




MOSAIC THEATER COMPANY PRESENTS

THE TILL TRILOGY REFLECTION SERIES

A PLAY ANALYSIS GUIDE

This play analysis guide was developed in collaboration with Mosaic Theater Company with contributions from Georgetown University as part of *UNXD 256 - Building a Social Impact Consciousness* class. Special thanks to Artistic Director Reginald L. Douglas for sharing these critical resources and Adjunct Professor Nate Wong who shaped the questions for further introspection.

MOSAIC
THEATER COMPANY

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

UNXD 256 | Building a Social Impact Consciousness Seminar
Till Trilogy - Play Analysis - Fall 2022

Play Synopsis

A theatrical event for the whole community, Ifa Bayeza's ***The Till Trilogy*** shines a new light on one of the most pivotal moments in our collective American history - the murder of fourteen year-old Emmett Till in 1955 - and the ongoing fight for racial justice that it inspired. Led by acclaimed director Talvin Wilks, a company of ten actors performs the award-winning *The Ballad of Emmett Till*, a reconceived second production of *Benevolence*, and the world premiere *That Summer In Sumner* in rotating repertory for the first time in a feat of pure theatricality. Filled with music, poetry, and imagination, ***The Till Trilogy*** is a powerful and profound interrogation of a moment in history that still resonates today.

The Ballad of Emmett Till
With music and magic, Ifa Bayeza's Edgar Award-winning drama recounts the last two weeks of Emmett Till's life on his journey from Chicago to Money, Mississippi in 1955. We meet a young man with boisterous energy and boundless charm whose fateful encounter with Caroline Bryant changes his life and our country forever.

That Summer In Sumner
Drawn from courtroom transcripts, news accounts, and government records, That Summer in Sumner simulates the 1955 trial for the murder of Emmett Till with palpable energy and profound theatricality. Told from the perspective of three African-American journalists covering the event, this world premiere play takes audiences on a journey from 1955 to today and calls upon us to reimagine our tomorrow, together.

Benevolence – *this is the focus of this play analysis guide*
A poignant and powerful look into the ripple effects of Emmett Till's murder, Benevolence follows two couples - one Black and one White - as they process the role of violence and loss in their relationships and communities following his death. With rich language and harrowing honesty, Benevolence invites audiences to reflect upon how our collective history resonates in our personal lives today.

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Play Analysis Questions
**indicates required questions to address*

Roles within Social Impact

1. *****Each character (*see program to rejog your memory*) in the play demonstrates a different perspective in their relationship to Emmett Till. What differentiates each character's approach, and how might it relate to their personal experiences, as you learn in the play? *[Feel free to look at the remaining pages for the historical context]*

2. *****There was an artistic choice to depict two couples: a white (Roy and Carolyn Bryant) and black (Clinton and Bea Melton) couple. What do you think the intention was to share these two perspectives?

Dissecting Social Change

3. *****In class, we've discussed power and identity as it relates to social change. How do you see these concepts show up in the play?

4. *****Are there aspects of the three sectors (business, public sector/ law, and advocacy/ nonprofits) that reveal themselves in this play? What do you make of the ways these sectors influence social change through Till's legacy?

5. *****The play depicts the legacy of Emmett Till in three parts. *Benevolence* shows the aftermath of Till years after his murder. How might this play reveal a longer arc to social change as you think about Till's legacy?

6. Describe the similarities and differences between the murders of Emmett Till and George Floyd. How did each energize a grassroot movement?

Personal Reflections

7. Who is a person that you admire for their boldness to face injustice?

8. Director Talvin Wilks says, "...this [play] is not reliving Black trauma. This is really liberating the truth." How did the play share a fuller story of Till and what was its impact for you?

9. *****What is the most impactful aspect that you are taking away from this play?

The following parts of this play analysis aggregate historical accounts of Emmett Till, the details of his murder and trial as well as the legacy of lynching in America for greater context. It is encouraged that you read these aspects before completing your analysis as a way to ground the play and augment your understanding of the larger story beyond what was depicted in the play.

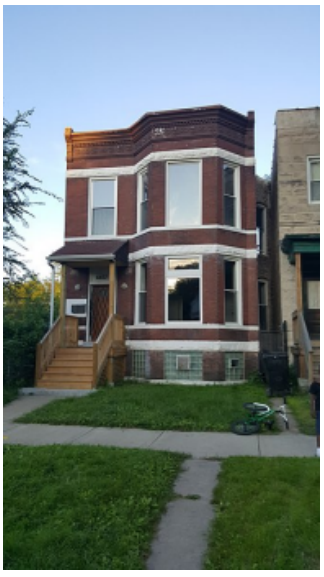
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Who was Emmett Till?

Emmett Louis Till (July 25, 1941 – August 28, 1955) was a 14-year-old African American boy who was abducted, tortured, and lynched in Mississippi in 1955, after being accused of offending a white woman in her family's grocery store. The brutality of his murder and the fact that his killers were acquitted drew attention to the long history of violent persecution of African Americans in the United States. Till posthumously became an icon of the civil rights movement.

Emmett Till was born in 1941 in Chicago; he was the son of Mamie Carthan (1921–2003) and Louis Till (1922–1945). Emmett's mother Mamie was born in the small Delta town of Webb, Mississippi. The Delta region encompasses the large, multi-county area of northwestern Mississippi in the watershed of the Yazoo and Mississippi rivers. When Carthan was two years old, her family moved to Argo, Illinois, near Chicago, as part of the Great Migration of rural black families out of the South to the North to escape violence, lack of opportunity and unequal treatment under the law. Argo received so many Southern migrants that it was named "Little Mississippi"; Carthan's mother's home was often used by other recent migrants as a way station while they were trying to find jobs and housing.

Mississippi was the poorest state in the U.S. in the 1950s, and the Delta counties were some of the poorest in Mississippi. Mamie Carthan was born in Tallahatchie County, where the average income per white household in 1949 was $690 (equivalent to $7,000 in 2016). For black families, the figure was $462 (equivalent to $4,700 in 2016). In the rural areas, economic opportunities for blacks were almost nonexistent. They were mostly sharecroppers who lived on land owned by whites. Blacks had essentially been disenfranchised and excluded from voting and the political system since 1890 when the white-dominated legislature passed a new constitution that raised barriers to voter registration. Whites had also passed ordinances establishing racial segregation and Jim Crow laws.



Mamie largely raised Emmett with her mother; she and Louis Till separated in 1942 after she discovered that he had been unfaithful. Louis later abused her, choking her to unconsciousness, to which she responded by throwing scalding water at him. For violating court orders to stay away from Mamie, Louis Till was forced by a judge in 1943 to choose between jail or enlisting in the U.S. Army. In 1945, a few weeks before his son's fourth birthday, he was executed for the murder of an Italian woman, and the rape of two others.

At the age of six, Emmett contracted polio, which left him with a persistent stutter. Mamie and Emmett moved to Detroit, where she met and married "Pink" Bradley in 1951. Emmett preferred living in Chicago, so he returned there to live with his grandmother; his mother and stepfather rejoined him later that year. After the marriage dissolved in 1952, "Pink" Bradley returned alone to Detroit.

This picture is the Chicago two-flat at 6427 S. St. Lawrence Avenue where Emmett Till lived with his mother in mid-1955.

