

MOSES "MOSE" WRIGHT (A)



ICHi-038435a



TRIAL TRANSCRIPT EXCERPT – MOSES “MOSE” WRIGHT (A)

1st Witness for the State, Direct Examination by Gerald Chatham for the Prosecution

Question (Q) Now, Uncle Mose, after you and your family had gone to bed that night, I want you to tell the jury if any person or if one or more persons called at your home that night, and if they did, what time was it?

Answer (A) About two o'clock.

Q What was the first thing that attracted your attention to the fact that there was someone about your premises?

A Well, someone was at the front door, and he was saying, "Preacher - - Preacher." And then I said, "Who is it?" And then he said, "This is Mr. Bryant. I want to talk to you and that boy."

Q Do you know Mr. Bryant?

A I just know him since he came up here. I couldn't see him that night so well, only with that flashlight there, and I could see that it was this other man. Mr. Milam. But I know Mr. Milam.

Q You know Mr. Milam, do you?

A I sure do.

Q And then what did you do?

A Well, I got up and opened the door.

Q And what did you see when you opened the door?

A Well, Mr. Milam was standing there at the door with a pistol in his right hand and he had a flashlight in his left hand.

Q Now stop there a minute, Uncle Mose. I want you to point out Mr. Milam if you see him here.

A There he is (pointing)

Q And do you see Mr. Bryant in here?

A (The witness pointed with his hand)

Q Now, Uncle Mose, what did you say J. W. Milam had in his hand that night when you saw him there on your porch?

A He had a pistol in his right hand.

Q And what else did he have?

A And he had a flashlight in his left hand.

Q And what did he say to you?

A Well, he asked me if I had two boys there from Chicago?

Q And what did you say?

A I said, "Yes, Sir."

Q And will you tell the jury who those boys were?

A Wheeler Parker, my grandson, and Emmett Till.

Q How long had they been visiting in your home with you?

A They was there a week that same day.

Q Now, Uncle Mose, after you told Mr. Milam that you did have two boys there from Chicago, and that they were there in your house, what did he say and do then?

A Then Mr. Milam said, "I want that boy that done the talking down at Money."

MOSES "MOSE" WRIGHT (B)



ICHi-038464



CHICAGO HISTORY MUSEUM

TRIAL TRANSCRIPT EXCERPT – MOSES “MOSE” WRIGHT (B)

1st Witness for the State, Cross Examination by C. Sidney Carlton for the Defense

Question (Q) Did you ever see this man that you pointed out as Mr. Bryant, did you ever see the light shining on his face that night?

Answer (A) I did not.

Q Had you ever seen him before that night?

A Not to know him.

Q Had you ever been in his store?

A I never have.

Q And the first time you ever saw him was in the courtroom this week, wasn't it?

A The first time I saw his face, that's right.

Q Now, let's go back to Mr. Milam -- you testified that he was standing in the doorway of your house with a pistol in his right hand and a flashlight out in front of him in his left hand, is that correct?

A That's right.

Q And the flashlight was sticking out in front about six or eight inches, about six or eight inches in front of the pistol, is that right?

A I don't know about that. I didn't measure it.

Q Had you ever seen Mr. Milam before that night?

A I never had.

Q Did you ever see the lights flashing on his face that night?

A Sure. He had it up to his face. That is the way I know him.

Q Mose, you talked to me over at this law office over here (pointing with his hand) last week, is that right?

A That's right.

Q And do you remember this gentleman here, Mr. Breland, being present at that time?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And do you remember Mr. Henderson being present there that day (indicating another gentleman)?

A That's right.

Q And this gentleman over there in the blue coat, Mr. Kellum, was he present that day also?

A That's right.

Q You remember him being there, do you?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And isn't it a fact, Mose, that you on that day told each one of those gentlemen and me that the, only reason you thought this was Mr. Milam in your house that night was due to the fact that he was a big man and had a bald head? Isn't that true?

A That's right.

Q And the first time that you ever saw him was in this courthouse later on when they came into the courtroom, isn't that right?

A I don't believe I understand.

Q The first time you ever saw him was in this courtroom, isn't that right?

A No Sir. I knowed him that night.

Q And the reason you say you know him is because the man had a bald head, isn't that right?

A Well, I noticed his face and his stature. And I knowed his face just like I see him there now.

Q Then you have changed your story from what you told us the other day, haven't you?

