

CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION

Notice to Close File

May 04, 2015

File No. 144-41-3595

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

To: Chief, Criminal Section

Re: Raleigh Glover, Elden Hester, Kenneth Head  
Tommie Lee Jones, and Jimmie Copeland - Subjects (all deceased);  
Wharlest Jackson – Victim (deceased)  
CIVIL RIGHTS

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It is recommended that the above case be closed for the following reasons:

1. Date of the Incident: February 27, 1967
2. Synopsis of the Facts and Reasons for Closing:

It is recommended that the above case be closed because it cannot be conclusively determined who committed the crime and the most likely suspects are all deceased. A detailed description of the FBI's investigation and the reasons for closing this case are provided below.

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Patricia Sumner  
Trial Attorney

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To: Records Section  
Office of Legal Administration

The above numbered file has been closed as of this date.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Chief, Criminal Section  
FORMERLY CVR-3 FORM CL-3

## **I. Case Synopsis and Predication for Investigation**

At approximately 8:00 p.m., on February 27, 1967, Wharlest Jackson's pick-up truck exploded as he was driving it home from Armstrong Tire & Rubber Company where he worked in Natchez, Mississippi. Jackson, a 37-year-old African-American man, had recently been promoted to a new position at Armstrong. He had driven approximately six blocks from the plant after having completed working overtime on his day-shift when the explosion occurred. The type of explosive material was never identified. Jackson suffered extensive damage to the lower-half of his torso and died on the scene. Based on the location of Jackson's injuries and the extensive damage to his truck under the driver's seat area, the FBI concluded that the bomb or other explosive device was placed under the driver's seat area on the outside of the frame of the truck.

At the request of then-Assistant Attorney General of the Civil Rights Division John Doar, the FBI initiated a full investigation immediately based on information that Jackson had been active in civil rights activities as a local official in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

## **II. Investigative History and Reasons for Closing**

The FBI immediately began an investigation into the explosion of Jackson's truck.<sup>1</sup> In August 1965, XXXXX, another African-American XXXXXXX, suffered severe injuries when a bomb exploded in his vehicle. The FBI also investigated that bombing but had been unable to solve the case. FBI Headquarters immediately dispatched two laboratory examiners to Natchez to inspect Jackson's vehicle and debris that was collected at the scene, but the leads generated by the examination of the physical evidence failed to meaningfully advance the investigation.

The FBI interviewed several hundred witnesses, including many Armstrong employees, residents in the neighborhood where the explosion occurred, members of the Ku Klux Klan ("KKK" or "klan"), local law enforcement officials, delivery drivers who delivered to Armstrong, and Jackson's family members. During the course of the FBI's investigation, Armstrong offered a reward of \$10,000 and the Natchez Board of Aldermen offered a \$25,000 reward for information in connection with the case, but no one came forward with any information.

The FBI continued its investigation for over a year but was unable to identify any viable subjects or a motive for the bombing and closed the investigation in August 1968. The FBI obtained information from XXXXXXXXXXXX that a secret klan organization called the Silver

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<sup>1</sup> The investigation was code-named "WHARBOM."

Dollar Group had formed in 1965 and was reportedly formed to carry out acts of violence against black people and others who were viewed as inferior or problematic. However, XXXX never provided any direct information of persons involved in the Jackson bombing. XXXXXX reported that Raleigh "Red" Glover and Elden Hester, both of whom were in the klan and were Armstrong employees, were involved in obtaining explosives shortly before the Jackson bombing and that Glover moved a stash of explosives shortly after the FBI began investigating. XXXXXX told the FBI that if he were promised in writing immunity from his own crimes, he could provide the FBI with sufficient information to convict Glover with conspiracy to murder XXXXX in 1965. Although the FBI told XXXX several times that immunity was not available in an attempt to get him to provide information without immunity, FBI Director Edgar Hoover requested immunity on XXXX's behalf through AAG Doar. AAG Doar reported that he had requested immunity from Attorney General Ramsey Clark, but the request was denied.