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Mamie Till Bradley and Emmett lived together in a busy neighborhood in Chicago's South Side, near distant relatives. She began working as a civilian clerk for the U.S. Air Force for a better salary. She recalled that Emmett was industrious enough to help with chores at home, although he sometimes got distracted. His mother remembered that he did not know his own limitations at times. Following the couple's separation, Bradley visited Mamie and began threatening her. At eleven years old, Emmett, with a butcher knife in hand, told Bradley he would kill him if the man did not leave. Usually, however, Emmett was happy. He and his cousins and friends pulled pranks on each other (Emmett once took advantage of an extended car ride when his friend fell asleep and placed the friend's underwear on his head), and they also spent their free time in pickup baseball games. He was a natty dresser and was often the center of attention among his peers.

Emmett Till's Murder

Till grew up in a working-class neighborhood on the south side of Chicago, and though he had attended a segregated elementary school, he was not prepared for the level of segregation he encountered in Mississippi. His mother warned him to take care because of his race, but Emmett enjoyed pulling pranks.

On August 24, stood with his cousins and some friends outside a country store in Money, Mississippi. He went in, bought some candy, and on the way out was heard saying, "Bye, baby" to the woman. There were no witnesses in the store, but Carolyn Bryant—the woman behind the counter—later claimed that he grabbed her, made lewd advances and wolf-whistled at her as he sauntered out.

Roy Bryant, the proprietor of the store and the woman's husband, returned from a business trip a few days later and heard how Emmett had allegedly spoken to his wife. Enraged, he went to the home of Till's great uncle, Mose Wright, with his half-brother J.W. Milam in the early morning hours of August 28.

The pair demanded to see the boy. Despite pleas from Wright, they forced Emmett into their car. After driving around in the night, and perhaps beating Till in a toolhouse behind Milam's residence, they drove him down to the Tallahatchie River.

His assailants—the white woman's husband and his brother—made Emmett carry a 75-pound cotton gin fan to the bank of the Tallahatchie River and ordered him to take off his clothes. The two men then beat him nearly to death, gouged out his eye, shot him in the head and then threw his body, tied to the cotton gin fan with barbed wire, into the river.

On August 28, 1955, Emmett Till was brutally murdered for allegedly flirting with a white woman four days earlier. Three days later, his corpse was recovered but was so disfigured that Mose Wright could only identify it by an initialed ring. Authorities wanted to bury the body quickly, but Till's mother, Mamie Bradley, requested it be sent back to Chicago. After seeing the mutilated remains, she decided to have an open-casket funeral so that all the world could see what racist murderers had done to her only son. Jet, an African American weekly magazine, published a photo of Emmett's corpse, and soon the mainstream media picked up on the story.

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Less than two weeks after Emmett's body was buried, Milam and Bryant went on trial in a segregated courthouse in Sumner, Mississippi. There were few witnesses besides Mose Wright, who positively identified the defendants as Emmett's killers.

On September 23, the all-white jury deliberated for less than an hour before issuing a verdict of "not guilty," explaining that they believed the state had failed to prove the identity of the body. Many people around the country were outraged by the decision and also by the state's decision not to indict Milam and Bryant on the separate charge of kidnapping.

Carolyn Bryant Confesses [1]



The Emmett Till murder trial brought to light the brutality of Jim Crow segregation in the South and was an early impetus of the civil rights movement. In 2017, Tim Tyson, author of the book The Blood of Emmett Till, revealed that Carolyn Bryant recanted her testimony, admitting that Till had never touched, threatened or harassed her. "Nothing that boy did could ever justify what happened to him," she said.

Roy and Carolyn Bryant and J. W. Milam will always be linked to the 1955 murder of Emmett Till. In the minds of many, they live in history as the trio that got away with murder. Carolyn Bryant, the daughter of a plantation manager and a nurse, hailed from Indianola, Mississippi, the nucleus of the segregationist and supremacist white Citizens' Councils. A high school dropout, she won two beauty contests and married Roy Bryant, an ex-soldier. The couple ran a small grocery, Bryant's Grocery & Meat Market, that sold provisions to black sharecroppers and their children. The store was located at one end of the main street in the tiny town of Money, the heart of the cotton growing Mississippi Delta. They had two sons and lived in two small rooms in the back of the store. To earn extra cash, Roy worked as a trucker with his half-brother J. W. Milam, an imposing man of six feet two inches, weighing 235 pounds. Milam prided himself on knowing how to "handle" blacks. He had served in World War II and received a combat medal.



On the evening of August 24, 1955, Emmett Till went with his cousins and some friends to Bryant's Grocery for refreshments after picking cotton in the hot sun. The boys went into the store one or two at a time to buy soda pop or bubble gum. Emmett walked in and bought two cents' worth of bubble gum. Though exactly what happened next is uncertain, Emmett flirted with, whistled at, or touched the hand or waist of Carolyn. She stormed out of the store. The kids outside said she was going to get a pistol. Frightened, Emmett and his group left.

[1] "Getting Away with Murder." PBS, Public Broadcasting Service, www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/emmett-biography-roy-carolyn-bryant-and-jw milam/

Carolyn told her sister-in-law, Juanita, who was in the back of the store with their children, what had happened. They agreed not to tell their husbands, who were out of town on a trucking job. When Roy and J. W. returned, one of the kids at the scene told them what had occurred. In the Deep South, an environment where the divisions between blacks and whites were severely defined, Roy and his half-brother decided Emmett had crossed the line and needed to be taught a lesson.

At about 2:30 a.m. on August 28, under the cover of darkness, the two white men showed up at Moses Wright's home, where Emmett was staying, and took him away. Wright said he saw a person in the car, possibly Carolyn, who helped identify Emmett. The boy's corpse would be found several days later, disfigured and decomposing in the Tallahatchie River. Moses Wright could identify the body only by an initialed ring, which had belonged to Emmett's father, Louis Till.



Bryant and Milam had already been rounded up as murder suspects, and Southern papers were decrying the "savage crime." Yet Northern outrage prompted many Southerners to resent outside agitators and rally in support of the suspects. When Bryant and Milam could not afford a legal defense, five local lawyers stepped up to represent the two suspects pro bono.

When the trial opened in September, the national and international press descended on the scene. Roy, Carolyn and J. W. became celebrities. Some reporters talked about Roy and Carolyn's "handsome looks" and J. W.'s tall stature and big cigars. They even alluded to Carolyn as "Roy Bryant's most attractive wife" and a "crossroads Marilyn Monroe."

During the trial, the families arrived with their sons dressed in their Sunday best. Roy and J.W. in starched white shirts while their wives donned cotton dresses. Many whites in the surrounding counties showed up to watch the show. They brought their children, picnic baskets and ice cream cones. Meanwhile, African American spectators were relegated to the back and looked on in fear. Carolyn testified under oath, but outside the presence of the jury, that Emmett said "ugly remarks" to her before whistling.

When they were acquitted, the men later sold their story for $4,000 to reporter William Bradford Huie. Two of their defense attorneys helped facilitate the interview that was published in Look magazine in January 1956. After the town's show of support at the trial, the men talked freely about how they killed the young teen from Chicago. But soon after the article came out, both men were ostracized. Blacks stopped frequenting groceries owned by both the Bryant and Milam families. The stores soon went out of business. Unable to find work, Roy took his family to East Texas and attended welding school. His half-brother J. W. followed him soon after. Years later, both men would return to Mississippi.

John Whitten, one of their defense attorneys, told National Public Radio's Soundprint program in a 1994 interview that he later regretted defending the case. "I'm not proud of it," Whitten said. "I wished I had never been associated with it."