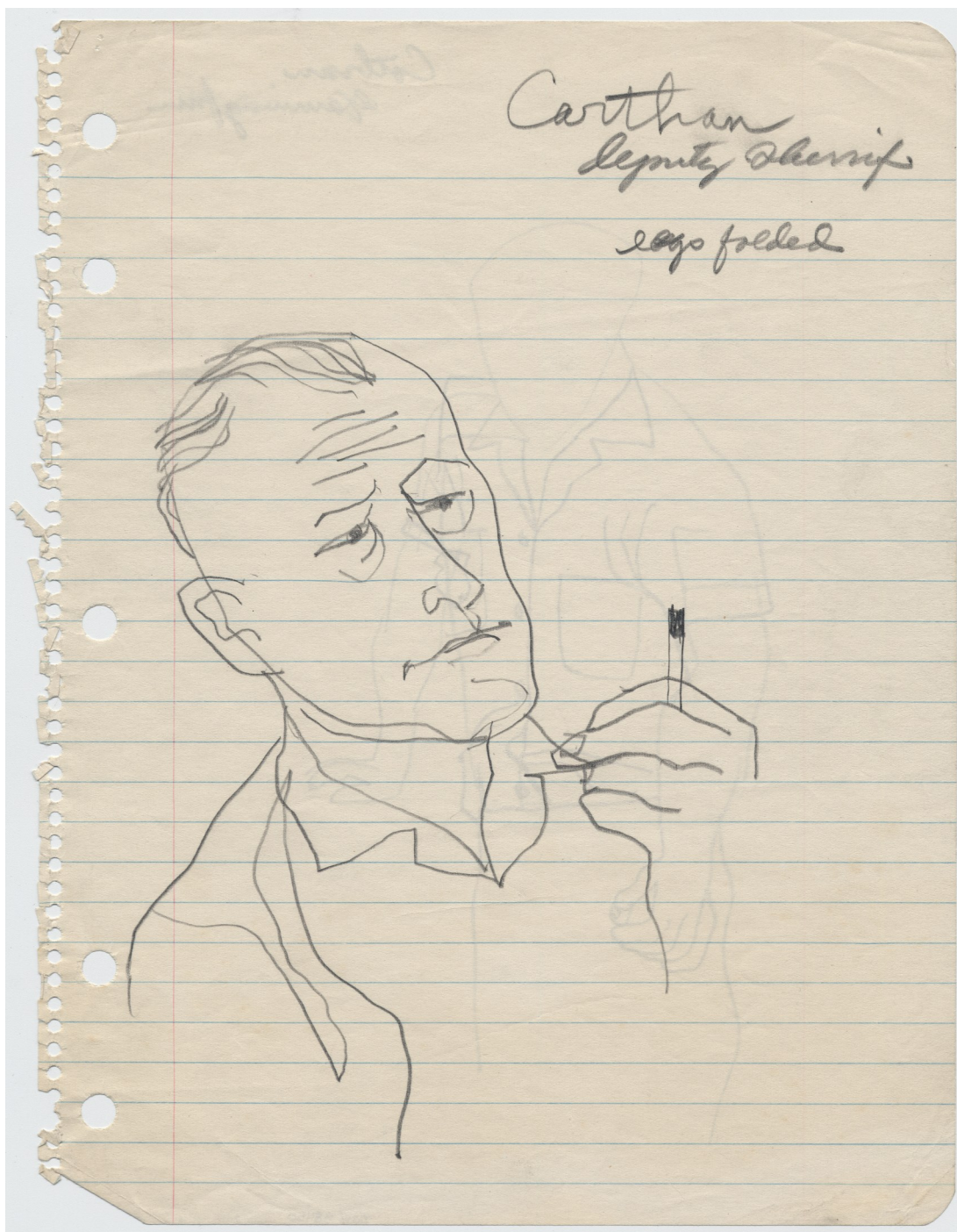
A They was at my house.

Q And the only thing you saw at your house, the only man you saw, was a bald headed man, is that right?

A That's right.



DEPUTY SHERIFF JOHN COTHRAN, LE FLORE COUNTY



ICHi-038450a



TRIAL TRANSCRIPT EXCERPT – DEPUTY SHERIFF COTHRAN

7th Witness for the State, Cross Examination by C. Sidney Carlton for the Defense

Question (Q) What, if any, official position have you held in that county during the past four years?

