

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Assistant Attorney General James M. McInerney DATE: August 14, 1950

FROM : Director, FBI

BY SPECIAL MESSENGER

SUBJECT: M. E. MILLS
HILLIARD BROOKS - VICTIM
 CIVIL RIGHTS AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

RECEIVED

AUG 17 1950

CRIMINAL DIVISION

On August 13, 1950, the Montgomery Advertiser, Montgomery, Alabama, carried a story indicating that a bullet fired by Officer M. E. Mills, Montgomery Policeman, at a reportedly drunken, fighting and cursing negro on Dexter Avenue, critically injured one person and caused lesser injury to two others on Saturday afternoon, August 12, 1950. The bullet passed through victim's stomach. He was being arrested by the officer for causing a disturbance. According to the article, witnesses stated that there were hundreds of people within one hundred yards of the victim at the time of the incident. Some of the witnesses called the shooting "reckless and needless."

M. E. Mills, according to the article, stated that the shooting occurred after Brooks had hit at him, and had pulled a whistle and chain from his shirt. He stated that when he asked Brooks what was the matter with him, Brooks turned and came toward him. He stated he pushed Brooks away and Brooks fell. He stated Brooks got up and came back toward him at which time he pulled his revolver and told Brooks not to come any closer. According to the article it was then that the alleged striking attempt was made by Brooks and Mills shot him.

Bessie Mae Robinson, one of the persons wounded, is quoted as stating that she saw Brooks staggering on the sidewalk and heard him cursing. She stated she heard a bus driver blow his horn and then saw a policeman approach around the bus. Witnesses describe Brooks as a slightly built negro, weighing approximately 145 pounds. According to the article, Mrs. A. W. Robertson, a witness, stated, "the boy appeared to be so intoxicated that he could have been subdued easily. I do not think the policeman shot in self defense. I did not see the boy attempt to strike the policeman. I did not see him threaten the policeman." Mr. G. W. Ruppert, a witness, was quoted as follows: "It was a shame. The negro never had a chance. The cop should have used a blackjack or anything."

Chief of Police Goodwyn J. Ruppenthal was quoted as stating that Mills had been with the Montgomery Police Department for two years and has an excellent record.

The Associated Press correspondent at Montgomery, Alabama advised that the Associated Press in Washington will make inquiry at the Department of Justice as to whether or not investigation will be conducted in this matter. The Special Agent in Charge of the Mobile Division has been instructed to conduct preliminary inquiry and the results will be forwarded to you promptly.

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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
AUG 17 1950
DIVISION OF INVESTIGATION
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