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Roy Bryant was also interviewed for the same Soundprint program. Legally blind and plagued with back trouble, he refused to talk about the case. Even though he was protected by double jeopardy, he still feared he would have to pay for his crime before he died.



"Let that goddamn stuff die," Bryant said. "Look what they done with Beckwith. And now they want to get me, well, to hell with them. I'm not gon' talk about it. Can't ever tell what they might do nowadays, they might change the Constitution." (White supremacist Byron de la Beckwith was convicted of murder in 1994, 31 years after assassinating black NAACP field secretary Medgar Evers.) Embittered, Roy also claimed that his half-brother J. W. got all the money from the Look deal. "A lot of people made a bunch of money off of this. I ain't never made a damn nickel." In 1981, Milam died of cancer of the bone. In August 1994, shortly after the Soundprint interview, Roy Bryant died of cancer.

No one ever did time for Emmett Till's murder.

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History of Lynching in America

White Americans used lynching to terrorize and control Black people in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

What are lynchings?

A lynching is the public killing of an individual who has not received any due process. These executions were often carried out by lawless mobs, though police officers did participate, under the pretext of justice. Lynchings were violent public acts that white people used to terrorize and control Black people in the 19th and 20th centuries, particularly in the South. Lynchings typically evoke images of Black men and women hanging from trees, but they involved other extreme brutality, such as torture, mutilation, decapitation, and desecration. Some victims were burned alive. A typical lynching involved a criminal accusation, an arrest, and the assembly of a mob, followed by seizure, physical torment, and murder of the victim. Lynchings were often public spectacles attended by the white community in celebration of white supremacy. Photos of lynchings were often sold as souvenir postcards.

How many people were lynched?

From 1882 to 1968, 4,743 lynchings occurred in the U.S., according to records maintained by NAACP. Other accounts, including the Equal Justice Initiative's extensive report on lynching, count slightly different numbers, but it's impossible to know for certain how many lynchings occurred because there was no formal tracking. Many historians believe the true number is underreported. The highest number of lynchings during that time period occurred in Mississippi, with 581 recorded. Georgia was second with 531, and Texas was third with 493. Lynchings did not occur in every state. There are no recorded lynchings in Arizona, Idaho, Maine, Nevada, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wisconsin.

Black people were the primary victims of lynching: 3,446, or about 72 percent of the people lynched, were Black. But they weren't the only victims of lynching. Some white people were lynched for helping Black people or for being anti-lynching. Immigrants from Mexico, China, Australia, and other countries were also lynched.

Allegations Behind Lynchings

White mobs often used dubious criminal accusations to justify lynchings. A common claim used to lynch Black men was perceived sexual transgressions against white women. Charges of rape were routinely fabricated. These allegations were used to enforce segregation and advance stereotypes of Black men as violent, hypersexual aggressors. Hundreds of Black people were lynched based on accusations of other crimes, including murder, arson, robbery, and vagrancy. Many victims of lynchings were murdered without being accused of any crime. They were killed for violating social customs or racial expectations, such as speaking to white people with less respect than what white people believed they were owed.

How NAACP Fought Lynchings

As Black Americans fled the South to escape the terror of lynchings, a historic event known as the Great Migration, people began to oppose lynchings in a number of ways. They

conducted grassroots activism, such as boycotting white businesses. Anti-lynching crusaders like Ida B. Wells composed newspaper columns to criticize the atrocities of lynching.

And several important civil rights organizations — including NAACP — emerged during this time to combat racial violence. NAACP led a courageous battle against lynching. In the July 1916 issue of The Crisis, editor W.E.B. Du Bois published a photo essay called "The Waco Horror" that featured brutal images of the lynching of Jesse Washington. Washington was a 17-year-old Black teen lynched in Waco, Texas, by a white mob that accused him of killing Lucy Fryer, a white woman. Du Bois was able to turn postcards of Washington's murder against their creators to energize the anti-lynching movement. The Crisis's circulation grew by 50,000 over the next two years, and we raised $20,000 toward an anti-lynching campaign.

In 1919, NAACP published Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States, 1889-1919, to promote awareness of the scope of lynching. The data in this study offer the gruesome facts by number, year, state, color, sex, and alleged offense. Among the campaign's other efforts, from 1920 to 1938, we flew a flag from our national headquarters in New York that bore the words "A man was lynched yesterday." The campaign turned the tide of public opinion and even persuaded some southern newspapers to oppose lynching because it was damaging the South's economic prospects. NAACP also fought hard for anti-lynching legislation. In 1918, Congressman Leonidas Dyer of Missouri first introduced his Anti-Lynching Bill — known as the Dyer Bill — into Congress. NAACP supported passage of the bill from 1919 onward, though it was defeated by a Senate filibuster. NAACP continued to push for federal anti-lynching legislation into the 1930s. National lynching rates declined in the 1930s, a trend that NAACP Executive Secretary Walter White attributed to anti-lynching activism, shifts in public opinion, and the Great Migration. The first full year without a recorded lynching occurred in 1952.

The Lynching of Emmett Till

The tide may have turned against lynching, but white supremacy and violence continued to terrorize Black communities. In 1955, 14-year-old Emmett Till was brutally murdered for allegedly flirting with a white woman. Till's murder and subsequent injustice deeply affected the Black community and galvanized a young generation of Black people to join the Civil Rights Movement. NAACP declared Till's murder a lynching. Southeast Regional Director Ruby Hurley, Mississippi Field Secretary Medgar Evers, and Amzie Moore, president of the Bolivar County branch in Mississippi, initiated the homicide investigation and secured witnesses. An all-white jury acquitted the two men accused, who later bragged about their crimes in a magazine article. Mamie Elizabeth Till-Mobley, Emmet Till's mother, decided to hold an open-casket funeral to put her son's brutalized body on display for the world to see. Jet Magazine published photos of his body in the casket, along with the headline "Negro Boy Was Killed for 'Wolf Whistle,'" causing national outrage among Black and white Americans alike, helping to catalyze the Civil Rights Movement.

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Modern-Day Lynchings
You might think of lynchings as a disgraceful and barbaric practice from the past, but they continue to this day. In 1998, James Byrd was chained to a car by three white supremacists and dragged to his death in the streets of Jasper, Texas. In 2020, Ahmaud Arbery was fatally shot while jogging near Brunswick, Georgia. The three white men charged with killing Arbery claimed he was trespassing.

The videotaped death of George Floyd was a modern-day lynching. Floyd was killed in broad daylight by police officer Derek Chauvin, who held Floyd down with a knee on his neck for more than nine minutes. Lynchings like these should not be part of American society today just as they should not have been 100 years ago. NAACP will continue to fight back against white supremacy and violence, and demand that people responsible, including law enforcement officers, be held accountable.

The Emmett Till Antilynching Act



The Emmett Till Antilynching Act is a United States landmark federal law which makes lynching a federal hate crime. The act amends the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act and prior hate crime laws to define lynching as any conspired bias-motivated offense which results in death or serious bodily injury. It was passed by the U.S House of Representatives on February 28, 2022, and U.S. Senate on March 7, 2022, and signed into law on March 29, 2022, by President Joe Biden.

Background

The bill was named after 14-year-old Emmett Till, who was lynched in Mississippi in 1955, sparking national and international outrage. A federal antilynching bill had been in discussion for over a century and had been proposed hundreds of times. Past attempts which passed at least one legislative chamber include the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill, the Costigan-Wagner Bill and the Justice for Victims of Lynching Act.

