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Department of Justice

Division of COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

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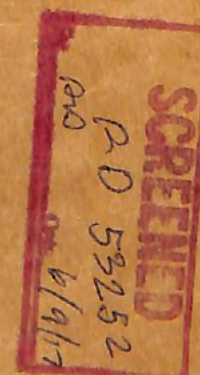
See also Nos.

BALCO

Systems

FEDERAL RECORDS CENTER

144-18-42



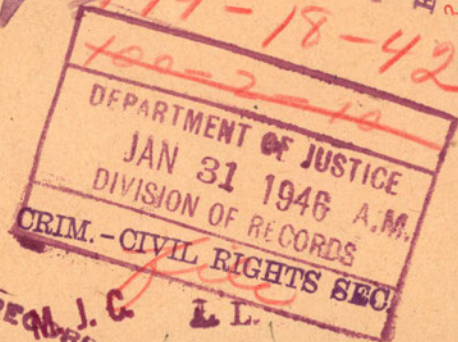
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DIVISION OF COMMUNI-
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MAK-
NEW



E.M.
E.W.C.
3/7/46

File
ant-

FILED

V.P.

FEB 1 1946

To president Harry S. Truman.

FOR CONSIDERATION
AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

William D. Kautz

Secretary to the President

1-13-46.

midway. Fla.

Mrs Mary Bradwell. Col

Dear Sir just a word or so.

There was some there wrote a letter to a white girl and signed her sons name to it in order to make it appear that he wrote it just because they did not like that family of people because they are doing very well.

So ~~the~~ the Sheriff rested the boy and taken him to jail on the 1-8-1946. and they have been asked about him and they just tell them he are safe keeping. The young man was just discharged from the army his name are Leroy Bradwell Serial # 3453169.

I am asking you for help to assistance ~~her~~ her in finding her child and to see that he are not harmed for just some one elses doing he does not know anything about this so please help him if you can.

2/5/46
2/1/46
please answer in his mothers name or his mother Mrs. Mary Bradwell.

or ^{put} Leroy Bradwell

Does not state where he is.

P.O. Box 61. midway. Fla.

Midway, Florida
February 4, 1946

MIT

-42

144-18-0
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEB 12 1946
DIVISION OF RECORDS
CRIM.-CIVIL RIGHTS SEC.

RECORDED

RECEIVED
FOR CONSIDERATION
AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

William D. Harbo

Secretary to the President

RECEIVED

FEB 17 1946

CRIMINAL DIVISION

Hon. Harry S. Truman
President of the U. S.
Washington, D. C.

Settled 1-15-46
filed in 100-2-10-37-

Dear Sir;

Four weeks ago the officers of Gadsden Co. took my son, Leroy Bradswell (his nick name is J. S. Bradswell.) away from home. I haven't seen or heard from him since. They gave me his dog tag, his Army insurance papers, his bill fold and all other papers or money he had in his possession. They had a letter written to a white lady with his name signed on it, but since then they have had the letter, along with some letters written to me from him, tested and they tell me he is not guilty. They tell me they took him to the Georgia line and turned him loose. I fear they have killed my child. Can't you please take some steps to help me find my child? He had been in the Army over 3 years. He served over sea for 2 years and had been home just 1 1/2 weeks. Please help me. Respectfully yours Mary McGray Bradswell

Midway High School
Midway, Florida
February 5, 1946

Mr. Walter White, President
N.A.A.C.P. Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir;

There is a matter in our town that needs your investigation. It concerns a letter that was supposed to have been written by a colored boy to a white lady. The officers took the boy away. They say they have him in safe keeping. They have acknowledged that he is not guilty since his handwriting has been compared with the letter, yet they won't tell where he is nor set him free. They say they are going to hold him until they find the guilty party. No word has come from him since they took him away. He was just back from Army service oversea. Please let me know by return mail how I can get in touch with one of your representatives. We are raising money to help with the investigation. His mother is a widow.

Very sincerely yours,

(signed) Maggie Lou Thomas

N. A. A. C. P. LEGAL DEFENSE AND EDUCATIONAL FUND, INC.

President

ARTHUR B. SPINGARN

Vice-Presidents

HON. HUBERT T. DELANY
DR. WILLIAM A. NEILSON

Treasurer

MARY WHITE OVINGTON

20 WEST 40TH STREET, NEW YORK 18, N. Y.

LONGACRE 3-6890

Executive Officers

WALTER WHITE
ROY WILKINS
THURGOOD MARSHALL
ROBERT L. CARTER
MARIAN WYNN PERRY
FRANKLIN H. WILLIAMS
EDWARD R. DUDLEY (on leave)
MILTON R. KONVITZ (on leave)
Secretary
Assistant Secretary
Special Counsel
Assistant Special Counsel

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ERIE, PA.
William F. Illig
LOS ANGELES, CALIF.
Thomas L. Griffith, Jr.
Loren Miller
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RECEIVED

APR 3 - 1946

CRIMINAL DIVISION

February 25, 1946

Hon. Turner L. Smith, Chief
Civil Rights Section
U. S. Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Smith:

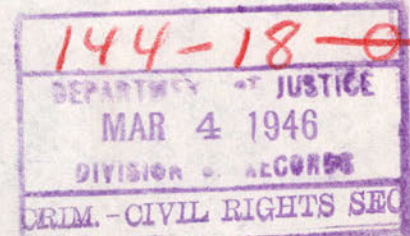
Enclosed please find copy of self-explanatory letter from Maggie Lou Thomas, concerning a letter that was supposed to have been written by a colored boy to a white woman.

We would appreciate very much an investigation by your Department of this situation.

Sincerely yours,

Thurgood Marshall
Thurgood Marshall
Special Counsel

TM:GS
uopwa-19-CIO
Enc.



The Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

March 1, 1946.

Theron L. Caudle, Assistant Attorney General

TLC:FSR:BC

Possible Violation of Section 52, Title 18,
Depriving Citizen of Constitutional Right Under
Color of Law; Accused, Sheriff of Gadsden
County, Florida; Victim, Leroy Bradswell

~~144-18-0~~

144-18-42

RECEIVED
MAR 1 1946

The Department is in receipt of a letter dated February 4, 1946, from Mrs. Mary McCray Bradswell, by reference from the President, which reads as follows:

"Four weeks ago the officers of Gadsden Co. took my son, Leroy Bradswell (his nickname is T. S. Bradswell) away from home. I haven't seen or heard from him since. They gave me his dog tag, his army insurance papers, his billfold and all other papers or money he had in his possession. They had a letter written to a white lady with his name signed on it, but since then they have had the letter, along with some letters written to me from him, tested and they tell me he is not guilty. They tell me they took him to the Georgia line and turned him loose. I fear they have killed my child. Can't you please take some steps to help me find my child? He had been in the Army over 3 years. He served over sea for 2 years and had been home just 1-1/2 weeks. Please help me.

SIGNED AND SENT BY
MESSENGER
MAR 1 1946
DIVISION OF RECORDS
8

Respectfully yours,

/s/ Mary McCray Bradswell."

It is believed that a possible violation of Section 52, Title 18, is involved, in depriving the victim of a constitutional right and it is requested that a preliminary investigation be made.

First, the victim's mother should be interviewed and a statement secured from her. Second, it should be ascertained from the records of the county courthouse as to whether or not a complaint has been filed and warrant issued for the arrest of the victim. Third, the officers responsible for the apprehension of the victim should be interviewed. Fourth, the victim was accused of writing a letter to a white girl and this is the basis of his apprehension. If the letter is available, it would be material to secure it or at least get a photostatic copy for comparison of handwriting.

Please furnish the United States Attorney with a copy of the investigation.

CC Records Chron.

TLC:FSR:BC

March 1, 1946.

~~144-18-0~~

144-18-42 *High 3/2/46 W.I.C.*

~~144-18-0~~
Mrs. Mary McCray Bradswell
Midway, Florida.

Dear Mrs. Bradswell:

This acknowledges your letter of February 4, 1946, by reference from the President, in which complaint is made as to the arrest of your son, Leroy Bradswell, by peace officers of Gadsden County, Florida, on a charge of writing a letter to a white girl.

Please be advised that this matter is being considered by the Department.

