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Q Did he say why he went down to get the boy at Mose Wright's house in the first place?

A No.

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

A I didn't ask him.

Q And he didn't offer any explanation to you about that?

A No.

MR. CHATHAM: I believe that is all we have in qualifying the witness for the State.

CROSS EXAMINATION

BY MR. CARLTON:

Q Mr. Cothran, give to the Court the exact language of the question which you asked "J.W." on this occasion?

A I asked him if they went out and got that boy, out at Mose Wright's house.

Q Then you said, "Did they go out and get that boy from Mose Wright's house?"

A I just said "Did you all".

Q And what was his exact answer to you?

A He said, yes, but they put him out there at the store.

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Q And when he said, yes, but they put him out there at the store, did he say who put him out at the store?

A No, he didn't say.

Q And when he gave his answer to you, did he say "They" or "We"?

A I don't remember whether he said "We" or "They".

Q Now who was present when you had this conversation with Mr. Milam?

A You mean when I talked to Mr. Milam?

Q Yes, Sir. Who was present at that time?

A Nobody but me and him.

Q Was Roy Bryant present?

A No.

Q Mr. Cothran, you were a candidate this year for Sheriff of LeFlore County, isn't that right?

A That's right.

Q And Mr. Campbell, a brother-in-law of Mr. Milam down there at Minter City, supported you in that campaign for Sheriff, isn't that true?

A I think so.

Q And Mr. Milam supported you in that campaign, isn't that true?

A I think so.

Q And there was a brother over at Itta Bena who

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supported you, isn't that right?

A I think so.

Q In fact, the entire family supported you in your campaign for Sheriff, isn't that right?

A I believe they did.

Q And you are a good friend of that entire family?

A Yes.

Q And you no doubt believe that they are all good friends of yours?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And you knew J. W. Milam before that time, did you?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And you all were good friends in the past?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Did you know that any statement he might make to you would be used against him?

A No, Sir.

Q And on what day did this particular conversation occur?

A It was on Monday.

Q Then it was on Monday, August 29th, after the boy had disappeared and before the body was found, is that right?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Mr. Cothran, do remember the occasion about a

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week ago when you conferred with Mr. Breland, Mr. Henderson, and Mr. Kellum, and myself, and also Mr. George Smith, when we were all together over there in the office?

A I do.

Q And on that occasion, Mr. Cothran, did you not make the statement to us that you had never talked to "J.W." at all about this and that he had never made any statement about it?

MR. CHATHAM: If the Court please, this doesn't go into the admissability of the statement.

THE COURT: No, it doesn't; but it is all right to ask it now.

MR. CARLTON: Well, we will hold that for now. But we will object to the admission of this testimony and this alleged admission on the grounds that it was not freely and voluntarily made, and that if any statement was made, it was made under improper circumstances without the defendant being properly advised of his rights. And we say that it is inadmissible for that reason.

And we also have a further objection to this witness's testimony at this time on the grounds that the corpus delicti has not been proven, and that there has been no showing whatsoever in the record that the body taken from the Tallahatchie River and alleged to be that of Emmett Till,

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that the death of that body was caused by any criminal agency whatsoever.

THE COURT: The objections will be overruled. Let the jury come in.

(The jury returned to the courtroom, and the proceedings continued with the jury present.)

Q Is this John Ed Cothran?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Mr. Cothran, where do you live?

A Greenwood.

Q Greenwood, LeFlore County, Mississippi?

A Yes, Sir.

Q How long have you lived in LeFlore County?

A Thirty years.

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

A Deputy Sheriff.

Q Deputy Sheriff?

A Yes, Sir.

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

A Yes, Sir.

Q In your capacity as Deputy Sheriff, I want you to tell the Court and jury whether or not in the latter part

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of August, 1955, you had occasion to investigate the murder or disappearance of Emmett Till?

A I did.

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

A Yes, Sir.

Q Where was he when you talked with him?

A In the LeFlore County jail.

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

A Monday.

Q You talked with him on Monday?

A Yes, Sir.

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

A That day.

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

A No one but he and myself.

Q Now, before he made any statement to you, and before you asked him any questions, did you threaten him or intimidate him in any way in order to compel him or force him to make any statement against his will?