116th Congress

Representative Bobby Rush introduced a bill, H.R. 35, on January 3, 2019, during the 116th United States Congress. The bill was reported out of the House Judiciary Committee on October 31, 2019, and was passed by the House, 410–4, on February 26, 2020. During June 2020, while protests and civil unrest over the murder of George Floyd were occurring nationwide, the bill was considered by the Senate. Senator Rand Paul prevented the bill from being passed by unanimous consent as he opposed the bill's language for being overly broad. Paul felt the legislation would include attacks which he felt were not extreme enough to qualify as "lynching", stating that "this bill would cheapen the meaning of lynching by defining it so broadly as to include a minor bruise or abrasion." Paul proposed an amendment that would apply a "serious bodily injury standard" for a crime to be considered as lynching. House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer

criticized Rand Paul's position, saying on Twitter that "it is shameful that one GOP Senator is standing in the way of seeing this bill become law." Senator Kamala Harris added that "Senator Paul is now trying to weaken a bill that was already passed — there's no reason for this" while speaking to have the amendment defeated.

117th Congress

The bill was reintroduced by Rush as H.R. 55 for the 117th Congress, this time revised to include a serious bodily injury standard, and was passed by the House on February 28, 2022. The vote was 422–3, with Republicans Andrew Clyde, Thomas Massie, and Chip Roy voting against. The Senate passed the bill through unanimous consent on March 7, 2022, and the bill was signed into law by President Joe Biden on March 29, 2022.

Text

The act amends section 249(a) of Title 18 of the United States Code[12] to include:

(5) LYNCHING.—Whoever conspires to commit any offense under paragraph (1), (2), or (3) shall, if death or serious bodily injury (as defined in section 2246 of this title) results from the offense, be imprisoned for not more than 30 years, fined in accordance with this title, or both.

(6) OTHER CONSPIRACIES.—Whoever conspires to commit any offense under paragraph (1), (2), or (3) shall, if death or serious bodily injury (as defined in section 2246 of this title) results from the offense, or if the offense includes kidnapping or an attempt to kidnap, aggravated sexual abuse or an attempt to commit aggravated sexual abuse, or an attempt to kill, be imprisoned for not more than 30 years, fined in accordance with this title, or both.

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Who's Who in the Emmett Till Case

Booker, Simeon S. (1918–2017) was a correspondent for *Jet* magazine from 1955 until his retirement in 2007. He covered the Milam–Bryant murder trial for that publication and soon after published his "Negro Reporter at the Till Trial" in the Nieman Reports. He had earlier won the Harvard Nieman Fellowship and then in 1952 became the first black reporter to work for the Washington Post, where he stayed until 1955. He was also the first black to win the National Press Club's Fourth Estate Award. He was educated at Virginia Union University, where he received a Bachelor's degree in 1942. He afterward attended Harvard University. He is also the recipient of the Washington Association of Black Journalists, Career Achievement Award (1993), the National Black Media Coalition, Master Communicators Award (1999), and the WABJ Lifetime Achievement Award (2000).

Bradley, Amanda (c.1905–?) lived on the Sturdivant plantation near Drew, Sunflower County, Mississippi at the time of the Emmett Till murder. This plantation was managed by Leslie Milam, brother of J. W. Milam and half- brother to Roy Bryant. As one of the surprise witnesses gathered by the prosecution, she testified at the murder trial that she saw four white men entering and exiting a barn on the plantation the morning after Emmett was abducted. She also saw a truck outside of the barn. After the trial she, like most of the other black witnesses, moved from Mississippi to Chicago. She is rumored to have moved back to Mississippi before her death, but her whereabouts after 1956 remain unknown. A granddaughter believes she died sometime in the 1960s.

Bradley, Mamie Elizabeth Carthan Till (1921–2003) was the mother of Emmett Louis Till. She was born to Wiley Nash and Alma Smith Carthan in Webb, Tallahatchie County, Mississippi. When she was two years old, the family migrated north to Argo, Cook County, Illinois, a racially mixed community near Chicago. From 1936–1941 she was employed as a domestic worker; from 1941–1943 she worked for the Coffey School of Aeronautics, and from 1953–1956 she was employed by the Federal Government, in charge of confidential Air Force files. She married Louis Till in 1940 and gave birth to her only son, Emmett, in 1941. She and Louis later separated but were never divorced. Louis, later serving in the army in Italy, was executed in 1945. Mamie married a second husband, Lemorse Mallory, on August 19, 1946, but they later divorced. After moving to Detroit, she married Pink Bradley on May 5, 1951, but that marriage also failed. On June 24, 1957, she married Gennie Mobley, and this time, she found a love that lasted. In 1956 she entered the Chicago Teacher's College, where she graduated Cum Laude in 1960. She taught in Chicago schools until her retirement in 1983. During her years as a teacher, she earned a master's degree in Administration and Supervision at Loyola University. In 1973, she trained the first group of children, who would become the Emmett Till Players, to recite speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. She continued to speak and push for justice in her son's slaying up until the time of her death, during which time she served as president of the Emmett Till Foundation. She also co-authored a play with David Barr, The State of Mississippi vs Emmett Till, which was performed in such cities as Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Diego beginning in 1999. She also co-authored her own memoir with Christopher Benson, *Death of Innocence: The Hate Crime That Changed America*, published soon after her death in 2003.

Breland, Jesse Josiah "J. J." (1888–1969) was one of five defense attorneys representing Roy Bryant and J. W. Milam in their murder trial. He was a graduate of Princeton University and began to practice law in Sumner, Tallahatchie County, Mississippi in 1915. He married Sue H.

Savage in 1917 in Sumner. He later went on to become Tallahatchie County chairman of the Republican Party.

Broadway, William Henry, Jr., "June" (1907–1957) was the foreman of the grand jury that met in Greenwood, Mississippi in November,1955, to consider kidnap charges against J. W. Milam and Roy Bryant. The grand jury returned a no true bill and therefore, all charges against Milam and Bryant were dropped. He committed suicide on a plantation in Mississippi where he was a supervisor. Some family members dispute that he actually took his own life and believe he may have been murdered.

Brownell, Herbert, Jr. (1904–1996) was United States attorney general at the time of the Emmett Till murder, and recipient of a telegram from NAACP attorney William Henry Huff urging the federal government to conduct a complete investigation into the killing. He received intense pressure from groups, individuals, and from those at rallies to bring justice to the case, especially after the acquittal of the defendants in the murder trial. He graduated from Yale Law School in 1927 and was admitted to the New York bar. He practiced law in New York City. He also served three terms in the New York assembly from 1933–1937. In 1944 and 1948, he served as campaign manager for Republican presidential candidate Thomas Dewey. As attorney general, he filed the first desegregation suits that followed the Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas and drafted the legislative proposal that became the Civil Rights Act of 1957.

