

CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION

Notice to Close File

File No. 144-33-2276

FEB 27 2013  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

To: Chief, Criminal Section

Re: James B. Goss (Deceased),  
Homer Thomas "Buck" Horton (Deceased),  
Raleigh Jackson "Red" Glover (Deceased)  
Frank DeLaughter (Deceased),  
Bud Spinks (Deceased),  
Bill Ogden (Deceased),  
Kenneth Norman Head (Deceased)  
Vidalia, Louisiana - Subjects;  
Joseph "JoEd" Edwards (Presumed Deceased) - Victim  
CIVIL RIGHTS

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

**Case Synopsis and Reasons for Closing**

In the early morning hours of July 12, 1964, Joseph "JoEd" Edwards, an African-American resident of Natchez, Mississippi, in his early 20s, was seen leaving work at the end of

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cristina Gamondi  
Attorney

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
To: Records Section  
Office of Legal Administration

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief, Criminal Section

FORMERLY CVR-3

FORM CL-3

his shift as a porter at the Shamrock Motel (the Shamrock) in Vidalia, Louisiana.<sup>1</sup> Although unclear, Edwards may have been seen by a friend on the evening of July 12, and by XXXXXX with whom XXX was living the next evening, July 13. On July 19, 1964, Edwards XXXXXX, reported XXXXXX missing to the Vidalia Police Department (VPD). On July 21, 1964, XXXXXX made a similar report to the Natchez Police Department (NPD).

Sometime between July 12 and 23, an unknown person reported Edwards's 1958 white-over-green Buick, which he had purchased on July 6, 1964, abandoned near the Dixie Lanes bowling alley on the Vidalia-Ferriday highway.<sup>2</sup> Several witnesses stated that they looked into the Buick in the days that followed. Some said that a belt was looped around the steering wheel, others that a necktie was hanging from the inside mirror. The majority, including Edwards XXXXXXXXXXXX, said that they saw no bloodstains. One witness stated that he saw a silver-dollar-sized blood spot under the steering wheel. Two witnesses, including XXXXXX, stated that they saw mud in the car.

Edwards's body was never found and he is presumed dead, likely murdered.

The FBI initiated an investigation on July 23, 1964, at the request of the Department of Justice, after XXXXXX reported hearsay learned via one of XXXXXX that Edwards was in jail in Ferriday, Louisiana.<sup>3</sup> The FBI contacted all the local law enforcement agencies and determined that Edwards was not in jail; they also determined that the local agencies were not actively investigating the matter, as Edwards was considered "merely" a missing person.

In August 1967, the FBI initiated a full investigation after receiving information from XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX in connection with another ongoing FBI investigation.<sup>4</sup> The XXXX information indicated that Edwards may have been the victim of Klan violence, specifically by members of the "Silver Dollar Group" (SDG), a Klan offshoot group operating in the area. At about the same time, the FBI received reports that sometime in September or October 1964,

---

<sup>1</sup> Edwards's birth-date was variously reported as February 12, 1939, 1940, or 1941 and, therefore, he is described as being in his "early 20s."

<sup>2</sup> A July 23, 1964 FBI report states that, according to information received from the Civil Rights Division, the car had been found two nights before, i.e. on July 21, but the same report stated inaccurately that the Buick was located in Natchez, Mississippi, across the Mississippi River from Vidalia. A later FBI report, also dated July 23, stated that NPD Desk Sergeant Ernest Brown told the FBI that the Buick had been recovered at the Shamrock (also inaccurate), and that the matter had been referred to the Concordia Parish Sheriff's Office (CPSO).

<sup>3</sup> XXXXXXXXXXXX made the report to the Department on July 22. John Doar of the Civil Rights Division then requested the FBI investigation on July 22, 1964, at 11:45 p.m.

<sup>4</sup> The other investigation, code-named WHARBOM, was into the February 27, 1967, car-bomb murder of Wharlest Jackson, which occurred after Jackson was promoted to a position previously held by white men at the Armstrong Tire and Rubber Company in Natchez. The Edwards investigation was conducted in conjunction with WHARBOM.

commercial fisherman XXXXXXXX found “flesh-like matter” in a container submerged in the Mississippi River near Deer Park, Louisiana, about 15 to 20 miles from Vidalia.<sup>5</sup>

The FBI continued its investigation until May 1968. The FBI interviewed in excess of 250 witnesses, and conducted multiple scuba searches and forensic tests, resulting in a case file of about 620 pages.<sup>6</sup>

Several hypotheses were developed, the strongest of which centered on an incident involving XXXXXXXX<sup>7</sup>, a white woman, who worked XXXXXXXXXXXX and XXXX at the Shamrock at the time of Edwards’s disappearance. According to XXXXXXXX, who was interviewed multiple times by the FBI, one afternoon in July 1964, she was on her way to the restroom when Edwards grabbed her and attempted to kiss her. At the time, XXXXXX was dating subject James Buford Goss, a married Louisiana Probation and Parole officer, and she reported the attempted kiss to him. Goss admitted to the FBI that he, in turn, reported the incident to subject VPD Chief (and Vidalia Town Marshal) Johnnie Lee “Bud” Spinks. Spinks and XXXXXXXX<sup>8</sup>, visited and interviewed XXXXXXXX, who reportedly declined to press charges.

According to the XXXXXX, Spinks then enlisted the aid of the SDG, led by subject Raleigh Jackson “Red” Glover, and counting among its members subjects Kenneth Norman Head, Homer Thomas “Buck” Horton, and Concordia Parish Sheriff’s Office (CPSO) Deputies William Howard “Bill” Ogden and Frank DeLaughter.

XXXXXXXXXXXX the Dixie Lanes bowling alley in 1964, told the FBI that on a night in July of that year, XXX saw a car matching the description of Edwards’s 1958 Buick being stopped by a white 1964 Oldsmobile. The Olds had no law enforcement emblems, but it did have two rear whip antennae and a red dashboard light. The traffic stop was on the Vidalia-Ferriday Highway,

---

<sup>5</sup> It is unclear from whom the reports concerning the finding of the flesh-like matter initially came. According to a September 1, 1967 report, the investigation into the flesh-like matter was predicated upon information furnished by XXXXXX, who was first interviewed on August 10, 1967. But, as will be discussed later in this memorandum, on August 8, 1967, two days prior to XXXXXXXX first interview, XXXXXXXX recounted a story he had heard years earlier from subject Howard “Bill” Ogden, indicating that an unidentified fisherman had found flesh-like material in the Mississippi, near Deer Park. Moreover, when XXXXXX was interviewed by a local newspaper in 2009, he stated that he did not know who notified the FBI about the finding.

<sup>6</sup> The witnesses included, among others, about 15 of Edwards’s family and friends, more than 30 Shamrock employees, and all of the named subjects, except for Raleigh Jackson Glover, who refused to speak with the FBI.

<sup>7</sup> At the time of XXX FBI interviews, XXXXXXXXXXXX was still XXXXXXXXXXXX at the time of Edwards’s disappearance, so XXX will be referred to as XXXXXXXX in this memorandum.

<sup>8</sup> XXXXXXXX lived in Natchez and, therefore, Spinks needed to be accompanied by an NPD officer.

east of the bowling alley, i.e. at or near the spot where the Buick was later found abandoned. The Olds was driven by an overweight white man, and two other white men were standing by the open driver's door of the Buick. XXXXXXXX stated the Buick appeared to be occupied solely by the driver, a man wearing a green, possibly plaid, sport shirt, whom XXXXXXXX could not see sufficiently to state whether he was African-American. XXXXXXXX passed the two cars and, shortly thereafter, the white Olds now occupied by several men, sped by XXXXXXXX.

An extensive investigation determined that the only local law enforcement agency that used a 1964 Olds with two rear antennae was the VPD. The VPD car had a red light mounted on top of the roof, not on the dashboard as described by XXXXXXXX. But several witnesses stated that the VPD officers, particularly subject Spinks, had one or more portable flashing red lights that could be mounted on the dashboard. When witness XXXXXXXX was interviewed for the third time in March 1968, he was shown pictures of the VPD car. XXXXXXXX stated that he did not "believe it identical" to the Olds he had seen. XXXXXXXX also claimed that he had seen the VPD Olds in 1964, two weeks after the "traffic" stop, and had concluded then that the VPD Olds was not the car he had seen that night.

It was also determined that subject Glover purchased a white 1964 Olds in late May 1964, but it does not appear that there was a significant investigation to determine whether the car matched XXXXXXXX's description of the car he had seen.

In 2010, the FBI conducted an investigation and determined that all but one of the named subjects and XXXXXXXXX had died by 2004, and the last subject died in 2009.

Ultimately, the exhaustive investigation did not definitively determine what happened to Edwards. But the overwhelming weight of the evidence strongly points to the XXXXXXXX incident as the precipitating event and to the named subjects as perpetrators, particularly the members of the SDG. The investigation has produced no credible evidence implicating any other subjects, and all of the named subjects are deceased as is the XXXXXXXX who provided the most important lead. Thus, this matter should be closed.

