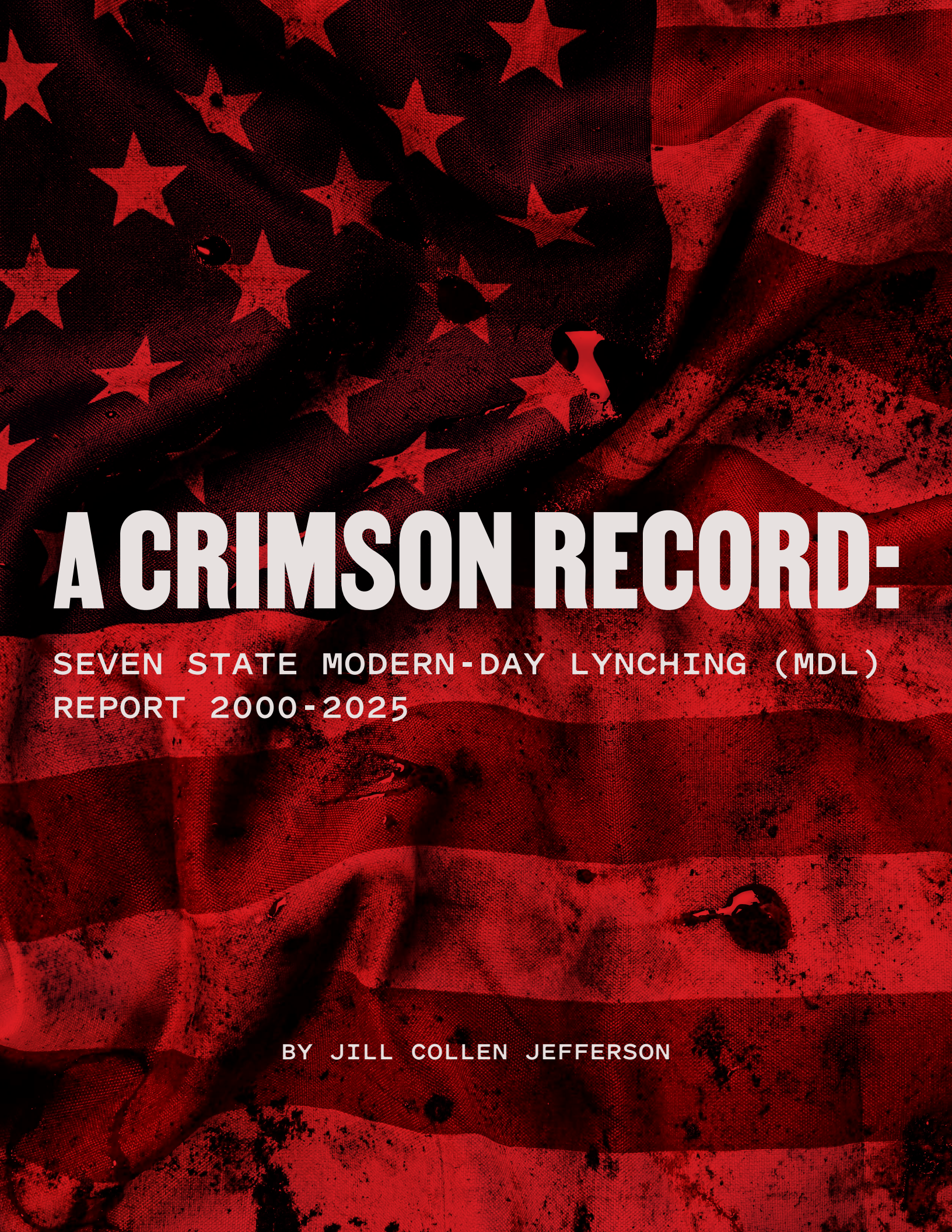




A CRIMSON RECORD:

SEVEN STATE MODERN-DAY LYNCHING (MDL)
REPORT 2000-2025

BY JILL COLLEN JEFFERSON

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THIS REPORT EXAMINES INCIDENTS ACROSS THE SOUTH CENTRAL AND SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES THAT CONSTITUTE MODERN-DAY LYNCHINGS (MDLS), HATE CRIMES RESULTING IN DEATH, AND OTHER NOTABLE SUSPICIOUS CASES. SPANNING THE YEARS 2000 THROUGH 2025, THE ANALYSIS REVEALS RECURRING PATTERNS OF VIOLENCE, SYSTEMIC NEGLECT, AND LAW ENFORCEMENT MISCONDUCT THAT ECHO THE RACIAL TERROR OF EARLIER ERAS. IT ALSO UNDERSCORES THE INTERSECTIONAL VULNERABILITIES FACED BY MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES – PARTICULARLY BLACK TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS, WHOSE DEATHS OFTEN REMAIN UNSOLVED OR MISCLASSIFIED.

SCOPE AND FINDINGS

Between 2000 and 2025, JULIAN identified more than 70 modern-day lynchings across the seven-state region—with Mississippi reporting the highest number. In addition, the study catalogued numerous hate crimes resulting in death and

suspicious deaths where racial or identity-based motives were plausible but not officially recognized. In many of the cases discussed, especially in Mississippi, JULIAN is revealing details that were not publicly available before.

STATE	DOCUMENTED MDLS	HATE CRIMES OR SUSPICIOUS DEATHS	NOTES
MISSISSIPPI	20	7	Highest total cases; increasing trend since 2021
TEXAS	13	22	Sharp rise since 2019; includes several trans victims
GEORGIA	14	11	Consistent pattern of racially charged deaths
LOUISIANA	11	14	Post-Katrina surge; renewed activity after 2020
FLORIDA	11	20	Stand Your Ground law plays role; several trans victims
TENNESSEE	5	4	Sparse reporting; limited investigative access
ALABAMA	1	5	Difficult to document due to data opacity and limited media coverage

Twenty-three of the more than 100 cases discussed in the report involved police officers or correctional guards, and 12 occurred in carceral settings.

People in their 20s comprised the largest percentage of MDLs with 37.5%. Teenagers and people in their 40s were tied in second place at 18.8% each. 17.2% of MDLs were of people in their 30s. 6.2% were people in their 50s, while 1.6% were people in their 60s. Sixty-five was the age of the oldest MDL victim, and 14 was the youngest.

The majority of cases examined in this study were officially classified as suicides, homicides without a proven discriminatory motive, or conventional hate crimes.

Across nearly every MDL case, a predictable investigative pattern emerges—marked by haste, neglect, and procedural breakdowns:

- ❶ Premature Conclusions
- ❷ Lack of Psychological Autopsies
- ❸ Compromised Crime Scenes
- ❹ Shoddy Investigations and Evasive Reporting

Across the states, most trans victims were killed by gunfire, contrasting with the hanging deaths more frequently seen among Black male victims in other MDL cases.

Protesters march up First Street in Jena, La. The Atlanta Journal Constitution

TEXAS

Texas had the highest number of LGBTQIA+ MDLs of any state. Historically, MDLs in Texas occurred sporadically – separated by intervals of seven, five, or four years. However, beginning in 2019, the state has seen multiple MDLs, hate crimes, or suspicious cases every year, signaling a clear escalation. JULIAN found a higher concentration of migrant deaths and disappearances in Texas than any other state. Suspected MDL cases on the Mexico and United States border are expected to rise and should be closely monitored.



LOUISIANA

Post-Katrina Louisiana, particularly Orleans Parish, witnessed a concentration of MDLs. After periods of relative quiet – gaps of seven to eight years – the pattern re-emerged in 2020, when several cases were recorded within months. New incidents continued into 2023 and 2024, marking a resurgence of racial and bias-motivated violence.