Answer (A) Deputy Sheriff.

Q Deputy Sheriff?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And you have been a deputy under Sheriff George Smith, is that right?

A Yes, Sir.

Q In your capacity as Deputy Sheriff, I want you to tell the Court and jury whether or not in the latter part of August, 1955, you had occasion to investigate the murder or disappearance of Emmett Till?

A I did.

Q And in that investigation, did you have occasion to talk to J. W. Milam, one of the defendants in this case?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Where was he when you talked with him?

A In the LeFlore County jail.

Q Do you remember the day of the week it was that you talked with him?

A Monday.

Q You talked with him on Monday?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And had he been arrested that day or was it the day before?

A That day.

Q Who was present in the jail, Mr. Cothran, when you talked with him?

A No one but he and myself.

Q Now, will you tell the jury, Mr. Cothran – and speak out so the last man sitting over here on the back row can hear you, will you state what you had to say to "J. W." that day in the jail and what he had to say to you in regard to the murder of Emmett Till?

A I asked him if they went out there and got that little boy and if they had done something with him. And he said that they had brought him up there to

that store and turned him loose, there at Roy Bryant's store.

Q Did you say they went and got the boy, or did he say we went and got the boy?

A I don't remember whether he said "we" or "I." I wouldn't say for sure.

Q Did he say where they got the boy?

A Over at Mose Wright's.

Q He told you they had gotten the boy at Mose Wright's house?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Did he say what time of the night or morning it was when they went out and got him?

A No, Sir.

Q Do you remember whether you asked him specifically the hour that he got him from Uncle Mose's house?

A No, Sir.

Q What did he say, Mr. Cothran, with reference to what he or they did with the boy after they got him from old man Mose's house?

A He said they brought him up there and talked to him, and then they let him go.

Q Where did he say they brought him to talk to him?

A Up to Mr. Bryant's store.

Q Where is Mr. Bryant's store?

A In Money, Mississippi.

Q And Money is in LeFlore [LeFlore] County, Mississippi, is that right?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Do you know about how far it is from Uncle Mose's house to Mr. Bryant's store at Money?

A I would say around three miles.

Q How long did they say they kept him up there before they released him?

A He didn't say.

Q Did he offer any explanation to you as to why they didn't carry the boy back home, back down to Uncle Mose's house?

A No, Sir.



MAMIE TILL-MOBLEY (A)



ICHi-038438



CHICAGO HISTORY MUSEUM

TRIAL TRANSCRIPT EXCERPT – MAMIE TILL-MOBLEY (A)

9th Witness for the State, Direct Examination by Robert Smith for the Prosecution; Objections by J. J. Breland for the Defense

Question (Q) Mamie, I will ask you if your son had a ring and frequently wore a ring that was sent along in the effects of your husband that you got?

Answer (A) Yes, Sir.

MR. BRELAND: We object to that, Your Honor, for the reason that she said that the effects were sent to her that were supposed to belong to her dead husband. But it hasn't been shown in evidence anything about the identity of those effects.

THE COURT: The objection is overruled.

Q I now hand you a ring, Mamie, that has engraved on it "May 25, 1943," with the large initials "L. T.," and I ask you if that was among the effects that were sent to you which were purported to be the effects of your dead husband?

A Yes, Sir.

Q What was your husband's name?

A Louis Till.

Q In other words, his initials were "L. T."?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And after you got this ring along with his effects, what happened to it?

A I kept the ring in a jewelry box, but it was much too large for the boy to wear. But since his twelfth birthday, he has worn it occasionally with the aid of scotch tape or string. [He] had to have something else on with it to make it fit his hand tightly enough. But usually though it was kept in his personal jewelry box. And on the morning of September [unclear] of August 20th when he got ready to board the train, he was looking in his jewelry box to get some cuff links, I think it was, and when he looked in the box there, he saw this ring, and he put it on his hand, or on his finger, and he shook his hand, to make sure that it would stay on there and not fall off. And I remember that

I casually remarked to him I said, "Gee, you are getting to be quite a grown man." And then he said to me...

Q Now don't tell what he said. But did he then put the ring on his finger?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And he left Chicago with it, did he?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And you definitely say that was the ring that he left there with?