The current FBI investigation has been criticized in local media for reportedly failing to include interviews of important witnesses, some of whom are now deceased. These witnesses include XXXXXXXX, subject James Goss, XXXXXXX, Catahoula Parish Sheriff's Office (CaPSO) Deputy Shelby XXXXXXX, LSU forensic anthropologist Mary Manheim, XXXXXXXX one of the founding members of the SDG), XXXXXXXX (one of Edwards's cousins), and retired FBI Special Agents XXXXXXX, XXXXXXX, and XXXXXXX. As will be discussed at greater length below, XXXXXXX was interviewed seven times during the original investigation, Goss three times, and XXXXXXX six times. Both XXXXXXX and XXXXXXX were also interviewed at the time. Sonny Boyd stated specifically that he "never heard a hint" of who killed Edwards. Manheim did not unearth any relevant physical evidence. None of three retired agents are mentioned in the Edwards file, and only XXXXXXXX stated that he had information specific to the Edwards matter. Most importantly, however, all of the individuals who had the most specific and potentially useful information not only previously provided it, sometimes repeatedly, but their information also points only to the deceased named subjects as the culprits. And, as mentioned previously, there is

a lack of credible evidence implicating anyone else.

**1964 and 1967-1968 FBI Investigation:**

The FBI conducted a brief investigation in 1964 after Edwards’s XXXXXXXX, reported him missing. The bulk of the FBI investigation was conducted starting in August 1967, after the FBI received information concerning Edwards’s disappearance during the course of the WHARBOM investigation.

Additionally, the *Concordia Sentinel* conducted a three-year investigation of Edwards’s disappearance and presumed death, between 2007 and 2010. Part of the *Sentinel*’s investigation involved a review of original FBI files, but it also conducted interviews of witnesses, most of whom had been interviewed by the FBI in the 1960s, but some of whom had not. Although those interviews were conducted between 2007 and 2010, the relevant summaries will be incorporated in this section so that they can add to or can be contrasted with the original interviews.

It should be noted that some of the information contained in the *Sentinel* series is not supported and some of it is outright contradicted by the 1960s FBI investigation. For example, as will be discussed as greater length later, the *Sentinel* quoted XXXXXX as stating that XXXXXX arranged prostitution “dates” for her at the Shamrock through Edwards. XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX FBI interview. Similarly, the *Sentinel* quoted a redacted version of the statement of Shamrock employee XXXXXXXX, to the effect that she had seen a white female employee and a black employee, who *fit Edwards’s description*, entering the same cottage within a short time of each other. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX FBI interview. In fact, the Shamrock employment records indicated that Walker and Edwards’s employments did not overlap. In another example, retired XXXXXXXX reportedly made several statements to the *Sentinel* concerning his role in the investigation: that he was the first agent to have contact with Edwards’s XXXXXX and that it was he who then notified the Louisiana agents, but the original FBI file, in which XXXXXXXX is never mentioned, indicates that XXXXXXXX contacted *the Department* on July 22, 1964, and that the Department asked the FBI to investigate.

**Days preceding Edwards’s disappearance**

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX reported to the FBI in July 1964 that they had not seen him for about two weeks prior to the 12th, i.e., sometime in late June or early July.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX told the *Sentinel* in July 2008, that she was 18 years old at the time of her brother’s disappearance. She said that she last saw Edwards on July 4, 1964, at the home of her grandparents in Clayton, Louisiana.

XXXXXXXXXXXX was interviewed by the FBI in August 1967.<sup>9</sup> She stated that the last

---

<sup>9</sup> XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

time she saw Edwards was on Friday, July 3, or Saturday, July 4, 1964, when she went to visit XXXXXXXX in Clayton. After the visit, Edwards accompanied XXXXXXXX to the bus station in Natchez so she could return to her home in Jackson, Mississippi. A week or two later, she received a letter from Edwards, postmarked July 2 in Vidalia, in which he stated that he had obtained XXXXXXXXXXXX. She did not hear from him again. She returned to Clayton in October 1964 and it was then that she learned he had been missing for several months. XXXXXX said that Edwards told her that he had been in fights with white men but he did not identify the men or explain the nature of the disagreements.

According to XXXXXXXX at Purvis Pontiac-Buick-Rambler, Inc. in Ferriday, Edwards purchased his car on Monday, July 6, 1964.

XXXXXXXXXX told the FBI in 1964 that Edwards was last seen alive by a female employee of the Shamrock on July 12, after 11:00 p.m. in his car, at the intersection of Canal and Franklin Streets. XXXXXXXX did not identify the female employee or indicate how she had learned the information. She stated further that on July 18, 1964, she contacted XXXXXXXX, who lived in New Orleans and XXXXXX told her she had not seen him. As mentioned in the synopsis, XXXXXXXX also said that, on July 22, 1964, another of XXXXXXXX, who lived in Natchez, reported hearsay that Edwards was in jail in Ferriday.<sup>10</sup> XXXXXXXX was re-interviewed by the FBI in August 1967. She stated that the last time she saw XXXXXX was on Tuesday, July 7, 1964. XXXXXXXX also reported additional hearsay, learned from XXXXXXXX living in New Orleans, XXXXXXXX, that a white preacher from Clayton said that "something terrible" had occurred to Edwards. The FBI followed up on this lead but learned nothing of value.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Although the teletype provided the XXXXXXXX address in Natchez, there is no other information in the FBI file identifying her.

<sup>11</sup> XXXXXXXX was located and interviewed by the FBI. She said that she did not want to make any allegations about things she could not prove. She stated that she was in Clayton shortly after Edwards went missing, and overheard two white men talking, one of whom was later identified as a preacher. The second man said to the preacher, "XXXXXX don't know nothing about it. All he heard, he heard from XXXXXXXX." XXXXXXXX stated further that "XXXXX," later identified as XXXXXXXX, also asked XXXXXXXX (XXXXXX of Edwards) whether Edwards was missing at a time when no one knew that he was missing. When it became known that Edwards had disappeared, XXXXXXXX came back to XXXXXX and said, "I told you Joe was missing." The FBI also interviewed XXXXXXXX, who said that XXXXXX never mentioned Edwards's disappearance to him. XXXXXXXX was also interviewed by the FBI and denied knowing anything about Edwards's disappearance or having a conversation with any preacher at the time of Edwards's disappearance. XXXXXXXX said that XXXXXXXX was a VPD officer who lived in Clayton, however there is no indication that anyone named XXXXXXXX LNU worked for the VPD. XXXXXXXX was interviewed by the FBI and denied participating in any conversation concerning Edwards's disappearance.



wearing a white short-sleeved shirt and dress pants. At about 6:45 p.m., Edwards said that he had to leave for his job at the Shamrock and XXXX never saw Edwards again.<sup>13</sup>

XXXXXXXXXX stated that Edwards was XXXXXXXX in Clayton, Louisiana in July 1964. XXXXXXXX stated that Edwards left for work in his car, at about 7:00 p.m. on a Monday evening in July 1964.<sup>14</sup> XXXXXXXX said that Edwards was wearing dress shoes, pants, and a shirt; XXXXXXXX did not specify the color of the shirt or pants. He was also wearing a ring with a blue stone and a watch with a yellow metal band and blue and red "diamonds" on the case and band. XXXXXXXX did not see him again.

XXXXXXXXXX Dixie Lanes bowling alley on the Vidalia-Ferriday Highway at the time of Edwards's disappearance. He was interviewed by the FBI on August 29 and September 1, 1967. He was interviewed a third time in March 1968.<sup>15</sup> XXXXXXXX stated that around midnight (give or take an hour) one night in July 1964, he was on his way home from Blackie Drane's night club located east of the bowling alley. XXXXXXXX was driving west on the highway, when he was passed by a late model, likely 1964, white Oldsmobile, that had two antennae on the trunk deck. The Olds had no law enforcement emblems on it. An old model, beige and (predominantly) green Buick was immediately in front of XXXXXXXX (having also passed him or having been there the whole time). The Olds passed the Buick and used a flashing red light on the dashboard to force the Buick to pull over at a location east of the highway crossover leading to the bowling alley. As XXXXXXXX drove past the two cars, he noted that a large white man was in the driver's seat of the Olds, and its right front door was open. Further, there were two or three men standing next to the driver's door of the Buick. XXXXXXXX stated that the Buick had only one male occupant but he could not see whether the man was African-American or white. The man was wearing a green sport shirt, possibly plaid, and no hat.

Shortly after XXXXXXXX drove past the two cars, the Olds sped by him, with an unknown number of male occupants.

XXXXXXXXXX became slightly suspicious and wrote down the license plate, but lost the note prior to his FBI interview in August 1967. XXXXXXXX said that he thought the plate was from a

---

<sup>13</sup> XXXX stated that his daughters XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX were present, but when the women were interviewed by the FBI in 1967, neither had any recollection of eating dinner with Edwards at XXXXXXXX house. Additionally, since Edwards bought his car on Monday, July 6, the only Sunday XXXX could have seen him with his car would have been July 12. If XXXX did indeed see Edwards that day, it is possible that Edwards disappeared prior to arriving to work, or did work that night but the Shamrock records did not reflect that last shift.

<sup>14</sup> XXXXXXXX would have last seen Edwards on either Monday, July 6, or Monday, July 13. Since it seems likely that XXXXXXXX would remember the day Edwards first had his car (July 6), XXXXXXXX more likely would have been referring to July 13.

