

44A-JN-30112, 62D-JN-30045-FD302

Continuation of FD-302 of TRANSCRIPT-EMMETT TILL TRIAL Sept 1955 On _____ Page 113

B. L. MIMS,

A witness introduced for and on behalf of the State, being first duly sworn, upon his oath testified as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

BY MR. SMITH:

Q You are Mr. B. L. Mims?

A That's right.

Q And I believe you spell that M-I-M-S, is that right?

A Yes.

Q Where do you live, Mr. Mims?

A About five miles north of Philipp.

Q Is that in Tallahatchie County?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And I believe you live right down there, right at the river, is that correct?

A That's right.

Q And that is the Tallahatchie River?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Mr. Mims, do you recall the occasion back on August 31st, 1955, when a body was found down there at the river near your home?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Who notified you about that fact?

44A-JN-30112, 62D-JN-30045-FD302

Continuation of FD-302 of TRANSCRIPT-EMMETT TILL TRIAL Sept 1955 On _____, Page 114

A. It was one of these boys on the place there. I am not sure exactly who did notify me about it. But somebody told me about it.

Q And you then called the officers about it, is that right?

A Beg pardon?

Q Did you call the officers?

A No, Sir.

Q You didn't call them?

A No, Sir.

Q Mr. Mims, I believe someone down there did notify them, is that correct?

A Yes, Sir; that's right.

Q Did you go down there to the river after you heard about this?

A Yes, Sir.

Q When was the first time you saw this body?

A I went down the river. I used my outboard motor and boat, and I went down the river to look for him, and we found him.

Q Who was with you at that time?

A Deputy Sheriff Garland Melton.

Q Was there anyone else along?

A Yes, Sir. There was two men behind us in another

44A-JN-30112, 62D-JN-30045-FD302

Continuation of FD-302 of TRANSCRIPT-EMMETT TILL TRIAL, Sept. 1955, On _____, Page 115

boat.

Q Who were they?

A Well, my brother Fred Mims, and Robert Hodges.

Q Will you just describe what you saw when you got there?

A Well, we saw a person - - from his knee on down and including his feet - - we saw that sticking up above the water. And we could tell by looking at it that it was a colored person. That is all we could see, just from the knee on down, both knees.

Q Why was that body there? Was it hung up, or floating or what?

A Yes, Sir, it was hung. It was hung.

Q Then what did you and the others do relative to that body?

A Well, we went up there and looked at it, and we decided that we was going to have to have a rope in order to unhang him. And so we sent one of the boats back after a line and to bring it down so that we could unhang the body.

Q And after you got the line, what did you do?

A Well, we tied it on the feet and then pulled the feet together. We tied it around the ankles and then pulled it loose from the bottom.

Q When you pulled it loose, did the body float there

44A-JN-30112, 62D-JN-30045-FD302

Continuation of FD-302 of TRANSCRIPT-EMMETT TILL TRIAL, Sept 1955, On _____, Page 116

in the water?

A Well, I am not sure about that. I wouldn't say it did float, and I say that because the deputy was there in the front end of the boat holding on to the line. And I didn't notice whether there was any slack that was loose enough for the body to be floating there or not. I didn't notice that.

Q What did you all do then with the body?

A We towed it downstream to a shallow bank there and then we landed there and pulled the body out.

Q Then was there anything attached to that body?

A Yes, Sir, there was.

Q What was it?

A It was a weight, part of a gin fan.

Q Would you recognize that fan if you saw it again?

A Yes, Sir, I believe I could.

Q Would you come around here and look at this fan here on the floor?

A Yes, Sir. (The witness observed the object). I think that is it.

Q Is that it?

A I believe it is, Yes, Sir.

Q It looks like it, does it?

A Yes, Sir.

44A-JN-30112, 62D-JN-30045-FD302

Continuation of FD-302 of TRANSCRIPT-EMMETT TILL TRIAL Sept 1955, On _____ Page 117

Q Now, how was that fan attached to the body?

A It was tied around his neck and then it was around the fan.

Q It was tied with what?

A A piece of barbed wire.

Q When you all got it out there on the bank, what did you do then?

A The Deputy Sheriff disconnected the weight from the body there when we pulled it out.

Q And what did you do with the body and the weight?

A We pulled the body over there in an extra boat that we had there to tow him back in, and we put the weight there in the boat also, in the same boat.

Q And then what did you do?

A Then we connected it on behind my boat and towed it upstream to the landing.

Q And then what was done with the body?

A We pulled the boat out on the bank about fifteen steps, I would say, from the water. And that is the way it was when I left. I didn't stay there but a little while after that.

Q You are familiar with the river and the land and so forth down there in that section, are you not?

A Yes, Sir.

44A-JN-30112, 62D-JN-30045-FD302

Continuation of FD-302 of TRANSCRIPT-EMMETT TILL TRIAL Sept 1955, On _____, Page 118

Q And I believe you are a landowner down there, is that right?

A A renter.

Q At the place you found that body, will you state to the jury and to the court whether it was on the Tallahatchie County side or on the LeFlore County side of the river?

A Well, I am not sure about how the line goes there. I understand the river is not exactly the way the line is. But I would guess it was in Tallahatchie County.

Q And would that be in the Second Court District of Tallahatchie County or the Sumner Court District?

A Yes, Sir.

MR. SMITH: Take the witness.

MR. CARLTON: No questions, Your Honor.

(WITNESS EXCUSED)
