



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Civil Rights Division

MJK:PMF:SWtc  
144-17M-3164

Criminal Section - 194B  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530

JUL 15 2011

[Redacted]  
New Carrollton, MD 20784 [Redacted]

Dear [Redacted]

We are writing to inform you that the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) recently conducted a review of the circumstances surrounding the deaths of your [Redacted] Harry T. and Harriette V. Moore, due to injuries sustained when a bomb detonated underneath their home on December 25, 1931. We regret to inform you that we are unable to proceed further with a federal criminal investigation of this matter because the persons who are likely responsible for your [Redacted] deaths, Earl J. Brooklyn, Tillman H. Belvin, Joseph Cox, and Edward L. Spivey, are deceased. Please accept our sincere condolences on the loss of your parents.

Over the last 50 years, the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice has been instrumental in bringing justice to some of the nation's most disturbing civil rights era crimes. Today, the Division continues to use its resources and expertise to identify, locate, and, where possible, prosecute those responsible for committing racially-motivated crimes more than 40 years ago.

In 2006, the FBI began its "Cold Case Initiative," — a comprehensive effort to identify and investigate racially-motivated murders committed decades ago. Toward that end, each of the 56 FBI field offices searched their "cold case files" to identify incidents which might be ripe for investigation. In February of 2007, the FBI announced the next phase of the initiative, which includes a partnership with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), and the National Urban League to assist the FBI in identifying additional cases for investigation and to solicit their help. In October 2008, the "Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Act" ("Emmett Till Act") became law giving the Department of Justice additional tools to investigate "violations of criminal civil rights statutes . . . result[ing] in death that "occurred not later than December 31, 1969."

cc: Records

Chrono

[Redacted]  
Fitzgerald

T. 7/15/2011

[Redacted]

The federal review concerning Mr. and Mrs. Moore's deaths was begun pursuant to the Cold Case Initiative and the Emmett Till Act. This review was conducted by FBI Special Agents and an experienced "cold case" civil rights prosecutor. We have now concluded that review and wish to inform you in writing of our findings.

As part of its review of the circumstances of Mr. and Mrs. Moore's deaths, the FBI researched and reviewed media articles from 1951; obtained the FBI's 1935 investigative file; obtained the results of the 1978 joint investigation by the Brevard County Sheriff's Office (BOSO) and the Brevard County State Attorney's Office; obtained the results of the 1991 investigation by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement; and obtained the results of the 2004 investigation by the Florida Attorney General's Office of Civil Rights. The FBI's review of the previous investigations identified ten former members of the central Florida Ku Klux Klan who may have had pertinent information about the bombing. Further investigation involving interviews and research of death certificates revealed that eight of the potential witnesses were confirmed to be dead, and two were unable to be located, but suspected to be dead. An exhaustive review conducted by the FBI and attorneys from the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division did not produce any new leads.

According to our review, on the night of December 25, 1951, a bomb exploded under the house of Mr. and Mrs. Moore. The explosion killed Mr. Moore instantly. Mrs. Moore succumbed to her injuries nine days later. Harry Moore was an active participant in the early civil rights movement of the 20th century. He started the Brevard County chapter of the NAACP in 1934, and served as the NAACP's first statewide Executive Secretary. His civil rights advocacy was well known in the area. He spoke out against lynchings, police brutality, inequalities in the criminal justice system, and fought for voting rights and pay equality. Mr. and Mrs. Moore were teachers in the segregated public schools in Brevard County, Florida, from 1925 through 1946, the year that the school district did not renew their contracts -- a common tactic of intimidation used to silence those who fought for civil rights. Mr. Moore's civil rights advocacy made him a known target of the Klan.

While no arrests were ever made in the case, four subjects were implicated in the bombing, all known to be high ranking members within the Ku Klux Klan in the central region of Florida. The initial FBI investigation focusing on the Klan led to two primary subjects -- Earl J. Brooklyn and Tillman H. Belvin. Both men had a reputation for violence, having been expelled from the Klan Klaverns in Georgia for being too violent. Confidential informants told the FBI that both Brooklyn and Belvin had participated in beatings and bombings in the past. Informants further advised that during one Klan meeting, Brooklyn showed the other Klan members a sketch of the floor plan of the Moore's home, and was seeking others to join him in casing the home. Belvin was also present during this meeting, having arrived with Brooklyn. Months before the bombing, a witness identified Brooklyn and Belvin as being in a local store asking directions to

the Moore's home. Brooklyn could not account for his whereabouts on Christmas night. Additionally, an FBI informant who was a fellow Klan member stated that Brooklyn told him in early 1952 that he was out of dynamite, having used it all on his last job. Furthermore, Belvin was known to wear a size 6 shoe, and size 6-8 footprints were found at the scene of the explosion. Four days after the bombing, Belvin was able to pay off the balance of his mortgage.

Brooklyn and Belvin both died while the FBI's initial investigation was being conducted. Belvin died of natural causes in August 1952, and Brooklyn died of natural causes on December 25, 1952.

In 1978, Brevard County [redacted] reopened the investigation after attending a memorial service for Harry Moore. During the investigation, Edward L. Spivey called the sheriff's office on a number of occasions to complain about the renewed interest in a closed case. [redacted] discovered through their conversations with Spivey that he was a former high-ranking member of the Klan. On one occasion, [redacted] met with an ailing Spivey, and Spivey revealed the details of the bombing at the Moore's home on Christmas Night, 1951. Spivey stated further that his close friend, Joseph Cox, was responsible for detonating the dynamite under the Moore's bedroom. Spivey stated that Cox came to his house after being interviewed twice by the FBI and admitted that the Klan had paid him \$5,000 to kill Harry Moore. Cox claimed to have used the money to pay off his mortgage and said that he was afraid that the FBI was going to find out about his mortgage payment and his role in the bombing. Spivey insisted that Cox's actions were not sanctioned by the Klan. Joseph Cox committed suicide in March 1952, using a shotgun he had borrowed from Spivey. Spivey died of cancer in August 1980.

After careful review of this incident, we have concluded that the only subjects credibly linked to the bombing are Brooklyn, Belvin, Cox, and Spivey. Therefore, we have no choice but to close our investigation.

We regret that we cannot be of further assistance to you. Again, please accept our sincere condolences on the loss of your [redacted] (b)(7)(C)

Sincerely,

Malgo M. Fitzgerald  
Deputy Chief in Charge of the Cold Case Initiative