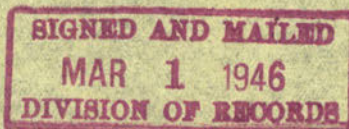
Respectfully,

For the Attorney General

144
8
THERON L. CAUDLE
Assistant Attorney General

CC Records ✓

Chron.



TLC:FSR:BC

March 1, 1946.

~~144-18-0~~

E. W. Q.

144-18-42 E. W. Q.

File
Thurgood Marshall, Esquire
Special Counsel
N.A.A.C.P. Legal Defense and
Educational Fund, Inc.
20 West 40th Street
New York 18, New York.

Dear Mr. Marshall:

This acknowledges your letter of February 25, 1946, addressed to Mr. Turner L. Smith, Chief, Civil Rights Section, enclosing copy of a letter from Maggie Lou Thomas, concerning the arrest of a Negro boy at Midway, Florida, by local state officers under conditions which would possibly be a violation of Section 52, Title 18, U. S. Code, pertaining to depriving citizens of constitutional rights under color of law.

Confirming the telephonic conversation with Mr. Smith yesterday, please be advised that this matter is being given appropriate attention.

Respectfully,

For the Attorney General

HERON L. CAUDLE
Assistant Attorney General

CC Records ✓

Chron.



Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Assistant Attorney General Theron L. Caudle
Criminal Division

DATE: May 21, 1946

FROM : Director, FBI

SUBJECT: Sheriff OTHO EDWARDS, Gadsden County, Florida
Deputy Sheriff EMORY MAPLES, Gadsden County, Florida
T. S. Bradswell, with alias Leroy Bradswell - Victim
CIVIL RIGHTS AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Reference is made to your memorandum dated March 1, 1946, entitled, "Sheriff of Gadsden County, Florida; Leroy Bradswell - Victim; Civil Rights and Domestic Violence."

In accordance with your request, a preliminary investigation has been conducted, and there is transmitted herewith a copy of the investigative report of Special Agent James B. Hafley, dated at Miami, Florida, April 25, 1946.

An additional report will be forwarded in the near future reflecting the results of the FBI Laboratory examination of the handwriting specimens of victim, T. S. Bradswell, and suspect, R. T. Parker.

Attachment

144-18-42

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
MAY 23 1946
DIVISION OF RECORDS
CRIM.-CIVIL RIGHTS SEC.

RECORD

B. P.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1

THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT **MIAMI, FLORIDA**

FILE NO. **44-56 (RD)ckk**

REPORT MADE AT MIAMI, FLORIDA	DATE WHEN MADE 4-25-46	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE 3-27-46 4/5, 9/12-46	REPORT MADE BY JAMES B. HAFLEY
TITLE Sheriff OTHO EDWARDS, Gadsden County, Fla. Deputy Sheriff EMORY MAPLES, Gadsden County, Fla. T. S. BRADSWELL wa. LEROY BRADSWELL - VICTIM			CHARACTER OF CASE CIVIL RIGHTS AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
SYNOPSIS OF FACTS: <p>Miss COLLEEN SMOTHERS, white resident of Gadsden County, Fla., received obscene letter on 1-7-46 from person signing name "T. S. BRADSWELL, Midway, Fla.". Instant letter did not pass through U. S. Mails, but was deposited on porch of SMOTHER'S home. T. S. BRADSWELL is a young negro male recently discharged from U. S. Army who lives near SMOTHERS. Immediately following receipt of instant letter, facts were reported to Sheriff OTHO EDWARDS, Gadsden County, Fla. On same date Sheriff EDWARDS and Deputy Sheriff EMORY MAPLES proceeded to Victim BRADSWELL's home, escorted him to Liberty County, Fla., line and advised him not to return to Gadsden County, Fla., since white residents would be indignant over fact negro victim's name appeared on obscene letter written to white woman and racial violence might occur. No evidence developed indicating that victim was harmed by officers and apparently both were acting in good faith. EDWARDS had previously discussed matter with Circuit Judge HUGH TAYLOR, Gadsden County, Fla., and latter had agreed that this course of action would be logical way to handle manner. Victim BRADSWELL has not been heard from since 1-7-46 and his mother fears he may have met with foul play. Recent developments indicate letter was not actually written by victim BRADSWELL, but was probably written by another local negro named R. T. PARKER, who had</p>			
APPROVED AND FORWARDED:	SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE		
COPIES OF THIS REPORT 5 - Bureau (encl) 1 - USA, Pensacola (encl) 3 - Miami			
<div style="border: 2px solid purple; padding: 10px; display: inline-block;"> 144-18-42 DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE MAY 23 1946 DIVISION OF RECORDS CRIM - CIVIL RIGHTS SEC. </div>			

motive of desiring to see victim BRADSWELL in trouble. Original letter together with handwriting specimens of victim BRADSWELL and suspect PARKER obtained and forwarded to FBI Laboratory for handwriting comparison. Sheriff EDWARDS and Deputy Sheriff MAPLES have good reputation in county with regard to treatment of negroes. Information regarding racial conditions in Gadsden County, Fla., set forth.

-P-

REFERENCE: Bureau letter to Miami dated March 13, 1946 captioned "Sheriff of Gadsden County, Florida, LEROY BRADSWELL - Victim, CIVIL RIGHTS AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE".

DETAILS: Reference Bureau letter enclosed a copy of memorandum from the Criminal Division dated March 1, 1946. Instant memorandum informed that the Department was in receipt of a letter dated February 4, 1946, from Mrs. MARY MCCRAY BRADSWELL by reference from the President, which reads as follows:

"Four weeks ago the officers of Gadsden County, took my son, LEROY BRADSWELL (his nickname is T. S. BRADSWELL) away from home. I haven't seen or heard from him since. They gave me his dog tag, his army insurance papers, his billfold and all other papers or money he had in his possession. They had a letter written to a white lady with his name signed on it, but since then they have had the letter, along with some letters written to me from him, tested and they tell me he is not guilty. They tell me they took him to the Georgia line and turned him loose. I fear they have killed my child. Can't you please take some steps to help me find my child? He had been in the Army over 3 years. He served over sea for 2 years and had been home just 1-1/2 weeks. Please help me.

Respectfully yours,

/s MARY MCCRAY BRADSWELL"

The Criminal Division's memorandum continued by stating it was believed that a possible violation of Section 52, Title 18, is involved in depriving the victim of a constitutional right and it was requested that a preliminary investigation be made.

The following suggestions were made: First, the victim's mother should be interviewed and a statement secured from her. Second, it should be ascertained from the records of the county courthouse as to whether or not a complaint has been filed and a warrant issued for the arrest of the victim. Third, the officers responsible for the apprehension of the victim

should be interviewed. Fourth, the victim was accused of writing a letter to a white girl and this is the basis of this apprehension. If the letter is available, it would be material to secure it or at least get a photostatic copy for comparison of handwriting.

It was also requested that a copy of the investigation report be furnished to the United States Attorney.

AT MIDWAY, GADSDEN, COUNTY, FLORIDA:

Reporting Agent and Special Agent Kyle M. McPhail, visited the home of MARY MCCRAY BRADSWELL on April 9, 1946. This home is located in a negro rural section, two miles west of Midway, Florida. It was learned from ROGINER HENDLEY, daughter of MARY MCCRAY BRADSWELL and a sister of victim T. S. BRADSWELL, that MARY MCCRAY BRADSWELL was out of town at the time and could not be located for an interview. ROGINER HENDLEY explained that her mother was presently doing some work on a plantation owned by a white man near Quincy, Florida. In the absence of MARY MCCRAY BRADSWELL, ROGINER HENDLEY was interviewed by Agent MCPHAIL and the writer concerning the facts in this case. She presented the following version.

