

CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION

Notice to Close File

File No. 144-41-3576

05/12/2010
Date _____

To: Chief, Criminal Section

Re: Unknown Subject(s)
Vicksburg, Mississippi;
Jasper Greenwood (Deceased) - Victim
CIVIL RIGHTS

It is recommended that the above case be closed for the following reasons:

Case Synopsis

On June 29, 1964, the badly decomposed body of Jasper Greenwood, the African-American victim, was found next to his car on a "lover's lane," about 100 yards off of Main Street in Vicksburg, Mississippi. One of the victim's family members reported him missing to the Vicksburg Police Department (VPD) on June 21, 1964. According to a June 30, 1964 article in the *Vicksburg Evening Post*, no weapon was found near the victim's body. Additionally, a purse containing about \$61 was found in the victim's car, likely ruling out the possibility that he was killed during a robbery. As a result of the body's condition, a coroner's inquest could not determine the cause of death.

Cristina Gamondi
Attorney

To: Records Section
Office of Legal Administration

The above numbered file has been closed as of this date.

Date

Chief, Criminal Section

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) first opened the matter on June 30, 1964, to investigate allegations that the victim, who managed the Jasper Lounge in Vicksburg, had last been seen leaving the lounge with two white men. Shortly after the discovery of the victim's body, the VPD investigation determined that he had last been seen alive in the early morning hours of June 21, 1964, in the company of Flossie Lee Minor, a married African-American woman, whose XXX had reportedly previously threatened the victim for dating XXX. Ms. Minor and XXX initially disappeared but, on July 3, 1964, the VPD arrested Ms. Minor. Ms. Minor reportedly admitted that she had gone with the victim to a "lover's lane" for a tryst. According to Ms. Minor, the victim suddenly died of an apparent heart attack and she fled the scene. She denied that there had been any foul play involved in the victim's death.

In 1964, the FBI also investigated allegations by XXX, a Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), member that XXX, the funeral home XXXX who prepared the victim's body for burial, told XXX that XXX had noticed a hole at the base of the victim's throat that could have been a stab or bullet wound. The FBI interviewed XXX who denied that XXX thought the hole had been caused by anything other than "nature" and who stated that XXX specifically told XXX as much when XXX asked about it.

The victim was reportedly not involved in voter registration drives or otherwise active in the civil rights movement. However, the victim XXX, reported that the victim's XXXX, at one time babysat for Medgar Evers's family.

Federal Investigations:

As mentioned above, the FBI first opened the matter on June 30, 1964, after receiving a complaint from XXX of the Jackson, Mississippi, COFO. XXX told the FBI that the victim had been found dead in a field on Main Street by two children. According to XXX, the victim had last been seen alive leaving Jasper Lounge with two white men on June 21, 1964. XXX noted that the victim was not active in the civil rights movement. Additionally, on June 30, 1964, XXX of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) also contacted the FBI and relayed the same allegations made by XXX.

In the fall of 2008, the FBI opened an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the victim's death, pursuant to the Department of Justice's "Cold Case" initiative and the "Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act of 2007," which charges the Department of Justice to investigate "violations of criminal civil rights statutes . . . result[ing] in death" that "occurred not later than December 31, 1969." The FBI retrieved from the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) the 1964 FBI file relating to the incident. The FBI also contacted the victim's XXX, XXXXXXX, XXXXX, and one of his XXXX, XXX. Additionally, the FBI contacted several Mississippi agency officials; conducted searches of the records of the SPLC, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH), the University of Southern Mississippi library, law enforcement databases, and the internet for relevant references and media articles; sent letters to the SPLC and the NAACP; and solicited information about the case via a press release that was published in local newspapers and broadcast on local television and radio stations.

1. 1964 Investigation:

On June 30, 1964, VPD Chief Murray Sills informed the FBI that the victim had been reported missing to the VPD on June 21. The victim's body was found at about 3:10 p.m. on June 29 by two boys. The victim was found lying next to his car; the car was parked on a "lover's lane" about 100 yards east of Main Street in Vicksburg. An African-American man named Charlie Phelps notified the VPD.¹ The victim's body was too severely decomposed to allow for an autopsy, and the Coroner could not ascertain the victim's cause of death.

According to Chief Sills, VPD Detective Investigator XXXX determined that the victim had last been seen with a married African-American woman sometime between 1:00 and 2:00 a.m. on June 21, 1964. Chief Sills did not identify the woman to the FBI, but presumably knew who she was since Sills stated that XXX had been developed as a logical suspect because the XXX had reportedly previously threatened the victim for dating XXX. Chief Sills stated that both the woman and XXX had disappeared.

On July 4, 1964, Chief Sills contacted the FBI and stated that the VPD had arrested Flossie Lee Minor on July 3. According to Chief Sills, Ms. Minor admitted that she had gone with the victim to "lover's lane" for a tryst. At some point, the victim had fallen to the ground, unconscious. When Ms. Minor was not able to awaken the victim, she fled the area. Ms. Minor said that the victim had apparently died of a heart attack and denied that there had been any foul play.

Additional allegations

In addition to the allegations made by XXX and XXX, the FBI was contacted on July 31, 1964, by **Dick Corigan**, a reporter for the *Washington Post*. Mr. Corigan relayed information he had received from XXX. Specifically, Mr. Corigan said that he had learned from XXX that the victim's body reportedly had what appeared to be a bullet wound in his chest.

The FBI interviewed XXX, who stated that XXX was in Vicksburg at the end of June 1964, and heard about the victim's death. XXX then visited the victim's XXX. XXXX told XXX that XXX had been missing for about a week and had reportedly died of a heart attack. XXX said that the case was being investigated and that XXX did not know exactly how XXX had died. She told that she had not been allowed to see XXX body because it was too decomposed. XXX had not requested an autopsy and was undecided as to its necessity. When XXX about XXX about XXX's civil rights activities, she provided no information other than to say that he was a registered voter.