Several patterns repeatedly arose while examining the Louisiana cases. First, there was systemic neglect and mishandled investigations.

Many cases lacked timely autopsies, thorough evidence collection, or transparent reporting. Second, in a number of the cases, law enforcement were the perpetrators. Officers were directly involved in multiple killings and cover-ups, particularly during post-Katrina chaos. Third, there were several LGBTQIA+ lynchings, specifically of transgender individuals. Fourth, a high number of the Louisiana cases have been brought to justice, reflecting a pattern that JULIAN has not seen in other states. One prominent pattern was the increase in MDLs in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

MISSISSIPPI

In Mississippi, MDLs have steadily increased since 2021, with multiple incidents each year and a record number of cases in 2024. Mississippi's trend reflects a broader national rise in bias-linked deaths. Mississippi also has a pattern of inmate deaths in prison. For example, in 2020, there were 26 deaths in two months at Mississippi prisons. Mississippi accounts for the highest number of MDLs, with 19 cases identified, continuing its historic record. JULIAN also identified a disturbing pattern in Rankin County, Mississippi: Black men would often go missing around the same date and place every couple of years. Rankin County is known for its racism, brutality, and sundown towns. Mississippi also has the longest pattern of misclassified MDLs and sub-par investigations. This is due in part to low job requirements. For example, to be a coroner in Mississippi, one need only obtain a high school diploma or equivalent and pass a test.

ALABAMA

Three of the four crimes discussed for Alabama occurred in predominantly white areas, with two occurring in the areas surrounding Montgomery. The victims were almost all Black in their late 20s or 30s. Selma, Alabama, is a town in south central Alabama with a predominantly Black population.

At least five Black people went missing from Selma between 2002 and 2010 under suspicious circumstances. Foul play is suspected in all five cases examined.

Alabama and Tennessee were the most challenging states to analyze in this study. In Alabama, autopsy reports, investigative records, and police bodycam footage are not automatically public—making external scrutiny nearly impossible unless the case attracts national attention. Local newspapers often rely on sheriff's office press releases rather than conducting independent investigations. Additionally, national media attention typically comes only when the family or civil rights organizations mobilize, which can take months.

TENNESSEE

In the Tennessee MDL cases, we observed common misclassification tactics that obscured the gravity of the violence inflicted. Such misclassification through vague terminology (“medical emergency,” “no known motive”) and delayed transparency reinforces a systemic pattern where Black death is neutralized through bureaucratic language and passive framing. All of the Tennessee cases underscore critical breakdowns in investigative processes and transparency. These cases also reflect broader data suppression and delays in autopsy releases, incomplete incident reports, and limited proactive updates to the victim's families.

GEORGIA

Across the documented incidents identified as potential MDLs or hate crimes in Georgia, a clear concentration appears in the decade spanning 2015–2025. Over one-third of these deaths occurred in custodial settings, jails, prisons, or during direct police encounters. Geographically, the cases show visible clustering in rural counties within Georgia such as Clinch, Washington, Lowndes, and Greene. Interestingly, these are

areas with long-standing histories of racial segregation and sundown town practices. Several incidents occurred in locations with deep symbolic resonance for racial terror.

An additional trend, particular to Georgia, is the intersection between race and mental health. Several victims were in psychiatric crises at the time of their deaths. Their plight was misunderstood and reframed as signs of aggression, prompting violent armed interventions rather than medical support. The absence of trained personnel and overmilitarized policing escalates encounters, turning psychiatric affliction into a potential death sentence.

An additional trend, particular to Georgia, is the intersection between race and mental health. Several victims were in psychiatric crises at the time of their deaths. Their plight was misunderstood and reframed as signs of aggression, prompting violent armed interventions rather than medical support. The absence of trained personnel and overmilitarized policing escalates encounters, turning psychiatric affliction into a potential death sentence.

FLORIDA

In Florida, hate crimes and MDLs also appear to repeatedly occur within carceral or quasi-carceral environments, revealing a horrifying pattern of these crimes not only being perpetrated by

isolated bad actors, but the system as a whole. Furthermore, accountability consistently fails across these domains. In multiple in-custody deaths, strong evidence—video footage, eyewitness testimony, or pathology—pointed to wrongful killing yet produced no criminal sanction.

Digital platforms now provide an avenue for perpetrators to accelerate and cause more widespread harm. The clustering of trans women's murders around Jacksonville suggests contagion dynamics amplified by social media. These digital traces could serve as early warning systems and investigative leads, yet they are inconsistently collected and often recognized only after violence has occurred.

Across all states examined, these findings expose a regional continuity of racial and identity-based violence, often disguised through misclassification, investigative failures, or official silence. They also highlight a disturbing shift in the geography and psychology of lynching – from public spectacles to private acts of terror, from mob-sanctioned violence to individualized radicalization, and from extrajudicial mobs to institutional complicity. Given the current political and social climate, JULIAN anticipates that the number of MDLs will continue to rise.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to case analysis, the report presents policy recommendations, an investigative protocol, and a strategic implementation plan designed to guide law enforcement, policymakers, and civil rights organizations in responding to suspected MDLs.

JULIAN also recommends changes to strengthen the federal Emmett Till Anti-Lynching Act, which is currently toothless. Among other things, these recommended changes include:

- Requiring an independent prosecutor by default in suspected MDLs.
- Sanctioning authorities, including district attorneys, who fail to adequately investigate or prosecute a lynching.
- Requiring psychological autopsies and the use of psychologists in cases involving suspected suicide, and
- If an MDL is possible, requiring the state medical examiner to have their autopsy attended by an independent pathologist chosen by the family—whether virtual or in person.

JULIAN also recommends investigative protocols and an implementation plan for potential MDLs—the JULIAN Protocol—which includes detailed guidance on how to conduct a psychological autopsy, analyze a crime scene, and run a thorough investigation.

SYNTHESIS AND SIGNIFICANCE

MDLs are not historical echoes; they are living patterns of impunity that reveal how America's oldest form of racial violence has adapted to new conditions. They thrive in silence—in the gaps between coroner's reports and truth, between official explanations and the lived experience of grieving families. What was once a public ritual of white supremacy has become a quieter machinery of neglect, operating through misclassification, inadequate investigation, and the failure to see Black, Brown, LGBTQIA+, indigenous, and physically impaired lives as fully grievable.

This report is both a warning and a demand. It calls for the courage to name what is happening, the rigor to investigate without bias, and the will to reform systems that still protect perpetrators over victims. The persistence of these deaths is not inevitable – it is the consequence of choices. To stop modern-day lynchings, we must first be willing to see them.

It is with no pleasure I have
dipped my hands in the
corruption here exposed.
Somebody must show that
the Afro-American race is
more sinned against than
sinning, and it seems to have
fallen upon me to do so.

- IDA B. WELLS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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IS
my
MOTHER
Next?

AM

IS
my
COUSIN
Next?

IS
my
BROTHER
Next?

IS
my
SISTER
Next?

IS
my
FATHER
Next?

IS
my
AUNT
Next?

I
NEXT

IS
my
UNCLE
Next?

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INTRODUCTION

The way to right wrongs
is to turn the light of
truth upon them.

— IDA B. WELLS

Before dawn breaks in too many Southern towns, another family wakes to a nightmare that feels centuries old. A son found hanging from a tree. A daughter discovered on a dirt road. A father beaten beyond recognition. Authorities rush to declare these deaths “no foul play,” while the air still reeks of injustice. Across seven states, we trace the threads of these horrors and uncover a truth as devastating as it is undeniable: lynching never left. It evolved. And the lives stolen in its shadow demand to be seen, named, and reckoned with.