During the night of January 7, 1946, Sheriff OTHO EDWARDS and Deputy Sheriff EMORY MAPLES, both of Gadsden County, Florida, came to the BRADSWELL home near Midway. Present at the home at this time were MARY MCCRAY BRADSWELL (victim's mother) T. S. BRADSWELL nicknamed LEROY BRADSWELL, victim, ROGINER HENDLEY, victim's sister, ARTHUR HENDLEY, victim's brother-in-law and LEVONIA BRADSWELL, victim's brother. Sheriff EDWARDS and Deputy Sheriff MAPLES inquired as to the identity of T. S. BRADSWELL. When he was pointed out among the group, EDWARDS notified him that he wanted to talk with him. T. S. BRADSWELL walked over to EDWARDS and MAPLES and these two officers immediately began a search of his person. They took all of his personal belongings out of his pockets and placed them on a mantel in the BRADSWELL home. They then placed handcuffs on T. S. BRADSWELL and instructed him to come along with them out to their car which was parked nearby. As they walked out of the house with him, MARY MCCRAY BRADSWELL became upset over the apparent plight of her son and said, "Mr. Sheriff, you can't just come in here, arrest my son without a warrant, take him away from here and then not tell me why you're taking him away or what he has done. Please tell me if he's been in any trouble and where you are taking him". Sheriff EDWARDS replied to her that Miss COLLEEN SMOTHERS, a white woman who resided nearby in Midway, Florida had on that date received an obscene letter and that T. S. BRADSWELL'S name had appeared on it. EDWARDS then proceeded to explain to her that although her son may not have written the letter, that since his name appeared on it, he, EDWARDS, was forced to take T. S. away to prevent any harm from coming to him. EDWARDS assured her that her son would not be harmed and that he was merely being taken to "the line"

with instructions that he should not return for his own good. The two officers then escorted victim BRADSWELL away in the sheriff's automobile.

ROGINER HENDLEY said that neither she, her mother, or any of her other relatives had seen or heard from victim since that night. She added that she remembered specifically that the officers had never said that victim was under arrest at the time of the apprehension.

Subsequently, ROGINER HENDLEY, her mother, and the other members of this family attempted to find out what kind of trouble victim could have had and what happened to him. They learned by inquiring among neighbors that Miss COLLEEN SMOTHERS had actually received an obscene letter bearing the name of T. S. BRADSWELL. This letter, addressed to Miss SMITHERS, had not been placed in the U. S. Mails, but had been deposited on January 7, 1946 on the porch of her home and had been found that day by her father. The latter immediately took the matter up with Sheriff EDWARDS.

ROGINER HENDLEY said that she was certain that victim had not written the letter for the following reasons: MAGGIE LOU THOMAS, colored, who lives nearby, recently advised her that on January 6, 1946, one R. T. PARKER, colored, who also lives in the same community, came to her MAGGIE LOU THOMAS, and asked her how to spell "Miss COLLEEN'S name". MAGGIE LOU asked PARKER why he wanted to know how to spell this white woman's name and PARKER explained that he was making application for a government job and needed names of three white persons as references. He told her that he already had the names of Mr. and Mrs. PINK FERRELL, white residents of Gadsden County, Florida and he intended to use Miss COLLEEN SMOTHERS also as a reference. MAGGIE LOU THOMAS then spelled the name out for him. He, PARKER, then wrote it down on a scrap of paper and departed. On the following day instant obscene letter was found on COLLEEN SMOTHER's porch by her father.

ROGINER HENDLEY explained that since her brother, victim, T. S. BRADSWELL, had returned from U. S. Army overseas, he, BRADSWELL and R. T. PARKER had been "Courting" the same negro girl in this community, one ROSA M. KENON. As a result of this courtship rivalry PARKER had become insanely jealous of BRADSWELL and had attempted to kill him on two different occasions. Once PARKER had shot at BRADSWELL in the dark of the night as BRADSWELL was returning from ROSA M. KENON's home. A few days later PARKER had attempted to run BRADSWELL down in a car as the latter was returning from ROSA M. KENON's home. On both occasions, BRADSWELL had commented to his family that R. T. PARKER was trying to kill him.

Victim's family had therefore concluded that PARKER had written instant obscene letter to Miss COLLEEN SMOTHERS and had signed the name of victim in order to cause trouble for the latter person. ROGINER HENDLEY explained that she and her mother, MARY MCCRAY BRADSWELL had recently made these facts known to the Sheriff EDWARDS whereupon EDWARDS obtained handwriting specimens of both victim BRADSWELL and suspect PARKER for comparison with the handwriting in the original obscene letter. EDWARDS obtained a letter written by victim to his mother while he was overseas on July 12, 1945. Likewise he obtained a letter written by PARKER to ROSA M. KENON on December 3, 1945. After comparing these letters with the original obscene letter address to Miss COLLEEN SMOTHERS, he, Sheriff EDWARDS indicated to MARY MCCRAY BRADSWELL and her family that victim T. S. BRADSWELL was not guilty of having written the letter. He also indicated however, that it would be a good idea for victim to remain away from Gadsden County until the whole thing "died down" since his name had appeared on the letter and it might cause trouble among the white and colored people.

In the meantime, on or about January 12, 1946 R. T. PARKER disappeared from his home near Midway, Florida and his whereabouts are unknown at the present time. This indicated that PARKER became afraid upon learning that he would probably be drawn into this matter and had fled the vicinity of Gadsden County. It was learned that PARKER has been known to visit Hastings, Florida and also 120 N. Division Street, Orlando Florida in the past. ROGINER HENDLEY was of the impression that PARKER is hiding out at one of these places until the case involving the obscene letter is concluded.

ROGINER HENDLEY stated that she and her mother had been in contact with all of their relatives in an effort to determine where victim BRADSWELL is at the present time, however, none of them have been able to ascertain his present whereabouts. It was her theory that victim might have become the victim of foul play at the hands of PARKER. However, she had no information to substantiate this theory other than the fact that PARKER hated victim and probably would not hesitate to kill him if he had the chance under the proper circumstances. She concluded by advising agents that her mother, MARY MCCRAY BRADSWELL, would be unable to furnish any further information than that previously furnished by her. She said that her mother would definitely confirm her testimony however.

Miss ORA HALE, Postmaster, advised that MARY MCCRAY BRADSWELL and her family had been patrons of the Midway, Florida Post office for a good many years and she knew of no derogatory information concerning this family. She described the whole family as a good, law-abiding citizens, and she could think of no ulterior motive that might be involved in the disappearance of victim BRADSWELL. She said that she felt certain that victim's whereabouts were unknown to MARY MCCRAY BRADSWELL and her family inasmuch as no mail had passed through her postoffice recently that might have originated from him. Further, she explained that several weeks ago victim received a government check, probably his mustering out

pay from the army, and when she told victim's mother that it had arrived, his mother explained that her son had disappeared and she had no idea as to where he was at the time. Accordingly, Miss HALE had returned the check to the Government pursuant to Post Office instructions.

When questioned as to her knowledge of the facts in this case, Miss HALE advised that she had been living in Gadsden County all her life and could not believe that Sheriff EDWARDS or his deputy would allow any harm to come to this victim. She cited numerous instances regarding isolated racial clashes in this county and said that Sheriff EDWARDS had always done his duty without showing preference to either race. Miss HALE had learned of the facts in this case by hearing white and colored people in the community talk about it and she was of the opinion that the officers had followed the correct line of action in order to avoid bloodshed. It was her opinion that victim BRADSWELL had decided to remain away from Gadsden County, for the present anyhow, in order to avoid any further trouble, although he may have been innocent of the accusations. Miss HALE said that she would contact the writer if she was able in the future to develop any pertinent information as to victim's present whereabouts.

AT QUINCY, GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA:

Sheriff OTHO EDWARDS stated that on January 7, 1946 he had received a call from Miss COLLEEN SMOTHER'S father at Midway, Florida. He proceeded to the SMOTHER'S residence where he found Mr. SMOTHERS in a very angry mood. The latter showed the Sheriff the obscene letter which he had found on the porch of his home and which was signed with T. S. BRADSWELL'S name. SMOTHERS advised the Sheriff that his first thought had been to kill BRADSWELL himself but after thinking the matter over had decided to call the Sheriff. EDWARDS obtained the original letter from SMOTHERS and returned to Quincy where he decided to talk the facts over with State Circuit Judge HUGH TAYLOR. In discussing it with TAYLOR, they remembered similar racial instances that have happened in this county in recent years and it was decided that the best logical course of action would be for the Sheriff to escort BRADSWELL to another county with instructions not to return. They felt that this would be for the negro's own good and would prevent a possible race riot. Therefore, EDWARDS explained that no complaint was filed in the county courthouse and on the same date, January 7, 1946, he and his deputy proceeded to BRADSWELL'S home and escorted him to the Liberty County, Florida line. His testimony as to victim's actual apprehension was substantially the same as that offered to Agents by victim's sister, ROGINER HENDLEY. He said that after leaving the BRADSWELL home with victim, he and his deputy had simply driven him to the Liberty County line where they had him get out of the car and walk away. EDWARDS assured the writer that neither he nor his deputy had harmed victim in any way although they had told him to stay out of Gadsden County for his own good. He emphasized that he did not know where victim was at the present time.