<sup>15</sup> That interview will be discussed in the section of this memorandum that relates to the 1964 Oldsmobile.



different part of Louisiana and that there was a decal from Loe Motors in Tallulah, Louisiana.<sup>16</sup> The Olds continued past the Ferriday Police Station, but it did not stop there, and XXXXXXX thought it continued on through town.

XXXXXXX said that he did not recognize any of the Oldsmobile's occupants. He could attest that subject DeLaughter and CPSO Sheriff Noah Cross, whom he knew, were not in the car.<sup>17</sup> XXXXXXX did not know subject Spinks.

XXXXXXX said the Buick remained in its spot on the side of the highway for several days. The Buick was then moved to a road adjacent to the bowling alley parking lot, where it remained even longer than at the prior location. XXXXXXX subsequently saw it at Beatty's Gulf gas station in Ferriday.

### **The finding and examination of Edwards's car**

Edwards's Buick was seen within days of Edwards's disappearance on the Vidalia-Ferriday highway, near the Dixie Lanes bowling alley. Subject Ogden claimed that "some unknown person" reported to the CPSO the "continued presence" of the car near the bowling alley.<sup>18</sup> Ogden dispatched Cecil Beatty of Beatty's Gulf Station to tow the car. Ogden

---

<sup>16</sup> XXXXXXX had a 1962 prescription form in his wallet with the numbers 892-482 written on it; the "482" was crossed out and "428" written below. XXXXXXX said that the numbers might have been the Olds's plate number. The FBI checked with the Louisiana Department of Revenue, Motor Vehicle Division, and determined that the plate "892-428" was issued to a 1963 Plymouth Valiant, belonging to XXXXXXX, and the number "892-482" was issued to a 1954 Ford Mercury, belonging to XXXXXXX. XXXXXXX told the FBI that he no longer owned the Valiant and could not recall exactly what he did with the plates but that he most likely did what he normally did which was throw them in the trash that was then taken to the city dump. The FBI then re-interviewed XXXXXXX, who stated that he did not know XXXXXXX. XXXXXXX stated further that he did know XXXXXXX and had no idea why he would record XXXXXXX's plate number on the piece of paper. XXXXXXX stated that he was certain that the car he saw was neither a Valiant or a Mercury and averred that it was a 1964 Olds. He then said that his recording of the numbers apparently had no connection to the sighting of the Edwards car.

<sup>17</sup> FBI XXXXXXX told the FBI in November 1967, that XXXXXXX said to the XXX that "they" were working hard for Concordia Parish Sheriff candidate Noah Cross. The XXX also stated that five African Americans had disappeared in the parish and that, "thanks to Cross," nothing had been heard about them. Other than this unspecific hearsay, there are no allegations or evidence implicating Cross. Moreover, Cross died in November 1976.

<sup>18</sup> As mentioned previously, according to a July 23, 1964, FBI report, NPD Desk Sergeant Ernest Brown told the FBI on that day that Edwards's car had been recovered at the Shamrock and that the matter had been referred to the CPSO.

did not make a record of the complaint or examine the car. He later told the FBI that he did have a check run on the license plate and found that it was registered to XXXXXXXX, a fact that he remembered because he did not like XXXXXXXX.<sup>19</sup>

XXXXXXXXXXXX stated that he saw the Buick parked near the bowling alley two days after he last spoke to Edwards. XXXXXXX did not inspect the car then, but did so when he saw it again at the same location, several days later. XXXXXXX saw a necktie hanging from the mirror, and a silver-dollar sized spot of blood under the steering wheel. XXXXXXX saw no belt.

XXXXXX a friend of Edwards's, said that he saw the car on the highway while delivering a couch. XXXX stopped and looked through the window. He saw a necktie over the mirror, and an old shirt and belt on the back seat.

XXXXXXXXXX a friend of Edwards's and a relative of XXXXX, similarly stated that he saw the car on the highway. XXXXXXX thought that XXXXXXX might have been with him at the time. XXXXXXX saw a belt looped around the steering wheel and one of Edwards's neckties draped over the mirror.

XXXXXXX who towed the Buick back to Purvis Pontiac in Ferriday, stated that he did not see any blood on the vehicle. There were no broken windows or flat tires, but XXXXXXX did not attempt to find out if the Buick was in driving condition.<sup>20</sup>

NPD Chief J.T. Robinson stated that a short time after Edwards XXXXXXX reported him missing to the NPD (on July 19, 1964), Edwards's car was found. Robinson examined the car and stated that he found nothing unusual, except that a man's belt had been looped through the steering wheel and driver's door handle. There was no blood, broken glass, bullet holes, or other evidence of violence. Robinson could not recall whether he looked at the car near the Plaza Club (next to the bowling alley) in Ferriday or at the gas station.

XXXXXXXX Edwards's XXXXXXX, stated that he inspected the Buick and saw a belt looped around the steering wheel. He did not see any blood stains, but he did see a lot of mud on the floor.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> Subject DeLaughter also claimed that he ran a check on a Buick parked near the bowling alley and found that it was registered to FNU XXXXXXXX. Similarly, former CPSO radio dispatcher Ann Curlee recalled the check and that it was registered to XXXXXXXX.

<sup>20</sup> XXXXXXX stated that he towed the car from a location near the bowling alley, not from Beatty's Gulf Station. Moreover, Beatty himself stated that he did not recall towing the car to his station. However, it seems clear that the car was in fact at the station for a period of time.

<sup>21</sup> Edwards did not say where he examined the car, but XXXXXXX said that it was at Beatty's Gulf Station.



bottom. According to XXXXXXXX, a white man pulled the child out of the pool. An African-American Shamrock employee jumped into the pool afterwards, but he could not swim so she helped him out. The employee was a busboy from the coffee shop and only 15 or 16 years old.

XXXXXXXXXX madam, for whom, according to XXXXXXXXX, XXXXXXXX had worked, stated that XXXXXXXX told her that it was Edwards who jumped in the pool. Jackson, however, also said that XXXXXXXX was not involved in prostitution and Edwards was not known to have been in a relationship with XXXXXXXX or arranged "dates" for her.

Another Shamrock XXXXXXXX at the time, XXXXXXXXX stated that she heard a commotion on the day of the drowning and ran out to the pool. XXXXXXXX was standing by, screaming. Several other men were present, but it was a young black Shamrock kitchen employee who jumped into the pool. XXXXXXXX averred that the employee was not Edwards.

XXXXXXXXXX who worked as a maid at the Shamrock in 1964, stated that the person who pulled the child out of the pool was a young African-American man who worked in the kitchen, not Edwards.

XXXXXXXXXX told the FBI that he had heard a rumor that XXXXXXXX was engaged in sexual relations with Edwards in a motel room at the time of her child's drowning. XXXXXXXXX opined that the rumor had been started by Klan members.

Similarly, retired FBI Agent XXXXXXXX told the *Sentinel* in 2010 that "word filtered back" (from informants) that Edwards had been with a white prostitute at the time the prostitute's child drowned in the pool.

As mentioned above, XXXXXXXX stated that XXXXXXXXX was standing by the pool and, therefore, if true, could not have been in a motel room with Edwards at the time of the drowning.

Subject Deputy Ogden told the FBI that he "made inquiries" concerning the drowning at the motel. Ogden stated that he saw a slender black man standing near the pool, who *might* have been Edwards. Ogden said that he had no information suggesting that Edwards was involved with the child's mother.

Several individuals reported rumors that Edwards helped XXXXXXXXX madam, arrange prostitution engagements with male guests of the Shamrock. Specifically, a Jackson XXXXX reported hearing it from Adams County, Mississippi, Sheriff's Deputy XXXXXXXX, who did not mention it in his own FBI interview, two months earlier; XXXXXXXX another Shamrock employee, who reported hearing it directly from Edwards; and two men who were reportedly Klan members, XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. Additionally, XXXXXXXXX reported that she heard a rumor that Edwards was arranging the dates for XXXXXXXX. Similarly, XXXXXXXXX, a former Shamrock waitress, stated that she heard a rumor from an unknown source that Edwards was helping a white prostitute, whose name she could not recall, arrange "dates." Additionally, XXXXXXXX who replaced Edwards as porter when Edwards disappeared, stated that when he declined to help guests

obtain prostitutes, they told him that the prior porter had.

XXXXXXXXX herself was interviewed by the FBI, and she stated that she was not personally acquainted with Edwards and he had never worked for her. Similarly, XXXXXXXX stated that, as far as she knew, Edwards was not involved in any illegal activities at the Shamrock. Moreover, Edwards's XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX both stated that Edwards was not involved in prostitution activities.

Another African-American Shamrock porter, XXXXXXXX, who worked on and off at the Shamrock for 11 years, admitted to the FBI that he had occasionally arranged prostitution engagements for XXXXXXXX. He stated further that, although he was not working at the Shamrock at the time of XXXXXXXX's drowning, he recalled that XXXXXXXX had, on one occasion, asked XXXXXXXX to inquire with a motel guest whether the guest wanted a prostitute. The guest declined. XXXXXXXX said he never learned the name of the prostitute XXXXXXXX had in mind. In the spring of 1964, XXXXXXXX was replaced as porter by his XXXX who, in turn, was replaced by Edwards. XXXXXXXX was considerably older than Edwards and, therefore, did not fit XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX description. On the other hand, Edwards had worked at the Shamrock for only about a month and a half when he disappeared.