Bryant, Carolyn (1934–) was born in Indianola, Sunflower County, Mississippi. She won two beauty contests in two different high schools, and at age seventeen, left school to marry Roy Bryant on April 25, 1951. She was the target of the "wolf whistle" by Emmett Till while she was running the counter at the Bryant Grocery and Meat Market on August 24, 1955, in Money, Leflore County, Mississippi. She testified during the murder trial that on the occasion of the whistle, "a Negro man" entered the store, grabbed her, asked her for a date, and used various obscenities. Judge Curtis Swango decided that her court testimony of the incident inside the store was not admissible before the jury and so they never heard it. She admitted in 2008 that this part of her testimony (that Till grabbed her) was not true. She had already borne two sons with Roy Bryant by the time of the trial, and later bore a third son and a daughter. The store in Money closed soon after the murder trial, and the family later moved to East Texas and then to Vinton, Louisiana. They returned to Mississippi in 1973. She and Roy Bryant divorced in 1975. She married Griffin Chandler in 1984, and after his death in 1988, she married David Donham. She lived for several years in Greenville, Mississippi. She was a major focus of the 2004–2005 investigation by the FBI as a possible accomplice in the kidnapping and murder of Emmett Till, but there was not enough evidence to support that and in February 2007 a grand jury failed to indict her. After the death of her son Frank in 2010 she left Mississippi. She suffers from rheumatoid arthritis and lives with her son, Thomas Lamar, in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Bryant, Roy (1931–1994) was one of the accused killers of Emmett Till. He was born a twin in Charleston, Tallahatchie County, Mississippi to Henry and Eula Lee Morgan Milam Bryant. He attended the Baptist church in Charleston as a child, and for a time lived in Tutwiler, Tallahatchie County. He later spent three years in the military as a paratrooper (1950-53). He married Carolyn Holloway on April 25, 1951, and the couple had three sons and a daughter. After the murder trial, due to black boycotting of his store, he was forced to close the business. Around this time he and J. W. Milam sold their story confessing to the murder of Emmett Till, to reporter William Bradford Huie for $3,150, and it was published in *Look*

magazine in January 1956. In 1956, he went to the Bell Machine Shop in Inverness, Mississippi, and learned welding with the help of the G. I. Bill. He worked as a welder and boilermaker for 16 years in East Texas and Louisiana. He and his family then moved to Ruleville, Sunflower County, Mississippi, in 1973, and Bryant lived there until his death. Legally blind as a result of his years as a welder, he came to own another general store in Ruleville, which he ran until it burned down in 1989. As his store in Money three decades earlier, the Ruleville establishment catered mainly to a black clientele. He and Carolyn divorced in 1979 and he married Vera Joe Orman in 1980. In 1983, while running his grocery store, he was indicted for buying food stamps for less than their value and then selling them at full price to the government. He plead guilty to two counts of food stamp fraud, but due to the pleas of his attorney, he was sentenced to only three years of probation and a $750.00 fine. Four years later, however, he was again charged with food stamp fraud and was sentenced to two years in prison. However, he was released after only eight months. The Till case was not discussed in the court in either conviction, and both times, he received the minimum sentence because his attorney argued for leniency. Bryant had been "a good citizen," the attorney argued. Toward the end of his life he spent most of his time at home but sold watermelon and other fruit at a stand along the road in Ruleville in the summertime. Plagued with health problems, he nearly lost his feet due to diabetes and eventually died of cancer at the Baptist Hospital in Jackson, Mississippi.

Caldwell, James Hamilton, Jr. (1898–1962) was one of three members of the prosecuting team representing the state of Mississippi at the Milam-Bryant murder trial. He was married to Sarah Petterson and at the time of the trial he was recovering from a heart attack and was unable to bear much of the responsibility of the prosecution team. He had initially opposed the grand jury indictment, stating his belief that "the case was lost from the start." Unfortunately, he drowned seven years after the trial.

Campbell, Melvin L. (1925–1972) was a brother-in-law to J. W. Milam and Roy Bryant, and according to the recent FBI investigation, was with Milam and Bryant when Emmett Till was kidnapped and murdered. He married Mary Louise Bryant on August 26, 1948 in Tallahatchie County Mississippi, and at the time of the Emmett Till murder, he and his wife owned a small store in Minter City, Leflore County, Mississippi. According to the FBI report of their interview
with Mary Louise, Campbell told his wife of his involvement in the crime.

Carlton, Caleb Sidney (1915–1968) was one of five defense attorneys representing Roy Bryant and J. W. Milam at their murder trial. He was admitted to the bar in 1939 and began practicing law in Sumner, Mississippi in 1945. He later became president of the Mississippi Bar Association.

Carter, Hodding (1907–1972) was a journalist who covered the Milam-Bryant murder trial for the Delta- Democrat Times, which he founded by merger in 1938. He remained with the paper as editor and publisher until the mid 1960s. He received a B.A. from Bowdoin College in 1927 and did graduate work in journalism at Columbia University. He was awarded a Neiman Fellowship at Harvard in 1940 and later that year helped found the daily PM. During WWI, he served in the Mississippi National Guard. He was a progressive journalist and known as the "Spokesman for the New South." In 1946 he won a Pulitzer Prize for his editorials against segregation and racist injustice and was censured in 1955 by the Mississippi legislature for his criticisms of the White Citizens Councils. He was the author of numerous books.

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Carthan, Wiley Nash "John" (1902–1969) was the father of Mamie Till-Mobley and grandfather of Emmett Till. He was born in Mississippi and lived there until moving to Argo, Cook County, Illinois with his wife and daughter in 1924. He worked for Corn Products in Argo until his divorce from Alma Smith Carthan in the early 1930s. He later moved to Detroit, Michigan and remarried. His relationship with Mamie was an estranged one until she and Emmett moved briefly to Detroit and in with the Carthans around 1950. He accompanied Mamie to the murder trial in Mississippi in August 1955, providing emotional support during that difficult week. He died at the home of his brother Emmett Carthan while visiting his relatives in Argo and Chicago. He went by the name of John Carthan by the time of the trial.

Chatham, Gerald (1906–1956) was the district attorney who prosecuted J. W. Milam and Roy Bryant in their murder trial. He had practiced law in the district since 1931. He had also served as a state representative, county superintendent of education, and county prosecuting attorney before he was elected district attorney in 1942. He held that office until 1956. Unfortunately, he died of a heart attack at home one year after the trial in Sumner. His family blames his health issues on stress related to the Till case.

Clark, Hubert (1920–1972) was alleged to have been involved in the murder and kidnapping of Emmett Till. According to the 2004-2006 FBI investigation, this claim originated in reports issued in 1955 as well as being confirmed by J. W. Milam several years later in a conversation with a friend. Clark was a World War II veteran. He married Francis Norene Mitchell in 1939.

Coleman, James Plemon "J. P." (1914–1991) was Mississippi Governor-elect at the time of the Milam-Bryant murder trial and assigned his own special agent, Robert Smith, to aid the prosecution. Prior to his election as governor, he had been an aid to a U. S. congressman, and served as district attorney, circuit judge, state attorney general, and justice of the Mississippi Supreme Court. As governor, he was successful in maintaining racial segregation in Mississippi. After his term as governor ended, he was elected to the state House of Representatives. He ran for governor again in 1963 but lost. In 1965 he was appointed to the United States' Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals and held the rank of chief judge from 1979 to 1981. He retired from the fifth circuit in 1984.

Collins, Levy "Too Tight" (1935–1992) has been tied to the murder of Emmett Till by various witnesses. At the time of the murder, he was employed by J. W. Milam, and was allegedly in the truck the morning Emmett was taken to the Shurden plantation near Drew, Sunflower County, Mississippi. Investigators learned that to prevent him from witnessing in court, Sheriff H. C. Strider placed him in jail elsewhere in Tallahatchie County under a false name. In an interview published in the Chicago Defender shortly after the trial, he denied any involvement with the murder. Later in life, he was working in a cotton compress warehouse in Drew.

