quincy. In your answer to me you said that as soon as the investigation was complete you would let me know the out come. I rather guess that in your busy life, you have over looked it.

This association will have two forums in the state in November. On the 10th in Tallahassee and on the 13th in Orlando. It will be my duty to give a complete report on this case. Hence, I am writing you again, to ask you if you will be kind enough to send me a report. Also to ask you to attend this forum in Tallahassee and say a few words. Mrs. D. E. Williams of Tallahassee is chairman of this meeting. Mrs. Williams represents the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs on the Florida Board of this Association. The main speaker will be Mrs. Jessie Daniel Ames of Atlanta, the Field Director of the Commission on Interracial Cooperation. Mrs. Williams will let you know the time and place of meeting and if you find that you can be with us, she will arrange the program to suit your convenience.

This is the first time the association has ever met in the State capitol and we are looking for a great many women from all over that part of the State.

Thanking you for your kindness and a hope that you will be with us, I am

Cordially yours,

/s/ Jane Havens

Mrs. Henry Havens, chairman

(FLORIDA SEAL)

OFFICE OF STATE ATTORNEY  
SECOND JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

Tallahassee, Florida  
May 19, 1941

His Excellency  
Honorable Spessard L. Holland  
Governor of Florida  
Tallahassee, Florida

Dear Sir:

I attach hereto copies of all evidence taken to this date in the investigation of the lynching of one A. C. Williams, who was taken from the custody of the Sheriff of Gadsden County, Florida on the night of May 11, 1941.

No evidence has been secured thus far showing any particular person to be involved in this lynching. It is my full intention to continue this investigation with an idea of apprehending the guilty ~~parties~~ parties. If you have any suggestions along the line of investigation to make, I will be more than pleased to hear from you.

Yours very truly,

/s/ Orion C. Parker, Jr.

ORION C. PARKER  
State Attorney, 2nd Judicial Circuit

OC:Pc

Enclosures.

C  
O  
P  
Y

M. P. LUTEN  
Sheriff Gadsden County  
Quincy, Florida  
May 14, 1941

Governor Spessard L. Holland  
Tallahassee, Fla.

My Dear Governor:

On Saturday night May 10th, a negro made an attack on a 12 year old white girl in Quincy. This was done without being reported to my office. This negro was caught by the Police Department and placed in the County Jail and the matter was not called to my attention until about 9 o'clock Sunday morning. When this matter was called to my attention it was reported to me that he was charged with breaking and entering and was being held on this charge.

On Sunday night at about 12 o'clock four masked men forced Dan Davis a night policeman to turn over his keys and the negro was taken from the jail and an attempt made to lynch him on the outskirts of the City limits, the mob locking Davis in the Jail when they left with the negro. It was generally thought that the negro had been lynched and his body destroyed throughout the day Monday. I went to this negro's mother on Monday afternoon and asked if she knew anything of his whereabouts and she said that she did not. At about 10:30 o'clock on Monday night this negro's Mother did come to my house and advise me that the negro had made his way to her house. I at once went to Judge E. C. Love for advice as to what to do in the matter. Judge Love advised me to have the negro examined by a Doctor, and if found to be in condition to have the negro undertake here transfer him to Tallahassee for hospital treatment. This I did do or tried to do believing that no one would suspect that anything unusual was happening.

When the ambulance was about three miles out of town it was held up by a masked mob and the negro removed and lynched. You can readily see that the facts in this case was kept from me until it was too late for me to realize the seriousness of the case. I regret beyond words of expression what has happened and only wish that I had known the seriousness of the charge from the start. I know that you are busy especially during the session of the Legislature, however, if you would care to discuss this case further I will be glad to come over and talk to you at any time.

Yours very truly,  
/s/ M. P. Luten  
Sheriff

WB:FGF:lw

158260-70

July 22, 1942

Mr. Ben Davis, Jr.,  
Editorial Board,  
Daily Worker,  
35 East 12th Street,  
New York, New York.

Dear Sir:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of July 19, 1942, in which you state that you are informed that one of the assailants of the alleged lynching of Willie Vinson in Texarkana, Texas, on July 13, 1942, was one L. Roberts, a white truck driver of that city.

Receipt of this information is appreciated and you are advised that the Attorney General has addressed a letter to the Governor of Texas regarding this alleged crime. Upon receipt of further information, the Department will consider whether the facts amount to a violation of any federal criminal statute.

