

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

CRIMINAL DIVISION

DEC 2 - 1952

Form No. 1
THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT

ATLANTA

RECEIVED

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

SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:

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

Oct 28-55

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DETAILS:

AT ATLANTA, GEORGIA

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

Predication

APPROVED AND FORWARDED:	SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE	DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES	
DANIEL DUKE Attorney at Law, Volunteer Building, advised		144-19-189	
COPIES OF THIS REPORT 3-Bureau (Encls.-8) 1-USA, Atlanta 2-Atlanta (44-494)		25	DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE DEC 1 1952 RECORDS BRANCH CRIM. CIVIL RIGHTS SEC.

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AT 44-494

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

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

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

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

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

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

Results of Preliminary Investigation

AT GREENVILLE, MERIWETHER COUNTY, GEORGIA

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