¹ One of the victim XXX, reported Charlie Phelps is deceased. XXX suggested that the FBI attempt to contact XXX for Mr. Phelps before he died as he may have spoken to XXX about the condition of the victim's body when it was discovered.

While XXX was visiting XXX, XXXX, the XXX of the funeral home that prepared the victim's body for burial, arrived at the XXX residence. According to XXX, XXXX said that while examining the victim's body he had noticed a hole at the base of the victim's throat that could have been a stab or bullet wound. When XXX asked XXX whether he had reported the information to the police, XXX said that he thought investigators already had the information and wanted to "keep it quiet;" it was XXX's understanding that the police report indicated that the victim died of a heart attack.

XXX told the FBI that he investigated the matter further and determined that the victim was not a member of COFO or any related organization and had not been involved in any voter registration drives or other civil rights work. **Charles Evers**, who was then the NAACP's Mississippi Field Director, similarly informed the FBI that the victim was not active in voter registration drives or the civil rights movement.

The FBI interviewed XXXX, who stated that the victim's body had been brought to XXX from the Dillon Funeral Home. According to XXX, a coroner's inquest had been conducted at the site where the victim's body was found. XXX stated that XXX did not conduct an inquest or examine the victim's body. XXX that the body was in terrible condition and had significantly decomposed. XXX did see a hole at the base of the victim's throat but the hole was full of small worms and XXX did not think it had been caused by stabbing or a bullet. XXX recalled being questioned by a man he thought was a member of the Greenwood family (later identified as XXXX) when he went to speak with XXX about funeral arrangements. According to XXX, when XXX asked him whether he thought the hole in the victim's throat had been caused by a bullet, he told XXX that he had no reason to believe that the hole had been caused by anything other than "nature and the worms."

2. 2009 Review

The FBI contacted the victim's XXXX, XXXX; his XXX, XXXX; and one of his XXXX, XXXX.² XXX said that when the victim went missing, XXX mother (now deceased) took XXX and XXXX to look for the victim. They searched as far as the Jackson Road, which the victim frequently used, but they did not find him. XXX told the FBI that a woman named XXX, may have been the person who disappeared immediately after his death.³

XXX was interviewed by a Mississippi Attorney General's Office (MAGO) investigator in

² In 2003, both XXX and another of the victim's XXXXX, XXXX, contacted the SPLC to obtain information about their XXXXXX's death.

³ XXX did not elaborate as to the source of her belief that XXX (rather than Flossie Minor) might have been the woman last seen with the victim. However, XXX may not have been aware of Ms. Minor's existence. First, Ms. Minor was not identified in the newspaper accounts. Second, if XXX viewed the FBI reports obtained by the SPLC via their FOIA/PA request, she would not have seen Ms. Minor's name because it was redacted.

March 2009.⁴ XXX stated that, within hours of the victim's body being found, she was interviewed by a Warren County Sheriff's Department (WCSD) deputy, at her place of employment, the Rockett Cab Company. The deputy told XXX that she had been seen with the victim at the Walnut Street Lounge. XXX explained to the deputy that XXX had previously been employed as a cook at the Walnut Street Lounge when it was called the Dixie Inn. XXX told the deputy that she did not have a personal relationship with the victim. XXX further explained that, although the victim managed the Walnut Street Lounge at the time of his death, another man managed it when it was called the Dixie Inn and she worked there.

XXX that a now deceased coworker, Moses Dixon, told her that he had seen the victim and Flossie Minor in the victim's car around 6:00 p.m. on the evening of Saturday, June 27, 1964.⁵ Mr. Dixon reportedly told XXX that the victim and Ms. Minor had a romantic tryst at Eagle Lake during which the victim died; Ms. Minor then fled the scene.⁶

XXX told the MAGO investigator that she worked the midnight shift at the cab company the entire weekend that the victim went missing and she did not know why it was rumored that she had been with him at any time.

The FBI conducted an online search for **Flossie Minor**, who reportedly witnessed the victim's death, and located a record for a Flossie E. Minor who died on April 2, 2005 in Liberty, Missouri. The FBI then contacted XXX, one of Ms. Minor's XXX. XXX stated that he had no knowledge that XXX had ever lived in Vicksburg.

The FBI obtained a copy of the victim's death record from James E. Jefferson, Jr., Funeral Director for the W.H. Jefferson Funeral Home.⁷ The record stated that the victim died on June 21, 1964. The victim's cause of death was listed as "undetermined" with "unknown" contributory causes.

The FBI contacted the **MAGO** and the **Mississippi Department of Public Safety**, but neither of those agencies had any records relevant to the victim's death.

Legal Analysis

This matter does not constitute a prosecutable violation of the federal criminal civil rights

⁴ The MAGO investigation was conducted in response to a request for assistance by the FBI.

⁵ XXX is the only person who stated that the victim had been seen alive on June 27, 1964, two days before his badly decomposed body was found. Although June 21 was a Sunday, rather than a Saturday, it may be that she confused the two dates.

⁶ XXX did not comment on Mr. Dixon's source of the information.

⁷ Presumably named after the man who was interviewed by the FBI in 1964.

statutes. Neither the FBI's 1964 nor its 2009 investigation uncovered sufficient evidence to contradict the reported results of the contemporaneous VPD investigation, i.e., that the victim died of a heart attack while in the company of an African-American woman. Accordingly, there is insufficient evidence that a racially-motivated homicide occurred and, therefore, this matter lacks prosecutive merit and should be closed. For the same reason, the matter will not be forwarded to the state for prosecutive review. AUSA Glenda Haynes, Southern District of Mississippi, concurs in this recommendation.