A No, Sir.

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Q You did not?

A No, Sir.

Q And before he made any statement to you, did you promise him any reward or hold out any hope of immunity for him if he made any statement to you?

A No, Sir.

Q And was any statement that he made to you in the jail at that time on that Monday, was that statement freely and voluntarily made?

A Yes, Sir.

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

A I asked him if they went out there and got that little boy and if they had done something with him. And he said that they had brought him up there to that store and turned him loose, there at Roy Bryant's store.

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

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

Q Did he say where they got the boy?

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A Over at Mose Wright's.

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

A Yes, Sir.

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

A No, Sir.

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

A No, Sir.

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

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

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

A Up to Mr. Bryant's store.

Q Where is Mr. Bryant's store?

A In Money, Mississippi.

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

A Yes, Sir.

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

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A I would say around three miles.

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

A He didn't say.

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

A No, Sir.

Q Did he tell you where he spent the rest of the night after that?

A He told me he went home.

Q He said he went home after that?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Do you know where he was living at that time?

A No, Sir.

Q How long had you known Mr. Milam prior to this conversation you had with him?

A I imagine around a couple of years.

Q Would you say that you knew him well and that he knew you well?

A Yes, Sir, I knew him.

Q So that, at the time you were talking to him in the jail there in regard to this alleged crime, he knew you were a deputy sheriff of that county under Sheriff George

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Smith, is that right?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And I believe it is the fact that you arrested him and brought him to jail, is that correct?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Now, Mr. Cothran, in your further investigation of this alleged crime, did you go down to the point on the Tallahatchie River between Philipp and Masel where the body was found?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And that was a body said to have been the body of Emmett Till, is that right?

A That's right.

Q When did you go down there?

A It was on Wednesday morning about - - around ten o'clock.

Q Then that would have been Wednesday morning, August 31st, is that right?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And it was this year, 1955?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And you say that was about ten o'clock in the morning?

A Yes, Sir.

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Q And what was the occasion for your going to that particular place? In other words, did you receive some message to go there or some request?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Do you remember who made that request of you or the sheriff?

A Mr. McCool, the office deputy, called me and told me - - -

MR. BRELAND: We object to any conversation, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Don't repeat any conversation.

Q But you did receive a request from someone in the sheriff's office to go to that place there on the Tallahatchie River between Phillip and Masel, is that right?

A Yes, Sir, that's right.

Q And did you there immediately?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Who went there with you?

A Mr. Weber.

Q And who is Mr. Weber?

A A deputy sheriff.

Q Did you stop on the way there anywhere between Greenwood and the point of your destination?

A We did.

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Q Where did you stop?

A At Mose Wright's.

Q Was Mose at home?

A Yes, Sir. He was picking cotton.

Q And did you pick him up?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And where did you and Mose and Mr. Weber go after that?

A We went up on the Tallahatchie River, up on the other side of Philipp.

Q What did you find there when you got to that particular point on the river?

A We found a body that they had taken out of the river.

Q and where was the body when you and Uncle Mose first got there?

A It was laying in a boat there at the edge of the river.

Q And where was the boat? Was it in the water or out on the bank?

A On the bank.

Q Do you remember who else was around there assisting in getting the body there in the boat, and the details connected with it?

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A Well, Mr. Strider was there, the Sheriff. And there was several people around there. There was Mr. Smith. He was over there. And I don't know just who all was there. There was several more.

Q Was there a number of your people around there?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Do you recall the negro undertaker at Greenwood?

A Chester Miller?

Q Yes, Chester Miller?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Was Chester there?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Was he there when you first got there?

A No, He came right after I got there.

Q And did he have his funeral coach with him?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And I believe you said that boy was in the boat when you first got there, is that right?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And how long was it after you got there that the body was removed from the boat?

A Oh, I imagine around twenty minutes, maybe more or maybe not.

Q What did they do with the body after it was taken

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out of the boat? How did they handle it?

A They took some big brown wrapping paper and put it around the body and then put it in a casket.

Q When you first saw the body there, was it lying on its back or face down?

A On its face.

Q And was it turned over before it was taken out of the boat?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And then what was done with the body, John Ed?