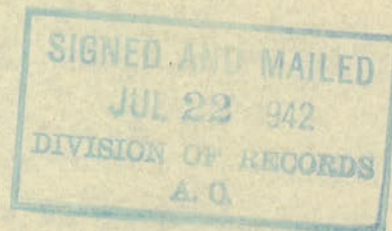
Respectfully,

For the Attorney General,



WENDELL BERGE,  
Assistant Attorney General.

*F. B. I.*



# DAILY WORKER

thirty-five east 12th st., N. Y. Algonquin 4-7954

July 19, 1942

RECEIVED  
JUL 21 1942  
CRIMINAL DIVISION

OFFICE OF THE  
RECEIVED  
JUL 20 1942  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

Attorney General Francis Biddle  
Department of Justice  
Washington, D. C.

Honorable Sir:

We have received information to the effect that one of the assailants of Willie Vinson, the Negro worker who was lynched in Texarkana, Texas on Monday July 13, was one L. Roberts, a white truck driver of that city.

The information reached this office in a wired story on the lynching from Mr. Carter Wesley, publisher of the Houston Informer, a Negro weekly in Houston, Texas. According to Mr. Wesley's telegram Vinson protested his innocence to the last.

We furnish this information to your Department in the hope that it may be of use in the speedy apprehension and vigorous prosecution of the lynchers and in furtherance of the constitutional rights of the Negro people which are so essential to our national war effort and to victory over Hitler.

*Handwritten initials*

158260-78  
DEPT. OF JUSTICE  
JUL 21 1942 A.M.  
DIVISION OF INVESTIGATION  
CRIM. DIV. - ROTNEM

Respectfully yours,

*Ben Davis Jr.*

Ben Davis, Jr.  
Editorial Board  
Daily Worker

ED/f  
ANG/ny  
f

pro

"THE TRUTH IN THE NEWS"

CRIMINAL DIVISION  
RECEIVED  
JUL 1 10 42 AM '42  
**TELEGRAM  
SPECIAL**

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
DIVISION OF RECORDS  
TELEGRAPH OFFICE

1942 JUN 30 PM 8:17

WL 142 49 DL

OPENSACOLA FLO JUNE 30 1942 431P

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

WASHDC

RETEL JUNE 22ND DEPT. FILE ONE FIVE EIGHT TWO SIX NAUGHT A  
C WILLIAMS VICTIM SEC 52 TITLE 18 USCA ADVISE ~~WTF~~

HAVE NOW COMPLETED MY INVESTIGATION FOR PRELIMINARY REPORT STOP  
WILL REQUIRE FEW DAYS TO COMPILE DATA AND NECESSARY COPY WORK.  
WILL FORWARD REPORT BY FIRST OF NEXT WEEK

GEORGE EARL HOFFMAN UNITED STATES ATTORNEY.

22 52 18 USCA A C .

816P.

**FILED**  
BY **SRG**  
On **JUL 3 1942**

*filed 7.1.42*  
**158260-70**  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
JUL 1 1942 P.M.  
DIVISION OF RECORDS  
CRIM. DIV. - ROTNEB

F.M.M

RULE 75 - Record on Appeal to a Circuit Court of Appeals

Subdivision (b) - Transcript

Northern District of California  
Southern Division

January 20, 1942

In re Joshua Hendy Iron Works - Hendy Realization Company et al.  
v. Harold M. F. Behneman et al. - Gladys M. Shores v.  
Hendy Realization Company et al. - Nos. 25937-S, 21792-S  
2 F. R. D. 244

Appellants' designation of contents of record on appeal including only certain portions of the transcript, appellees properly requested additional portions of the record as well as two copies of the reporter's transcript.

(See opinion in this case under Rule 75 (a).)

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
DIVISION OF RECORDS  
TELEGRAPH OFFICE

WB:FGF:mld

158260-70

✓

1942 JUN 22 PM 1:49

RECORDED  
EMD

JUNE 22, 1942

GEORGE EARL HOFFMAN, ESQUIRE,  
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY,  
PENSACOLA, FLORIDA

RE A. C. WILLIAMS LYNCHING PLEASE SEND IMMEDIATE REPORT  
ON YOUR FINDINGS.