There are several ways through which terror is enforced. Most prominent among them are hate crimes, domestic terrorism incidents, and violent extremism. A modern-day lynching (MDL) is a specific type of hate crime. Unfortunately, national hate crime data is notoriously flawed because it is not mandatory for America’s 18,000 law enforcement agencies to submit data on hate crimes. In 2024, less than 84.9% of agencies submitted data to the FBI.¹

Many crimes are miscategorized and more are erroneously investigated so that no true estimation of hate crimes or MDLs and the frequency with which they terrorize American communities has existed until now.

To further exacerbate the number of miscategorized hate crimes and MDLs, states

are incentivized to underreport their hate crimes numbers because higher numbers could trigger greater federal oversight. The FBI reports annual hate crime statistics compiled from its Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, but that number is uniformly too low. We know this because of the National Criminal Victimization Survey (NCVS), which investigates how many Americans have been victims of crimes annually.

For example, in 2024, the FBI reported that 14,243 Americans were victims of hate crimes.² The NCVS reported that approximately 48% of violent victimizations were reported to police in 2024.³

In the grand scheme, these inaccurate numbers lead to inadequate funding for the DOJ’s/FBI’s civil rights work. When these entities lack funding, they cannot adequately complete their investigations or launch as many investigations as needed, and communities are thereby denied justice.

Yet, despite these facts, the federal government relies solely on states’ self-reported numbers to determine the frequency of hate crimes in America. States do not track or report MDLs at all. Even more damning, police usually do not investigate MDLs and rule them as suicides instead.

¹ N’dea Yancey-Bragg. 2024. “Hate Crimes Reached Record Levels in 2023. Why ‘a Perfect Storm’ Could Push Them Higher.” USA TODAY. January 5, 2024. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2024/01/05/hate-crimes-hit-record-levels-in-2023-why-2024-could-be-even-worse/72118808007/>.

² “UCR Summary of Reported Crimes in the Nation, 2024.” n.d. <https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/resources/reports/UCR%20Summary%20of%20Reported%20Crimes%20in%20the%20Nation%202024.pdf>.

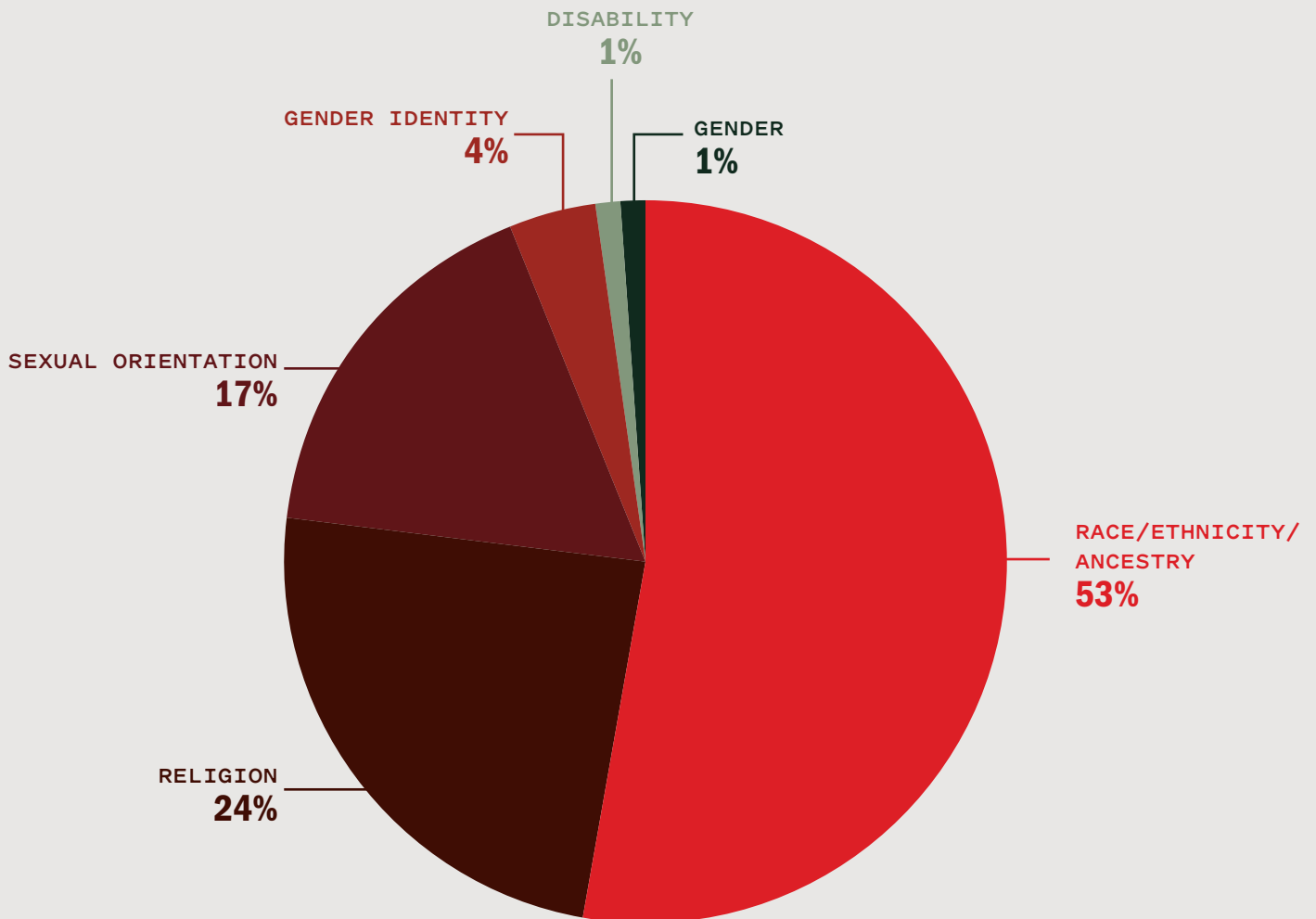
³ Susannah Tapp, Emilie Coen, and Statisticians. 2025. “Criminal Victimization, 2024.” <https://bjs.ojp.gov/document/cv24.pdf>.

◀ Ida B. Wells, 1862 – 1931, was an American investigative journalist, educator, and early leader in the civil rights movement, vintage illustration from 1894

HATE CRIMES

Although true numbers of hate crimes do not exist, we can clearly see an increase in hate crimes across the United States in the past few years. According to the FBI's flawed data, in 2024, 11,323 single-bias incidents involved 13,768 victims. In 356 incidents, a total of 475 victims were targeted because of more than one bias.⁴

BIAS MOTIVATION CATEGORIES FOR VICTIMS OF SINGLE-BIAS INCIDENTS IN 2024



⁴ Tapp, Susannah, Emilie Coen, and Statisticians. 2025. "Criminal Victimization, 2024." <https://bjs.ojp.gov/document/cv24.pdf>.

Of single-bias incidents in 2024, 53% were because of race, ethnicity, or ancestry. Twenty-four percent (24%) were based on religion and 17% were caused by the victim's sexual orientation, 4% of them caused by Gender Identity, 1% because of disability, and 1% due to gender.^{5[1]}

A study by the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University found at least 2,184 hate crimes were reported across New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, Phoenix, Philadelphia, San Antonio, San Diego, Dallas, and Austin in 2023, an increase of nearly 13% from 2022 driven in part by upticks in anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim attacks amid the ongoing Israel-Hamas war. A larger analysis of 25 American cities found hate crimes increased an average of 17% from 2022, according to the study.⁶

HISTORICAL LYNCHINGS AND THE “SUICIDE” DESIGNATION

Lynching has a long history in America. The lynching of Black Americans was once a widely supported terror campaign used to enforce racial subordination and segregation in the 19th and 20th centuries, particularly in the South. Lynchings were violent public acts attended by whole communities, including children, that white people used to terrorize and control Black people. *Lynching in America* documents more than 4,400 racial terror lynchings in the United States during the period between Reconstruction and World War II, and the Burnham-Nobles Digital Archive has records of incidents up until 1954.