A It was put in a casket.

Q Was the casket out on the bank?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And who was supervising that? Was it Chester Miller?

A Chester Miller. He was the one that handled him.

Q And he was the undertaker there?

A That's right.

Q Now, in the course of Chester and those who were assisting him in removing the body from the boat and putting it in the casket, do you recall seeing a ring on the deceased's finger and seeing that ring removed from his finger?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Do you remember generally what kind of ring it was, the general description of it?

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A Yes, Sir. It was a - - it looked like a home-made ring.

Q Was it silver or gold?

A It was silver looking.

Q Did it have any marks or identification on it that you remember?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And what were they?

A 1943 was the date.

Q 1943? Did it have any other marks?

A Yes. It had May - - I don't remember just what date it was.

Q Did it have any initials on it?

A L. T.

Q Did you see that ring on the deceased's finger before it was taken off his finger?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And who took it off his finger?

A This Miller's helper.

Q Do you know whether that was Chester's boy or not?

A I think his name is Simon Garrett.

Q Did you see Simon when he took the ring off the deceased's finger?

A Yes, Sir.

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Q What was done with that ring after Simon took it off the body?

A He gave it to Mose Wright.

Q Do you know what Mose did with it?

A Yes, Sir.

Q What did he do with it?

A He carried it to his house.

Q Did you see the ring at any time thereafter?

A Yes, Sir.

Q How long was it after that when you saw it again?

When did you see it again?

A He gave it to me as soon as that boy looked at it.

Q How is that?

A He gave it back to me there at his house.

Q Did you go with him back to his home?

A I carried him back down there.

Q You didn't drop him out there at Money?

A No. I carried him out there.

Q And when you took him back home, he returned that same ring back to you?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And have you had that same ring in your possession since?

A Yes, Sir.

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Q I will hand you this ring, Mr. Cothran, and I ask you if you can identify it as the same ring that was taken from the body there at that point on Tallahatchie River on the day that you went over there? (A ring is shown to the witness.)

A It is.

Q And have you given anybody else possession of that ring since you have had it?

A Nobody but you.

Q Nobody else except me?

A That's right.

Q Now, you were speaking from your recollection a few minutes ago when I asked you what marks of identification were on the ring. And for the purposes of the record now, and for the benefit of the jury, I would like for you to read what marks, or initials, or figures are on that ring.

A (Reading) "May 25, 1943." And then right under that it has got "L.T."

Q The initials "L.T."?

A Yes, Sir.

MR. CHATHAM: If the Court please, we at this time will offer this ring in evidence as Exhibit 1 to the testimony of Mr. John Ed Cothran.

THE COURT: It will be received in evidence.

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(A ring was tagged and marked as Exhibit 1 to the testimony of Mr. John Ed Cothran by the reporter.)

Q Now, John Ed, I wish you would step down off the witness stand and look at this object lying on the floor here in front of the jury, and if you can, I wish you would tell the jury when was the first time you saw that object? And will you tell what it is and the first time you saw it?

A Well, the first time I saw it was out there at that river that morning, laying in a boat there.

Q Was it in the boat with the body at the same time you testified of your seeing the body?

A That's right.

Q And on that same day?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Was it in the same boat with the body or was it in a separate boat?

A It was in the same boat.

Q At the time you saw the fan and the body, was the wire still attached to the fan and to the body or not?

A No, Sir, it wasn't.

Q The wire was not attached to the body when you saw it?

A The wire was still on the body but it was not on the fan.

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Q Can you tell the court and jury where that fan has been since that day?

A It has been in the Sheriff's office down in Greenwood.

Q Who carried it there?

A I did.

Q And could you say that the object there on the floor is the same fan and that it is the same piece of wire that you took from the boat that was at the river that day?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And it has been in your possession since then?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Mr. Cothran, you are familiar with the area around Money where Uncle Mose Wright's house is situated or where the house is that he was living in on August 28th of this year, are you?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And is that house in LeFlore County, Mississippi?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Now, John Ed, how long have you been a peace officer?

A Almost eight years.

Q And during that time I want you to tell the court and jury whether or not you have had numerous occasions to

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see bodies that have been maimed and beaten and shot or wounded?