Edwards was caught entering the room of a white female Shamrock guest and Edwards dated white women

XXXXXXXXX Edwards's XXXXXXXX, said that Edwards recounted to him an incident that occurred at the Shamrock. A white female guest had reportedly called the reception and asked for something (XXXXXXXXX did not know the specifics) to be brought to her room. Edwards brought the requested item to the room, obtained permission to enter the room and, when he did so, saw that the guest was naked. He immediately left the room. A white man entered the room without having seen Edwards exit, but shortly thereafter came out and stared at Edwards.

XXXXXXXXX was working part-time in the kitchen of the Shamrock in July 1964. He recalled that sometime before Edwards disappeared, Edwards came to the rear door of the kitchen and said that he had entered a guest room and something provoked the male guest to point a pistol at him. XXXXXXXX opined that the provocation was the result of Edwards having seen the female guest naked. That same night, Edwards, who was off-duty and needed a shave, asked that one of the kitchen employees go to the bar and get him a bottle of whiskey. XXXXXXXX did not see Edwards again.

XXXXXXXXX told the *Sentinel* during its 2007-2010 investigation, that he was Edwards's XXXXXXXXXXX. XXXXXXXX said that Edwards told him that he had a white girlfriend at the Shamrock, and that he had been threatened by white men. Once, Edwards was in a room with the white woman and a white man burst in and "caught him." At that point, there were a number of unidentified white men who wanted to kill Edwards, but the white woman threatened to "tell" if the men hurt Edwards. XXXXXXXX said that Edwards told him about many

“close escapes” and that XXXXXXXX begged Edwards to quit his job at the motel.<sup>24</sup>

XXXXXXX who knew Edwards for about five or six years, stated that a month or two prior to Edwards’s disappearance, Edwards told him that he had met about five white women, who were “very nice to him.” Edwards did not identify the women, but XXXXXX surmised that they were employees of the Shamrock, rather than guests, because Edwards said that he had known them over a period of time.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX reportedly knew Edwards well, told the *Sentinel* that he and others had warned Edwards that he was “playing with fire” by dating white women.<sup>25</sup>

XXXXXXX one of Edwards’s XXXXXX, told the FBI that Edwards was a “lady’s man,” and often had several girlfriends, but Edwards never mentioned their names or whether they were white or black. XXXXXX specified further that he had no knowledge of any white woman Edwards might have dated or made advances toward.

XXXXXXX, one of XXXXXXXX daughters, stated that about two weeks prior to his disappearance, Edwards told her that he was having an affair with a white woman. He also told her that he had been caught with a white woman in a room while working at a hotel in Natchez.<sup>26</sup> Edwards laughed about the two stories and did not appear worried.

XXXXXXXXXX another of XXXXXXXX daughters, stated that she had known Edwards since childhood. She recalled him working at the Shamrock, but she stated that he never mentioned dating white women or being involved in prostitution.

XXXXXXX said that he had never heard any rumors that Edwards had scheduled a date

---

<sup>24</sup> According to XXXXXXXX, Edwards had been employed at the Shamrock for more than two years prior to his disappearance. But the Shamrock’s employment records and statements from Shamrock employees indicate otherwise.

<sup>25</sup> XXXXXXXX told the *Sentinel* that he had known Edwards since Edwards was a boy. Edwards eventually asked XXXX to officiate his marriage with his girlfriend, XXXXXXXX, and XXXX agreed. Shortly thereafter, Edwards disappeared and XXXX thought it was due to “cold feet.” The Reverend also reportedly told the *Sentinel* that he had been told by someone he considered a reliable source that Edwards had been taken to somewhere in Mississippi, shot more than 30 times, and then his body was put in concrete and thrown into the river. According to the same article, two other sources, who wished to remain anonymous, had reportedly heard the same account.

<sup>26</sup> Prior to the Shamrock, Edwards had been working two jobs, a day job as stock worker at “Swift and Company” and a night job at the Albert Pick Motel in Natchez. Edwards was eventually let go at Swift, but he continued at the Albert Pick until he started work at the Shamrock. The FBI interviewed a number of Swift and Albert Pick employees, and none of them knew of any incident involving Edwards and a white woman.

with a white woman on the night he disappeared.

The incident involving XXXXXXXX and other evidence against the named subjects

XXXXXXXXXX was interviewed by the FBI on September 8, September 9, September 19, October 16, and November 3, 1967. XXXXXXXX stated that she started work at the Shamrock in May or June 1964 (not long before Edwards started work at the motel) and continued there for about two months ending in mid-July, 1964.<sup>27</sup> XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. She was let go by the Shamrock owner, XXXXXXXX, reportedly because he felt that the job was too strenuous for her. XXXXXXXX said that she had decided to quit before being let go, in part because of an incident involving Edwards. According to XXXXXXXX, one afternoon, she had left the switchboard and was heading toward the restroom when Edwards put an arm around her and attempted to kiss her on the lips. XXXXXXXX pulled away and told him that she "didn't go for that." Edwards told her it would not happen again and pleaded with her not to tell anyone.<sup>28</sup> In a later interview, her fifth, XXXXXXXX opined that Edwards might have felt encouraged after a conversation between them. XXXXXXXX said that Edwards told her that he had dated white women. When XXXXXXXX registered surprise, Edwards asked her if she would ever date African-American men. XXXXXXXX told the FBI that she lied to Edwards and said that she would.

In her **first FBI interview**, XXXXXXXX claimed that she did not tell anyone about the incident, except for her roommate, XXXXXXXX. XXXXXXXX stated that, nevertheless, several days after the incident, two or three men came to her residence. One of the men was wearing an NPD uniform; a second man was from the VPD, although she could not remember whether the man was wearing a uniform. XXXXXXXX was shown photographs of all the VPD officers and she "sorta' sa[id]" one of her visitors was subject VPD Chief Spinks. Subject Spinks and XXXXXXXXXXXX later told the FBI that they had, in fact, interviewed XXXXXXXX. XXXXXXXX added that a third man may have been with the officers, but she did not know whether the man was a police officer. The men asked XXXXXXXX about the incident with Edwards, and then told her that Edwards would be "taken care of."

XXXXXXXXXX also claimed that she did not recall whom she was dating at the time and denied that she had ever dated a police officer.<sup>29</sup> XXXXXXXX said that she had heard no information indicating that Edwards had disappeared.

---

<sup>27</sup> XXXXXXXXXXXX of the Shamrock, checked the employment records and found that XXXXXXXX was employed there between June 1 and June 21, 1964. XXXXXXXXXXXX told the FBI that he thought that she worked there longer and would check again. Indeed, based on other evidence, it seems likely that XXXXXXXX was still at the Shamrock in July, as she stated. The FBI file does not indicate that XXXXXXXX was re-contacted concerning the records.

<sup>28</sup> In XXXXXXXX's third interview, she said that Edwards said that he was sorry and that he tried to kiss her because he was in love with her.

<sup>29</sup> Technically, subject Goss was not a police officer, rather, a probation officer.

In her **second interview**, XXXXXXXX admitted that she also told subject Goss, whom she had been dating, about the incident with Edwards. She claimed that she had not mentioned telling Goss in her first interview because she knew that Goss was married.

XXXXXXX said that, shortly after telling Goss about the incident, she asked him whether he had reported it to the police, and he said that he had not. Goss added that XXXXXXXX's own failure to report the incident had allowed Edwards to brag about it, and that's how the police found out about it. XXXXXXXX told Goss that she did not want him to make trouble, and he replied to the effect that "the line to get a shot at [Edwards] would be so long, he would not be able to get a shot."

XXXXXXX stated that the officers interviewed her two or three days after she told Goss, and they said that "someone" had reported the Edwards incident to them. According to XXXXXXXX, a "short time" after she was questioned by XXXXXXXX and Spinks, Goss said to her that she might be contacted by the FBI.

She also added that she saw Edwards alive at the Shamrock, about a week after the officers' visit. A week after that, XXXXXXXX let her go from the Shamrock.

In XXXXXXXX's **third interview**, she told the FBI that she remembered that one or two nights after the incident, she told Goss about it, while they were in his car, driving on the Vidalia-Ferriday Highway in the direction of Ferriday. She said that, even though it was dark outside, she could see Goss's face turn red and he said, "I'll kill him. He's messing with something that belongs to me." She also stated that Goss may have added something to the effect that he would feed Edwards to the fishes and the alligators. Goss dropped XXXXXXXX off at home around 11:00 or 11:30 p.m., and she told him not to harm Edwards.

XXXXXXX also added that the two officers who interviewed her specified that it had been a law enforcement officer who reported to them that she had been assaulted. When she recounted the incident with Edwards, they told her it was always best to report such incidents.

XXXXXXX added that, at one point, Goss told her that he had convinced Edwards that Goss was his best friend and that Goss had Edwards where he wanted him so he could kill him. Goss told XXXXXXXX that he would shoot Edwards.

XXXXXXX said that she was certain that Edwards was still working at the Shamrock on XXXXXXXX's second-to-last day, and likely on her last day there. She started working at the Jefferson Davis Hospital in Natchez. At one point, Goss told her that Edwards was no longer at the Shamrock. She said to Goss that she thought she had seen Edwards in a passing car. Even though XXXXXXXX was not certain that the person she had seen had been Edwards, she told Goss that it was. Goss did not reply but turned red. Sometime later, Goss said to her that he bet that she would not be seeing Edwards any more.