These historical lynchings typically included hanging from trees and brutality, such as torture,

mutilation, decapitation, desecration, and burning some victims alive. These executions were often carried out by white mobs with the participation and in the presence of law enforcement.

Victims were accused frequently without credible evidence of crimes ranging from theft and assault to merely violating the rigid norms of white supremacy. A common cause of lynchings was interracial interactions, specifically Black men and White women. Lynching victims were denied legal representation, due process, or the chance to defend themselves in court.⁷ Lynching served a specific and brutal purpose: to instill fear, discourage Black resistance, and maintain economic exploitation by violently suppressing demands. The psychological scars of this terror extended across generations, shaping patterns of Black culture and civic disenfranchisement.⁸ One of the scars that continues to exist is the designation of lynchings as suicides.

Historically, describing a lynching as a “suicide” was both a cover-up and a cruel joke—a way for white authorities and communities to deny culpability in racial killings while mocking the victims and their families. From the late 19th through the mid-20th century, local law enforcement, coroners, and newspapers in the South often recorded lynchings as suicides or accidents. When Black men were found hanging from trees, bridges, or jail rafters, the “official” verdict was frequently: “*Death by suicide*,” “*No foul play suspected*,” or “*Accidental death by hanging*.”

These determinations were rarely based on investigation. Instead, they reflected a coordinated

5 Tapp, 2024.

6 Ibid.

7 NAACP. 2025. “History of Lynching in America.” [Naacp.org](https://naacp.org/find-resources/history-explained/history-lynching-america). NAACP. 2025. <https://naacp.org/find-resources/history-explained/history-lynching-america>.

8 “Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror.” n.d. Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror. <https://lynchinginamerica.eji.org/report>; M.J. Pfeifer, 2010. “Lynching and Spectacle: Witnessing Racial Violence in America, 1890-1940. By Amy Louise Wood. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009. Xvi, 349 Pp. \$39.95, ISBN 978-0-8078-3254-7).” *Journal of American History* 96 (4): 1200-1201. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jahist/96.4.1200a>.

effort to protect white perpetrators, preserve the town's image, and uphold segregation's racial hierarchy. For example, coroners were often white men tied to the same power structures that allowed mob violence. Sheriffs sometimes participated in or sanctioned lynchings, then wrote reports absolving the mob. Local papers repeated these "suicide" narratives uncritically, normalizing the deception.

Over time, within white communities, calling a lynching a "suicide" became a cynical euphemism—a dark inside joke. Phrases like "*he committed suicide by rope*" or "*he hung himself, if you believe that*" were used with a wink and a nod. The "joke" served two purposes: (1) It signaled

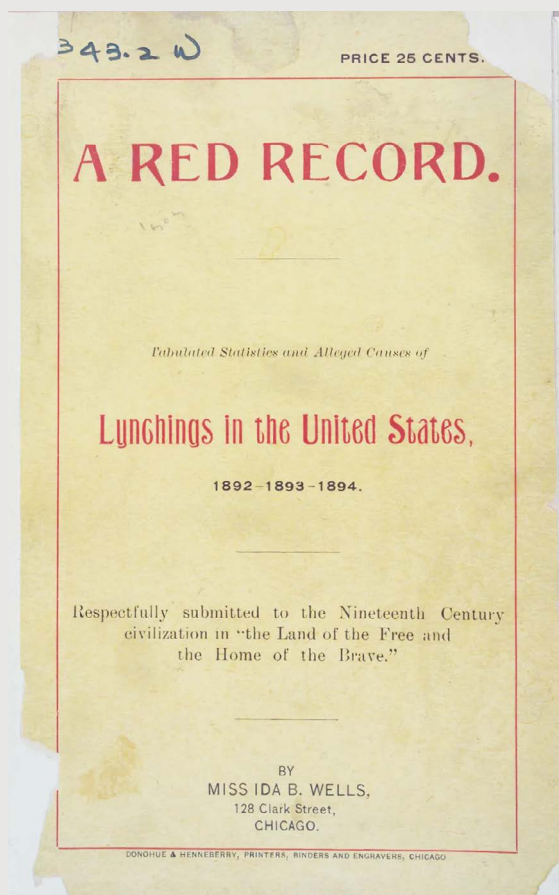
shared complicity—everyone knew what really happened, but pretending it was suicide kept it "respectable"; and (2) it humiliated the victims posthumously, denying them truth and dignity even in death. This rhetorical habit functioned as both gaslighting and mockery: a way to reinforce white dominance while mocking the very idea of accountability.

Labeling lynchings as suicides was not just about falsifying death records; it was an ideological act. It erased evidence of white violence. It allowed communities to maintain the illusion of law and order. It deepened Black despair by showing that even truth itself could be lynched.

A RED RECORD

In the late 19th century, Ida B. Wells, already known as a fearless journalist and civil rights advocate, wrote *A Red Record: Tabulated Statistics and Alleged Causes of Lynching in the United States, 1892-1893-1894* to expose the truth behind lynchings. Building upon her earlier pamphlet *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases* (1892), *A Red Record* was both a data-driven study and a moral indictment. It sought to educate national and international audiences, particularly in the North, about the scale and injustice of lynching.

Wells used a method that was groundbreaking for its time. She collected and categorized reports of lynchings from newspapers, court records, and correspondence—essentially performing one of the earliest examples of data journalism. The book included statistical tables detailing numbers of lynchings by year, location, race, gender, and alleged cause. It also included narrative analysis dismantling myths about lynching as "punishment for rape" by showing that most victims were killed for minor or fabricated offenses—such as arguing with white employers or being "too prosperous."



▲ Cover of Ida B. Wells's *A Red Record: Tabulated Statistics and Alleged Cause of Lynching in the United States 1892-1893-1894* (Donohue & Henneberry, 1895).

A Red Record provided individual case studies giving names, dates, and circumstances to counter the anonymity and silence that surrounded these deaths.

By documenting 241 lynchings in 1892 alone, Wells demonstrated that lynching was not a spontaneous reaction but an organized system of racial control. *The Record* created a foundation for activism. The work helped galvanize early anti-lynching movements and inspired later civil rights efforts by the NAACP and others. It circulated widely among Black readers and sympathetic reformers in the North and Britain, framing lynching as both a national disgrace and

an international human rights issue. Lynchings continued to be documented consistently up until the late 1950s.

According to NPR, America's "last" recorded lynching was in 1981.⁹ But the thing is, lynchings never stopped even though the documentation of them did. JULIAN fights for justice in these cases every day. *The Washington Post* first reported on JULIAN's work in Mississippi.¹⁰ According to JULIAN, there have been at least dozens and possibly hundreds of lynching cases across the South central and Southeastern United States since the year 2000.



▲ NAACP anti-lynching protest at National Crime Conference in DC, December 1934.

⁹ NPR. 2008. "The 'Last Lynching': How Far Have We Come?" NPR. October 13, 2008. <https://www.npr.org/transcripts/95672737>.