WENDELL BERGE  
ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL

FILE COPY

FILED  
BY **SRG**  
On **JUN 25 1942**

WB:PGF:mld

158260-70

JUNE 22, 1942

GEORGE EARL HOFFMAN, ESQUIRE,  
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY,  
PENSACOLA, FLORIDA

RE A. C. WILLIAMS LYNCHING PLEASE SEND IMMEDIATE REPORT  
ON YOUR FINDINGS.

WENDELL BERGE  
ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL

ADDRESS REPLY TO  
"THE ATTORNEY GENERAL"  
AND REFER TO  
INITIALS AND NUMBER

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

WASHINGTON, D. C.

WB:VWR:AEM

158260-70 *ym*

May 21, 1942

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIVISION OF RECORDS

Kindly remove the May 14, 1941 communication to the President from the Harlem Peoples Progressive Club, the June 2, 1941 communication from Mr. Berge to United States Attorney Hoffman, and a communication from United States Attorney Hoffman dated February 12, 1942, which is, no doubt, in Section 52 of the file, from File No. 158260. Open a new file and advise my secretary, Miss Mythen, as to the new number.

VICTOR W. ROTNEM  
Chief,  
Civil Rights Section.



FOR DEFENSE



*Done 5/23/42*

*Allen  
new # is 158260-70*

*file  
ym*

WB:FGF:ld

~~158260~~

February 12, 1942

*E.M.A.*

158260-70

George Earl Hoffman, Esquire  
United States Attorney  
Pensacola, Florida

Dear Mr. Hoffman:

Reference is made to your letter of October 1, 1941, concerning an alleged lynching of A. C. Williams near Quincy, Florida, in the summer of 1941.

You advised that you would make an inquiry while attending the October 6 Term of Court at Marianna, Florida.

Please advise the Department of such facts as you were able to obtain.

Respectfully,

For the Attorney General

WENDELL BERGE  
Assistant Attorney General

FILED  
BY KMB  
On FEB 17 1942

SIGNED AND MAILED  
FEB 12 1942  
DIVISION OF RECORDS

*787  
R C.A.P.*

TERMS OF COURT

Pensacola—First Mondays in May and November.

Marianna—First Monday in April.

Tallahassee—Second Monday in February and the Tuesday after the first Monday in September.

Gainesville—Second Mondays in June and December.

Panama City—First Monday in October.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

NORTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

Pensacola,  
October 1, 1941.

RECEIVED  
OCT 6 - 1941  
ORIGINAL DIVISION

The Attorney General,  
Washington, D. C.

Re: Department of Justice File  
No. WB-158260.

Sir:

The Department's letter of September 29, 1941, in regard to the alleged lynching near Quincy, Florida, has not gone without attention. However, I am not in a situation to make a report to the Department on the matter. Pressure of national defense litigation has kept us so highly pressed for time I do not see any possibility of making a report on the matter within the next two or three weeks. We have a term of Court at Marianna, Florida, on October 6, 1941, and while I am in that area I will go over to the Quincy district in an effort to give the Department a complete report.

Respectfully,

GEORGE EARL HOFFMAN,  
United States Attorney.

FILED  
JW.  
On OCT 8 1941

GEH:HLC

*File MR*  
158260-70  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
OCT 6 1941 P.M.  
DIVISION OF RECORDS  
GRIM. DIV. - ROTNEM  
EJR  
RECORDED

WB:FGP:lld

September 29, 1941

~~158260~~

JEM

158260-70

George Earl Hoffman, Esquire  
United States Attorney  
Pensacola, Florida

Dear Mr. Hoffman:

Reference is made to the Department's letter of June 2, 1941, concerning the alleged lynching of A. C. Williams near Quincy, Florida. A check in the Department's files does not reflect what disposition was made of this matter and it is requested that you advise the Department promptly concerning such facts as you were able to obtain. Your comments relative to prosecution would also be appreciated.

Respectfully,

For the Attorney General

WENDELL BERGE  
Assistant Attorney General

7.8.7.

B

R

FILED  
BY JW.  
OCT 1 1941

SIGNED AND MAILED  
SEP 29 1941  
DIVISION OF RECORDS

WB:FGF:mb

158260

June 2, 1941.

George Earl Hoffman, Esquire,  
United States Attorney,  
Pensacola, Florida.

FILED  
BY NMMac  
On JUN 2 1941

Dear Mr. Hoffman:

The Department is in receipt of a letter dated May 14, 1941, from the Harlem Peoples Progressive Club, New York City, concerning the alleged lynching of A. C. Williams near Quincy, Florida. A copy of this letter is enclosed herewith and is self-explanatory.