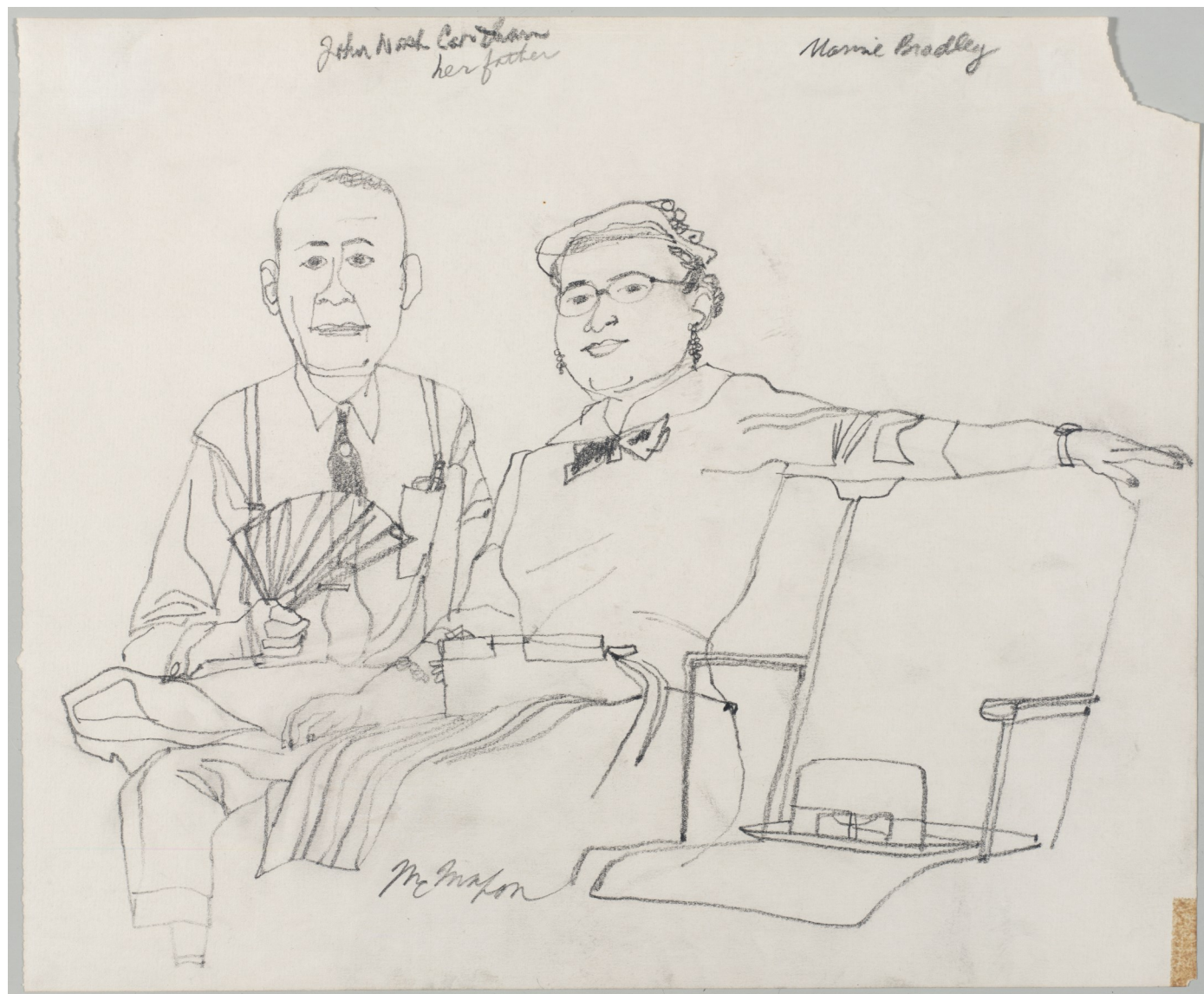
A Yes, Sir.

Q And that was the ring he had when he came down here to Mississippi?

A Yes, Sir.



MAMIE TILL-MOBLEY (B)



ICHi-038466



CHICAGO HISTORY MUSEUM

TRIAL TRANSCRIPT EXCERPT – MAMIE TILL-MOBLEY (B)

9th Witness for the State, Cross Examination by J. J. Breland for the Defense; Clarifying Questions by Robert Smith for the Prosecution

The Defense began asking Mamie Till-Mobley about the newspapers she read and the Prosecution objected. The jury was asked to go the jury room. The following took place without them present.