Sometime afterwards, after Goss had been transferred from Tallulah to New Orleans and



XXXXXXX had learned that he was married, Goss contacted her and told her he was divorcing his wife. He also told her that he had been questioned by the FBI and told them that he only knew Edwards as a porter. Goss told XXXXXXXX that the FBI would probably interview her and that she, too, should say that she only knew Edwards as a porter.

XXXXXXX said that she "honestly" felt that Goss may have killed Edwards or assisted others in doing so. She denied that she ever made a date with Edwards to lure him, or that Goss had ever suggested doing so. Moreover, earlier in the same statement, XXXXXXXX said that although Goss had lied to her on many occasions, she did not believe he would kill Edwards.

In her **fourth interview**, in October 1967, XXXXXXXX stated that, since her last interview, she had given much thought to Goss's involvement in Edwards death and concluded that he was probably not involved. XXXXXXXX stated that he had lied to her so many times, that it seemed likely that he lied about wanting to kill Edwards.

XXXXXXX stated for the first time, that when Edwards attempted to kiss her, she threatened to report the assault. Edwards told her that he would leave town if she did make the report.

XXXXXXX contacted the FBI on November 2, 1967, and inquired about the status of the investigation. The next day, she spoke to the FBI a **fifth time**. XXXXXXXX reiterated that Goss denied telling the police about the incident with Edwards. XXXXXXXX did not iterate her fourth interview opinion that Goss likely lied about wanting to kill Edwards, however. In fact, she mentioned additional instances of Goss saying or implying that he was involved in Edwards's death. XXXXXXXX stated that, some time after Goss told her that she would not see Edwards around anymore, he bought a .45 caliber pistol, showed it to her, and told her that he bought it for Edwards.

XXXXXXX said that Goss frequently said something about killing Edwards. When she cautioned him, he would state that she ought to know him better than that. Later, he would contradict himself and say "I told you what I was going to do." At one point, XXXXXXXX told Goss that he could get into a lot of trouble, and he replied that "they would have to find the body first."

XXXXXXX was briefly re-contacted a **sixth time** by the FBI on November 24, 1967, and she stated that she had been thinking about the incidents between Goss and Edwards and had nothing to add.

XXXXXXX was interviewed a **seventh time** on December 28, 1967. She stated that she recalled that she was in Goss's car once, when subject Spinks passed by. Both men stopped their cars and talked for a while. XXXXXXXX said that Goss was very friendly with law enforcement officers in the area. XXXXXXXX stated that, on an another occasion, she was in Goss's car when he drove near Deer Park. Goss said that he "wanted to check on Edwards." Goss also said something to the effect that Edwards was in a refrigerator and that the fish would have plenty to feed on. He then said that Edwards's remains would come to the surface. Once, Goss even



Thursday night and was a friend of DeLaughter's. In his second interview, XXXXXXXX said that Goss was friendly with both DeLaughter and Ogden. XXXXXXXX further opined that Ogden, DeLaughter, and Deputy Cowan might have been involved in Edwards's disappearance. He added that Spinks had a tendency toward violence when provoked and was "in close" with the CPSO deputies.

XXXXXXXXXX was interviewed by the FBI in November 1967, and stated that about two years' prior, XXXXXXXXXXXX told her that a black employee of the Shamrock had disappeared and that his disappearance was connected to an alleged attack on a white woman. At around that time, XXXXX was at the Concordia Parish courthouse and overheard XXXXXXXX talking to Ogden about the matter. The two men said something to the effect that they "would not be bothered with him [Edwards] anymore." Ogden added, "that'll serve him right, and they ought to bundle up all the Negroes and get rid of them." Although the men did not mention specifics, XXXXXXXX inferred that law enforcement officers were involved.

A few weeks later, XXXXXXXX was again at the courthouse and there was a "commotion" outside. Her husband told her that they had found the black man's body in the river and she understood him to mean the same missing Shamrock employee.

XXXXXXXXXXXX stated that he was a good friend of subject Ogden and that Ogden often related interesting cases to him. XXXXXXXX stated that Ogden told him on an unknown date that three or four days prior, at about 11:00 p.m., Ogden received a complaint that Edwards was creating a disturbance at Haney's Big House in Ferriday. When Ogden arrived at Haney's, Edwards had already driven off, but Ogden was able to overtake Edwards on the Vidalia-Ferriday highway, where Ogden conducted a traffic stop. Before Ogden could arrest Edwards, Edwards jumped from his car and ran over the levee. XXXXXXXX stated that DeLaughter was present and almost caught Edwards. Ogden told XXXXXXXX that Edwards's car was still in the place where they had stopped it, but XXXXXXXX drove by about a week later and did not see it there. XXXXXXXX added that he thought that Ogden considered using, or actually obtained' bloodhounds to locate Edwards, but he was unsuccessful. At the time of the incident, Ogden drove a grey Plymouth.<sup>32</sup>

XXXXXXXXXX told the FBI in October 1967 that XXXXXXXXXXXX Louisiana Klan Bureau of Investigation (KBI) in July 1964, was known to have disclaimed any knowledge concerning Edwards's disappearance, but was also quoted as saying that if anyone did have that knowledge it would have been subjects Glover (who was head of the Farriday KBI) and DeLaughter, as well as XXXXX who had knowledge from Glover, and a fourth unidentified Klansman, about 40 years

---

<sup>32</sup> As is discussed later, subject Ogden claimed that the incident described by XXXXXXXX actually involved other African-American arrestees. Additionally, XXXXXXXX Haney's Big House, stated that he did not know Edwards, and denied ever calling the police concerning a disturbance involving Edwards. XXXXX added that if such an incident had occurred in his absence, his employees would have told him about it.



XXXXXX stated that when Spinks offered him the patrolman position, he initially turned it down because he was getting paid better at his job in the Shamrock Lounge.<sup>35</sup> When XXXXX changed his mind, Spinks told him that the job had been offered to subject Head, but that if Head turned it down (as he apparently did) XXXXX could have it.

XXXXXX claimed that during the summer of 1964, he never heard about a black Shamrock porter named Joseph Edwards insulting a "XXXXX" female employee. XXXXX stated that Spinks never mentioned Edwards until the FBI began inquiring about Edwards's disappearance. According to XXXXX, Spinks said that the first Spinks himself had heard about the incident was when the FBI asked about it. XXXXX noted that it was unlikely that Spinks would have made any incriminating statements to XXXXX because XXXX and Spinks had been involved in a fist-fight and Spinks had tried, unsuccessfully, to fire XXXXX.<sup>36</sup>

XXXXXXXXX the fisherman, who found the "flesh-like material" in the river near Deer Park, discussed in the physical evidence section, stated that about three days after XXXXXXXX assisted the FBI with the scuba operation, he was at a bar in Ferriday, where he ran into subject Ogden, who inquired about the diving operation. XXXXXXXX lied and said that it involved getting mud samples for a government agency, and gave the location of the operation as one considerably distant from the actual location. Ogden said, "that far north is all right. You had me worried for a while." XXXXXXXX added that Ogden appeared very concerned, which led XXXXXXXX to conclude that Ogden was involved.

XXXXXXXXX also stated that subject DeLaughter called his home on March 11, 1968, approximately 45 minutes after diving operations began in the river near Deer Park and asked where XXXXXXXX was. XXXXXXXX contacted DeLaughter the next day (concerning something else) and DeLaughter asked XXXXXXXX what he was doing with the FBI. XXXXXXXX told DeLaughter that he had been hired by the FBI divers but not told the purpose of the search. According to XXXXXXXX, DeLaughter seemed very concerned when told of the exact location of the search. In order to draw DeLaughter out and worry him more, XXXXXXXX told DeLaughter that the FBI had recovered an object that they had concealed from XXXXXXXX in a canvas bag. XXXXXXXX opined that DeLaughter was involved.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> Shamrock XXXXXXXXXXXX told the FBI that the motel records indicated that XXXXX started employment there the last three days of the pay period between July 1 and July 15, 1967. But, as was made clear by XXXX himself as well as the VPD employment records, he started work at the VPD in August 1964 and, therefore, worked at the Shamrock in July 1964. Coincidentally, if he indeed started in the last three days of the pay period, it would have been immediately after Edwards disappeared.

<sup>36</sup> Moreover, although not mentioned by XXXXX, another March 1968 FBI report indicated that, at the time of XXXXX FBI interview, XXXXXXXXXXXX Spinks XXXXXXXXXXXX.

<sup>37</sup> XXXXXXXX told the FBI on March 13, 1968, that two days prior, on March 11, subject *Ogden* told him that the FBI had conducted scuba operations and brought up two sacks of material from the river.



XXXXXXXXXX told the FBI in 1967 that he had heard a rumor that an unidentified woman working at the Bonanza Club had claimed that XXXXXX had skinned alive a black man, and then thrown him in the river. There are no other references in the Edwards FBI file to rumors of Edwards, specifically, being skinned alive or any evidence of it happening.