¹⁰ DeNeen L Brown. 2021. "Lynchings in Mississippi Never Stopped." *Washington Post*. The Washington Post. August 8, 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2021/08/08/modern-day-mississippi-lynchings>.

Like *A Red Record*, this report documents suspected MDLs but will focus only on Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, Texas, Tennessee, Georgia, and Florida. The majority of these cases were ruled suicides and were never known. This report is the evolution and deepening of *A Red Record* for the 21st Century: *Crimson*.

MODERN-DAY LYNCHINGS: A 21ST CENTURY RED RECORD

Lynching is one of the hardest hate crimes to prove. Unlike other hate crimes, lynchings, especially lynchings by hanging, tend to be ruled suicides initially. So, in order to address them, one first has to prove to local and state authorities (who are the ones who ruled the case a suicide in the first place) that the case is in fact a homicide. Getting them to change their suicide designation is an uphill battle, and only if they rule the death a homicide can the federal hate crimes statute come into play.

The method of lynchings has changed. They are no longer public entertainment in public areas with individuals posing with the mutilated corpse and cutting off souvenirs. Now, lynchings usually occur on private property or in jails or prisons. In most cases authorities rule the manner of death in lynching cases as suicide or undetermined, and police barely investigate, if at all. The type of hate crime deemed a lynching has also changed. No longer are lynchings isolated to Black people, but trans women, indigenous women, and people with disabilities also fall victim to these crimes and their underreporting every day in America.

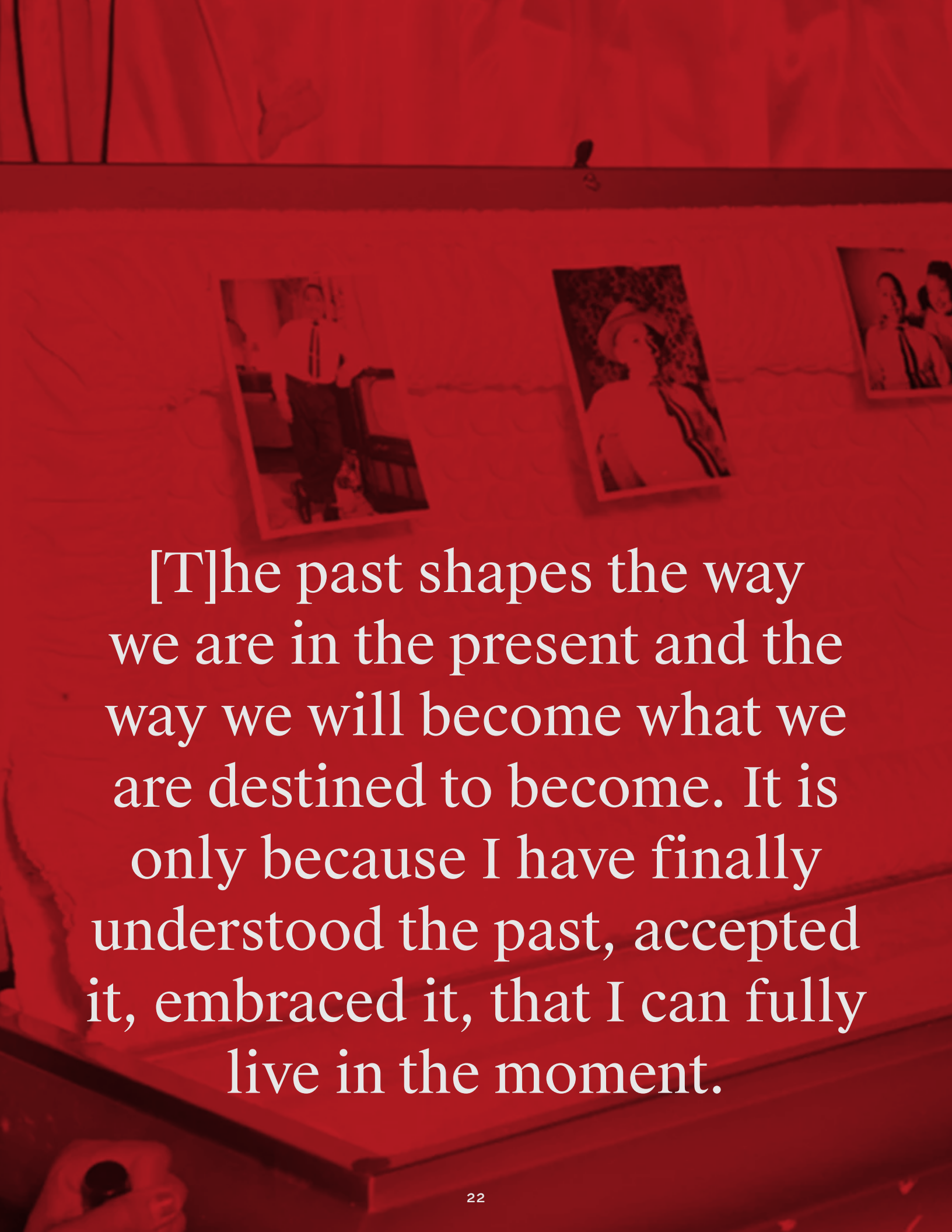
The reality is that while securing evidence in MDLs, staff and witnesses are harassed and intimidated. Families and communities that pursue further redress become targets of persecution and violence, which are often perpetuated by or ignored by local law enforcement and prosecutors. One case wherein

a 23-year-old named Nick Naylor was found hanging from a tree in the middle of an all-white hunting camp in Porterville, Mississippi, in 2003, was paused due to the family receiving physical threats and harassment. People in pick-up trucks followed them at night, popped wheelies in their driveway, and burned a cross in their front yard.

The official designation of suicide and the lack of care from law enforcement also make tracking and investigating incidents of modern-day lynchings extremely difficult and deters families from reporting abuse or seeking justice.¹¹ Our intention is that this study will give those families hope and bring new eyes to their loved one's cases.

This report consists of eight sections, which may themselves contain chapters. Section II discusses the definition and evolution of the term "lynching." The next section examines how a victim's body serves as evidence of what occurred. This chapter highlights medical considerations that forensic pathologists use to determine if a death is a suicide, accident, or homicide. It was created by interviewing independent forensic pathologists and studying forensic analyses and case studies of homicides versus suicides. The hope is that these considerations may serve as a guide for coroners when determining cause of death in potential MDLs. Section IV explains JULIAN's methodology for finding and categorizing MDLs. Section V reveals the patterns and findings that JULIAN discovered while conducting this study. The largest section, it begins by discussing overall trends across the seven states before diving into detailed state-by-state case profiles. Case profiles are divided into two groups: (1) suspected MDLs and (2) notable hate crimes or suspicious deaths. Each state's subsection ends with a discussion of that state's particular MDL patterns and findings. Section VI discusses recommendations ranging from policy to investigative protocols, and the report's penultimate chapter, Section VII, explains how to implement the JULIAN protocol.

¹¹ Brown, 2021.



[T]he past shapes the way we are in the present and the way we will become what we are destined to become. It is only because I have finally understood the past, accepted it, embraced it, that I can fully live in the moment.

DEFINITION AND EVOLUTION OF THE TERM “LYNCHING”

And hardly a moment goes
by when I don't think about
Emmett, and the lessons a son
can teach...