Deputy Sheriff EMORY MAPLES offered substantially the same information in this regard.

The original obscene letter was obtained from Sheriff EDWARDS. This letter is enclosed in a small white envelope and bears the return address "T. S. BRADSWELL, Midway, Florida". It is addressed "MR. SMOTHERS, Midway, Florida, to Miss CORLEAN". On the back of the envelope appears the writing "From T. S. BRADSWELL, a colored boy", and other illegible scrawling. The letter itself is written on lined tablet stationery, a copy of same attached herewith.

Also from Sheriff EDWARDS were obtained (1) a letter written in victim's handwriting to his mother, this letter dated July 12, 1945 and which was written while victim was overseas. (2) A letter dated December 3, 1945 written in R. T. PARKER'S handwriting to ROSA M. KENON.

By comparing exhibits (1) and (2) above, with the handwriting appearing in the original obscene letter, it appears from a layman's viewpoint that the original obscene letter was written by suspect R. T. PARKER, however, all three letters are being submitted to the FBI Laboratory under separate cover for handwriting comparisons in accordance with the suggestions made by the Criminal Division.

Sheriff EDWARDS admitted that in the light of recent developments it would appear that R. T. Parker was the writer of instant letter. He said that he learned of PARKER'S disappearance from the county six days after the appearance of the letter and his belief was that PARKER had gone to Hastings, Florida. EDWARDS indicated however that he felt that it would be best to drop the whole matter as it stands in view of the delicate racial situation in Gadsden County. He said that if he made any further active investigation to locate PARKER or BRADSWELL, that the whole matter would receive publicity throughout the state and that bloodshed would inevitably result.

It is to be noted that Sheriff EDWARDS has been Sheriff of Gadsden County, Florida for approximately 2½ years and during that time has enjoyed a good reputation in his community with regard to handling racial problems. There is no case on record in which he is alleged to have deprived any person, white or colored, of his constitutional rights. No complaints have been received about him involving any other unscrupulous practices. Sheriff EDWARDS is backed by the American Sumatra Tobacco Company, which company has vast holdings, interests and property in Gadsden County, Florida. Apparently the reason for this backing is due to the fact that the negro population of this county is approximately 55% and most of the negroes in this county are employed by the American Sumatra Tobacco Company, interests, either directly or indirectly. Since Sheriff EDWARDS has a reputation of dealing fairly with negroes by releasing them to their employers whenever they get into trouble and the circumstances of the arrests would warrant such action, he has been able to discharge the functions of his office in a manner harmonious to most Gadsden County residents.

MM 44-56

Approximately two years ago Sheriff EDWARDS was commended by the Governor of Florida for his actions in preventing mob violence in a case involving three negroes arrested for raping a white woman in Gadsden County. Details of this case are set forth in Miami Office file #26-6051, entitled "JAMES C. WILLIAMS, et al" NATIONAL MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT ACT. The Bureau is in possession of pertinent information concerning this case.

AT TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

Confidential Informant T - 1 advised the writer that the facts in this case had been brought to the attention of Governor MILLARD F. CALDWELL. The information in the Governor's possession is in substance that which has previously been set forth in instant report. According to this Informant, Governor CALDWELL has been in communication with Sheriff EDWARDS over the matter and has instructed EDWARDS to ascertain victim's present whereabouts and also to determine if he has been harmed in any way. It was learned that Governor CALDWELL is "very much concerned" over the disappearance of this negro and is anxious to see that the matter receives no undue publicity. To date there has been no publicity whatsoever in the happening and CALDWELL feels that an open investigation would tend only to cause friction between the white and colored people in this section and possibly produce a race riot. Informant also mentioned the fact that Governor CALDWELL and the State of Florida as a whole have received considerable unfavorable publicity recently as an outgrowth of magazine editorials recently appearing in Time and Collier's Magazines. These editorials criticized CALDWELL and Sheriff LONNIE T. DAVIS for the alleged lynching of a negro in Madison County, Florida last year for the rape of a five year old white girl. (Miami Office File #44-53, entitled "Unknown Subjects - JESSIE JAMES PAYNE - Victim, CIVIL RIGHTS AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE". The Bureau is in possession of pertinent information in this case).

Further, it was learned from this Informant that a negro man named HARRY T. MOORE of Mims, Florida who is a representative of the National Association for the Advancement of the Colored People, wrote a letter to Governor CALDWELL shortly after victim's disappearance and requested that a state investigation be conducted to determine what happened to this victim.

Descriptions of subject OTHO EDWARDS, EMORY MAPLES, victim T. S. BRADSWELL, and suspect R. T. PARKER are not being set out at the present time inasmuch as it is believed this information is unnecessary.

On April 12, 1946 MARY MCCRAY BRADSWELL, mother of the victim in this case was located by the writer in Tallahassee at which time she was interviewed. This woman appeared to be very sincere and offered the following signed statement:

"Tallahassee, Florida
April 12, 1946

"I, MARY MCCRAY BRADSWELL, wish to make the following statement of my own free will to Mr. JAMES B. HAFLEY who is a Special Agent of the FBI. No threats, promises, or means of violence have been used against me to get me to make this statement, I understand that I do not have to make any statement, and also that anything I say may be used in a court of law at a later date.

"Last Christmas Eve night R.T. PARKER came to my house near Midway, Fla., and asked me if my son, T. S. BRADSWELL, wouldn't be home from the Army pretty soon. I told him that I was expecting him soon. R. T. then told me that I should tell him to stay away from a girl named ROSA MAE KENON who lived in the neighborhood. He said that this girl was going around with white men, probably had bad blood, and it would cause trouble for T. S. to go around with her. Shortly after Christmas my son returned to Midway from overseas service. I told him what R. T. had said about the girl and T. S. said that he would not pay any attention to R. T. T. S. went to see this girl some after he got home and I think R. T. got jealous because he was trying to court the girl too. T. S. told me that R. T. had tried to kill him twice, once by running over him, and again by shooting at him. I told T. S. that I believed R. T. was just trying to scare him.

"On a Monday night, January 7, 1946 Sheriff EDWARDS and his Deputy, Mr. MAPLES came to my house about 11:00 o'clock and said they wanted to talk to T. S. BRADSWELL. T. S. stood up to talk to them and Mr. EDWARDS immediately searched him, took everything out of his pockets, and put it on a shelf. Mr. MAPLES then put a pair of handcuffs on my boy. They started to lead him out of the door and I asked Mr. EDWARDS why they were taking my child off like this without a warrant or anything. Mr. EDWARDS said that he had done some writing and that's all he would tell me. My son-in-law followed them out to the car and asked them more about it. They told him that my boy had done some writing to a white girl and that they were going to take him to the county line so that he wouldn't get hurt. My son-in-law is named ARTHUR HENDLEY.

"The next day I went into Quincy to see the Sheriff and find

and find out if I could make a bond for T. S. I thought that he might be in the county jail there, but the Sheriff told me that he and his deputy had "pitched T. S. off the bridge". He probably meant the Little River Bridges in Gadsden County. He later told me that they had taken T. S. to the County line and I believe he meant the Georgia line which is just above Quincy. I asked the Sheriff when I would see my boy and he said "it might be a month, it might be six months, and it might be that you will never see him again".

"Several weeks later on Sheriff Edwards told me that they had investigated the letter-writing a little more and had found out that T. S. was not guilty. They said that R. T. Parker was guilty because of his handwriting and the fact he left town after this thing happened. The Sheriff also talked to Maggie Lou Thomas at Midway because on the day before this letter was received at Mr. Smother's house, R. T. Parker had gone to Maggie Lou and asked her how to spell Miss Colleen Smothers' name. This lady's name was on the letter that had my son's name on it.