Question (Q) Do you subscribe to the CHICAGO DEFENDER?

Answer (A) No Sir, I don't subscribe to the paper, but I do buy it and read it.

Q I will hand you a portion of that particular paper, that edition of that particular paper, and ask you to look at the photograph and see if you have seen that?

A I have seen this picture but not in this paper. I saw a much smaller picture in another copy of the DEFENDER.

Q But is that a likeness of the picture you did see?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Have you a photograph of your son, Emmett Till, with you?

A Yes, Sir, I have.

Q And have you got it on your person?

A It is with my Father in the witness chambers.

Q And did you furnish any of those photographs to members of the press?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And that was for photographic purposes to put in the papers, is that right?

A Yes, Sir.

THE COURT: Can you get the photographs?

THE WITNESS: Yes, Sir. My Father has them in the witness room.

MR. SMITH: What is your Father's name?

THE WITNESS: John Carthan. And he has the pictures with him. They are in this coat.

MR. BRELAND: Tell them to bring John Carthan to the courtroom and to bring his coat with him.

After a short period, an envelope is produced and handed to the witness on the stand.

Q Mamie, will you take out those photographs that are in that envelope?

A Yes, Sir. (Three photographs are given to Mr. Breland by the witness.)

Q Mamie, you have presented to counsel for the defendants what purports to be three separate photographs of your son, one of which has a woman in it taken with him. Is that you?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Mamie, I hand you now what purports to be a photograph of some person. Will you state whose photograph that is?

A That is a photograph of Emmett Louis Till.

Q Mamie, I hand you a paper, being page 19 of the CHICAGO DEFENDER, on the date of Sept. 17th, 1955, which purports to be a photograph of some person. Will you look at that and state whether or not that is also a photograph of Emmett Till or the person who was shipped back to Chicago that you saw at the funeral home there?

A This is a picture of Emmett Louis Till as I saw it at the funeral home.

Q That is a picture of the body as you saw it in the funeral home in Chicago, Illinois?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And being the picture of the same body which you then identified as Emmett Till?

A Yes, Sir.

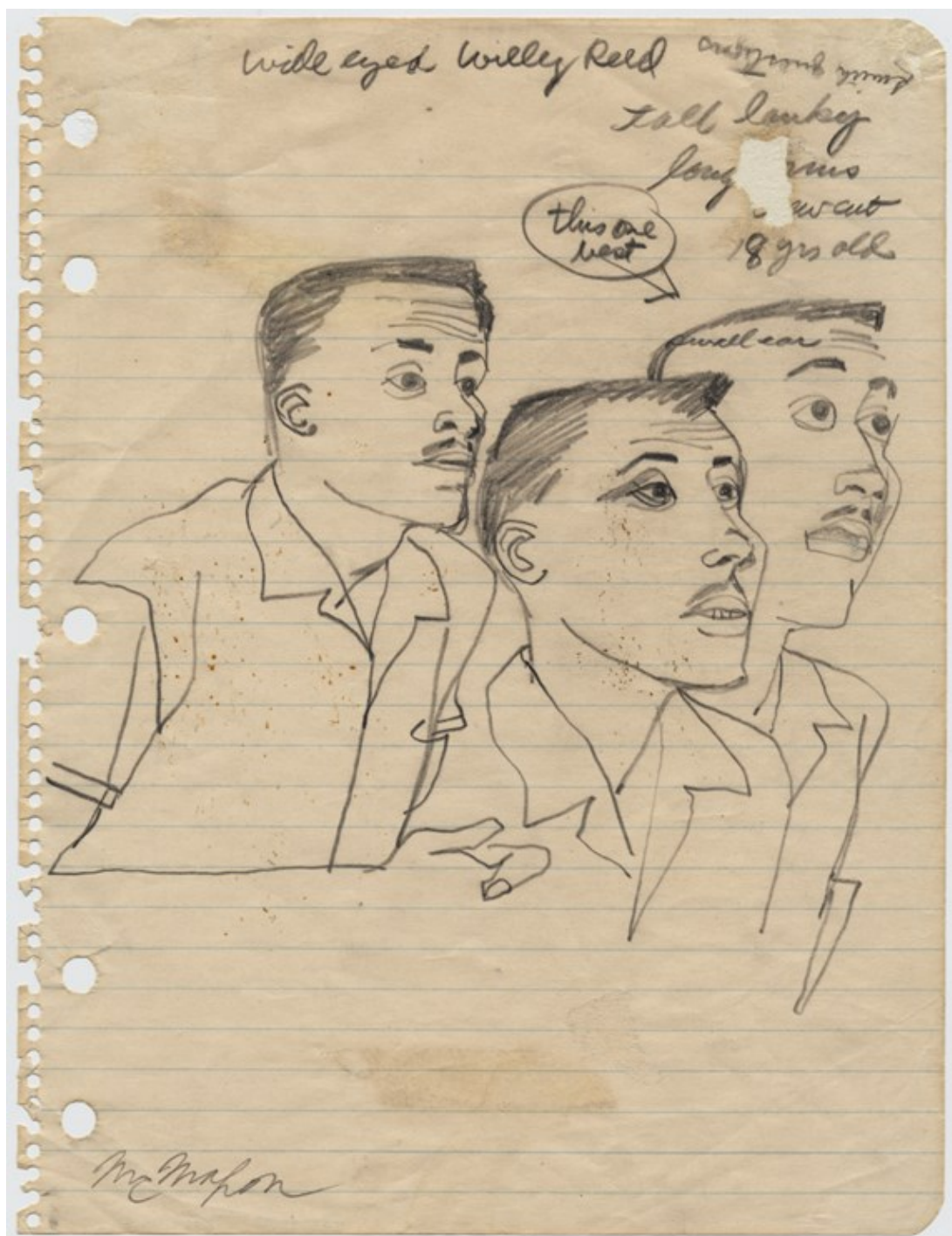
Q And which you now identify as that of Emmett Till, is that right?

