

Office of the Superintendent of Police

Negro Willmer Smith (C) January 15th, 1941
Shot and Killed by Detc. William Grosch.

At 10:15 p. m. Wednesday January 15, 1941 Detectives William Grosch and Andrew Arnold, notified this office as follows:

At 6:30 p. m. Wednesday January 15, 1941 Detectives William Grosch and Andrew Arnold, returned to the city from Detroit Michigan with Willmer Smith, Aliases Willmer Moore, Coat-tail, red, and John Saunders (C) Age 39 years, with No Home, who is wanted in this city for the murder of Patrolman Lester Johnson, on January 18, 1930 at Esplanade and Rampart Streets.

While at the 3rd precinct Station the negro Smith was further questioned and admitted to the shooting and murder of Patrolman Lester Johnson, and stated that at the time of the murder he abandoned his automobile on the scene and left the city on the same night going to the home of his sister at Vacharie, La., and then he left his gun at the home of his sister and that if we took him to his sister's home he would get the gun, that is if his sister still lived there as he had not seen her since.

Detectives Andrew Arnold and William Grosch, put the negro Smith in the Police car to take him to Vacharie to try and recover the gun, Detective Arnold was driving the car and while on the Air line Highway near LaBar Road the negro complained that he had a call of nature and had to go at once. Detective Andrew Arnold stopped the car and as Detective William Grosch got out of the car with the negro Smith, in back of the automobile the negro Smith, struck Detective over the head with the hand cuffs which were around his wrists, knocking Detective Grosch to the ground. Detective William Grosch grabbed the negro and hollowed for Detective Arnold who was on the front seat of the automobile. Detective Arnold got out of the car while Detective William Grosch was scuffling with the negro, and Detective William Grosch fired one ineffectual shot to try and stop the negro. Grosch while scuffling with the negro struck him with his regulation revolver to try and subdue him, but as Arnold and Grosch were scuffling with the negro he managed to get his two hands over Detective William Grosch's head with the handcuffs on and attempted to choke the officer, when Detective William Grosch fired the second shot which struck the negro in the neck he fell to the ground dragging Grosch with him.

Charity Hospital Ambulance was summoned and Sheriff's Earl Rowling and John Stewart were also notified and arrived on the scene and on the arrival of the Ambulance the negro Smith was pronounced dead. Dr. Odon, Coroner for Jefferson Parish was called on the scene and ordered the body be brought to Litz Eagan Undertakers for an Autopsy.