"I am certain that my son, T. S. Bradwell, did not have anything to do with the writing of that letter, that he is innocent of any crime, and that he was arrested by the Sheriff and his Deputy without a warrant. These officers never did tell T. S. that he was under arrest when they carried him away and I have not seen him since that night. I fear that some harm has come to my child, either from the officers or from R. T. Parker. He did not have any money, identification papers, or anything when they took him away therefore I know that he could not have gone anywhere and made a living. I have taken every step that I know to find my son but have been unsuccessful.

"This one page statement was typed by Mr. Hafley as I told him what to write. It is true and correct in every detail.

Witness: James B. Hafley
Special Agent FBI
Miami, Fla."

i have red this page

/s/ Mary Bradwell

ENCLOSURES - To Bureau
5 copies of obscene letter
addressed to "Mr. Smothers,
Midway, Florida, Miss Corlean".

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Assistant Attorney General T. L. Caudle
Criminal Division

FROM : *ft* Director, FBI

DATE: June 19, 1946

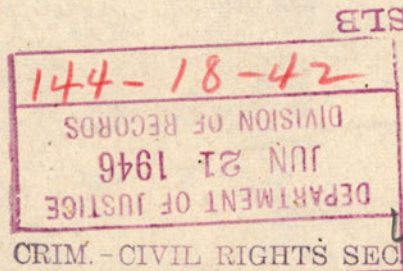
SUBJECT: SHERIFF OTHO EDWARDS, Gadsden County, Florida;
Deputy Sheriff EMORY MAPLES, Gadsden County, Florida
LEROY BRADWELL, was, VICTIM
CIVIL RIGHTS AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Reference is made to our previous correspondence regarding the above-captioned matter, your file reference 144-18-42. For your further consideration there is transmitted herewith a copy of the report of Special Agent James B. Hafley dated June 14, 1946, at Miami, Florida.

I shall appreciate your advising me if any further action by this Bureau is desired.

Enclosure

RECORDED



FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1

THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT

MIAMI, FLORIDA

FILE NO. 44-56 ckk

REPORT MADE AT MIAMI, FLORIDA	DATE WHEN MADE 6-14-46	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE 5-27, 29, 30-46	REPORT MADE BY JAMES B. HAFLEY
TITLE SHERIFF OTHO EDWARDS, Gadsden County, Florida Deputy Sheriff EMORY MAPLES, Gadsden County, Florida LEROY BRADWELL was. T. S. BRADWELL, T.S. BRADSWELL LEROY BRADSWELL			CHARACTER OF CASE CIVIL RIGHTS AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
<p>SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:</p> <p>Handwriting examination by FBI Laboratory reveals that obscene letter in instant case was written by R. T. PARKER, a Midway, Fla., negro youth who apparently desired to see victim LEROY BRADWELL in trouble. Latter person is still missing and no clue available as to present whereabouts. Appropriate stop notice placed in files of FBI Identification Division.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">-C-</p> <p>REFERENCE: Bureau file #44-1362 Report of SA JAMES B. HAFLEY dated 4-25-46 at Miami.</p> <p>DETAILS: The title in instant case is being marked "CHANGED" to reflect the true name of Victim as being LEROY BRADWELL and to also set forth the additional alias of T. S. BRADWELL.</p> <p>By cover letter dated April 25, 1946, appropriate original specimens of the handwriting of Victim LEROY BRADWELL and suspect R. T. PARKER were forwarded to the FBI Laboratory together with the original obscene letter in this case. The Laboratory was requested to compare the handwriting of BRADWELL and also PARKER with the handwriting in instant letter in order to determine if either of these individuals had written the letter.</p> <p>The FBI Laboratory replied in a letter dated May 16, 1946 that it had been concluded that the writer of the letter was R. T. PARKER.</p>			
APPROVED AND FORWARDED:		SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE	
COPIES OF THIS REPORT 3 Bureau 1 USA, Pensacola 3 Miami		DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES <div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 10px; display: inline-block;"> 144-18-42 DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE JUN 21 1946 DIVISION OF RECORDS CRIM - CIVIL RIGHTS SEC. SLB </div>	

As set forth in reference report, PARKER is a Midway Florida negro youth who apparently had desired to see Victim LEROY BRADWELL in trouble. Sheriff OTHO EDWARDS has recently advised reporting agent that PARKER departed from Midway right after Victim's disappearance and he, EDWARDS, did not know where PARKER was at the present time. He indicated by his remarks that instant case was inactive as far as his office was concerned and probably would be considered closed, due to the potentialities of racial strife.

AT TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

Victim's mother, MARY MC CRAY BRADWELL, appeared personally at the Tallahassee Resident Agency on May 27, 1946, at which time she was again interviewed by the writer and questioned as to any further pertinent information she may have received regarding the whereabouts of her son, LEROY BRADWELL. She said that her niece, LEILA WILLIAMS, 1686 W. 2nd Street, Jacksonville, Florida, had recently written her, MARY MC CRAY BRADWELL, and had told the latter not to worry about LEROY that he was probably unharmed, but was unable to advise her. LEILA also told MARY that she felt LEROY was in jail in Miami, Florida, although she did not elaborate on this theory.

MARY MC CRAY BRADWELL advised that victim's Army Serial Number had been 34531699. Two recent photos of Subject in his Army uniform were also obtained from this woman and they are being retained in the Miami Office file relating to this matter for possible future reference. No further information having a bearing on the facts of instant case could be obtained from victim's mother, however, she was requested to advise the Miami Office or the writer if any further pertinent information did come to her attention concerning the disappearance of her son.

AT MIAMI, FLORIDA

Special Agent E. J. LEAHY of this office checked the records of the Dade County Jail from January 7, 1946 to the present time in an effort to determine if victim LEROY BRADWELL could have been incarcerated there as alleged by LEILA WILLIAMS, however, this phase of the investigation resulted negatively.

AT JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

In order to determine the reason for LEILA WILLIAMS belief that victim had been in jail at Miami, the following investigation was conducted by SA JOHN RILEY SMITH of this office:

LEILA WILLIAMS, 1686 West 2nd Street, advised that she had not written her aunt, MARY BRADWELL, mother of victim, in which she advised her the victim was in jail at Miami, Florida. She wrote that perhaps the victim was being held in some jail in Florida and that the Sheriff would not tell her where he was being held. MARY BRADWELL had written to her, and asked what she could do to locate the victim. LEILA stated that about 10 years ago another cousin, MANEY MC CRAY, had been taken to the Lake City Jail and that the Sheriff would not tell his mother where he was being held. She went to several jails in the vicinity before she found him at Lake City. She stated that this cousin had not been prosecuted, but had been escorted to the county line and told not to come back to Gadsden County. She advised that MARY had gone to Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, where she was presently residing.

LEILA WILLIAMS stated that she had not heard anything from the victim and that none of his relatives in Jacksonville had heard from him. She and her husband who had just returned from the Army, went to Midway, Florida on January 10, 1946 to see the victim and the family at which time they were told how the victim had been taken by the sheriff. She advised that her mother, MARIE RAMBERT, 1215 West Beaver, her brother, THOMAS MCRAY, Church Street, and a cousin L. G. MC CULLOUGH, 214 Chelsea Street, knew about the case and had not been contacted by the victim since his return from the army. She expressed full cooperation in the location of the victim and will notify this office in the event they hear from him.

She advised that about six weeks ago, R. T. PARKER, who is reported to have written instant letter, came through Jacksonville and stopped at the house of L. G. McCULLOUGH. He told this cousin he was going back to Midway and would stay only a few days. He said he was going to Savannah, Georgia from Midway. She does not know how or where he can be located. She stated that he did not know these people were relatives of the victim and left shortly after he learned they were cousins.

She advised that the victim had relatives at Ft. Lauderdale, Florida and Miami. She does not know the addresses of these people, but stated that the victim's mother wrote to them and could give their addresses. She stated that the victim had visited and worked with the relatives at Fort Lauderdale.

It is to be noted that LEILA WILLIAMS advised that victim has relatives in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and has visited them on occasions. When victim's mother was interviewed by the writer on May 27, 1946, she also stated that victim had relatives in Fort

MM 44-56

Lauderdale, but she further explained that she had recently been in contact with all of these relatives and had established beyond a doubt that victim had not visited any of these relatives since his disappearance. Therefore it is felt that no further check at Fort Lauderdale is necessary at this time.

