

# FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1

THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT **MEMPHIS**

REPORT MADE AT <b>MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE</b>	DATE WHEN MADE <b>10/12/55</b>	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE <b>10/8,10,12/55</b>	REPORT MADE BY <b>JOSEPH A. CANALE</b> <span style="float: right;">ME</span>
TITLE <b>CHANGED</b> <b>UNKNOWN SUBJECTS;</b> <b>LEROY COLLINS, Aka "Too-Tight", Levy Collins; HENRY LEE LOGAN, Aka Henry Lee Loggin, Henry E. Loggins - VICTIMS</b>			CHARACTER OF CASE <b>CIVIL RIGHTS</b>
<p>SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:</p> <p>U. S. Dept. of Justice requested investigation re allegation that Victims COLLINS and LOGAN were confined Charleston, Miss. Jail to prevent their testifying during EMETT L. TILL murder case. Special Prosecutor ROBERT B. SMITH, III interviewed. He states the prosecution received rumor during the trial re incarceration of COLLINS and LOGAN and that their investigation disclosed these rumors to be false. Portions of copyrighted interview of Victim COLLINS, as appeared in <u>Tri-State Defender</u> (Memphis), 10/8/55, set out as relating to allegations of confinement and whereabouts of Victims during the trial.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">- C -</p> <p>DETAILS: The title of this case is being marked changed to denote the inclusion of the name LEVY COLLINS for Victim LEROY COLLINS. This additional name was secured from the copyrighted newspaper article described in this report.</p> <p>The U. S. Department of Justice advised the Bureau by memorandum of September 30, 1955 of its desire for an investigation based upon allegations received from J. FRANCIS POHLHAUS, Counsel, Washington, D. C. Bureau of the National Association For the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). These allegations, based</p>			
APPROVED AND FORWARDED:		SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE	DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES <b>M. J. T.</b>
COPIES OF THIS REPORT ② - Bureau 1 - USA, Oxford 2 - Chicago (Info.) 2 - Memphis (44-424)		<div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 10px; display: inline-block;"> <b>144-46-116</b>  <b>CRIM. - CIVIL RIGHTS SEC.</b> </div>	

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on newspaper clippings, indicate the Victims, LEROY COLLINS and HENRY LEE LOGAN, were "abducted, apparently from their homes in Sumner, Mississippi, and placed in jail elsewhere to prevent them from testifying in State Court in which the trial involving the death of EMMETT LOUIS TILL was held." The Department advised further that it had received an additional communication from Attorney POHLHAUS, attaching a copy of a news item from a South Carolina newspaper indicating that these Victims were held in a jail at Charleston, Mississippi, and that one of them, LEROY COLLINS, was taken to jail by one LESLIE MILAM, brother of one of the defendants in the TILL case.

On October 10, 1955, Special Agents V. WALSER PROSPERE and JOSEPH A. CANALE contacted Attorney ROBERT B. SMITH, III at Ripley, Mississippi. Attorney SMITH was appointed by Mississippi Governor HUGH WHITE to serve as Special Prosecutor representing the State of Mississippi in assisting State District Attorney GERALD L. CHATHAM in the EMMETT L. TILL murder trial held recently in Sumner, Mississippi.

SMITH advised that before and during this trial, innumerable rumors reached the prosecution concerning various witnesses and other matters pertinent to the trial and that the prosecution attempted to run down all of these rumors. He stated that shortly before the trial began, the prosecution received an allegation that Victims COLLINS and LOGAN were in possession of information of value to the prosecution in the TILL case. SMITH stated that he immediately contacted Sheriff GEORGE SMITH, Leflore County, Greenwood, Mississippi, and that either SMITH or one of his Deputies contacted the father of Victim COLLINS, who according to SMITH told the officer that COLLINS was "away" and was going to stay away and that even if he, the father, knew of his whereabouts, he would not disclose it.

The officers' investigation to locate COLLINS and LOGAN was fruitless.

SMITH stated that on Tuesday morning, September 20, 1955, CLARK PORTEOUS, newspaper reporter for the Memphis Press-Scimitar, called him and stated he had received additional information through contacts at Mound Bayou, Mississippi, indicating that COLLINS and LOGAN might be pertinent witnesses for the prosecution.

Based on this information, contact was had with Mississippi Governor WHITE; Mississippi Attorney General J. P. COLEMAN; Colonel T. B. BIRDSONG, Commissioner of Public Safety,



Jackson, Mississippi; STANNY SANDERS, District Attorney at Indianola, Mississippi, and other pertinent officials. As a result, Governor WHITE had Investigators GWIN COLE and HARVEY SWINDOLL of the Mississippi Highway Patrol sent to Sumner, Mississippi to assist the prosecuting attorneys in locating pertinent witnesses.