During the course of its WHARBOM investigation, the FBI determined that a man named Orvin C. "Coonie" Poissot had also reported in 1966 to the FBI in Texas that a man named "Red Blubber" and Kenneth Head had admitted being involved in the XXXXX bombing in Mississippi. Poissot also told the FBI of several klan-related acts of violence or intimidation that he and others, including Glover, had participated in. Although the FBI was able to corroborate many of the incidents reported by Poissot, the FBI concluded that Poissot had a poor memory due to extensive drug use and that he had difficulty distinguishing between personal knowledge and hearsay. The FBI interviewed Glover and Head several times, and they both denied any involvement in or knowledge of the XXXXX or Jackson bombings. The FBI was unable to uncover any corroboration from sources, other than XXXXXX, for Poissot's allegations about Glover and Head's participation in the XXXXX bombing.

In September 1967, the FBI in Jackson received a tip from a female anonymous caller who alleged that Jimmie Copeland was responsible for the Jackson bombing and that she knew this information from Copeland's wife, Betty Jean Copeland. The Copelands lived near Jackson, Mississippi. The FBI interviewed Copeland, and he denied any involvement in the klan and in the Jackson bombing and said that he had not been in the Natchez area in a very long time. In December 1967, XXXXXXXX, told the FBI that Copeland was very upset that the FBI was investigating him and that everything he had told Dewey Bryant had gotten back to him through the FBI, with the exception of the location of the dynamite that was buried in his yard. XXXX also reported that Bryant allegedly said that the FBI told him that the FBI knew that Copeland was a look-out on the Jackson bombing and that Copeland's XXXX told the FBI that Copeland was involved in the Jackson bombing. Copeland was interviewed again in January 1968, and he admitted to being a former klan member but again denied any knowledge of or involvement in the Jackson bombing. The FBI was unable to uncover any independent basis to corroborate the XXXX's statements.

Because the FBI was not able to independently corroborate XXXXX and because the FBI concluded that Poissot was a poor witness and that his information was uncorroborated, the FBI closed its investigation in August 1968. The FBI had 18 agents from Jackson, Mississippi,

working on the investigation, conducted well over 1,000 interviews, and the investigation resulted in a case file in excess of 6,000 pages.<sup>2</sup> Ultimately, the exhaustive investigation did not definitively determine who was responsible for the murder of Jackson.

In 2007, the FBI re-opened its investigation as part of its Cold Case Initiative and continued its investigation after passage in 2008 of the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crimes Act. In the course of the FBI's investigation that was re-opened in 2007, the FBI determined that Glover, Hester, Head, Poissot, Copeland, Betty Jean Copeland, and Bryant were all deceased. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. The FBI also re-interviewed many former community leaders and co-workers of Jackson. The FBI also reviewed the files of the Sovereignty Commission and other available historical data as well as the original WHARBOM case file.

Despite these efforts, the investigation has produced no conclusive evidence concerning the subjects identified in the original FBI investigation, and all of those subjects are deceased. No other subjects have been identified. Thus, this matter should be closed.

### **III. Subjects Identified in the 1960's Investigation**

As described more fully below, early in its 1960's investigation, the FBI received information that a significant number of employees at Armstrong belonged to the klan and investigated whether XXXXXXXXXX had purposely selected Jackson to work overtime on the night he was killed as part of the plot. The FBI also obtained information that Raleigh "Red" Glover and Elden Glen Hester, both of whom worked at Armstrong and belonged to the klan, were involved in obtaining explosives prior to the Jackson bombing and moving them shortly afterward. In addition, the FBI received information that Glover and Kenneth Head, who also was a member of the klan, had been involved in the XXXXX bombing in 1965. The FBI also received information that Glover and several other klan members were involved in several acts of violence against African-Americans in the Natchez-Vidalia area.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the FBI received information from an anonymous tip that Jimmie Copeland, who was from near Jackson, Mississippi, and who was in the klan, was responsible for the Jackson bombing. Below we summarize all of the FBI's investigative efforts to solve the Jackson bombing. First, however, we summarize the FBI's interviews with Jackson's family members and others who knew Jackson well, including some of his co-workers.

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<sup>2</sup> At the height of the WHARBOM investigation, the FBI had approximately 180 agents working on the case.