By separate letter the Bureau is being advised of victim's name and army serial number in order that an appropriate stop notice may be placed against his arrest. Meanwhile, instant case is being placed in a Closed status, subject to reopening in the event further pertinent information is received, which would warrant such action.

-CLOSED-

The Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

June 12, 1946

Theron L. Caudle, Assistant Attorney General

TLC:FSR:LAK

144-18-42

Sheriff Otho Edwards, Gadsden County, Florida;
Deputy Sheriff Emory Maples, Gadsden County, Florida;
T. S. Bradswell, with alias Leroy Bradswell - Victim -
Civil Rights and Domestic Violence

Reference is made to your memorandum of May 21, 1946, enclosing a copy of the report of Special Agent James B. Hafley, dated at Miami, Florida, April 25, 1946, in which it is stated that an FBI Laboratory examination of handwriting specimens of victim T. S. Bradswell and suspect R. T. Parker is being made.

It will be appreciated if you will expedite this matter.

HOLLIE

cc - Records
Chrono.

SIGNED AND SENT BY
MESSENGER
JUN 13 1946
DIVISION OF RECORDS
6

July 15, 1946

Herbert S. Phillips, Esquire
United States Attorney
Tampa, Florida

HOLLIE

Dear Mr. Phillips:

Re: Sheriff Otho Edwards, Gadsden County,
Fla., et al.; Leroy Bradwell, victim
Civil Rights and Domestic Violence

The Department is in receipt of final Federal Bureau of Investigation report in the above entitled matter in which it is disclosed from the handwriting analysis of the Bureau that the obscene letter purported to have been written by Leroy Bradwell was written by R. T. Parker of Midway, Florida. It also appears that both Bradwell and Parker mysteriously disappeared and their whereabouts is unknown.

It would be appreciated if you would examine these reports and advise the Department of your conclusions as to whether or not prosecution should be instituted or any further investigation requested.

Respectfully,

For the Attorney General



THERON L. CAUDLE
Assistant Attorney General

CC: Records ✓
Chron.

IN REPLY
PLEASE REFER TO

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

TAMPA 1, FLORIDA

July 19, 1946



HSP-lap

RECEIVED DIVISION

JUL 23 1946

The Attorney General,
Department of Justice,
Washington, D.C.


Attn: Hon. Theron L. Caudle,
Assistant Attorney General.

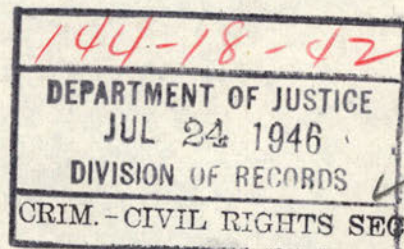
Dear Sir:

Re: Sheriff Otho Edwards, Gadsden County, Fla.,
et al; Leroy Bradwell, victim Civil Rights
and Domestic Violence.
Dept. of Justice File: TLC:FSR:esw,
No. 144-18-42.

Referring to Department letter of the 15th
instant, I beg to bring to your attention the fact that
according to your letter the alleged offense was
committed in the Northern District of Florida. Since
the F.B.I. reports have not reached this office, I have
concluded that they were sent to the United States
Attorney in the Northern District.

Respectfully,


HERBERT S. PHILLIPS,
United States Attorney.



TLC:FSR:BC

144-18-42

July 25, 1946.

George Earl Hoffman, Esquire
United States Attorney
Pensacola, Florida.

HOLLIE

Dear Mr. Hoffman:

Re: Sheriff Otho Edwards, Gadsden County,
Fla., et al; Leroy Bradwell, victim;
Civil Rights and Domestic Violence

The Department is in receipt of final Federal Bureau of Investigation report in the above entitled matter in which it is disclosed from the handwriting analysis of the Bureau that the obscene letter purported to have been written by Leroy Bradwell was written by R. T. Parker of Midway, Florida. It also appears that both Bradwell and Parker mysteriously disappeared and their whereabouts is unknown.

It would be appreciated if you would examine these reports and advise the Department of your conclusions as to whether or not prosecution should be instituted or any further investigation requested.

Respectfully,

For the Attorney General



THERON L. CAUDLE
Assistant Attorney General

CC Records

Chron.

TERMS OF COURT

PENSACOLA — First Mondays in May
and November.
MARIANNA — First Monday in April.
TALLAHASSEE — Second Monday in
February and the Tuesday after
the first Monday in September.
GAINESVILLE — Second Mondays in
June and December.
PANAMA CITY — First Monday in
October.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

NORTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

Pensacola, Florida

August 30, 1946



CRIMINAL DIVISION
SEP 5 - 1946
RECEIVED

The Attorney General
Department of Justice
Washington, 25, D. C.

RE: Sheriff Otho Edwards, Gadsden County,
Florida., et al; Leroy Bradwell, victim;
Civil Rights and Domestic Violence
Department of Justice File No. TLC:FSR:
BC 144-18-42.

Sir:

Attention: Honorable Theron L. Caudle
Assistant Attorney General

After a careful examination of the Federal Bureau of Investigation
reports in the above matter I do not request any further investigation and
believe that prosecution should not be instituted.

Respectfully,

GEORGE EARL HOFFMAN
United States Attorney

GEH:HVK:et



TLC:FSR:BC

144-18-42

September 11, 1946.

George Earl Hoffman, Esquire
United States Attorney
Pensacola, Florida.

~~HOLIF~~

Dear Mr. Hoffman:

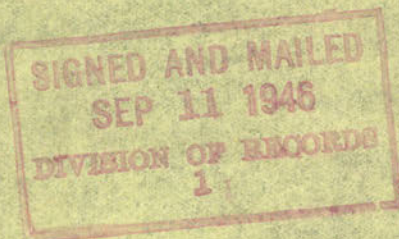
Re: Sheriff Otho Edwards, Gadsden County, Florida,
et al; Leroy Bradwell, Victim; Civil Rights
and Domestic Violence

This acknowledges your letter of August 30, 1946, in which you state that after careful examination of the Federal Bureau of Investigation reports in the above matter, you do not request further investigation and believe that prosecution should not be instituted.

After careful review of the Federal Bureau of Investigation reports, the Department concurs in your conclusion to the extent that prosecutive action should not be instituted at this time. However, in view of the fact that Leroy Bradwell, the victim, is still unaccounted for, it is believed advisable to place this matter on your suspended or inactive office docket.

Respectfully,

For the Attorney General



THERON L. CAUDLE
Assistant Attorney General

CC Records ✓

Chron.

WMA
TLC:MMH:efr

144-18-42

RECORD
P. C.
LL

September 24, 1946

Mr. Harry T. Moore
Executive Secretary
Florida State Conference of the
National Association for the
Advancement of Colored People
Mims, Florida

HOLLIE

Dear Mr. Moore:

I have your letter of August 13, 1946, together with the attached statements and copies of correspondence concerning Leroy Bradswell of Midway, Gadsden County, Florida.

This Department has instituted an investigation of this case, but, up until the present time, such investigation has failed to disclose the whereabouts of Leroy Bradswell. In the absence of information as to his whereabouts or relative to what eventually happened to him after his arrest, it is felt that it would be inadvisable for the Department to order prosecution. We shall, however, keep the case under consideration.

Should you or your organization discover any additional information in connection with the matter, please call it to our attention immediately.

Respectfully,

For the Attorney General

7B.7
70
THERON L. CAUDLE
Assistant Attorney General

CC: Records ✓
Chron.