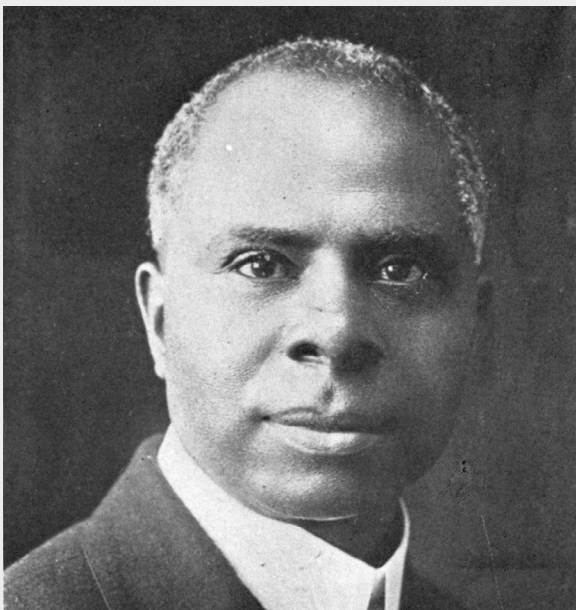
— MAMIE TILL MOBLEY

1. ORIGINS IN FRONTIER “JUSTICE” (18TH–EARLY 19TH CENTURY)

The term *lynching* derives from the name Charles Lynch, a Virginia planter and Revolutionary War-era magistrate who presided over informal courts punishing suspected Loyalists without a formal legal process. In the late 1700s, “Lynch’s Law” referred to extralegal punishment—often whipping or banishment—by self-appointed citizens claiming to uphold community order. Early usages did not necessarily imply death; rather, they reflected mob-administered discipline in the absence or distrust of formal courts.

2. THE EXPANSION AND RACIALIZATION OF LYNCHING (MID–19TH CENTURY)

By the mid-1800s, particularly after the Civil War, lynching evolved from local vigilantism into a systematic tool of racial terror. As Reconstruction unfolded, white mobs increasingly used public executions—especially hangings—to enforce white supremacy and suppress Black citizenship. The definition of lynching began to narrow toward mob killings motivated by perceived transgressions of racial or social hierarchy rather than mere “community justice.” During this period, newspapers and local officials often used



euphemisms like “mob violence” or “summary justice,” but anti-lynching activists insisted the term *lynching* be tied explicitly to racial violence and impunity.

3. THE NAACP AND EARLY LEGAL DEFINITIONS (EARLY 20TH CENTURY)

Beginning in the 1910s, organizations such as the NAACP and the Tuskegee Institute sought to standardize the term for data collection and advocacy. The Tuskegee Institute defined a lynching as:

“
The killing of a
person by three or
more persons acting in
concert and without
legal authority,
under the pretext of
administering justice.
”

This definition introduced three key criteria—mob participation, illegality, and intent of justice or punishment—that shaped national understanding. It allowed activists like Ida B. Wells-Barnett and the NAACP to produce statistical records demonstrating the racial and gendered nature of lynching, fueling the push for federal anti-lynching legislation throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

4. POST-WORLD WAR II INTERPRETATIONS

After the 1940s, overt public lynchings declined, but the concept expanded in civil rights discourse. Scholars and civil rights leaders used *lynching* metaphorically to describe state-sanctioned or

Portrait of Monroe N. Work, American sociologist and author who founded the Department of Records and Research at the Tuskegee Institute in 1908. Richardson, Clement, ed. (1919) [The National Encyclopedia of the Colored Race](#). Montgomery: National Publishing Company, Inc.

tolerated racial killings, such as police brutality or racially motivated murders that went unpunished. The definition began to encompass institutional complicity—not only mob violence but also official neglect or endorsement of racial terror.

5. CONTEMPORARY LEGAL AND SCHOLARLY DEFINITIONS

In modern legal and sociological frameworks, *lynching* is defined broadly as a killing, or attempted killing, carried out by a group without due process, often motivated by race, class, or social identity, and typically intended to terrorize a broader community.

The Emmett Till Antilynching Act (signed into law in 2022) codified lynching as a federal hate crime when someone conspires to commit a hate-based offense resulting in death or serious injury. This marked the culmination of more than a century of advocacy—transforming the term from a colloquial descriptor of mob violence into a recognized legal category of racially motivated collective homicide.

6. CONTINUING DEBATES AND JULIAN'S DEFINITION

Historians and human rights scholars still debate the boundaries of the term. Some argue that modern police killings, deaths in custody, or racially motivated vigilante killings—such as those of Trayvon Martin or Ahmaud Arbery—represent contemporary forms of *lynching*, though the term remains politically charged. The evolution of lynching thus reflects not only shifts in law and

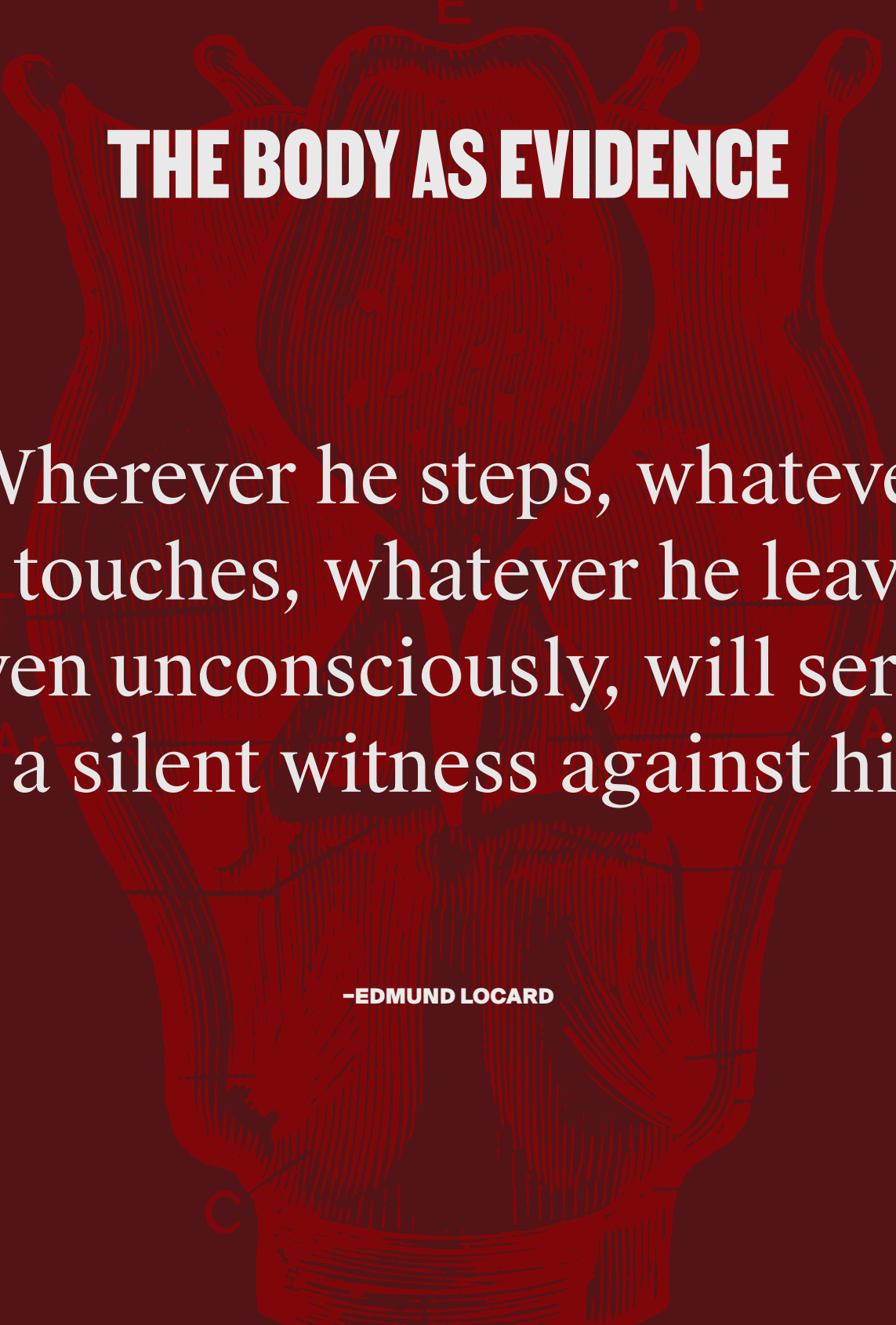
violence but also America's ongoing struggle to define justice, race, and accountability.