A Yes, Sir.

Following some additional questions, the COURT ruled the photos could be shown to the jury, but questions related to the newspapers Ms. Mobley read could not be asked.



WILLIE REED



ICHi-038442



CHICAGO HISTORY MUSEUM

TRIAL TRANSCRIPT EXCERPT – WILLIE REED

10th Witness for the State, Direct Examination by Robert Smith for the Prosecution; Objections by J. J. Breland and C. Sidney Carlton for the Defense

Question (Q) Now, later on in the morning, did you see Mr. J. W. Milam out there?

Answer (A) Yes, Sir.

Q Where did you see him?

A Well, when I passed by he came out by the barn to the well.

Q And was that Mr. J. W. Milam, the man who is sitting over there (pointing to the defendant, Mr. Milam)?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Will you state whether he had anything unusual on about his person?

A Yes, Sir.

Q What did he have?

A He had on a gun.

Q Was it a pistol, a rifle, or a shotgun?

A He had on a pistol. He had it on his belt.

Q And what did Mr. J. W. Milam do when you saw him?

A He just came to the well and got a drink of water.

Q What did he do then?

A Then he went back to the barn.

Q And as you passed the barn, did you hear or see anything?

MR. BRELAND: We object, Your Honor.

MR. SMITH: If Your Honor please, I believe we have got the defendant right there, going in and out of the barn.

THE COURT: I don't think it has been connected sufficiently, Mr. Smith.

Q Just where did Mr. Milam come from when you saw him that morning?

A He came from the barn.

Q And where did he go when he left there? After he got a drink of water and left the well, where did he go then?

A He went back to the barn.

Q Did you hear or see anything as you passed the barn?

MR. CARLTON: We object, Your Honor.

THE COURT: I think he has got it straight now. I will overrule the objection.

Q Did you see or hear anything as you passed the barn?

A I heard somebody hollering, and I heard some licks like somebody was whipping somebody.

Q You heard some licks, and you also heard somebody hollering, is that right?

A Yes, Sir.

Q What was that person hollering?

A He was just hollering, "Oh."

Q You heard someone hollering "Oh," is that right?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Did they holler once or was it more than once, or was it two or three times, or what?

A They hollered more than once.

Q And what about the licks? Was it just one lick you heard, or was it two, or were there several licks?

A There was a whole lot of them.

Q You heard a whole lot of licks?