STATE OFFICERS

HARRY T. MOORE, PRESIDENT
BOX 4, MIMS

DR. C. F. DUNCAN, VICE-PRESIDENT
417 1/2 BROAD ST., JACKSONVILLE

FRANK C. BURTS, VICE-PRESIDENT
226 E. LAKE AVE., TAMPA

O. BEATRICE MCILIN, SECRETARY
335 JACKSON ST., N. ST. PETERSBURG

EMMA A. PICKETT, ASSISTANT SECRETARY
3410 E. BUFFALO AVE., TAMPA

REV. K. S. JOHNSON, TREASURER
601 CYPRESS AVE., SANFORD

FLORIDA STATE CONFERENCE OF THE

National Association

FOR THE

Advancement of Colored People

Mims, Florida
August 13, 1946

144-18-42 NATIONAL OFFICERS

ARTHUR B. SPINGARN
PRESIDENT

WALTER WHITE
SECRETARY

MARY WHITE OVINGTON
TREASURER

STROY WILKINS
EDITOR, THE CRISIS

THURGOOD MARSHALL
SPECIAL COUNSEL

ELLA J. BAKER
DIRECTOR OF BRANCHES

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
AUG 20 1946
DIVISION OF RECORDS
CIVIL RIGHTS

OFFICE OF THE
RECEIVED
AUG 19 1946
ATTORNEY GENERAL

RECORD

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WEST VOLUSIA COUNTY
ALLEN L. ATTAWAY
C. W. HARRIS

WEST PALM BEACH
REV. E. J. JACKSON

LEGAL COMMITTEE
ATTY. S. D. MCGILL
ATTY. L. E. THOMAS
EDWARD D. DAVIS

Attorney General Tom Clark
Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir :

Leroy Bradwell, Negro veteran of Midway, Gadsden County, Florida was discharged from the army at Camp Blanding, December 28, 1945. He went home on December 29, 1945.

On January 7, 1946, Leroy was arrested by Sheriff Otha Edwards and Deputy Maple of Gadsden County. As you will note from the inclosed affidavits, no warrant was presented. Evidently, they had no warrant. Leroy has not been seen or heard of since the night of January 7th, when he was carried off by the officers named above.

On March 12th we wrote Gov. Millard F. Caldwell of Florida and asked him for an investigation of this case. On March 15th we received a letter from Gov. Caldwell, stating that he was asking the Sheriff for further information in connection with the Bradwell Case. After we failed to hear any more from Gov. Caldwell, we wrote him again on June 3rd and asked for further information. In his reply to us on June 6th Gov. Caldwell merely repeated the Sheriff's alibi that Leroy's mother knows where he is, but that she refuses to reveal his whereabouts.

We have had a personal interview with Bradwell's mother and sister, and we are inclined to believe that Leroy is a victim of foul play at the hands of peace officers of Gadsden County. From past experience, we also are inclined to believe that we cannot depend upon Gov. Caldwell to get at the bottom of this case. As you will note, he is placing the investigation in the hands of local peace officers, and they are the very ones who are responsible for Bradwell's disappearance.

In view of these facts, we are submitting this case to your Department for investigation and for prosecution of any guilty parties. This case is similar to the case of Thomas A. Crews, constable at Branford, Florida, who is bound over for Federal Court on a charge of murdering Samuel McFadden, a Negro, last September. We feel, therefore, that under the 14th Amendment and the Civil Rights Statute your Department has ample jurisdiction to act in the Bradwell Case.

For your information we are inclosing copies of correspondence and affidavits relative to this case. We shall be very grateful for your best efforts in this matter.

Respectfully yours,

Harry T. Moore
Harry T. Moore, Executive Secretary

cc: Atty. Thurgood Marshall
20 W. 40th Street
New York 18, N. Y.

Mims, Florida
March 12, 1946

Gov. Millard F. Caldwell
Capitol Building
Tallahassee, Florida

Dear Governor :

It has been reported to us that Leroy (T. S.) Bradswell, a discharged Negro soldier of Midway, Florida, has mysteriously disappeared while in the custody of Gadsden County officers. According to this report, Bradswell was arrested about 11:00 P. M. Monday, January 7, by Ortha Edwards and Mr. Maple, officers from Quincy, on a charge of writing a letter to a white girl. On January 26 one of these officers told the mother, Mary McCray Bradswell, that Leroy was not guilty, that the officers had taken Leroy to the county line and turned him loose, and that the mother would probably hear from him in a few days. We are informed that the mother has neither seen Leroy nor heard from him. The latest rumor up there is that Leroy has been beaten up badly and is being treated.

We shall be very grateful if you will make a thorough investigation of this matter and try to ascertain the facts in the case. We also urge that vigorous action be taken against any officer, or officers, who might be found guilty of brutal treatment of Bradswell.

Please let us hear from you after you have made your investigation.

Respectfully yours,

Harry T. Moore

State of Florida
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
Tallahassee

March 15, 1946.

Harry T. Moore, President
Florida State Conference of the
National Association for the
Advancement of Colored People
Mims, Florida

Sir:

This will acknowledge receipt of
your letter dated March 12th regarding
Leroy Bradswell of Midway.

I am today asking the Sheriff for
further information in connection with this
matter.

Sincerely,

Governor.

MFC/wj

Mims, Florida
June 3, 1946

Governor Millard F. Caldwell
Capitol Building
Tallahassee, Florida

Dear Governor :

On March 12th we reported to you the case of Leroy Bradwell, Negro veteran of Midway, who is said to have disappeared while in the custody of peace officers of Gadsden County. I also have your letter of March 15th, in which you said that you were writing the Sheriff of that county for further information in connection with this case.

We are anxious to know the results of your investigation. Has Bradwell been located? Was he injured in any way by the officers? Please let us know the facts in this case.

On April 10th we received a copy of your letter to the Honorable Murray Sams, State Attorney at Deland, in which you asked him to investigate the death of James Fuller, Volusia County Negro, who was allegedly shot by a Deputy Sheriff near Pierson. We shall be grateful for a report on his findings in this case.

Sincerely yours,

Harry T. Moore

State of Florida
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
Tallahassee

June 6, 1946

Harry T. Moore, President,
Florida State Conference of the
National Association for the
Advancement of Colored People,
Mims, Florida.

Dear Sir:

Upon returning to the office, I have your letter of June 3 inquiring further about LeRoy Bradswell of Gadsden County and about the death of James Fuller of Volusia County.

Further investigation reveals very little additional information as to the whereabouts of LeRoy Bradswell. The Sheriff and other officials have made inquiry and while they have certain evidence and reports that Bradswell's mother is in regular communication with him and knows his whereabouts, they have been unable to get her to admit that she knows where he is. The officers are under the definite impression that she does know his whereabouts but for a certain reason refuses to give them this information.

Thorough further inquiry has been made regarding the death of James Fuller. There has been no new evidence brought to the attention of either the Grand Jury or the State's Attorney or any other authorized official regarding Fuller's death. I have received and thoughtfully studied the transcript of the testimony at the Coroner's inquest and have found nothing to substantiate any theory that the findings of the Coroner's jury were not correct and legal. I am informed by the State's Attorney that since the conclusion of the inquest no one has complained to his office about either the conduct of the inquest or the verdict of the Coroner's jury and no request had been made to him for a further investigation until I took up the matter with him. Further, no one appeared before or requested the Volusia County Grand Jury for the spring term, which was convened after Fuller's death, for further investigation of the case.

If you or anyone else has any new evidence, it should be called immediately to the attention of the State Attorney or Grand Jury in the county where the death occurred.

Sincerely,

Governor.

AFFIDAVIT

State of Florida
County of Broward

My name is Roginer Hendley. I have lived in Gadsden County, Florida, practically all of my life. My husband, Arthur Hendley, and I have been living at Midway, in Gadsden County, with my mother, Mary Bradwell.

On December 28, 1945, my brother, Leroy Bradwell, came home with an honorable discharge from the army. Leroy had been in the army about 3 years, and he had served in Europe about 2 years.

On the afternoon of January 7, 1946, Sheriff Otha Edwards and Deputy Maple of Gadsden County came to our house and asked for Leroy, but Leroy was not there at the time. That same night they came back again and found Leroy home. My husband, my mother, and I also were at home. The officers arrested Leroy. They took Leroy's wallet and Discharge paper out of his pocket and threw them on the shelf. The officers started out with Leroy without making any explanation. My mother asked them what they wanted with Leroy. The Sheriff then said: "I am gixing to tell you now. He did some writing". My husband followed the officers out into the yard and tried to get a fuller explanation. The Sheriff said: "He wrote to a white girl, and we are going to carry him out of the county before something happens to him".

The next morning my mother, my husband, and I went to the Sheriff's office in Quincy to ask about Leroy. We went to the Sheriff's office several times, but we could not learn where Leroy was.

