June 9, 1958

Mr. CHARLTON W. DuPREE, Coroner, Terrell County, Dawson, Georgia, advised that he was advised of WILLIE COUNTRYMAN's death on May 25, 1958. He stated he called a Coroner's Jury on May 26, 1958, to determine the cause of COUNTRYMAN's death. He furnished a letter which reads as follows:

"Z. T. MATHEWS
SHERIFF OF TERRELL COUNTY, GEORGIA

M. E. MATHEWS, DEPUTY SHERIFF,
DAWSON, GEORGIA.

May 26, 1958

"We, the Coroner's Jury, find that Willie Countryman came to his death from gunshot wounds inflicted by Patrolman W. B. Cherry of the Dawson Police force on the 25th day of May, 1958.

"Evidence submitted indicated that Patrolman Cherry was acting in line of duty and in self-defense.

Signed: WILLIE BIRDSONG
ARTIS LEE.
ROGERS LOCKE
JOHN W. FILLINGAME
J. H. SENN "

* * * * * *

Mr. DuPREE stated that he saw the knife at the Coroner's inquest which was offered as evidence. He described the knife as being a switchblade knife 10 to 12 inches long when open. He stated that the point was broken off the knife blade and the blade was very dull. He stated he believed the handle was



Interview with CHARLTON W. DuPREE File # 44-879

on 6/5/58 at Dawson, Georgia Dictated 6/9/58

by Special Agents HENRY L. BURGETT and JAMES J. WARD : CM

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of metal, possibly painted black or brown at one time. It appeared to be made of stamped steel. The knife was one-bladed and must be opened by hand, and it had two match stems in the handle to make possible quick opening of the blade. He stated that testimony was offered at the inquest which indicated that the knife was in COUNTRYMAN's hand under him when he was picked up from the ground to be placed on the ambulance cot. He stated that testimony reflected that victim COUNTRYMAN jumped from the shadow of a tree and grabbed subject CHERRY around the neck as CHERRY was walking to the house in back of COUNTRYMAN's home. He stated that the officers stated at the inquest that COUNTRYMAN said, "What are you ---- doing down here?" He stated the officers testified that they crossed a vacant lot to the house in back and that they went past a tree located in COUNTRYMAN's back yard. HANDCOCK was proceeding in front, CHERRY following him, thus making it possible for COUNTRYMAN to grab CHERRY. CHERRY broke loose and shot COUNTRYMAN.

Mr. DuPREE stated that the records of the Coroner's hearing were turned over to the Clerk of Superior Court and would be available if needed.

Mr. DuPREE said he did not wish to give a signed statement.