Crawford, John (1933–) was one of several youths who was with Emmett Till in the evening before his kidnapping. He is the brother of Roosevelt Crawford and uncle of Ruth Crawford, two of the local teenagers who witnessed the incident at the Bryant Grocery and Meat Market. He currently lives in Detroit, Michigan.

Crawford, Roosevelt (1939–) was one of several youths with Emmett Till who went to Bryant's Grocery and Meat Market on August 25, 1955, when the incident between Emmett and Carolyn Bryant occurred. He maintains that Till did not whistle at Bryant but that Till was responding to a bad move made by a checker player on the porch. He is the brother of John

Crawford, who was with Till on the day he was kidnapped, and uncle of Ruth Crawford, who was also present at the store when Till whistled. He currently lives in Detroit, Michigan.

Crawford, Ruth Mae (1937–) was one of several youths with Emmett Till who went to Bryant's Grocery and Meat Market on August 25, 1955, when the incident between Emmett and Carolyn Bryant occurred. Speaking publicly for the first time in Keith Beauchamp's film The Untold Story of Emmett Louis Till, she says she watched Till through a window and that all Till did to upset Bryant while in the store was place his money in her hand, rather than on the counter. She is the niece of Roosevelt Crawford, who was also present that evening, and John Crawford. She lives in Greenwood, Mississippi.

Dogan, Harry H. (1895–1959) was Tallahatchie County Sheriff-elect at the time of the Milam Bryant murder trial. He served from 1956-1960. He allegedly helped pick jurors for the trial that would likely favor an acquittal of the accused. According to one of the defense attorneys, Dogan
sent word to the jurors while they were deliberating to stall the verdict in order to make it "look good." He died in office during this, his fifth term as sheriff.

Evers, Medgar (1925–1963) was field secretary for the Mississippi chapter of the NAACP at the time of the Emmett Till murder. He, with other NAACP officials, helped to seek out witnesses for the trial. He was inducted into the army in 1943 and served in Normandy. He attended Alcorn College (now Alcorn University), where he met his wife to be, Myrlie Beasley. The two were married on December 24, 1951. The following semester, he graduated with a degree in business administration. They moved to Mound Bayou, where he worked as an insurance agent until 1954, and was active in the NAACP and in civil rights activities. He applied for, and was denied entrance into the University of Mississippi Law School. He moved his family to Jackson, where he and Myrlie set up the office of the NAACP and began investigations into violent crimes perpetrated against blacks. His work to bring down segregation made him many enemies, and late in the evening on June 12, 1963, he was gunned down in his driveway as he returned home. His killer, Byron De La Beckwith, was tried twice in 1964 and set free due to two hung juries. Beckwith was finally convicted in 1994 and died in prison.

Ford, Louis Henry (1914–1995) was the bishop who preached Emmett Till's funeral sermon. He was also the presiding bishop of the Church of God in Christ and the namesake of the Bishop Ford Freeway in Chicago. He began his ministry in 1926, and became national director of public relations for the Church of God in Christ in 1945. He was elevated to the position of assistant presiding bishop in 1972 and in 1990, became presiding bishop. A graduate of Saints College in Lexington, Mississippi, he moved to Chicago in 1933. In 1963 he founded the St. Paul Church of God in Christ and later the C. H. Mason and William Roberts Bible Institute for Bible Studies.

Frasier, John, Jr. (?–?) was a Leflore County prosecutor who worked on the kidnapping case against J. W. Milam and Roy Bryant. The kidnapping occurred in Leflore County.

Garrett, Simon (1924–2007) was a funeral home assistant to Chester Miller at the Century Burial Association and assisted in bringing the body of Emmett Till to Greenwood after it was retrieved from the Tallahatchie River. He pulled a ring off of Till's finger that was later used to identify the body. He lived in Greenwood, Mississippi until the time of his death.

Henderson, Robert Harvey (1921–2007) was one of five defense attorneys representing J. W. Milam and Roy Bryant in their murder trial. At 34, he was the youngest of the legal team. He had been a life-long resident of Tallahatchie County and had been in practice since 1947. As the last surviving member of the defense team, his death came just five days after Tallahatchie County apologized to the Till family for the injustices of the trial on October 2, 2007.

Hodges, Robert (c. 1938–) was the young fisherman who discovered Emmett Till's body in the Tallahatchie River at a spot called Pecan Point, near Philipp, on August 31, 1955. He was a witness for the prosecution at the murder trial.

Hubbard, Joe Willie (c. 1928–?) was alleged by T.R.M. Howard to have been with J. W. Milam and Roy Bryant in the murder of Emmett Till. This claim was also put forth by two other writers who published investigative pieces on the murder in 1956: Olive Arnold Adams in Time Bomb: Mississippi Exposed and the Full Story of Emmett Till, and Amos Dixon (pseudonym) in a series
of articles in the California Eagle (although Adams uses the pseudonym "Herbert" for Hubbard). Although Willie Reed and Henry Loggins recently recalled having once known Hubbard, no one knows what happened to him.

Huff, William Henry (1888–1963) was a NAACP attorney who represented Mamie Bradley after Emmett Till was murdered. He later terminated his services with her when the NAACP ended its sponsorship of Mrs. Bradley's speaking tour. He attended Georgia Normal and Industrial Institute and Knox Institute in Athens, Georgia. He also attended the Chicago Law School, obtaining his L.L.B., and the John Marshall Law School for his J.D. He was admitted to the Indiana Bar in 1936 and the Illinois Bar in 1946. He was also admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court. In addition to law, he was trained at the National Medical University in Chicago and practiced pharmacy.

Huie, William Bradford (1910–1986) was the reporter who paid J. W. Milam and Roy Bryant $3,150 to tell their story after their acquittal. Their confession appeared in an article by Huie in Look magazine in 1956. He graduated from the University of Alabama in 1930 and worked as a reporter for the Birmingham Post from 1932-1936 and as associate editor for American Mercury from 1941-1943. He served in the U. S. Navy from 1943-1945, and then returned to the Mercury as editor and publisher until 1952. In the 1950s, he interviewed political figures for the CBS series, Chronoscope. He authored numerous books over the years, including Wolf Whistle, in 1969, a chapter of which deals with the Emmett Till murder.

Hurley, Ruby (1913–1980) was southeastern director of the NAACP who, with Amzie Moore and Medgar Evers, helped seek out witnesses for the prosecution in the Milam-Bryant murder trial. To do so, she disguised herself as a field worker. In 1951 she had moved from New York to Birmingham to establish the first permanent office of the NAACP in the deep south. She was the first professional civil rights worker in the south. She was later involved in the 1952-56 case of Autherine Lucy, who was the first black woman to be admitted to the University of Alabama.

Jackson, David (1922–1966) covered the Milam-Bryant murder trial as a photographer for Ebony and Jet magazine. He took the famous photo of Emmett Till on the slab at the A. A. Rayner & Sons Funeral Home, published in Jet, which shocked the nation. Just before the

trial, while interviewing Mose Wright at his home, with Clotye Murdock, he witnessed a truck carrying six armed white men slow past the house.

Johnson, Otha, Jr. (1934–2002) was, according to his son, with Roy Bryant and J. W. Milam on the night they kidnapped and murdered Emmett Till, as stated in the FBI report of its 2004-2006 investigation. He may have been one of four black men seen by Willie Reed on the back of a truck on the morning of Till's murder.