<sup>3</sup> Natchez is just across the Mississippi River from Vidalia, Louisiana.

### Interviews Related to Background on Jackson

Wharlest Jackson was 35 years old at the time of his murder. He was married and had five children. His parents and several siblings lived in Florida. Jackson served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War. Jackson met his wife while he was in the Army in Chicago, and they moved to Natchez in 1953 after Jackson was discharged because Jackson's XXXXXXXXXXXX.

Jackson began working for Armstrong Tire & Rubber in 1955. In early 1967, Jackson applied for a new position at Armstrong that had been created because the company was spending a substantial amount of money on overtime. The position was called chemical mixer and the pay was 20 cents per hour higher than Jackson's previous position. At the time, there were two other chemical mixer positions at Armstrong. According to Armstrong managers interviewed at the time, 127 men were eligible to apply for the new chemical mixer position, but only three did, and one of them was Jackson. The other two applicants were white. Of the three who applied, Jackson had the most seniority and was awarded the job. According to Armstrong employees, Jackson was the first African-American to be employed as a chemical mixer at Armstrong.

Jackson had been treasurer of the Natchez National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since its inception in 1964 but had given up the position when he received the promotion. According to Jackson's wife, Jackson had not been active in any Civil rights activities in the recent past. Jackson's family members, friends, and colleagues from the NAACP told the FBI that Jackson did not have any enemies and had not reported any threats or difficulties on the job.<sup>4</sup>

### Investigation of Armstrong Employees

The FBI investigated whether anyone connected to Jackson's job at Armstrong was involved in the Jackson bombing. The FBI's investigation revealed that Jackson began training for his new job on Monday, February 20, 1967, and worked from 4:00 p.m. until midnight during the first week of training. On Monday, February 27, the day of the bombing, Jackson began training during the day shift, and worked from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. At approximately 3:15 p.m., XXXXXXXXXXXX asked Jackson to work overtime from 4:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. Earlier in the day, XXXXXX had determined that he needed someone to work overtime in the mixing department and asked one of the other chemical mixers who had more seniority than Jackson to work overtime the next morning from 4:00 a.m. until 8:00 a.m. Later that day, XXXXXX determined that he needed someone to work overtime in another department from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and asked another employee who had more seniority than Jackson, but that employee declined. XXXXXX then asked Jackson to work overtime, and Jackson agreed. XXXXXX

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<sup>4</sup> The FBI contacted XXXXXXXXXXXX during the course of its current investigation. XXXXXX expressed anger at the FBI and asserted that he believed that the FBI was involved in covering up XXXXXX.

denied any involvement in, or knowledge of anyone else's involvement in, the Jackson bombing and said that he was not aware that Jackson was an NAACP official.

After the FBI interviewed XXXXXX at the beginning of its investigation, the FBI learned from witnesses and XXXX that XXXXXX were good friends with XXXXXX and XXXXXX. The FBI re-interviewed XXXXXX, and he acknowledged being friends with XXXXXX. XXXXX told the FBI that approximately a year earlier he had been at XXXXX's house and was retrieving fishing gear from a closet when he saw a portrait of Jefferson Davis that XXXXX recognized as having previously been located in the Natchez hospital. XXXXX said that he asked XXXXX about the painting and that XXXXX told him that Glover had brought it to him and asked him to store it at his house. XXXXX told XXXXXX that the painting was taken from the hospital after the hospital was forced to integrate and accept African-American patients. XXXXXX acknowledged that he should have provided the information about the Davis portrait sooner, but insisted that he had no knowledge of the Jackson bombing.

The FBI also interviewed the two other chemical mixers at Armstrong, both of whom stated that the chemical mixer position was one of the least desirable positions in the Armstrong plant because it was dangerous. Both employees also stated that they had not heard anyone make any comments about Jackson getting the job. Both employees also stated that Jackson was easy to work with and appeared to get along well with his co-workers. The FBI interviewed 22 employees of Armstrong about whom the FBI received information as current or former klan members, as well as many other Armstrong employees, including African-American employees. No one reported being aware of any threats to Jackson or having any knowledge of who was involved in the bombing.