The facts alleged indicate that there is a very strong possibility that the victim, Williams, was denied adequate protection by the police officials involved. If this can be substantiated and the alleged denial was wilful, it is felt that a violation of Section 52, Title 18, United States Code, can be made out against those officers. It is, therefore, requested that you make an inquiry into this matter and advise the Department promptly of such facts as you are able to obtain.

Respectfully,

For the Attorney General,

WENDELL HERGE,  
Assistant Attorney General.

enclosure 267893

797  
HMS

SIGNED AND MAILED  
JUN 2 1941  
DIVISION OF RECORDS

*Quincy*

RESPECTFULLY REQUESTING  
FOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT  
AND CORRECTION  
*M. M. Mac*  
Secretary to the President

1 West 125th Street  
New York City  
May 14, 1941

Hon. Franklin Delano Roosevelt  
Washington, D.C.

RECEIVED  
MAY 23 1941  
ORIGINAL DIVISION

Dear Sir -

Lynch terror has again found a victim among the Negro people, this time in northern Florida. Associated Press dispatches from Quincy, Florida May 13th report the brutal murder of A. C. Williams, imprisoned by law enforcement officials in the county jail the previous day. According to the report prisoner Williams was seized by a group of allegedly 'unidentifiable' men from his cell, after the group had compelled Officer Dan Davis to open the cell doors. Several hours Williams was discovered some miles away, severely wounded by pistol bullets and blows around the head. Sheriff Luten then ordered the prisoner transferred by ambulance to a hospital in Tallahassee, but provided no guard for the journey which was 'interrupted' by another group of allegedly 'unidentifiable' men, the Negro removed with no effort of driver and accompanying physician to protect the life of the patient. The next morning Williams' body was found by the side of river, riddled by bullets, dead. He lay there, proof that democracy has failed in Florida, that the Negro people subject to widespread discrimination in direct contradiction of Constitutional guarantees are among the first victims of a national and state and local program inducing war hysteria, encouraging Jim Crow and blessing disgraceful, un-American lynch tactics.

The criminal failure of local law officers to protect Williams, who had been taken into custody without the formality of charges, reveals so clearly that the Negro people and other Americans can not expect Florida officials to uphold the right of trial, the right to protection from lynch mobs during imprisonment, in fact any of the rights which all Americans possess under the Constitution which every public official is sworn to uphold.

RECORDED  
MAY 23 1941

Today lynch terror occurs throughout the country. A young Negro soldier was lynched within a few miles of an Army encampment in Georgia. Why? Because cynical and bold efforts are now being made to drive America deeper into war. An administration in Washington sets the precedent, inspires the terror. A program which conscripts the Negro and white youth into an Army exceeding all possible requirements for national defense, a program which converts our America into an arsenal for the imperialist slaughter abroad, a program which officially condones Jim Crow in the armed forces and the national defense industries...such a program is as guilty as the Florida officials directly responsible for the lynch death of Williams.

We demand the arrest and prosecution of the mob which lynched Williams. We refuse to accept the threadbare excuse of law officials that members of the mob wore masks and therefore can not be identified. Instance after instance in the past show that this excuse is always offered to explain the failure to apprehend the culprits. Law enforcement officials boast of their prowess in detecting murderers; a child would ridicule the suggestion that detection of a murderous mob is more difficult.

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We further demand that Sheriff Luten, Officer Davis and all other public officials implicated in this lynch death and sworn by oath to protect Williams be charged in court with their criminal irresponsibility, be deprived of public office, and be punished to the full extent of the law as accessories to the murder.

We demand that steps be taken to assure the Negro people, not only in Florida but throughout the United States, the rights guaranteed to them and to all Americans under the law of our land. We demand the passage of the Anti-Lynching bill, shamefully pigeonholed by Congress and ignored by you and your spokesmen. We further demand passage of the Geyer Anti-Poll Tax Bill which may insure representation of the Southern people, negro and white, in the halls of the national legislative chamber.

We further demand that you as President of the United States, elected to that high office by the people of this country, members of your official family, and all representatives of the people now in the Federal Government, end these efforts to plunge America into war and that you undividedly honor your oaths of office and responsibility to guarantee democracy...here in America...today.

Sincerely yours,

HARLEM PEOPLES PROGRESSIVE CLUB

By

Peter Landon