A Yes, Sir, I have.

Q And since you have, I would like for you to describe for the court and jury the condition of this boy's body that you saw there in the boat that you have testified to and about, with reference to any wounds or abrasions on or about his head or body? And describe them, if you can, please, Sir?

A Well, his head was torn up pretty bad. And his left eye was about out, it was all gouged out in there, you know. And right up in the top of his head, well, there was a hole knocked in the front of it there.

And then right over his right ear - - well, I wouldn't say it was a bullet hole, but some of them said it was - - -

MR. BRELAND: We object to what they said it was.

THE COURT: The objection is sustained.

Q But there was a hole there on that side of his head

- - -?

MR. BRELAND: We object to the leading form of the question.

THE COURT: I believe he said there was a hole in his head there.

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Q And I believe you said there was a hole there, and you indicated with your finger that it was about one inch above the right ear, is that right?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And could you describe the dimensions of that hole by an illustration with a dime or a penny, or anything of that sort?

A No - - it wasn't anything like that big. It was just a small hole.

Q Could you tell whether or not that hole penetrated the skull?

A No, Sir.

What portion of the left side of his head was caved in?

A Right above his ear, on that side (indicating with his hand).

Q do you mean at a point next to the left temple?

(At this point, one of the jurors stated that he could not hear the witness's answer.)

THE WITNESS: I said it was on the left side of his head, right alongside his left ear and above his ear.

Q From the way you indicated with your finger, you began at a point on the left temple, about an inch above the left eye and his left ear, and extending back to a

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point about an inch or an inch and a half behind the left ear, is that correct?

MR. BRELAND: I think we should let the witness make his own statement about that, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Was that right, Mr. Cothran? Did Mr. Chatham state it correctly?

THE WITNESS: I think I have got confused myself, Judge.

THE COURT: Then suppose you tell it to the jury, yourself, Mr. Cothran. Just state it to them in your own words, and show on your head, as best you can where it was, and just what the condition looked to you.

THE WITNESS: There as a small hole in his head right above the ear over on the right side of his head, over here - - - and that was all tore up. (The witness hesitated in his answer at this point) Now the reason I hesitated there, I wanted to be sure I was getting it on the right side.

Q And what about the front part of his head, and on his forehead?

A There was a place knocked in on his forehead.

Q Did that seem to penetrate the skull?

A Well, it looked like it did.

Q With reference to other parts of his body being maimed or mutilated, did you notice that?

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A There wasn't any.

Q Did you notice anything at all other than about the head?

A No, Sir.

MR. CHATHAM: Take the witness.

CROSS EXAMINATION

BY MR. CARLTON:

Q Mr. Cothran, I believe you ran for Sheriff of LeFlore County this last summer, is that right?

A Yes, Sir.

Q That is, this summer?

A That's right.

Q And in that campaign, I believe that Mr. Milam's brother-in-law over at Minter City, Mr. Campbell, supported you in that race, is that right?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And Mr. Milam supported you in that race?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And Mr. Roy Bryant, from Money, supported you, is that right?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And Mr. Beaner (?), a full brother of Mr. J.W. Milam, also supported you, I believe?

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A Yes, Sir.

Q And the entire family, generally, have been friendly with you over a period of years, is that right?

A That's right.

Q And you have confidence in that family, and the family has confidence in you?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And you have known J.W. Milam for several years, have you?

A For about two years.

Q And he was friendly with you and you were friendly with him?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And they were right in treating you as a friend, isn't that right?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And they were right in feeling that you would treat them fairly and properly?

A That's right.

Q Now, when this statement that Mr. Milam was supposed to have made to you there in the courthouse in Greenwood on Monday, the 28th - - -

Mr. CHATHAM: We object to that statement that it was supposed to have been made. He had already testified that

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he unequivocally made a statement.

Q Mr. Cothran, this statement to which you testified that Mr. Milam made to you on Monday, the 28th - - or I believe it was the 29th - - of August, was anyone present when that conversation was had between you all?

A No, Sir.

Q And where was it made?

A Up in the jail there.

Q Was Mr. Roy Bryant present at that time?

A No, Sir.

Q Was there anyone else there at all?

A There was no one but J.W. and myself.