The FBI received information from XXXX in March 1967 suggesting that XXXXX may have been the target of the bombing of Jackson's truck, not Jackson. XXXXXXX<sup>5</sup> told the FBI that shortly before Christmas of 1966, he heard that certain klansmen had been told to stay home at the first of the year because "something" was going to happen to XXXXX. XXXX told the FBI that he disguised his voice and called several klansmen and said, "If anything happens to XXXXX, we will arrest you," pretending to be a law enforcement officer. No other information is contained in the file about this allegation. XXXXX told the FBI that after his truck was bombed, Jackson drove him to and from work every day and that they both worked from 4:00 p.m. until midnight. XXXXX said that February 27<sup>th</sup> was the first day that Jackson did not drive XXXXX to work because Jackson started working the day shift. Because the bomb was determined to have been placed directly under the driver's seat, it is difficult to conclude that XXXXX was the target of the attack that killed Jackson.

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<sup>5</sup> XXX.

Possible Suspects: Glover and Hester

Despite interviewing hundreds of people who worked with Jackson, lived near Jackson, lived in the vicinity of where the explosion occurred, knew Jackson personally, or were otherwise associated with Jackson or the klan, the FBI was unable to develop any evidence of who was responsible. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. The FBI obtained information that Raleigh "Red" Glover and Elden Glen Hester, both of whom worked at Armstrong and belonged to the klan, were involved in obtaining explosives prior to the Jackson bombing and moving them shortly afterward.<sup>6</sup>

XXXXXXX<sup>7</sup> provided the FBI with several pieces of information suggesting that Glover and Hester were involved with the Jackson bombing. XXXX reported that several months before the bombing Glover and Tommie Lee Jones, another klansmen, said more than once that "someone should get" the Negro helping XXXXX get back and forth to work every day.<sup>8</sup> XXXX also reported that in December 1966, Hester showed him and Glover a cache of explosives at his house and told XXXX that the explosives were stolen. XXXX provided the FBI with the names on the labels on the canisters of the explosives. According to the FBI's research, the explosives had the force of dynamite and could be ignited by an electric blasting cap.<sup>9</sup> XXXX, also reported that in January 1967 Glover asked him XXXXXXXXXXX.

XXXXXXXXXX<sup>10</sup> also provided information about Glover. XXXX told the FBI that approximately two weeks before the Jackson bombing, Glover, XXXX, and XXXXX met at Glover's house in Louisiana, and Glover said that he knew someone in Mississippi who had access to explosives and that they should get some, although Glover did not say for what purpose. According to XXXX, two days later Glover asked him to go to Mississippi to pick up some explosives, but XXXX did not go with Glover.

XXXX also told the FBI that he could provide the FBI with sufficient information to convict Glover of the XXXXX bombing, but the XXXX insisted that he be provided immunity in writing before he would provide specific information. The local FBI office requested immunity on behalf of XXXX through FBI Headquarters, and FBI Headquarters sent the request to the Department of Justice. According to the case file, Assistant Attorney General John Doar supported the request for immunity and submitted the proposal to Attorney General Ramsey Clark. The Attorney General, however, denied the request.

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<sup>6</sup> Glover and Hester are deceased.

<sup>7</sup> XX.

<sup>8</sup> XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.

<sup>9</sup> Wire fragments recovered at the scene were believed to be from an electrical blasting cap.

<sup>10</sup> XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.

The FBI also received information from an employee at Armstrong named XXXXX that Glover stored explosives at XXXXXX ( XXXX) house. XXXXX, said that he overheard XXX talking to XXXXX and that XXXXX said that Glover had stored explosives believed to be nitroglycerine in their attic around the time of the Jackson bombing. XXXXX also reported that Glover had given XXXXX a stolen portrait of Jefferson Davis to store at his house. XXXXX also described Glover as having an intense hatred for Negroes and said that Glover had a sawed-off shotgun that Glover said would be good for “get[ting] a lot of niggers too.” Several other witnesses described Glover as being a “fanatic” in his hatred of African-Americans and as having extreme views with respect to race.