Jones, Curtis (1938–2000) was a cousin of Emmett Till. He traveled from Illinois to Mississippi to spend time with Mose Wright's family shortly after Emmett and Wheeler Parker had left, and was in the Wright home the night Emmett was abducted. He is quoted in the film Eyes on the Prize as having been at the store at the time of the incident between Emmett Till and Carolyn Bryant, although he had not yet arrived in Mississippi. He served with the Chicago Police Department for years.

Jones, Willie Mae Wright (1917–) is the oldest child of Moses and Lucinda Larry Wright. She was the mother of Curtis Jones, a cousin of Emmett Till who traveled from Chicago to Mississippi shortly after Emmett and Wheeler Parker left, and was in the Wright home the night Emmett was abducted. It was Willie Mae's phone call on Sunday morning, August 28, 1955, that notified Mamie Bradley that Emmett had been kidnapped from her father's home. As of 2008, she is still living in Chicago, and is the oldest living direct link to the Emmett Till case.

Kellum, Joseph W. (1911–1996) was one of five defense attorneys representing J. W. Milam and Roy Bryant in their murder trial. He had lived in Tallahatchie County since 1920 and was admitted to the bar in 1939. In 1955, he ran for District Attorney and lost that race just a week before Emmett Till was murdered.

Kimbell, Elmer O. (1922–1985) was a friend of J. W. Milam, and according to Carolyn Bryant, in her testimony before the FBI in its 2004-2006 investigation, he was present with Milam and Roy Bryant on the night Emmett Till was kidnapped. Shortly after the Milam-Bryant murder trial, he shot and killed a black man, Clinton Melton in Glendora, Mississippi, at the gas station that Melton worked at, because Melton put more gas in Kimbell's car than he had asked for. Kimbell was acquitted by an all-white jury in Sumner, Mississippi shortly thereafter.

Loggins, Henry Lee (1923–2009) is believed to have been with J. W. Milam and Roy Bryant during the kidnapping and murder of Emmett Till. He was employed by J. W. Milam at the time of the murder and went missing shortly thereafter. During the trial, it was rumored that he, and another possible accomplice named Leroy Collins were placed in the county jail at Charleston, Mississippi under false names in order to keep them from testifying, but this was never substantially proven. He later moved to Ohio. During the 2004-2006 FBI investigation he denied having anything to do with the murder.

McGarrh, Lee (1920–2002) lived in Glendora, Leflore County, Mississippi, and was one of the character witnesses for J. W. Milam in the Milam-Bryant murder trial. A few months after the trial, his employee at his service station, a black man named Clinton Melton, was murdered at the station by a white man, Elmer Kimbrell. The trial was held in Sumner, Mississippi, with several of the same cast of characters as the Milam-Bryant trial. This time, McGarrh, outraged

at the murder, testified for the prosecution.

Melton, Garland (1907–1962) was deputy sheriff of Tallahatchie County who arrived at the scene at the Tallahatchie River when Emmett Till's body was found. He and Robert Hodges (who discovered the body) took separate boats into the river in order to retrieve the body. He married Myrtha Campbell in 1939 in Charleston, Tallahatchie County.

Milam, John William "J. W." (1919–1980) was one of the accused murderers of Emmett Till. He was born in Charleston, Tallahatchie County, Mississippi, to William Leslie and Eula Morgan Milam. He married Juanita Thompson on December 11, 1949 in Tallahatchie County, Mississippi, and they had two sons. He possessed only a ninth grade education and fought in Europe during World War II. While in the military he won a purple heart, a silver star, and other medals. Soon after the trial and acquittal, he and Roy Bryant sold their story confessing to the murder of Emmett Till to reporter William Bradford Huie for $3,150, and it was published in Look magazine. By 1956, Milam found he was unable to rent land and was refused a loan due to
his notoriety in the case. The Milam's moved to Texas for several years, and later returned to Mississippi. They moved to Greenville, Washington County, Mississippi in 1965 and were said to have later divorced, but he is listed as married to Juanita in his obituary, and there is no divorce record for them in Greenville or Washington County. He had worked as a heavy equipment operator in Greenville and was retired at the time of his death from cancer.

Milam, Mary Juanita Thompson (1927–2014) married John W. Milam on December 11, 1949 in Tallahatchie County, Mississippi. She was at the back of the Bryant Grocery and Meat Market, in the apartment, when the incident between Emmett Till and Carolyn Bryant occurred, and was a witness for the defense at the trial. She and J. W. Milam were the parents of two sons and the family moved to east Texas in 1962. They later returned to Mississippi around 1965 and lived in Greenville, Washington County. She and J. W were said to have later divorced, but she is listed as his wife in his obituary, and there is no divorce record for them in Greenville or Washington County. She moved to Ocean Springs, Mississippi around 1994 and died there at age 87.

Milam, Leslie F. (1925–1974) was born in Tallahatchie County, Mississippi to William Leslie and Eula Morgan Milam. He was the brother of J. W. Milam and half-brother to Roy Bryant, accused murderers of Emmett Till. He married Francis Moody Waldrup in 1949. According to witnesses, Emmett Till was beaten and shot in a tool shed at the Shurden plantation that Leslie Milam managed, and that they saw Milam present. According to the 2004-2006 FBI investigation, Milam confessed to a local minister shortly before his death that he had been involved in Till's murder and that he had been troubled by that involvement.

Mims, Benjamin "B. L." (1925–2001) was in the boat with Garland Melton when Emmett Till's body was pulled from the Tallahatchie River on August 31, 1955. He married Carol Dyanne Gregg in 1950 and lived in Philipp, Tallahatchie County, Mississippi. He served as a witness for the prosecution and testified to the condition of Emmett's body.

Mobley, Gennie (1923–2000) married Mamie Till Bradley two years after Emmett Till's death, and had several children from a previous marriage. He was a barber in Chicago when he met Mamie, and during their courtship grew close to Emmett. He accompanied Mamie Bradley to the A. A. Rayner funeral home where she examined the body for identification purposes.

Gene aided in this effort as he recognized the haircut that he had given Emmett two weeks prior. He later became a well-respected Cadillac salesman in Chicago. He traveled the country with his wife whenever she spoke on her son's case and remained her greatest supporter until his death.

Parker, Thelton "Pete" (c.1938–) was one of the local youths who was with Emmett Till in Money, Mississippi the evening of the incident between Emmett Till and Carolyn Bryant at Bryant's Grocery and Meat Market. He currently lives in Michigan.

Parker, Wheeler (1939–) was a cousin of Emmett Till who accompanied him to Mississippi from Chicago to visit relatives. He was with Emmett at the Bryant Grocery and Meat Market the night that Emmett allegedly whistled at Carolyn Bryant. He was in the home of Moses and Elizabeth Wright the night that Emmett was abducted. He was born in Mississippi and moved with his parents and two siblings to Argo, Illinois in 1947. He operated a barber shop in Argo until 2007. He also became a minister in 1977. In 1993, he became pastor of the Argo Temple Church of God in Christ, the church Alma Spearman, Emmett's grandmother, helped to found.

Rayner, Ahmed A., Sr. (1893–1989) was the funeral director who received Emmett Till's body after its arrival in Chicago on September 2, 1955. He defied orders from Mississippi to keep the casket sealed and allowed Mamie Bradley to examine the remains of her son.

Reed, Add (1879–1977) was one of the surprise witnesses at the Milam-Bryant murder trial, who testified that the morning after Emmett was abducted, he walked past the barn at the Shurden plantation and saw Leslie Milam and another white man. He was the grandfather of Willie Reed, who also testified.