Retired FBI Agent XXXXXXXXXXX told the *Sentinel* in 2008 that when he was working in the Natchez office in 1964, Louisiana FBI agents told the Mississippi agents that they had received information that Edwards had been “hung up and skinned alive.” In 2009, XXXXXXX said that he had learned from XXXXXXX that Edwards had been taken to a “torture chamber” in an abandoned farmhouse located either in Concordia Parish or Adams County, Mississippi, where he “had been skinned alive.” As mentioned above, the FBI’s investigative file does not contain any statements indicating that the agents had learned that Edwards specifically had been skinned alive or that he had been skinned alive in a torture chamber on a farm; indeed the investigative file contains no information that indicates that XXXXXXX was in any way associated with the investigation.

XXXXXXXXXX told the *Sentinel* in 2009 that XXXXXXX was one of the founding members of the SDG. XXXXXXXXXXX years old in 1964, said that sometime in April of that year, he had a brief conversation with Edwards in the Shamrock’s café, while XXXXXX father and other members of the SDG met in an adjacent room.<sup>41</sup> XXXXXX had been in a car accident shortly before and Edwards asked him what happened. XXXXXX said that Edwards was bored and told XXXXXX about his grandparents. XXXXXX stated further that he worked at a gas station next to Beatty’s gas station and he recalled the large amount of “activity” around Beatty’s when Edwards’s car was towed there. XXXXXX opined that Edwards was likely killed by members of the SDG, although XXXXXX “never heard a hint” of who killed Edwards.

### **Subjects’ interviews**

James Buford Goss, now deceased, was interviewed by the FBI on September 12 and November 28, 1967; he was re-contacted on January 18, 1968.

In his first interview, Goss stated that in March 1964, he started working out of the Tallulah Office of the Louisiana Department of Public Welfare, as a probation officer.<sup>42</sup> He was in the office on Mondays and Wednesdays, and out on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Every Thursday night, he spent the night in one of three motels, the Shamrock in Vidalia being his first choice. The first night Goss ever stayed at the Shamrock, Goss met Edwards. Goss opined that

---

<sup>41</sup> Shamrock employment records indicated that Edwards had not started work at the Shamrock in April 1964.

<sup>42</sup> The FBI obtained Goss’s employment records from XXXXXXX, then Director of the Louisiana Division of Probation and Parole. The records indicated that Goss was employed as a welfare visitor out of Shreveport from August 1961 until March 1964, and that he started as a probation officer out of Tallulah on March 9, 1964.

Edwards had just started working there.<sup>43</sup>

In the spring of 1964, Goss met and fell in love with XXXXXXXX, who was already employed at the Shamrock. Goss stated that he and XXXXXXXX continued to associate with each other through May 1965 and he considered divorcing his wife.

Sometime in July 1964, when Goss checked into the Shamrock, XXXXXXXX started to cry but refused to explain why. Goss took XXXXXXXX for a drive after she got off work, sometime around 9:30 p.m. XXXXXXXX told Goss that she was passing through a back storage room of the motel office, when Edwards grabbed her by the arms and kissed her on the lips. She screamed and Edwards ran out of the office. Goss stated that he thought the incident had occurred either the same night she recounted it or the night before. Goss eventually dropped XXXXXXXX off at home and Goss drove back to the Shamrock, where he learned that Edwards had already left the motel. Goss admitted that he was angry with Edwards and would have beaten him if he had found him. He stated that he did not "believe as a law enforcement officer, that [he] would have killed him," however.

Goss stated that he had business at the courthouse the next morning and reported the incident involving Edwards and XXXXXXXX to subject VPD Chief Spinks. Spinks told Goss that he would look into it. Goss saw subjects DeLaughter and Ogden at the courthouse but he did not mention the incident to anyone other than Spinks. That afternoon, Goss drove to Ruston, Louisiana, where he stayed with his parents.

According to Goss, two VPD officers went to XXXXXXXX's apartment in Natchez, that day or the next. Goss said the officers were in civilian clothing because XXXXXXXX's residence was outside of their jurisdiction. Goss did not know whether one of the two officers was Spinks.

Goss said that he was certain that he returned to Vidalia the following Thursday (and may have been there on Tuesday). It was then that he learned from XXXXXXXX of the officers' visit to her home. Goss said that he may have initially denied to XXXXXXXX that he reported the incident to the VPD, but he eventually admitted it. Goss said that he enquired about Edwards at the Shamrock that Thursday, but he was told that Edwards had not returned there.

Goss stated that he "had no recollection" of telling XXXXXXXX that he would have to stand in line to "get a shot" at Edwards. He also specifically denied that he suggested or arranged for XXXXXXXX or any other woman to make a date with Edwards so that they could kill him.

Goss admitted that he expected that, given the number of FBI agents in the area,

---

<sup>43</sup> XXXXXXXXXXXX Shamrock) told the FBI that hotel registration records indicated that Goss had stayed there on June 11 and 18, and on July 9, 1964. XXXXXXXX could not find registration records from July 15 through the end of July, 1964. As mentioned before, Edwards started work at the Shamrock on June 8, 1964.



XXXXXXX would be interviewed by the FBI and he told her that she only had to tell the truth.

Goss said he was not a member of any KKK-type organization and added that he did not know subjects Head, Horton, or Glover.

Goss also said that neither he nor any of his coworkers owned a white Olds, a flashing red light, or any car radio equipment requiring two long antennas.<sup>44</sup>

In Goss's **second interview**, Goss stated again that he went to the Shamrock after XXXXXXX told him of Edwards's "insult," but he was not able to locate Edwards. He also iterated that he reported the incident to subject Spinks the next day. Goss stated for the first time that subject Ogden was present when Goss spoke to Spinks and that, later that day, Ogden asked Goss for details. When Goss explained the situation, Ogden said that "they" would "take care of it." Ogden did not specify what he meant, but Goss assumed that someone in the CPSO would take legal action against Edwards.

An unspecified number of days after XXXXXXX told Goss that she had been contacted by the police but did not want press charges, Goss saw Edwards's car parked outside the Shamrock office. Goss did not see Edwards. Sometime later, Goss saw Ogden at Beatty's gas station and inquired as to what action Ogden was taking with respect to Edwards. Goss iterated that he meant legal action. Goss did not indicate in his statement what, if anything, Ogden replied.

Sometime later, Goss was at Blackie Drane's bar and an unidentified person said that Edwards's car had been found. Goss understood that the car was found near the sandbar on the levee. Sometime after that, Goss was at a table in the King Hotel in the company of XXXXXXX when another unidentified person said something to the effect that Edwards had "gone to New Orleans via the river."<sup>45</sup>

A long time after Goss last spoke to Ogden about Edwards, Goss bumped into Ogden at the Concordia Parish courthouse. Ogden said that Goss should "sink [his] n...ers far enough out where fishermen could not hook onto them." When Goss asked what Ogden meant, Ogden replied, "You ought to know; you put him there."

Sometime later, Goss learned from someone that a fisherman had hooked into some flesh in the river. It was then that Goss understood the comment about Edwards going to New Orleans via the river to mean that someone had killed Edwards. But Goss asked no questions because he

---

<sup>44</sup> As discussed in the section concerning the white Olds, all of the available evidence corroborates Goss's assertion that he did not own or operate a 1964 white Olds.

<sup>45</sup> XXXXXXXXXX was interviewed in January 1968, and stated that Goss was his probation officer and he would contact Goss at the Shamrock. XXXXXXX stated that he had no information concerning Edwards and did not mention being at the King Hotel when someone said that Edwards went up the river.

did not want to get involved.

Goss recalled that, on an unknown date, Ogden said that “the fresh water shrimp were sure getting fat now,” but Ogden did not elaborate.

Goss stated that when he made the complaint concerning Edwards to Ogden, he had been working in the area only three months and was not aware of the CPSO’s reputation for its officers being involved in numerous beatings and other illegal activities.

Goss added that a long time after Edwards disappeared, Goss accompanied Spinks, DeLaughter, and CPSO Deputy Junior Harp on patrol in Natchez. Harp had been a jailer in the Ferriday jail. Goss stated that Harp owned a 1964 or 1965 white Olds that he used as a patrol car after joining the CPSO. Goss could not explain his suspicions, but he believed that Harp was involved in Edwards’s disappearance.<sup>46</sup>

Goss was briefly recontacted on January 18, 1968, and stated that he had nothing to add to his prior statements. He stated that anything he said about subject Ogden would only be denied by Ogden and Ogden would be falsely backed up by Ogden’s associates.

Goss died in 2009.

XX years of his life, Goss often spoke to XXXX about Concordia Parish. Goss referred to subjects Ogden and DeLaughter as “those bastards,” and said that they had tried to pin Edwards’s murder on him.

VPD Chief Johnnie Lee “Bud” Spinks, now deceased, was interviewed by the FBI on November 1, 1967. Spinks stated that he received a telephonic complaint from a woman demanding to know what Spinks planned to do about the fact that a male African-American employee of the Shamrock had insulted a white female employee. The woman severely criticized Spinks for his apparent lack of action. Spinks made no record of the call because the caller was anonymous.

Spinks checked into the matter and interviewed the alleged victim, later identified as XXXXXXXX. He stated that he was in uniform when he went to interview XXXXXXXX and was likely accompanied by XXXXXXXX. He could not recall whether any other VPD officer accompanied them.

When XXXXXXXX described the incident, Spinks said that he wanted to charge the man with assault or attempted rape, but XXXXXXXX refused to press charges so Spinks did not make a record of the interview. Spinks told the FBI that he did not know Edwards, but assumed that he was the man referenced in the complaint. He denied being involved in Edwards’s disappearance.