Based on the information provided by XXXXX, the FBI considered seeking a search warrant of the XXXXX’s home but decided not to because neither possessing explosives nor possessing a stolen painting was a federal crime and because there was insufficient evidence linking the explosives to the Jackson bombing. The FBI interviewed XXXXX. XX acknowledged being good friends with XXXXX but denied having any knowledge of explosives being stored at the XXXX’s home. Thereafter, the FBI approached XXXXX and asked for his consent to search his attic and XXXXX consented. The FBI did not find any explosives or the stolen Davis painting but found several firearms, one of which XXXXX said was given to him by XXXXXX. The FBI interviewed XXXXX who denied ever having explosives in his house, denied having any knowledge of the Jackson bombing, and denied having any knowledge of Glover’s involvement in the klan.

The FBI re-interviewed XXXXXX about the firearm. XXXXXX said that he had taken it from an acquaintance who was drunk and was threatening to shoot teenagers in a café. XXXXXX said that he should have returned the gun to his acquaintance. XXXXXX said that after he realized that the FBI suspected him of being involved in the Jackson bombing, he asked XXXXX to store the gun at his house for him. XXXXXX stated that he had purchased a hunting rifle from Glover. XXXXXX also said that XXXXX told him that Glover and XXXXX were very upset that the FBI was interviewing people about them and that Glover felt like he was being harassed. XXXXXX said that he had no knowledge that XXXXX ever stored any explosives in his house.

Within a few days of the bombing, the FBI interviewed Glover who denied having any knowledge of or participation in the Jackson bombing. He said that he went home after his shift was over at 8:00 a.m. and slept until approximately 2:00 p.m. Glover denied having any explosives. Glover said that he left his house at approximately 11:00 p.m to report to Armstrong for his midnight shift. Glover said that he learned about the bombing when he got to work. XXXXXXX confirmed that he was at home when XXXXXX. XXXX said that XXX when XXX returned at approximately 9:00 p.m. XXXXX said that XXXX was not aware of any association XXXXX had with the klan and that XXXX never knew him to possess explosives or firearms.



The FBI also focused on Glover because of information provided by Orvin Clarence “Coonie” Poissot in April 1966 about Glover in connection with the XXXXX bombing. During the course of the WHARBOM investigation, the FBI in Mississippi became aware that Poissot had told the FBI in San Antonio the previous year that a person name “Red Blubber” had bragged to Poissot and Kenneth Head in November 1965 about being responsible for the XXXXX bombing in the summer of 1965. In June 1967, the FBI paid for Poissot to come to Mississippi and spent several days interviewing him. Poissot told the FBI that he had joined the Ferriday-Clayton Unit of the Original Knights of the KKK of Louisiana in July 1965 and that he attended weekly meetings until approximately December 1965 when he moved to Texas. Poissot told the FBI that at a local klan meeting on November 2, 1965, Glover (whom the FBI determined was the “Red Blubber” in previous FBI reports) had bragged to Poissot and Kenneth Head about what a “good job” he had done on XXXXX’s vehicle and said that if he had wanted to kill XXXXX, he would have put the bomb under the dashboard instead of under the hood. Poissot also reported that Head admitted that he had acted as a “look-out” with another unnamed man during the XXXXX bombing. Poissot also told the FBI of several klan-related acts of violence or intimidation that he and others, including Glover, had participated in. Although the FBI was able to corroborate many of the incidents reported by Poissot, including that a klan meeting involving Glover had taken place on November 2, 1965, the FBI concluded that Poissot had a poor memory due to extensive drug use and that he had difficulty distinguishing between personal knowledge and hearsay and determined that he would not be a good witness. In a memorandum to FBI Headquarters dated June 16, 1967, FBI agents from Mississippi stated, “Poissot, by his own admission, has told so many stories about some of his personal activities that he now has difficulty in distinguishing fact from fiction.” For this reason, the FBI concluded that Poissot would make a “very poor witness” and that no further contact with him was necessary. Poissot is deceased.