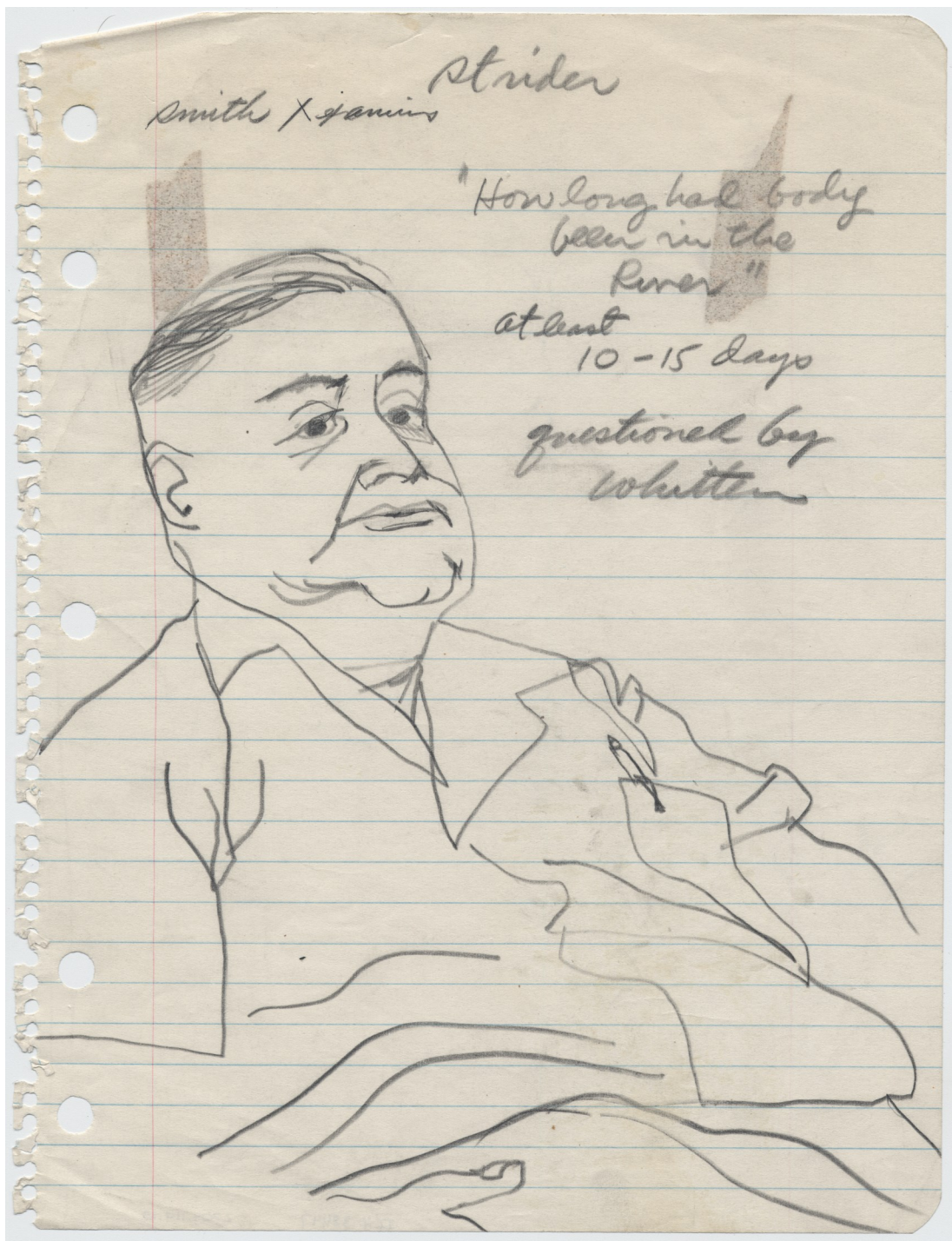
A Yes, Sir.

Q And was that a human being you heard or was it some kind of animal?

A Well, it sounded like a human being.



SHERIFF H. C. STRIDER, TALLAHATCHIE COUNTY



ICHi-038447



CHICAGO HISTORY MUSEUM

TRIAL TRANSCRIPT EXCERPT – SHERIFF H.C. STRIDER

3rd Witness for the Defense

Direct Examination by John Whitten Jr. for the Defense; Objection by Robert Smith for the Prosecution

Question (Q) Have you ever taken a body from the river that you knew had been there for a period of six days?

Answer (A) I have.

Q Were the conditions under which that body was in that river about the same as the conditions under which this body was taken from the river?

MR. SMITH: We object to that, Your Honor.

THE COURT: The objection is sustained. But you can ask his opinion about the particular time that body was in the river, his opinion from his past experience.