---

<sup>46</sup> XXXXXXXX at CPSO, told the FBI that XXXXXXXX sold his 1962 Olds to the CPSO for use as a patrol car when he started work there in March 1965.

Spinks stated that the VPD leased a new Olds every year. The Olds had two antennae. Spinks's personal vehicle was a 1964 beige Olds, with a single short antenna on the right rear. Spinks denied ever stopping Edwards's car or any of his VPD officers doing so.

Spinks stated that he was acquainted with Goss, but denied that Goss ever reported information concerning the assault on XXXXXXXX to him.

Spinks died in 1970.

CPSO Deputy Sheriff Bill Ogden, now deceased, was interviewed by the FBI on September 5, 1967. He stated that he vaguely remembered meeting Edwards at the Shamrock near the swimming pool, either the day XXXXXXXXX drowned or two days later. He stated that the drowning was investigated by the VPD and that there was friction between the CPSO and the VPD. In Ogden's third FBI interview, he iterated that he may have met Edwards on the day of the XXXX drowning. He said that he had gone to the Shamrock to "make inquiries" concerning the drowning, thus, somewhat contradicting the prior account that it was the VPD and not the CPSO that investigated the drowning.

With respect to the "flesh-like material" in the river at Deer Park, it was reported to the Catahoula Parish Sheriff's Office in Harrisonburg, Louisiana, and was subsequently communicated to the CPSO, at which point Sheriff Noah Cross, Deputy Ike Cowan, and Ogden went to investigate. Ogden told the FBI that he concluded, even prior to arriving at Deer Park, that the flesh was unwanted deer parts thrown into the water by the proprietors of Jughead's Café, who used poached deer meat to make sausages. Upon arrival, they noted that they had only one drag line and needed two so they made no attempt to locate submerged material. They did not see any flesh floating. After the search, they left their boat tied to the river bank. That night a severe storm sank the boat. The next day they recovered it, left the area, and stopped investigating the matter.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> XXXXXXXXXXXX told the FBI on August 8, 1967, that years prior, subject Ogden related a story concerning an unidentified commercial fisherman (later identified as XXXXXXXX) was fishing in the Mississippi near Deer Park (also known as "Deer Park Lake") and hooked a sunken refrigerator. The refrigerator opened and material the fisherman thought was human flesh rose to the surface. The fisherman took some of the material to the Catahoula Parish Sheriff's Office, where the Sheriff attempted to give it to CPSO Sheriff Noah Cross. Cross declined to take the material telling the other Sheriff that he could not dump the material on him. Ogden stated that "they" took the CPSO power boat to the area and stirred up the water where the flesh had been found. On August 29, 1967, the CI stated that four nights prior, on August 25, subject Ogden was at the Bonanza Club and said that he either already told, or planned to tell the FBI that the odor that arose from Deer Park Lake was from animal carcasses sunk there to attract catfish.

Ogden was **re-interviewed** on November 21, 1967, and denied having knowledge of any incident where he chased an African-American man over a levee.

Ogden was interviewed a **third time** on December 20, 1967. He stated that the only additional detail he recalled was “once” seeing subject Goss outside the CPSO station with a middle-aged woman, presumably Goss’s wife, in the car.

Ogden acknowledged that he was present for a conversation inside the CPSO concerning an incident between Edwards and XXXXXXX, but Ogden denied making any statement to the effect that “it would be taken care of,” or “they will take care of it.”

With respect to XXXXXXX’s story, Ogden stated that the incident did not involve Edwards, but rather one of two other African-American arrestees, XXXXXXXXXXX, both of whom attempted to escape.

Ogden died in 2004.

CPSO Deputy Frank DeLaughter, now deceased, was interviewed on October 10, 1967. DeLaughter stated that he did not know Edwards and had no information concerning Edwards. He recalled checking on a green and white Buick parked near the bowling alley, which came up as registered to FNU XXXXXXXXXXX. DeLaughter denied XXXXXXX’s allegation that he said that the car belonged to the black man who had insulted the woman at the Shamrock and that the man would not be bothering anyone anymore.<sup>48</sup>

DeLaughter died in 1996.

Kenneth Norman Head, now deceased, was interviewed by the FBI on December 18, 1967. Head stated that he had never heard the name “Joseph Edwards,” nor knew anything about a missing African-American porter from the Shamrock. Head stated further that he and subject Horton were close friends and they used to ride to work together. Head did not know Horton to be a member of the KKK. Head died in 2004.

The FBI attempted to interview Raleigh Jackson “Red” Glover, now deceased, on December 20, 1967. Glover refused to answer any questions without his attorney present. He stated that he had been contacted by FBI agents 15 times concerning “blowing up” African Americans, and accused them of spreading lies about him. He denied knowing Edwards or having any role in Edwards’s disappearance. Glover died in 1984.

---

<sup>48</sup> The October 10, 1967, 302, states that DeLaughter was told that “the inquiry would be limited to a matter about which he had been contacted *before*,” but there is no indication in the file that the FBI had contacted or interviewed DeLaughter with respect to Edwards prior to October 1967.



A review of the DMV records indicated that Glover purchased a 1964 Oldsmobile on May 20, 1964, from McPhail Motors. The FBI interviewed XXXXXXXXXX, and he confirmed that XXXXXX had purchased a white 1964 Oldsmobile from McPhail.<sup>51</sup>

XXXXXXXXXXXX told the FBI that DeLaughter was assigned a Pontiac and Ogden a Chevrolet, both purchased for the CPSO in January 1964. The only two Olds ever used by the CPSO were a 1962 model purchased in March 1965 (from XXXXXXXXXX when he started work at the CPSO) and a 1967 model. XXXXXXXXXX, stated that she believed that the CPSO would furnish dashboard-mounted beacon lights for emergency use.

Louisiana Department of Motor Vehicle records indicated that Goss purchased a used, two-door, 1962 Chevrolet, on May 18, 1964; he also purchased a used 1953 Chevrolet School Bus in May 1963. No records were found indicating that Goss ever registered a 1964 Oldsmobile. Additionally, although Goss worked out of Tallulah in Madison Parish, and the Madison Parish Sheriff's Office (MPSO) had a 1964 Olds with whip antennae and no dome light, both XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX stated that Goss never had access to MPSO vehicles. XXX added that Goss was not given a red dashboard light and he was not authorized to use such a light.

XX stated that the ECPSO had white Oldsmobiles in 1964, however the cars had only one antenna, a roof-mounted red light, and large emblems on the front doors.

The FBI determined through inquiries at McPhail Oldsmobile in Natchez that the Adams County, Mississippi, Sheriff's Office did not have any Oldsmobile patrol cars until October 1964, several months after Edwards's disappearance.

XXXXXXXXXXXX stated that in July 1964, his patrol car was a white and blue Ford that had been previously used by the CPSO.

Because XXXXXXXX indicated in his first interview that the white Olds had a decal from Loe Chevrolet Company, the FBI interviewed XXXXXXXXXX, a Loe salesman. Loe was located across the street from the Louisiana Office of Probation and Parole in Tallulah where subject Goss was employed. XXXXXXXX remembered Goss but did not recall Goss purchasing a car at Loe.

The FBI obtained Loe sales invoices for the years 1963 and 1964 and determined that only 16 white Oldsmobiles had been purchased by individuals and four by companies (two by the same company, Coit Chevrolet in Newellton, Louisiana). The FBI then located and interviewed the majority of the individuals and company representatives on the list, as well as a number that had not been listed. The FBI determined that none of the Oldsmobiles owned by the interviewees matched the description given by XXXXXXXX. Moreover, when XXXXXXXX was interviewed in

---

<sup>51</sup> It is unclear what, if anything, the FBI did to determine whether Glover's car matched XXXXXXXX's description.

1968, he stated that he could not be certain that he had seen the Loe decal.

Investigation related to finding of “flesh-like matter” in the river at Deer Park

XXXXXXX was interviewed or contacted by the FBI on August 10, 15 and 25, 1967, on October 20, 1967, on November 27, 1967, and on March 13, 1968. XXXXXXX told the FBI that he, XXXXXXX, and XXXXXXX were fishing in the Mississippi at Deer Park (“Dear Park Lake” or “the lake”) when their net snagged on a large object (a refrigerator/icebox or a steel drum possibly). In freeing the net, they apparently turned over the object and a four-foot in diameter air bubble floated to the surface bringing with it approximately eight pounds of dark brown flesh. At the same time there was a terrible sickening stench. The three men departed the area because of the stench but took a small sample of the material with them, which XXXXXXX then gave to the Catahoula Parish Sheriff’s Office (CaPSO) in Harrisonburg.<sup>52</sup> XXXXXXX estimated that the incident occurred in late October 1964.<sup>53</sup> XXXXXXX stated that he recalled noticing several iceboxes stacked on the river embankment on the property of XXXXXXXXXX. The iceboxes were eventually removed and XXXXXXX did not know where they were.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, were interviewed by the *Sentinel* in July 2009. XXXXXXX reiterated that he brought the material to the CaPSO, and specified that he gave it to Sheriff J.Y. McGuffee. XXXXXXX added that some time “later” he asked McGuffee about the material and McGuffee told him it had disappeared. XXXXXXX stated that, shortly after her father hauled in the material, she “saw buzzards circling.”