The FBI interviewed Glover and Head several times, and they both denied any involvement in or knowledge of the XXXXX or Jackson bombings. The FBI was unable to uncover any corroboration for Poissot’s allegations about Glover and Head’s participation in the XXXXX bombing. Head is deceased.

Several months after the FBI began its WHARBOM investigation, the FBI received information that Glover had participated in the theft of a piece of farm equipment called a “bush hog.”<sup>11</sup> An FBI agent obtained consent to walk around Glover’s property and saw the reportedly stolen piece of equipment and reported this information to local authorities. Although Glover was charged by local authorities with possession of stolen goods, these criminal charges did not result in any cooperation with federal authorities by Glover or additional information about the

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<sup>11</sup> XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.

Jackson bombing.<sup>12</sup>

Possible Suspects: the Silver Dollar Group

During the WHARBOM investigation, the FBI XXXXXXXXXXXX about the klan and its activities. The FBI learned that a secret and select klan group was formed in early 1965 and was called "the Silver Dollar Group." The Silver Dollar Group was reportedly made up of more fanatical or "hard core" klan members from Mississippi and Louisiana and its purpose was to carry out acts of violence. The FBI obtained the names of approximately 15 members of the group who were given a silver dollar once they were admitted into the group. XXXXXX reported that the group discussed the need to keep the existence and membership of the group secret and that they should all acquire weapons because of fear that the federal government was going to prohibit purchasing of weapons in the future. XXXXX said that Kenneth Head, Raleigh Glover, and Tommie Jones were "action men" of the Silver Dollar Group, but he did not provide any specifics about any actions carried out by the group. XXXX told the FBI that the group was told that if anyone felt that a "job" needed to be done, he should pick the men he wanted to assist in the job and not discuss the job with the group.

XXXX reported that Glover was one of the primary organizers of the Silver Dollar Group. XXXX said that Ernest Finley had organized the group.<sup>13</sup> The FBI interviewed and re-interviewed suspected members of the group, most all of whom denied membership in or knowledge of the Silver Dollar Group. The FBI learned small pieces of information, such as that the group had experimented with explosives at a meeting in the summer of 1965 held at the home of James Lee shortly before the XXXXX bombing. In addition, another XXXX said that he heard klan members discussing XXXXX in July or August of 1965, but he did not provide any further details.

The FBI also learned from XXXXXX about other acts of violence committed by klan members, but no charges were ever brought concerning these acts of violence. For example, XXXXX reported that Glover had trapped two black men by pretending that his car was broken down. When the black men stopped to help, Glover pulled a gun on the men, drove them to an abandoned oil well, and beat them with leather straps. XXXXX said that Glover "bragged and laughed" when talking about this incident. According to XXXXX, Glover said that he carried out the beating because he was asked to by klan members from another part of Louisiana. XXXXX reported that Glover said that his "wrecking crew" for the beating included Tommie Lee Jones, James Scarborough, and James Lee. The FBI was able to identify and interview the two victims, one of whom identified Glover, but the victims were not able to identify anyone

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<sup>12</sup> The WHARBOM files do not reflect the outcome of the state charges, although there is a note indicating that the prosecuting attorney informed the FBI that the case against Glover was weak.

<sup>13</sup> Finley is also deceased.

else. One of the victims reported that men put paper bags over their heads, drove them someplace, stripped them, and beat them and also damaged the victim's car. Jones, Scarborough, and Lee are all deceased.

The FBI also learned from XXXXX that Tommie Jones, Thor Torgersen,<sup>14</sup> and two other men went to the home of the reported leader of the "Black Muslims" in order to shoot and kill him.<sup>15</sup> The group threatened the man, who was on his porch, but Jones reportedly had forgotten to load his shotgun. Someone else at the home fired at the group and shot Jones in the cheek with birdshot, and the group ran off. A local doctor treated Jones for his injuries. The FBI found and interviewed the victim who said that he thought that the men were there to abduct him. The FBI confronted Jones about the incident, and he did not deny his involvement. Jones acknowledged being shot, and according to the FBI "appeared to be visibly shaken." Jones also admitted to being in the Silver Dollar Group, which he had previously denied. However, Jones still claimed no knowledge of the XXXXX or Jackson bombing, and he declined to discuss other incidents. Jones admitted to making anonymous calls to the mayor of Natchez telling him that he should fire black employees, but denied being involved in throwing explosives into the mayor's yard.