JULIAN defines a “modern-day lynching” as a discriminatory killing in the late 20th or early 21st century, under the pretext of administering justice, committed by more than one person for an alleged offense with or without a legal trial. This definition of lynching expands the current definition and includes killings based on gender or sexuality, such as the killings of trans women and indigenous women across America. This definition also takes into account the impact and undercurrent of caste rather than race only.

DIFFERENTIATING AN MDL AND A HATE CRIME

Hate crime homicides are categorized as a single perpetrator, bias driven homicide targeting a person or group on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, race, national origin, religion or ability status. An MDL is a multiple perpetrator homicide, targeting a group or individual, driven by race, gender identity, or other bias with the intent of causing community terror or carrying out an extrajudicial homicide for a perceived threat or wrongdoing. All MDLs are hate crimes, but not all hate crimes are MDLs. MDLs are also distinct from domestic terrorism, such as the 2022 mass shooting at Tops supermarket in Buffalo, targeting Blacks, and the 2019 Wal-Mart shooting in El Paso, targeting Hispanics and Latinos.

Distinct from historical lynchings, modern-day lynchings do not typically feature a mob. They can be committed by as few as two people.



THE BODY AS EVIDENCE

Wherever he steps, whatever he touches, whatever he leaves, even unconsciously, will serve as a silent witness against him.

-EDMUND LOCARD

Many MDLs take the form of hanging deaths, and the vast majority of hanging deaths are the result of suicide.¹² This presents a challenge, as the overwhelming prevalence of suicidal hangings can lead investigators to assume suicide prematurely. Consequently, some accidental or homicidal hangings may be misclassified, since their outward appearance can resemble suicide. In such cases, both the external postmortem examination and the police inquiry may be insufficiently thorough. In these circumstances, JULIAN turns to independent pathologists who work with the organization to analyze the crime scene and use the victim's body as evidence.

Drs. Anny Godin, Célia Kremer, and Anny Sauvageau found that distinguishing a true suicidal hanging from a staged hanging that follows homicidal strangulation presents significant challenges.¹³ In a study investigating whether fractures of the cricoid cartilage could serve as an indicator of homicide, the doctors analyzed all cases of suicidal hanging over a six-year period (231 cases) and compared them to homicidal hangings (4 cases) and homicidal strangulations without hanging (52 cases). They found that fractures of neck structures were identified in 23.4% of suicidal hangings (54 cases); however, the cricoid cartilage remained intact in all of them. In contrast, fractures occurred in 65.4% (34 cases) of homicidal strangulations, with cricoid cartilage fractures present in 20.6%. A review of existing literature revealed only one instance of a cricoid cartilage fracture among approximately 2,700 suicidal hangings, whereas such fractures occur in 5-20% of homicidal strangulations. Consequently, the study suggests

that the presence of a cricoid cartilage fracture in a case appearing to be suicidal hanging should raise strong suspicion of homicide.

A case study in *Forensic Science International* by Peter Leth and Annie Vesterby on a 61-year-old man found hanging from a rope in his house is helpful in understanding the body as evidence.¹⁴ There, the autopsy revealed recent bruising consistent with blunt-force trauma. In addition, a large subdural hematoma accompanied by brain swelling was present, suggesting that the victim was already unconscious when the hanging occurred. Evidence of a vital reaction—specifically, skin bleeding beneath the ligature mark—indicated that the deceased was still alive at the time of suspension. Determining the time of death proved crucial, as only one other individual could have been present within the estimated time frame. That person was later convicted of manslaughter.

In the case of Willie Andrew Jones Jr., a 21-year-old Black man who was found hanging from a tree in 2018, JULIAN discovered that Mr. Jones's arm had been injured in high school—an injury that would have prevented him from hanging himself. Mr. Jones was also too short to secure a rope around the branch with that arm injury. Photographs JULIAN obtained from the funeral home showed that Mr. Jones's shoulder was dislocated, indicating a struggle.

In the case of Frederick Jermaine Carter, the first autopsy found nothing remarkable. However, a second independent autopsy performed by Dr. Matthias I. Okoye (the same pathologist

¹² E. Doberentz, P. Markwerth, and B. Madea. 2019. "Differentiation of Homicidal or Suicidal Strangulation." *Forensic Science International* 301 (August): e44–48. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.forsciint.2019.05.058>.

¹³ Anny Godin, Célia Kremer, and Anny Sauvageau. 2012. "Fracture of the Cricoid as a Potential Pointer to Homicide." *The American Journal of Forensic Medicine and Pathology* 33 (1): 4–7. <https://doi.org/10.1097/paf.0b013e3181d3dc24>.

¹⁴ Peter Leth, and Annie Vesterby. 1997. "Homicidal Hanging Masquerading as Suicide." *Forensic Science International* 85 (1): 68–70. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0379-0738\(96\)02082-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0379-0738(96)02082-8).

who performed an independent autopsy in the Trey Reed case) found blunt force trauma of the posterior aspect of the larynx, blunt force trauma of the head, blunt force trauma of the trunk, and blunt force trauma of the extremities—all indicating a beating or struggle.

Generally, in hanging cases, where the rope sits compared to the neck break can tell investigators a great deal about what really happened. If the bones in the neck are broken far from the mark left by the ligature—and there are bruises or wounds that suggest a fight—it points to a killing disguised as suicide. But if there are no other injuries, and the break matches the line of the rope, it's far more likely the bones gave way during an actual self-inflicted hanging.

The condition of the hyoid is also important. The hyoid is a small, U-shaped bone in the neck that breaks in about one out of every three killings caused by strangulation. When examiners find a fracture there after death, it can strongly suggest the person was strangled. Still, many victims show no break at all—so the lack of a fractured hyoid does not necessarily mean strangulation did not happen. However, fractures of hyoid bone resulting from trauma other than strangulation are very rare.¹⁵ These and other insights prove crucial to determining the truth in potential MDLs.

According to Dr. Michael Baden, an esteemed independent pathologist and the author of *American Autopsy*, if someone is found hanging, the issues in any potential lynching case revolve around the history and surrounding facts. However, he explained to JULIAN that there is certain evidence on the body that can point to suicide versus homicide. For example, if there is a fracture of the windpipe, that suggests that there was more pressure put on the neck than would be in a suicidal hanging. He notes, however, that someone can be hanged with no fractures at all. Additionally, the curvature of the ligature furrow often has an upward trajectory in hangings, while a horizontal ligature is indicative of homicidal strangulation. He has also found that fractures of the hyoid bone and thyroid cartilage, as discussed above, often indicate homicide by manual strangulation rather than a suicide by hanging. Petechiae—little hemorrhages—in the eyes are also common in strangulation but not suicide.

All of the factors discussed in this section are key to correctly analyzing the body as evidence. In any potential MDL case, the coroner and medical examiner should consult this report and search for the elements identified herein to help them determine if a death is a suicide or an MDL.