Q Was he in a cell at the time?

A We were going in a cell.

Q And he made this statement to you right after you arrested him?

A Well, he stopped there and talked to me after we got to the jail.

Q And that is when he made the statement to you?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And had you told him anything that he might say there would be used against him?

A No, Sir.

Q Had you told him that he was under arrest?

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A Well, no, Sir, I hadn't.

Q Had you given him any reason to think that you were asking that question for the purpose of incriminating him?

A Well, I just asked the question.

Q And you talked to him and asked him that just as one friend would ask another friend, is that right?

A Yes, that's right.

Q And just what was the exact question which you asked him, John Ed?

A I asked him if they had carried that boy off.

Q You asked him if they had carried that boy off?

A That's right.

Q And you used the term or words, "If they had carried the boy off"?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And just what was his answer?

A He said that they carried him up to Roy Bryant's store, and they talked to him, and then they let him go.

Q Now, let's get over here and look at this gin fan or this object on the floor here, John Ed. Will you tell the jury just how that fan is made, and for the purpose of the record, will you describe it so that the reporter can get it down here? Will you give us a description of that fan?

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A What do you mean?

Q Well, how many blades are in it?

A I don't know.

Q Count them there, please, sir.

A Eighteen.

Q It has eighteen blades?

A That's right.

Q Are those blades flat or cupped?

A They are cupped on the bottom and kind of flat at the top.

Q And they are set in there between the metal sides, I believe, is that right?

A That's right.

Q Are the sides circular?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And of course, the fan is lying flat on the floor now, is that right?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And one side is lying flat on the floor, and then come these eighteen blades, and then the next side is on top of that, is that correct?

A That's right.

Q And there is a big, heavy hub in the center there, is that right?

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A That's right.

Q And those blades are sharp on the end, is that correct?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Now, how wide is this hub across here?

A About three inches.

Q Is that made out of heavy metal or light metal?

A Heavy.

Q And is it round or square?

A Round.

Q How long are those blades, Mr. Cothran? That is, from the inside edge to the outside edge, what is your best judgement as to the length of the blades?

A Six or eight inches, I imagine, something like that.

Q And how wide across is the fan? What is the diameter, approximately?

A About - - almost three feet.

Q Have you had occasion to weigh that fan?

A I did.

Q And how much does it weigh?

A Seventy pounds.

Q When you took the fan out of the boat up there at the river, was it muddy or clean like it is now?

A It was full of mud.

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Q Who took it away from the scene there?

A Two colored boys put it in my car.

Q Did it still have mud on it when they put it in your car?

A yes, Sir.

Q Did it get your car muddy?

A Yes, Sir, it sure did.

Q And of course, it weighed considerably more when you took it out of the river there than it does now, is that right?

A Almost twice.

Q Then you would say that the weight was somewhere around one hundred and forty pounds when it came out of the river, is that right?

A Yes, Sir, I sure would.

Q Now; how long was this barbed wire that was wrapped around the neck of this body in the boat? How long was that wire, the length of it, from his neck?

A They had the wire off the fan when I got up there. I don't know how much of it they had off. But it was tied around the fan before, and I would judge from the length of it now - - well, I would say the length - - well, it looked to me like it would have been a width of about that long (indicating with his hands).

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Q Would you say that is about eighteen inches?

A Something like that.

Q Then about eighteen inches would have been the distance the body was from the fan, is that right?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Now, this wound over his right ear, the small wound, was it round or what kind of a wound was it?

A It wouldn't say because I don't know.

Q Was it just a hole there?

A It was just a little hole.

Q And as I understood from your testimony, there were some gashes or cuts over his left ear?

A That's right.

Q And these gashes over his left ear, what did they look like?

A They was just gashes, is all I know.

Q And how many were there?

A I know there was two.

Q And how close together were they?

A Oh, they were pretty close together.

Q Was it possible for those gashes to have been made by this fan dropping on that head, in your best judgement?

A You mean if they dropped that on his head?

Q Well, the body was found in the river, I believe,

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is that right?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Do you think the body went in the river under its own power?

A I don't know.

MR. SMITH: Your Honor, we object to what he thinks, even if it is cross examination.

THE COURT: Yes - - don't ask the witness that.

