



Office of the
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
FOURTH DISTRICT



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**LEFLORE COUNTY GRAND JURY PRESENTED CASE AGAINST
CAROLYN BRYANT DONHAM**

Greenwood, MS— District Attorney Dewayne Richardson reported that last week, a Leflore County Grand Jury heard and considered evidence and testimony regarding Carolyn Bryant Donham’s involvement in the kidnapping and death of Emmett Till. After hearing more than seven hours of testimony from witnesses with direct knowledge about this case and the investigators that investigated this case, the Grand Jury determined that there was not sufficient evidence to indict Donham.

The Grand Jury heard testimony from witnesses detailing the investigation of this case from 2004 to the present day. The Leflore County Grand Jury considered the charges of both Kidnaping and Manslaughter. After hearing every aspect of the investigation and evidence collected regarding Donham’s involvement, the Grand Jury returned a “No Bill” to the charges of both Kidnaping and Manslaughter. A “No Bill” means that the Leflore County Grand Jury did not indict Carolyn Bryant Donham.

The Office of the District Attorney has worked extensively with officials from the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice (DOJ), the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Northern District of Mississippi, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Civil Rights Division investigators since 2004.

From 2004 to 2007, FBI agents investigated this case, and upon the conclusion of that investigation, the case was presented to a separate Leflore County Grand Jury in 2007 by then District Attorney Joyce Chiles. The 2007 Grand Jury returned a “No Bill” against Donham for the charge of Manslaughter.

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In 2017, a joint federal and state investigation was reopened based on assertions that Donham may have recanted previous statements given in the 1955 trial of her husband or to FBI investigators during the 2004 to 2007 investigation. The second investigation concluded in December 2021. The Department of Justice released its closing memo detailing the steps taken during the course of the investigation as well as the DOJ's ultimate findings. (See DOJ December 6, 2021, closing memorandum detailing the joint investigation. [Emmett Till - Notice to Close File | CRT | Department of Justice](#))

Recently, a 1955 arrest warrant was located in the Leflore County Circuit Clerk's basement. Following this discovery, the FBI was notified and further discussions were had between the District Attorney's Office and its federal partners. Although prosecutors do not arrest people nor do prosecutors serve arrest warrants, the existence of the 1955 warrant along with additional information confirmed the decision to present this matter to the next regularly scheduled Leflore County Grand Jury.

The murder of Emmett Till remains an unforgettable tragedy in this country and the thoughts and prayers of this nation continue to be with the family of Emmett Till.

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