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX confirmed XXXXXXX’s account.

XXXXXXX was interviewed by the FBI in August 1967. He stated that he recalled XXXXXXX came into the CaPSO one day (XXXXXXX thought in the summer of 1965) and brought in something that appeared to be a 6-inch piece of intestines. The material was extremely decayed and appeared to be dissolving into liquid. XXXXXXX assumed the material was cow or dog intestines. XXXXXXX said he placed the material in a bottle with a note on it XXXXXXXXXX gave the material to the CPSO since they had jurisdiction over the waters. XXXXXXXXXX confirmed that XXXXXXX brought the material, that XXXXXXX handled the matter, and that it was referred to the CPSO. XXXXXXXXXX stated that there was no reason to believe that the material was anything other than animal flesh. XXXXXXX, on the other hand, stated that he vaguely recalled someone bringing material in that they thought was part of a dead

---

<sup>52</sup> Harrisonburg is located about 40 miles away from Deer Park and in a different parish, but XXXXXXX explained that he brought the material to the CaPSO because both his home and business were located in Harrisonburg.

<sup>53</sup> XXXXXXX explained that he found the material about a month after he was arrested by the CPSO for cutting a fence in early October 1964 on the complaint of XXXXXXXXXX, a neighbor. In a later contact, XXXXXXX stated that he found the material about two weeks after he bought the car he used to transport it and that his records indicated that he bought the car on October 14, 1964. XXXXXXX estimated that it was between October 14 and October 25.

body, but XXXXXX denied that he ever saw the material or that he forwarded it to the CPSO.

XXXXXXXXXX stated that he recalled that two to three years prior, the XXXXXXXXXXX and a number of deputies acted on a report of XXXXXXXX finding some material but apparently the investigation did not reveal any evidence. Neither XXXXXX nor anyone else at the CPSO had a record of XXXXXXXX being arrested in 1964.<sup>54</sup>

XXXXXXXXXX was interviewed in December 1967, and stated that in 1964 and 1965, he submerged 40 to 50 iceboxes near XXXX railroad track and then floated them into the river to harbor fish. XXXXXXXX did not mention what, if anything, was in the iceboxes when he submerged them. He recalled hearing, in the fall of 1964, that a CPSO boat being used at the lake, sunk near Jughead's Landing.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX in July 1964, stated that he did not recall any suspicious activity at Deer Park in that period. XXXXXX stated further that subject Spinks maintained a houseboat several hundred feet from Jughead's Landing.

In August 1967, the FBI hired a number of scuba divers to search the lake for Edwards's remains. The divers reportedly searched the lake for a distance of 60 feet in all directions from the point indicated to them by XXXXXXXX, but they did not find any large container as described by XXXXXXXX. In March 1968, the FBI conducted a second search of the lake, this time with a magnet, and found a broken hunting knife and a refrigerator door but not a refrigerator.

The broken knife handle (and small portion of the blade) was submitted to the FBI laboratory for analysis, but the lab determined that there was no hair, blood, or fiber on the knife.

#### The Clayton Skull:

In 2009, the *Sentinel* reported that in 2002, a human skull had been found in the ground in Clayton, Louisiana. The skull was missing the lower jaw and had a small hole in the forehead. In 2002, Louisiana State University (LSU) forensic anthropologist Mary Manhein went to Clayton briefly to collect the skull and survey the area. In 2008, students from the Syracuse University College of Law's Cold Case Justice Initiative contacted Manhein and told her about Edwards's case. Manhein's lab obtained DNA from Edwards's XXXXXXXX. In the spring of 2009, Manhein returned to Clayton and searched the area where the skull had been found. Manhein was not able to locate any human remains. Moreover, in 2010, the *Sentinel* reported that DNA extracted from the skull did not match that obtained from Edwards's relatives.

---

<sup>54</sup> Moreover, XXXXXXXX's attorney, XXXXXXXX, stated that he represented XXXXXXXX on a trespassing charge based on XXXXXX's complaint in 1962.



**2010 Federal Investigation:**

In 2010, the FBI initiated a review of the circumstances surrounding Edwards's death, pursuant to the Department of Justice's "Cold Case" initiative and the "Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act of 2007," which charges the Department of Justice to investigate "violations of criminal civil rights statutes . . . result[ing] in death" that "occurred not later than December 31, 1969." The FBI retrieved the from the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) the 1964-67 FBI file relating to the incident and reviewed it. The FBI also conducted research to determine whether any of the named subjects or other relevant individuals were still alive.

The FBI determined that the all of the named subjects are deceased:

Frank Delaughter died on October 30, 1996.

Raleigh Jackson "Red" Glover died in April 1984.

James Buford Goss died on June 26, 2009.

Kenneth Norman Head died on April 4, 2004.

Homer Thomas "Buck" Horton died on September 2, 1995.

Bill Ogden died on September 15, 2004.

Johnnie Lee "Bud" Spinks died in November 1970.

Additionally, XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.

**Review by Department Attorneys:**

Civil Rights Division, Criminal Section attorneys reviewed the FBI file retrieved from NARA. As mentioned previously, the FBI interviewed in excess of 250 witnesses and conducted multiple scuba searches and forensic tests, resulting in a case file of about 620 pages. Attorneys also reviewed the results of the 2010 FBI investigation and numerous newspaper articles.

**Conclusion:**

This matter does not constitute a prosecutable violation of the federal criminal civil rights statutes.

As discussed at great length above, the FBI conducted an extensive investigation into numerous theories as to the events that precipitated Edwards's disappearance and likely murder. The majority of those theories were not supported by sufficient credible or corroborated evidence,

and the investigation did not produce any solid leads.

First, the theory that Edwards's murder was connected to the drowning of XXXXXXXX or to Edwards's alleged relationship with the child's mother, XXXXXXXX, was contradicted by XXXXXXXX herself, who said that she did not know Edwards, as well as eyewitness Shamrock employees who said that the African-American employee who jumped into the pool was not Edwards.

A second theory suggested that Edwards was murdered because of his alleged involvement in providing prostitutes to motel guests. However, that theory failed to link any specific alleged activity to Edwards's disappearance, except for the connection to XXXXXXXX, discussed above. Moreover, Edwards had been employed at the Shamrock a little over a month by the time of his disappearance, whereas a prior porter, XXXXXXXX, had worked there XX years and admitted to being involved in obtaining prostitutes. In fact, XXXXXXXX stated that he once was asked by XXXXXXXX to inquire with a motel guest whether he wanted a prostitute. More to the point, XXXXXXXX madam, stated that she did not know Edwards and that he never worked for her.

A third theory revolved around Edwards's alleged relationships with one or more white women and the related theory that Edwards was caught entering the room of a female motel guest. FBI agents interviewed numerous family members and employees of both the Shamrock and the Albert Pick motel in Natchez where Edwards had been employed immediately prior. Once again, the investigation failed to produce any specific information or solid lead.

Another theory was provided more recently by retired SA XXXXXXXX, who told the *Sentinel* that in 1964, Louisiana FBI agents told the Mississippi agents that they had received information that Edwards had been "hung up and skinned alive." XXXXXXXX also said that he had learned from an informant that Edwards had been taken to a "torture chamber" in an abandoned farmhouse located either in Concordia Parish or Adams County, Mississippi, where he "had been skinned alive." However, other than a multiple-hearsay rumor reported to NPD Chief Robinson that Klan-member XXXXXXXX had skinned alive an unidentified black man, there is no mention of this theory in the FBI's investigative file of the Edwards disappearance. Moreover, XXXXXXXX, who is also not mentioned in the FBI file, did not name any specific suspects or suggest any solid leads.

Another theory was mentioned in a July 10, 2008, *Sentinel* article, in which the XXXXXXXXXXX, was quoted as saying that he had been told by someone he considered a reliable source that Edwards had been taken to somewhere in Mississippi, shot more than 30 times, and then his body was put in concrete and thrown into the river. According to the same article, two other sources, who wished to remain anonymous, had reportedly heard the same theory.

The FBI investigation reasonably focused on the three most viable leads. First and foremost, the XXXXX information reportedly received directly from subject Head, indicating that Edwards was murdered because of the XXXXXXXX incident, and naming the subjects. Second, XXXXXXXX's statement concerning the "traffic stop" of Edwards's Buick by a white 1964 Olds on what was most likely the night of Edwards's disappearance. Third, the discovery of the

flesh-like material at Deer Park by fisherman XXXXXXXX.

As a result of the first lead, the FBI interviewed XXXXXXXX seven times, Goss twice (and contacted him a third time), Ogden three times, and Spinks, DeLaughter, and Head once each. The FBI also conducted almost 80 interviews related to the lead. As a result of the second lead, the FBI interviewed XXXXXXXX three times, and conducted in excess of 70 other related interviews. As a result of the third lead, the FBI interviewed XXXXXXXX six times, and conducted almost 20 related interviews or scuba searches.

As discussed previously, the recent FBI investigation has been the subject of scrutiny and criticism, particularly in the local media. But, as has been clearly established, all of the "leads" that the FBI allegedly failed to pursue had either been extensively pursued during the original investigation, lacked in useful specificity, or implicated the very same named subjects, who are all deceased.

Based on the foregoing, this matter should be closed. William Flanagan, Counsel to the United States Attorney for the Western District of Louisiana, concurs in this recommendation.