Q Of course, you don't know, Mr. Cothran, whether the body went in the river first or whether the fan went in the river first, do you?

A No, Sir.

Q But those wounds on the left-hand side of his head were such that they could have been made by this fan dropping on the head, isn't that right?

A Yes, Sir. If it had hit him, it would have.

Q And the depressed place in the forehead of that body, the gash there, that could have been made by the fan blades or by the hub, too, couldn't it?

A Yes, Sir.

Q In your best judgement, was it possible for that place, the wound over his right ear, was it possible for that to have been made by a snag in the river?

A Yes, it could have been.

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Q John Ed, when you arrested Mr. Milam, did he ask you to be allowed to talk to counsel or to an attorney?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And what did you answer him?

A I told him he could call in the office.

Q And did you allow him to call his counsel or his attorney?

A I don't know whether he did or not.

Q Was that before the statement which you testified about was made or after?

A It was before. We went in the office there, but I don't know whether he called or not.

Q All right. Now, John Ed, I believe you testified on direct examination that there was no mutilation of this body except around the head?

A That's right. If there was, I didn't see any.

Q Had the boy's privates been mutilated?

A No, Sir.

Q Did his back show any signs of any bruises or any wounds at all on the back?

A Now you are asking me a pretty hard question there. That body was in pretty bad shape, and I couldn't hardly tell. And I wouldn't want to answer that "Yes" or "No". At least, you couldn't see any.

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Q Then you couldn't see any signs of that?

A You couldn't see any.

Q Now, let's go down to the morning of Wednesday, the 31st of August, when you left Greenwood - - I believe you said that deputy sheriff Weber, from Itta Bena, Le-Flore County, was with you?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Was anybody else in the car with you?

A No, Sir.

Q And after you left there, where did you first stop?

A At Mose Wright's.

Q And did you pick up anybody there at Mose Wright's?

A We picked up Mose Wright.

Q Did you pick up anybody else there at Mose Wright's?

A No, Sir.

Q And as I understand, you stopped again between there and the river, is that right?

A I did.

Q And where did you stop?

A We stopped at Ray's Service Station in Philipp.

Q Did you pick up anybody there?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Who did you pickup there?

A I never did ask the man his name.

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Q Did you at any time pick up Deputy Smith of Tallahatchie County?

A Not then.

Q Not on that trip?

A I don't remember ever picking him up.

Q When you got up there to the river, and after you parked your car, could you see the body in the boat in the river down there?

A Not from where we parked the car.

Q And why couldn't you see it?

A There was some bushes and trees between me and where the boat was.

Q After you stopped and parked the car there, did Mose Wright get out of the car with you?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And then you walked down towards the river, I believe?

A That's right.

Q And when you were about fifteen or twenty yards away from the boat, did Mose make any statement about whether the body in the boat was that of Emmett Till or not?

A Yes, Sir. He said, "I believe that's him."

Q And when he made that statement to you, where was

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the body at the time?

A It was in the boat.

Q And where was the boat then?

A It was setting on the river bank about - - I would say, about twenty feet from us.

Q The boat was about fifteen or twenty feet from you or would you say it was fifteen or twenty yards away?

A Feet.

Q And was the body lying on its back or was the body on its stomach?

A It was on its stomach.

Q And which end of the body was towards you and Mose?

A The head.

Q Now there at the boat, was Mose's attention directed to the ring that was on this boy's hand?

A Well, I don't know just how - - I don't know who first saw that ring.

Q But was Mose asked any questions there about the ring?

A That's right.

Q And what did Mose say there about the ring?

A He said he didn't know about the ring at the time, but he said he would carry it out to his house and ask his boy about it, that he would know.

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Q And Mose said at that time that he didn't know anything about the ring?

A That's right.

Q What hand of the body was the ring on?

A It was on his right hand.

Q Do you know which finger it was on?

A I think it was on his middle finger.

Q Was there any tape wrapped around the ring?

A I didn't see any.

Q Did the ring come off the hand or finger easily or was it hard to get off?

A It wasn't any trouble to get off.

Q Beg pardon?

A The ring didn't seem any trouble to get off, or it didn't look like it was. I think the undertaker took it off.