SMITH pointed out that on Tuesday afternoon, September 20, 1955, Court was recessed in an effort to allow the prosecution to locate Victims COLLINS and LOGAN. SMITH further stated that later he and Prosecuting Attorney CHATHAM came into possession of a rumor being circulated at the trial that Victims COLLINS and LOGAN were then confined to the jail at Charleston, Mississippi. He stated that he and CHATHAM immediately called one of the Tallahatchie County Deputy Sheriffs aside and questioned him in this regard. The Deputy advised them that he was aware of the identities of the prisoners in the Tallahatchie County Jail at Charleston, Mississippi, and that COLLINS and LOGAN were definitely not incarcerated there.

SMITH stated they then questioned Sheriff H. C. STRIDER of Tallahatchie County and confronted him with this information. He said STRIDER denied that either COLLINS or LOGAN or anyone meeting their descriptions was confined in the Tallahatchie County Jail or had been confined during the pertinent period.

Attorney SMITH further advised on the evening of the same day, he, Prosecuting Attorney CHATHAM, and Investigator GWIN COLE further discussed the matter of the missing witnesses. At the time they were staying at the Holiday Inn in Clarksdale, Mississippi. He stated that at his and CHATHAM's request, COLE contacted by radio the Mississippi Highway Patrol car which covered Charleston, Mississippi. At COLE's request, the officers occupying this car went to the Tallahatchie County Jail at Charleston, Mississippi. In the absence of the jailer, they contacted the jailer's wife who accorded them full access to the jail. SMITH stated the officers thereupon searched the entire jail premises and contacted each of the Negro prisoners individually, interviewing each of them concerning COLLINS and LOGAN. SMITH stated the officers determined in this manner that COLLINS and LOGAN were definitely not being held in the Tallahatchie County Jail at Charleston and that they had not been held there during the trial. SMITH stated that based upon this information and all other information which has come into his possession with respect to this matter, he is positive that neither COLLINS nor LOGAN was held in custody in the Tallahatchie County Jail, Charleston, Mississippi, or any other jail during the TILL trial for the purpose of preventing them from testifying, or otherwise.



The October 8, 1955 edition of the Tri-State Defender, Memphis extra edition, contains a copyrighted question and answer interview conducted by L. ALEX WILSON, General Manager of the Tri-State Defender, and Colonel EUCLID LOUIS TAYLOR, General Counsel of the Chicago Defender, with Victim COLLINS.

The Editor's note appearing above the question and answer interview reflects that Victim COLLINS was questioned for two days and that the questions and answers "have been reproduced without changes." It appears from the interview that it was conducted in Chicago, Illinois and that JOHN H. SENGSTACKE, Publisher and Editor of the Chicago Defender, was present during the interview. The interview occupies approximately six columns of the paper. The interview relates in general to Victims COLLINS and LOGAN's association with each other, their employment by Defendant J. W. MILAM, and their knowledge, or lack thereof, concerning the TILL murder.

The following is quoted from the question and answer interview:

"Q -- Were you ever in jail in Mississippi?

A -- Never been in jail in my life.

Q -- Were you ever held in jail by anybody and told you couldn't leave?

A -- No.

Q -- Has anybody asked you whether or not you knew anything about the Till case?

A -- No.

Q -- None of the sheriffs, policemen or prosecutors?

A -- No."

In another portion of the interview, the following questions and answers appear:

"Q -- Where were you during the trial?

A -- I was in Clarksdale, Miss.

Q -- What were you doing?

A -- Driving a gravel truck for Mr. Milam.

Q -- Do you mean the same Mr. Milam?



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"A -- I was driving this truck for Mr. Campbell, his brother-in-law.

Q -- Did you see Mr. Campbell during the trial?

A -- No.

Q -- Who told you to go out to Clarksdale?

A -- Mr. Campbell did.

Q -- You worked up in Clarksdale driving this gravel truck. Did Mr. Campbell pay you for the time you worked in Clarksdale?

A -- Sure did.

Q -- He sent you to Clarksdale by yourself?

A -- Henry Loggins was there at the time. Me and him both were sent up to work.

Q -- Was anybody else sent up there?

A -- Nobody but me and Loggins.

Q -- When you came back from there, was the trial over?

A -- I guess it was but I didn't know about the trial.

Q -- Did Mr. Campbell tell you it was over with?

A -- He told me.

Q -- What did you say to him?

A -- I told him the job was finished and he told me to go back to the cotton picker that Saturday. That was two Saturdays ago. I worked up there all during the trial. When the trial was over I told him the work was finished.

Q -- Were you and Mr. Loggins the only ones sent up from Glendora?

A -- Yes.

Q -- On Saturday nite just before you heard about the Till boy being killed and just before Mr. Milam was arrested, were you on a truck with Mr. Melvin Campbell or anybody with a colored boy along.

A -- No not me.



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"Q -- Did you see any strange colored boy that day on the truck?

A -- No, I didn't see anybody."

In another portion of the interview, the following appears:

"Q -- You want to leave Mississippi?

A -- Yes.

Q -- Did anyone tell you to get out of Mississippi?

A -- No.

Q -- Did you ever talk to Loggins about the Till boy being killed?

A -- No. "

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