The FBI interviewed reported Silver Dollar Group members several times and asked about the acts of violence that were reported by XXXXXX. Thereafter, XXXXX that Glover and other members began to speculate that Jones was an FBI informant and that they should kill him. XXXX also reported that Glover was drinking heavily and was concerned that he was going to be arrested by the FBI.

XXXXX who provided information about the Silver Dollar Group had XXXX.<sup>16</sup> XXXXXX worked at Armstrong but was not working on the day of the Jackson bombing. XXXXXX said that he heard about the bombing around 10:30 p.m. from a local attorney.<sup>17</sup> XXXXXX

On XXX, the FBI interviewed XXXXXX during its current investigation. XXXXXX acknowledged that he was a member of the KKK in the mid-60s but denied ever being a member of the Silver Dollar Group. XXXXXX said that XX formed the United Klans of America as a way to purge radical or violent individuals from their organization. XXXXXX identified the

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<sup>14</sup> Torgersen is also deceased.

<sup>15</sup> XXXX reported different names for the other two participants in the incident.

<sup>16</sup> XXXXXXXXX

<sup>17</sup> The attorney was Bill Riley, who represented the klan in Mississippi. According to XXXX, he and another klan member XXXXXXXXX, met with Riley the night of the bombing and discussed issuing a press release stating that the klan was not involved in the bombing. XXXXXXXXXXXX. XXXXXXXXXXXX. Riley is deceased.

following as possible members of the Silver Dollar Group: XXXXX, XXXXX, Ernest Finley, Raleigh Glover, XXXXX, and XXXXX. XXXXXX remembered a meeting in which XXXXX approached him and asked him to be in the Silver Dollar Group, but XXXXXX declined. According to XXXXXX, he and XXXXX, who was also a klan member, were more interested in organizing a voting bloc than committing violent acts against blacks. XXXXXX stated that he did not have any information about who was involved in the Jackson bombing.

XXXXXX was re-interviewed on XXXX. XXXXXX stated that he and XXXXXXXX after several violent events that were attributed to the KKK took place. XXXXXX stated that at the time, he was a life-long resident of XXX and had known XXXXXX for several years. XXXXXX acknowledged that in the mid-1960's XXXXXXXXXXXX. XXXXXX stated that XXXXXX did not agree with violence; XXXXXXXXXXXX.

XXXXXX was asked about XXXXXXXX in the 1960's, including specific information about the Silver Dollar Group, which, according to XXXXXX, was formed in the early months of 1965. XXXXXX described as the "mean" group of the KKK or the "demolition" group. XXXXXX. XXXXXX stated that he could not recall XXX but that XXXXXX.<sup>18</sup>

Possible Suspect: Jimmie Copeland

The FBI received a telephone call from a female caller who refused to give her name and reported that Jimmie Copeland was responsible for the Jackson bombing. Copeland lived with his wife near Jackson, Mississippi. In March 1967, the FBI interviewed Copeland who said that he had had back surgery on January 26, 1967, and that he had been home bound since the surgery. Copeland reported being a staunch segregationist but said that he did not belong to the klan.

According to XXXXXX, Copeland had a conversation with Dewey Bryant several months after Copeland was interviewed by the FBI and Bryant told Copeland that he had been interviewed by the FBI.<sup>19</sup> Bryant told the XXXX that the FBI had "dead wood" on Copeland. Bryant told Copeland that the FBI had told Bryant that Copeland's XXXXXX told the FBI that Copeland was present for the Jackson bombing; that the FBI knew that Copeland was a look-out during the Jackson bombing; and that the FBI had proof that Copeland had delivered dynamite used in a synagogue bombing in Natchez. XXXXXX told the FBI that Copeland was very upset that the FBI was talking to people about him and that the FBI knew too much about him. Copeland also said that XXXXXX, XXXXXX. Copeland told XXXX that everything Copeland had told Bryant had gotten back to the FBI with the exception of the location of the dynamite, which Copeland had buried in his yard.