Q What then, Mr. Strider, is your opinion based on your past experience in taking bodies from the river, as to how long this particular body that was removed from the water on August 31st had been in the river?

MR. SMITH: We object to that, if Your Honor please. He is not a doctor, and he is not qualified to testify about that.

THE COURT: He is not qualified as a doctor, but he stated that he has had experience with other bodies taken from the river from time to time. And I think he is qualified.

Q You may state your opinion on that, Mr. Strider.

A I would say at least ten days, if not fifteen.

Cross examination by Hon. Robert B. Smith III for prosecution.

Question (Q) And that death certificate certified the fact that it was the body of Emmett Till, isn't that correct?

Answer (A) No, I didn't certify that body as Emmett Till. I said it was a dead body. I had never seen Emmett Till before, and I couldn't swear it was Emmett Till because I didn't know Emmett Till or what he looked like. And another thing, his body at that time was not identified at the scene, because I asked his uncle at the time there at the scene -- could I just go ahead and tell what happened there?

Q Yes, Sir.

A Well, I called for his uncle. You see, I heard about this boy being gone or having disappeared there, and so I had the sheriff -- well, I got the sheriff's office over at Greenwood, I got them to go by and pick up the uncle. And so then they went by and got the old man, and when he got there, he looked at this boy's body, and I said to him, "Mose, is this the boy that is missing from your home?" And then he said, "I believe it is, but I couldn't say it is for sure. And then I said to him, "What about this ring on his finger?" And then he said, "I don't know. I would have to ask my boys about that." And then I said to him, "Do you mean to tell me, Mose, that he has been staying there at your home for a week with this ring on his finger, and eating there at the same table with you, and you don't even know this ring, or that you didn't notice he had a ring on his finger?" And then he said, "No, Sir. I did not know about that ring. But my boys would know whether he was wearing that ring or not." That is what he said to me.

Q Mr. Strider, do you know whether that death certificate had the name of Emmett Till on it or not?

A No, I don't know.



CAROLYN BRYANT



ICHi-038465



CHICAGO HISTORY MUSEUM

TRIAL TRANSCRIPT EXCERPT – CAROLYN BRYANT

1st Witness for the Defense, Direct Examination by C. Sidney Carlton for the Defense; Objections by Robert Smith for the Prosecution

The defense began asking Carolyn Bryant questions about the events on Wednesday, August 24th. The prosecution objected because they believed it was not relevant to the case. The Judge was not sure if it would be relevant and excused the jury from the courtroom. The testimony was allowed to continue without them present.

Question (Q) And what did you do then?

Answer (A) I walked up to the candy counter.

Q And what transpired up there at the candy counter?

A I asked him what he wanted.

Q And did he tell you?

A Yes.

Q Do you know what it was he asked for?

A No.

Q And did you then get the merchandise for him?

A Yes. I got it and put it on top of the candy case.

Q And what did you do then?

A I held my hand out for his money.

Q Which hand did you hold out?

A My right hand.

Q Will you show the Court how you held your hand out?

A I held out my hand like this (demonstrating by holding out her hand).

Q And did he give you the money?

A No.

Q What did he do?

A He caught my hand.

Q Just what did he say when he grabbed your hand?

A He said, "How about a date, baby?"

Q When you freed yourself, what happened then?

A I turned around and started back to the back of the store.

Q You did what?

A I turned to get to the back of the store.

Q Did you do anything further then?

A Yes. He came on down that way and he caught me at the cash register.

Q You say he caught you?

A Yes.

Q Now, Mrs. Bryant, will you stand up and put my hands just where he grasped you? Will you show the Court and jury?

A It was like this (demonstrating by putting [Def. Attorney] Mr. Carlton's hands on her body).

Q He grabbed you like that, did he?

A Yes.

Q Did he say or do anything at that time?

A He whistled and then came out in the road.

Q Can you give a sound something like the whistle that he made there? Was it something like this? (Mr. Carlton demonstrated by giving two low whistles.)

A Yes.

Q When you got your pistol, Mrs. Bryant, where was this boy then? Or I should say where was this man?

A When I turned around, he was getting in a car down the road.

Q Did you rush back in the store then?

A Yes.

Q Had you ever seen that man before?

A No.

Q Have you ever seen him since?

A No.

When the questioning was done, the Judge ruled the testimony was inadmissible (not allowed) and the jury never heard it.

