

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : The Attorney General

DATE: September 6, 1955

FROM : Director, FBI

SUBJECT: ROY BRYANT,
J. W. MILAN,
MRS. ROY BRYANT,
UNKNOWN SUBJECT;
EMMETT LOUIS TILL - VICTIM
KIDNAPING;
CIVIL RIGHTS

RECEIVED

SEP 8 1955

CRIMINAL DIVISION



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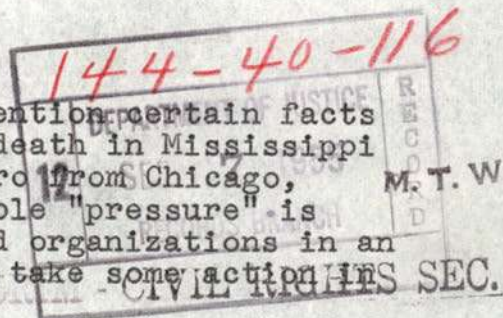
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CIVIL RIGHTS SECTION

m. j. w.

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NELSON

I want to bring to your attention certain facts concerning the alleged kidnaping and death in Mississippi of the victim, a fifteen-year-old Negro from Chicago, Illinois. It is noted that considerable "pressure" is being generated by some newspapers and organizations in an effort to have the Federal Government take some action in the matter.



On the morning of August 28, 1955, the victim was taken from the home of his uncle near Money, Mississippi, by the subjects. The victim's body was found in the Tallahatchie River on August 31, 1955, and Roy Bryant and J. W. Milan have been arrested by the Sheriff's Office at Greenwood, Mississippi, on warrants charging them with kidnaping. These individuals are being held without bond and the Sheriff also holds a warrant for Mrs. Bryant on the same charge. These two individuals were arrested by the Sheriff's Office before the recovery of the victim's body.

The victim with two other Negro juveniles allegedly visited the Bryant store at Money, Mississippi, on August 27, 1955, at which time the victim reportedly made "ugly remarks" to Mrs. Bryant. The action against the victim was allegedly taken because of this incident.

On August 31, 1955, after the receipt of information that the victim's body had been recovered, the above facts were furnished to Mr. A. B. Caldwell, Chief, Civil Rights Section, Criminal Division, by a representative of this Bureau and Mr. Caldwell stated that the facts did not indicate a violation of the Civil Rights Statute and no investigation should be conducted. The opinion ex-

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pressed by Mr. Caldwell was confirmed by my memorandum to Mr. Olney of September 1, 1955.

The facts in this case indicate a state offense of kidnaping and murder but there is no indication to date of a violation of the Federal Kidnaping Statute or the Federal Civil Rights Statute inasmuch as the action was taken against a private citizen by a group of citizens. There has been no allegation made that the victim has been subjected to the deprivation of any right or privilege which is secured and protected by the Constitution and laws of the United States which would come within the provisions of Section 241, Title 18, United States Code. It should be noted that recently in Washington, D.C., a group of white boys from the State of Mississippi were beaten and knifed by Negro youths and this Bureau did not conduct an investigation into that matter upon the instructions of the Criminal Division.

The above is submitted for your information.

cc: Mr. William P. Rogers
Deputy Attorney General

cc: Assistant Attorney General
Warren Olney III