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<sup>18</sup> XXXXXX.

<sup>19</sup> XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.

Copeland was interviewed again in January 1968. Copeland acknowledged being a member of the Americans for the Preservation of the White Race, which he described as a "Christian organization" made up of "upstanding citizens." Copeland said that he had in the past been a member of the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan of Mississippi. Copeland denied having any knowledge or involvement in the Jackson bombing or several other acts of violence, including the bombing of a synagogue in Natchez. Copeland and Copeland's wife – Betty Jean Copeland – are both deceased.

#### **IV. Physical Evidence**

FBI Headquarters immediately dispatched two laboratory examiners to Natchez to inspect Jackson's vehicle and the scene. Jackson's truck was processed for latent fingerprints, but none were recovered. The following evidence from the scene was processed: pieces of tape, metal fragments, pieces of the truck, debris, and wire fragments. The FBI processed the tape for fingerprints, but none were recovered. Wire fragments recovered at the scene were believed to be from an electrical blasting cap. In addition, portions of the wire to the brake light, tail light, and rear left turn indicator were missing. The FBI concluded that the explosive device was likely connected to the wiring of the truck's turn signals or brakes. The wiring was accessible from under the truck. In addition, no evidence of a timing device was recovered. The FBI Laboratory determined that the electrical blasting cap was manufactured by Hercules, Inc. whose main offices were in Wilmington, Delaware. The FBI contacted numerous companies that could have distributed the blasting cap in Mississippi or Louisiana but was unable to determine the source of the blasting cap. The FBI also contacted companies that may have sold explosives or had explosives stolen in the recent past but were unable to determine any suspects based on explosive purchases. The FBI Laboratory noted that the solid residue that would have remained if dynamite had been used was water soluble, and since it was raining heavily the night of the explosion, it was possible that any residue would have dissolved.

#### **V. Conclusion**

This matter does not constitute a prosecutable violation of the federal criminal civil rights statutes. The FBI was unable to conclusively determine who was responsible for the Jackson bombing and murder, despite conducting an exhaustive investigation in the 1960's and again more recently in connection with the Cold Case Initiative. As discussed above, none of the allegations investigated were supported by sufficient credible or corroborated evidence. Although the evidence suggested that some combination of Glover, Hester, Head, Jones, and Copeland may have been involved, that evidence was not sufficiently credible or corroborated to support a criminal prosecution of any of them. Further, Glover, Hester, Head, Jones, and Copeland are now all deceased and cannot be prosecuted. Similarly, XXXXXXX who agreed to provide detailed information about the XXXXX bombing in exchange for immunity XXXX. There is no evidence suggesting that any other living individual was involved.

Even if we believed we could have established the identity of those responsible beyond a reasonable doubt and they were still alive, the applicable statute of limitations precludes prosecution of any individual under the federal criminal civil rights statutes. Prior to 1994, federal criminal civil rights violations were not capital offenses, thereby subjecting them to a five-year statute of limitations. See 18 U.S.C. § 3282(a). In 1994, some of these civil rights statutes were amended to provide the death penalty for violations resulting in death, thereby eliminating the statute of limitations. See 18 U.S.C. § 3281 (“An indictment for any offense punishable by death may be found at any time without limitation.”). However, the *Ex Post Facto* Clause prohibits the retroactive application of the 1994 increase in penalties and the resultant change in the statute of limitations to the detriment of criminal defendants. Stogner v. California, 539 U.S. 607, 611 (2003). While the Civil Rights Division has used non-civil rights statutes to overcome the statute of limitations challenge in certain cases, such as those occurring on federal land and kidnapping resulting in death when the victim is transported in interstate or foreign commerce, the facts here do not indicate that federal prosecution is available under other statutes. Although, under state law, a viable subject could still be prosecuted for murder, there is no credible evidence to establish beyond a reasonable doubt the identity of the person or persons responsible.

Based on the foregoing, this matter should be closed. Assistant United States Attorney Glenda Haynes of the United States Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of Mississippi concurs in this recommendation.