My husband and I finally went to Tallahassee and paid Atty. Clyde Atkins \$50.00 to find out about Leroy. Atty. Atkins told us he would see that Leroy was found, and that there would be no bloodshed until they found out about writing the letter. We gave Atty. Atkins a letter that Leroy had written home. When my husband and I went to Atty. Atkins the second time, he told us that they had sent the letter off to find out about the handwriting and that we should be at the trial in Quincy that Wednesday.

My mother, my husband, and I went to the Court House that Wednesday. We started up into the court room, but the Sheriff told us to have a seat in his office. The Sheriff finally came back down and told us that Leroy was not guilty. My mother then asked why they would not turn Leroy loose and let him go home. Sheriff Edwards replied: "No, we can't turn him loose now. The judge says he will have to get more true evidence. He says R. T. Parker (a Negro living in Midway) must have written that letter, because he left town".

Sheriff Edwards came to our house several times after this and asked if we had heard from Leroy. On his last trip out the Sheriff asked me if we had heard from Leroy. I said, "No". The Sheriff said: "I wonder why that boy doesn't write his mother. He got her all worried up like this". I replied: "Leroy would write if he could". The Sheriff said: "I'll do everything I can to make it possible for Leroy to live in the county again."

After the "trial" in Quincy my husband and I went back to Atty. Atkins. He told us that Leroy was not guilty. I then asked Atty. Atkins to find out where Leroy was. Atty. Atkins said: "That will be hard to do, since they turned him loose. He might write later. He could be somewhere in Georgia".

We have neither seen nor heard from Leroy since he was carried off by Sheriff .

Otha Edwards and Deputy Maple on the night of January 7, 1946.

Signed :

Roger Hendley

COUNTY OF BROWARD

STATE OF FLORIDA

Sworn to and subscribed before me this *10*, day of *August* A.D. 1946

Ruby Mae Watson

Notary Public, State of Florida at Large.
My commission expires March 13, 1948.
Bonded by American Surety Co. of N. Y.

AFFIDAVIT

State of Florida
County of Broward

My name is Mary Bradwell. I own a home and about 15 acres of land at Midway, in Gadsden County, Florida. I have lived in that county practically all of my life. I have a daughter (Reginer Hendley) and two sons (Leroy Bradwell and Levoneia Bradwell), both of whom have served in the armed forces of the United States. Levoneia is still in service.

My son, Leroy Bradwell, was born at Midway, Gadsden County, Florida, November 3, 1920. He was inducted into the army November 21, 1942, at Camp Blanding, Florida. He went overseas November 3, 1943, and saw service in the Battle of France and the Rhineland. He was awarded the following decorations: (1) Good Conduct Medal, (2) EAMETO Medal, and (3) World War II Victory Medal. Leroy returned to the United States December 21, 1945, and he was given an honorable discharge at Camp Blanding, Florida, on December 28, 1945. The following description is on his discharge paper: "LEROY BRADWELL 34 531 699 PRIVATE FIRST CLASS 4229TH QUARTERMASTER STERILIZING COMPANY".

Leroy came home December 29, 1945. On the afternoon of January 7, 1946, Sheriff Otha Edwards and Deputy Maple of Gadsden County came to our house and asked for Leroy, but Leroy was not at home then. When I asked why he wanted Leroy, the Sheriff said: "I just want to see him about cutting some pulp wood". That same night Sheriff Edwards and Deputy Maple came back to our house and found Leroy home. At home also were my daughter, Reginer Hendley, and my son-in-law, Arthur Hendley. Sheriff Edwards arrested Leroy in the house. He took Leroy's wallet and discharge paper out of his pocket and threw them on the shelf. Then they started out with Leroy without explaining anything. I then asked the officers why they were arresting my son. Sheriff Edwards answered: "I am fixing to tell you now. He did some writing". Arthur Hendley followed them into the yard and tried to get more information about the arrest. The Sheriff said: "He wrote to a white girl, and we are going to carry him out of the county before something happens to him".

The next morning, January 8th, I went to the Sheriff's office in Quincy and asked about Leroy. The Sheriff said: "He is not in jail. I put him off at the foot of the bridge and told him to get going and not to be caught in the county again". Arthur Hendley and Reginer Hendley were in the Sheriff's outer office when this was said. We went to the Sheriff's office several times, but we could not find out where Leroy was.

Arthur and Reginer Hendley finally went to Tallahassee and paid Atty. Clyde Atkins \$50.00 to help us on this case. Atty. Atkins notified us to be in Quincy the next week for the trial. On that day Arthur and Reginer Hendley and I went to the Sheriff's office. We then started up to the court room where the trial was to be held, but Sheriff Edwards made us stay in his office. The Sheriff finally came back down and told us that Leroy was not guilty. I then asked why they would not turn Leroy loose and let him go home. Sheriff Edwards said: "No, we can't turn him loose now. The judge says he will have to get more true evidence against Leroy. The judge says R. T. Parker (a Negro Living in Midway) must have written that letter because he left town". Sheriff Edwards came to our home several times after this and asked if we had heard from Leroy.

R. T. Parker liked the same colored girl that Leroy had been courting. Before Leroy got home from the army, Parker warned us that Leroy was not to go to this girl's home, but Leroy was going to see her anyway. Leroy told us that Parker shot at him once and tried to run a car over him once. Maggie Lou Thomas, a colored teacher who

lives in Midway, told us that Parker came to her and asked how to spell the name of this white girl (Carline Blahely). The Sheriff talked with Parker the Sunday after Leroy was arrested, and Parker left that same night.

We have neither seen nor heard from Leroy since he was carried off by Sheriff Ed. wards and Deputy Maple on the night of January 7, 1946.

Signed :

Mary Bradwell

COUNTY OF BROWARD

STATE OF FLORIDA

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 10, day of August A.D. 1946

Ruby Mae Watson

Notary Public, State of Florida at Large.
My commission expires March 13, 1948.
Bonded by American Surety Co. of N. Y.

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Assistant Attorney General T. L. Caudle
Criminal Division

FROM : Director - FBI

DATE: January 30, 1947

SUBJECT: SHERIFF OTHO EDWARDS, Gadsden County, Florida;
DEPUTY SHERIFF EMORY NAPLES, Gadsden County, Florida;
LEROY BRADWELL, with aliases T. S. Bradwell, T. S.
Bradswell, Leroy Bradswell - VICTIM:
CIVIL RIGHTS AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

RECEIVED
FEB 3 - 1947
CRIMINAL DIVISION

Reference is made to our previous correspondence in the above captioned case, your file reference #144-18-42.

Information has been received by our Miami Office from State Attorney Orrion C. Parker, Tallahassee, Florida, that he has been ordered to make a complete investigation of this case at the request of Governor Millard Caldwell. Mr. Parker requested that the information in the files of our Miami Office concerning this matter be made available to him.

I shall appreciate your advising me if you have any objection to the requested information developed in the course of this Bureau's investigation being made available to Mr. Parker. It will be appreciated if you will let me have your opinion in this regard as soon as possible so that our Miami Office may be appropriately advised.

RECORDED
FEB 3 1947

144-18-42

DEPARTMENT	OFFICE
FEB 3 1947	
CRIM. - CIVIL RIGHTS SEC.	

SLB

The Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

February 4, 1947

Theron L. Caudle, Assistant Attorney General

TLC:TLS:LAK
144-18-42

Sheriff Otho Edwards, Gadsden County, Florida;
Deputy Sheriff Emory Naples, Gadsden County, Florida;
Leroy Bradwell, with aliases T. S. Bradwell, T. S.
Bradswell, Leroy Bradswell - Victim;
Civil Rights and Domestic Violence

S. L. G.
R. J. G.

I have your memorandum of January 30, 1947, asking to be advised if we have any objection to the Bureau reports in the above-captioned matter being made available to State Attorney Orrion C. Parker who has been ordered by the Governor of Florida to make an investigation in the matter.

If the Bureau sees no objection to making the results of your investigation available to Mr. Parker, no objection is entertained by me. I do not believe the use of this information by the State authorities would materially jeopardize any future Federal prosecution that might result.

HOLLIE

cc - Records ✓
Chrono.