Q Now, when Mose got up close to the boat and saw the body there, did he make any statement to you such as, "I could be mistaken that it might could not be him"?

A He did.

Q At the time this ring was taken off his finger, did the skin come off with the ring?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And how about the finger nails?

A I didn't notice about that.

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Q Did you examine his left hand?

A No, Sir.

Q Was the skin slipped badly all over his body?

A I didn't notice that, but when they pulled that ring off, it slipped off.

Q And you didn't look at the left hand at all?

A No, Sir.

Q What was the position of his tongue there at the scene?

A It was swelled out of his mouth.

Q And what was the condition of the body all over as regards swelling?

A It was bad.

Q And was he a well developed body?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And what was the condition of his privates there when he was turned over?

A It was in bad shape.

Q Were they swelled or stiff?

A Well, swelled or stiff.

Q And were they well developed privates?

A Yes, Sir.

Q How old would you estimate this body to be?

A I wouldn't.

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MR. CARLTON: That is all, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Any further questions, Mr. Chatham?

MR. CHATHAM: Just one minute, Your Honor, please. We want to offer - - well, I am not in a condition right now - - or I can't lift this object here, this gin fan, but we want to offer it as Exhibit 2 to Mr. Cothran's testimony.

THE COURT: All right, sir. I think we will just let the Court Reporter take care of that.

REDIRECT EXAMINATION

BY THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

Q John Ed, during the cross examination by Mr. Carlton, at one point there with reference to Uncle Mose Wright's statement, I believe he asked you if Uncle Mose at that time expressed any doubt that his identification of the body, and I believe you answered at that time that Uncle Mose said he might be mistaken; is that right?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And at that particular time, I want you to tell the court and jury whether the corpse was lying on its stomach or on its back?

A Mr. Chatham, as well as I remember it was still on its stomach. Now I wouldn't say for sure whether it had been turned over or not. But I think it was on its stomach.

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MR. CHATHAM: We would like to now introduce these photographs, if we may. The writing has been covered up now.

THE COURT: I think the picture of the body was received in evidence this morning as an exhibit to Mr. Strickland's testimony. But the other ones had not been properly identified at the time, as I recall.

MR. CHATHAM: Then can we introduce both of these photographs now? We have had the testimony about the fan now.

MR. CARLTON: We have no objection.

THE COURT: All right. There has been no objection, and the picture of this wheel or fan will be received as Exhibit 2 to the testimony of Mr. Strickland.

(A photograph was then marked as Exhibit 2 to the testimony of Mr. Strickland by the reporter.)

(WITNESS EXCUSED)

THE COURT: We will now recess until ten o'clock tomorrow morning.

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FOURTH DAY

This day, this cause having been continued for further hearing; on this the 22nd day of September, 1955, comes the District Attorney, came also the defendants, each in his own proper person and represented by counsel and announced ready to proceed herein. Whereupon, came the same jury, composed of J. A. Shaw, Jr., and eleven others, being specially sworn to try the issue. Thereupon, the cause proceeded to further trial before the Judge aforesaid, and the jury, when and where the following proceedings were had, as follows:

C. F. (CHICK) NELSON

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

DIRECT EXAMINATION

BY MR. SMITH:

Q Will you state your name, please, sir?

A C. F. Nelson.

Q And I believe they call you "Chick", is that right?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Mr. Nelson, what is your occupation?

A I have a furniture store for one thing.

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Q And are you also manager and operator of a funeral home?

A That's right.

Q Where is the funeral home?

A At Tutwiler, Mississippi.

Q Do you hold any official position in the town of Tutwiler?

A Yes, Sir. I am Mayor.

Q You are the Mayor of the town?

A Yes, Sir.

Q Mr. Nelson, directing your attention to the last part of August, were you called upon or requested to come to Greenwood to pick up a body?

A Yes, Sir.

Q And who were you advised that the person would be that your were to pick up? What was the name?

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

THE COURT: The objection is overruled.

THE WITNESS: Emmett Till.

Q And did you go or send someone to Greenwood to pick up that body?

A Yes, Sir, I did.

Q And to what funeral home did they go to pick up that body?

A The Century Funeral Home, I think they call it. 178