Reed, Willie (1937–2013) was one of the surprise witnesses at the Milam-Bryant murder trial. He lived next door to the Shurden plantation managed by Leslie Milam and testified that he heard beating and yelling coming from a tool shed near the barn on the plantation. He also saw J. W. Milam leave the shed and get a drink of water. After the acquittal, he moved to Chicago, where, upon his arrival, he suffered a nervous breakdown due to the stress built up over the trial. He worked as a surgical orderly for forty-eight years at Jackson Park Hospital in Chicago. It was there that he met his wife, Juliet Mendenhall, who was then a nurse's aide, now a registered nurse. They married in 1976. After years of declining health, he died of gastronomical bleeding at age seventy- six.

Sanders, Stanny (1919–1971) of Indianola, Leflore County, was a district prosecutor who worked on the kidnapping case against J. W. Milam and Roy Bryant. He later served on the defense team during the 1964 murder trials of Byron De La Beckwith, accused killer of civil rights leader Medgar Evers. The library at Mississippi Delta Community College is named after him.

Smith, Crosby (1908–1993) was an uncle to Mamie Till Bradley and brother of her mother, Alma Spearman. Through his efforts, Emmett Till's body was released from the state of Mississippi after attempts were made to bury it in Money. He accompanied it on the train back to Chicago. He remained a resident of Sumner after the trial until his death.

Spearman, Alma Smith Carthan Gaines (1902–1981) was the mother of Mamie Bradley and

grandmother of Emmett Till. She helped her daughter in the days after Emmett was kidnapped and murdered, and it was at her home that Chicago reporters first congregated. She was born in Mississippi and married Wiley Nash Carthan in 1919. She lived in Mississippi until moving to
Argo, Illinois with her husband and daughter in 1924, where she was a founder of the Argo Temple Church of God in Christ. In the early 1930s she and Nash separated and divorced, after which she married Tom Gaines. He died in 1944 and she married Henry Spearman in 1947. After his death in 1967, she moved in with Mamie and Gene Mobley, where she lived until her death.

Swango, Curtis M. (1908–1968) presided as judge at the Milam-Bryant murder trial. He graduated from Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi, and from the University of Mississippi law school. He was appointed to the Circuit Court bench in 1950 by then Governor Fielding Wright and was a judge of the Seventeenth Judicial District. He was praised by black and white journalists for the even-handed way he conducted the trial.

Washington, Johnny B. (1928–1980) was a black male who worked for Roy Bryant and, according to the 2004– 2006 FBI investigation, was alleged to have assisted in the kidnapping
and murder of Emmett Till. He may have been the "third man" who appeared on Moses Wright's porch and remained outside when Milam and Bryant entered Wright's home and abducted Till.

Whitten, John W. (1919–2003) was one of five defense attorneys representing Roy Bryant and J. W. Milam in their murder trial. He was born in Tallahatchie County and began practicing law in Sumner in 1940. He served as Tallahatchie County chairman of the Democratic Party and attorney for the board of supervisors. He was the first cousin of Jamie Whitten of the U. S. House of Representatives.

Withers, Ernest C. (1922–2007) was the photographer who defied Judge Swango's orders and captured a photograph while court was in session during the Milam-Bryant murder trial. The photo was that of Moses Wright standing at the witness stand, pointing out J. W. Milam and Roy Bryant as the men who kidnapped Emmett Till from his home. He got his start as a military photographer while serving in the South Pacific during World War II, and became a photographer by profession upon his return to Memphis after the war. He published a photo pamphlet of the Emmett Till murder case, and also photographed important events such as the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the strike of Memphis sanitation workers. At the funeral of Medgar Evers, he was beaten and arrested by a police officer. During his 60 year career, he accumulated over five million photographs. His work has appeared in the New York Times, Jet, Ebony, Newsweek, and Life. He won the National News Association's Best Photograph of the Year in 1968. In 1988 he was elected to the Black Press Hall of Fame and received an honorary doctorate from the Massachusetts College of Art. He continued to operate his photography studio on Beal Street in Memphis, Tennessee until near the time of his death.

Wright, Elizabeth Smith (1900–1970) was the wife of Moses Wright, sister of Alma Spearman, and great aunt of Emmett Till. She was present the night Emmett was abducted from her home, and offered J. W. Milam and Roy Bryant money if they would leave Till alone. She left her home the night of the abduction and never returned. She moved to Chicago and remained there during the murder trial while her husband and sons stayed behind to pick

cotton and for Moses to testify at the trial.

Wright, Maurice (1939–1991) was one of several youths who accompanied Emmett Till to Bryant's Grocery and Meat Market on August 25, 1955 and witnessed the incident between Emmett and Carolyn Bryant. He was a son of Moses and Elizabeth Smith Wright. It was believed by some that he may have been the one who told Roy Bryant about the incident, setting off the events that led to Emmett's murder, although this is denied by his family. After a troubled life, he lost contact with his family and died an alcoholic and homeless.

Wright, Moses (1892–1977) was the great-uncle of Emmett Till, who visited Chicago in August 1955 and brought Emmett and Wheeler Parker to Mississippi. He was born in Mississippi and married Lucinda Larry on December 16, 1911. After her death, he married Elizabeth Smith around 1925. Until 1949 he preached at a black church in Money, Mississippi, and also worked as a sharecropper. Since 1946, he worked on a plantation in Money owned by Frederick Grover. He identified J. W. Milam and Roy Bryant in court as the men who came to his home the morning of August 28, 1955 and kidnapped Emmett Till. After the trial, he moved to Argo, Illinois, with his family and did some speaking engagements on the Emmett Till case that were sponsored by the NAACP. Due to his notoriety in the case, he was offered a lifetime job in a
nursery in Albany, New York. However, he chose to move to Argo, where he lived quietly after the case died down and his speaking engagements ended, working as a janitor in a night-club in Chicago and at a restaurant in Argo. He died in the White Oak Nursing Home in Indian Head Park, Illinois. Recall that J. W. Milam asked him how old he was on the night of the kidnapping of Emmett Till, and he said "sixty-four." Milam's response was that if Wright knew anyone there that night, he would never live to be sixty-five. Wright's obituary in August 1977 says he was 85 years old at his death, and his death record in the Social Security Death Index, as well as the 1900 U. S. Census says he was born in April 1892. If these are all correct, then he was actually 63, not 64, when Emmett Till was kidnapped.

Wright, Robert (1940–) is a son of Moses and Elizabeth Wright and was in the house, sleeping in the bed with Curtis Jones in a nearby room on the night Emmett Till was kidnapped.

Wright, Simeon Brown (1942–2017) is the son of Moses and Elizabeth Smith Wright. He lived with his family near Money, Mississippi and was in the bed with Emmett Till at the time of Till's abduction on August 28, 1955. He left Mississippi with his family after the murder trial and was raised in Argo, Illinois. He later moved to nearby Countryside, Illinois. For several years he worked as a pipe-fitter for Reynolds Metals, Co. During the 2004-2006 investigation, he spoke out publicly many times about the need for justice in the case. In 2010 he published his own memoir about the case, Simeon's Story: An Eyewitness Account of the Kidnapping of Emmett Till.

Young, Frank (c. 1920–?) was a field worker who volunteered names of accomplices of J. W. Milam and Roy Bryant in the kidnapping and murder of Emmett Till to Dr. T. R. M. Howard, as well as leads to possible witnesses. It was intended that he testify on behalf of the prosecution at the Milam-Bryant murder trial, but for whatever reason, he left the courthouse and did not testify.

Sources

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