¹⁵ R. Keerthi, and Abdulhaseeb Quadri. 2016. "Hyoid Bone Fracture: Associated with Head and Neck Trauma—a Rare Case Report." *Journal of Maxillofacial & Oral Surgery* 15 (Suppl 2): 249–52. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12663-015-0761-x>.

METHODOLOGY

If one really wishes to know how justice is administered in a country, one does not question the policemen, the lawyers, the judges, or the protected members of the middle class. One goes to the unprotected – those, precisely, who need the law’s protection most! – and listens to their testimony.

— JAMES BALDWIN

This study was developed over an 18-month period by a team of fellows and senior staff at JULIAN who reviewed thousands of cases. The year 2000 was selected as the cutoff for inclusion in this report; subsequent research may examine cases occurring between 1981 (the date of the last documented lynching) and 2000.

The study began with an extensive research and data collection phase, which constituted the longest component of the process. JULIAN conducted a comprehensive review of primary and secondary sources, including local newspapers, television reports, and digital archives for every county within each of the seven states under examination. Additional data were obtained from partner organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign, and from social media platforms including TikTok, Reddit, Tumblr, Twitter (now X), Instagram, Facebook, and others.

In many cases, JULIAN became aware of potential incidents through calls, messages, and referrals from the public. The organization also reviewed academic and forensic studies concerning the distinctions between suicide and homicide, and conducted interviews with nationally recognized forensic pathologists. Where available, JULIAN obtained and analyzed official autopsy reports, case files from local police departments, state agencies, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). JULIAN also interviewed former FBI agents, forensic psychologists, and investigative journalists.

Upon identifying a potential case, JULIAN fellows and staff undertook a multi-stage classification process. Each case was evaluated to determine whether it constituted a MDL, a Hate Crime or

Suspicious Death, or a suicide. Cases determined to be suicides were excluded from this report out of respect for the privacy of victims' families. Hate crimes included only those incidents that resulted in death, excluding nonfatal assaults, threats, or property crimes such as arson.

A case was classified as an MDL when JULIAN found a strong likelihood—or virtual certainty—that the death represented a modern-day lynching according to JULIAN's definition. A case was deemed a suspicious death when available evidence suggested inconsistencies with the official ruling but did not provide sufficient proof to meet the MDL threshold. In most instances, JULIAN categorized cases as hate crimes or suspicious deaths even in the absence of formal hate crime charges, reflecting the organization's independent criteria. Because the present study centers on MDLs rather than hate crimes broadly, only a representative sampling of hate crime deaths is included.

JULIAN's numbering of each case profile does not necessarily match the number of MDLs or hate crimes. In situations where more than one person was killed by the same perpetrator, each death was counted separately even if not numbered separately with its own headline. However, deaths that were the result of domestic terrorism were not counted individually. In those cases, the entire incident served as a single occurrence.

JULIAN did not classify every transgender killing as a hate crime or MDL; instead, each case was evaluated individually, based on context and motive. JULIAN did not include cases where the violence appeared personal, such as situations involving violence within relationships, sexual

On June 24, 1922, more than 3,000 black people marched in a silent protest through the streets of Washington, D.C., demanding an end to lynchings that terrorized black people. According to a 1922 New York Times article, a group of boys in the protest carried a sign that said: "We Are Fifteen Years Old: One of Our Age Was Roasted Alive." Another sign read: "Congress Discusses Constitutionality while the Smoke of Burning Bodies Darkens the Heavens."

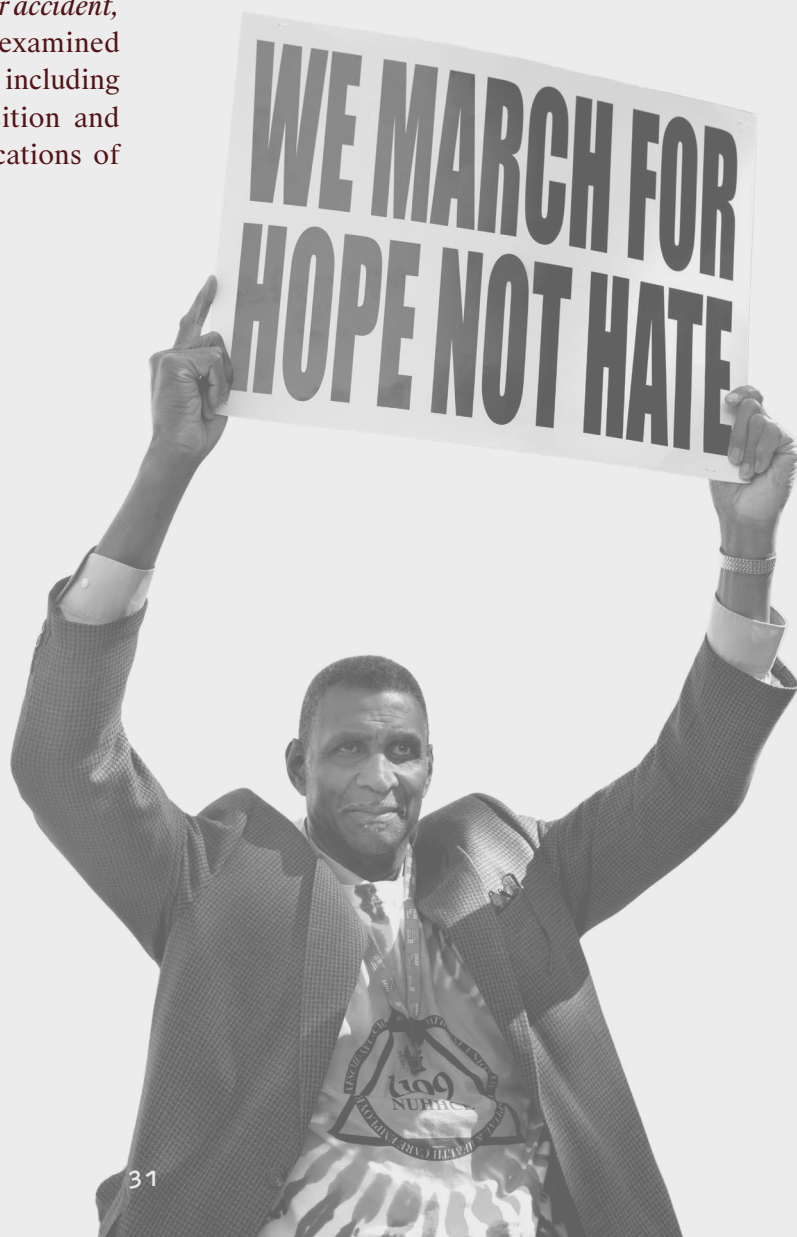
interactions, or instances of someone killing for fear of being outed. The cases discussed herein are those where the violence seemed possibly driven by bias or for the purpose of sending a larger message.

Following categorization, senior staff conducted a multi-layered review to ensure the accuracy and consistency of findings. JULIAN then contacted family members of the victims in selected cases to confirm factual details and to obtain consent for inclusion in this report.

In several cases, JULIAN undertook independent investigations. In such instances, investigators approached each case with a central guiding question: *Was the death truly a suicide or accident, or was it a homicide?* Investigators examined physical and circumstantial evidence, including crime scene characteristics, the position and condition of the body, and any indications of

struggle. Each investigation included a timeline reconstruction of the victim's final days to identify potential signs of suicidal ideation or distress. Investigators also cross-referenced police findings and collaborated with forensic psychologists to conduct psychological autopsies when appropriate. Notable cases—such as the deaths of Willie Andrew Jones Jr. and Raynard Johnson—underwent this full investigative process.

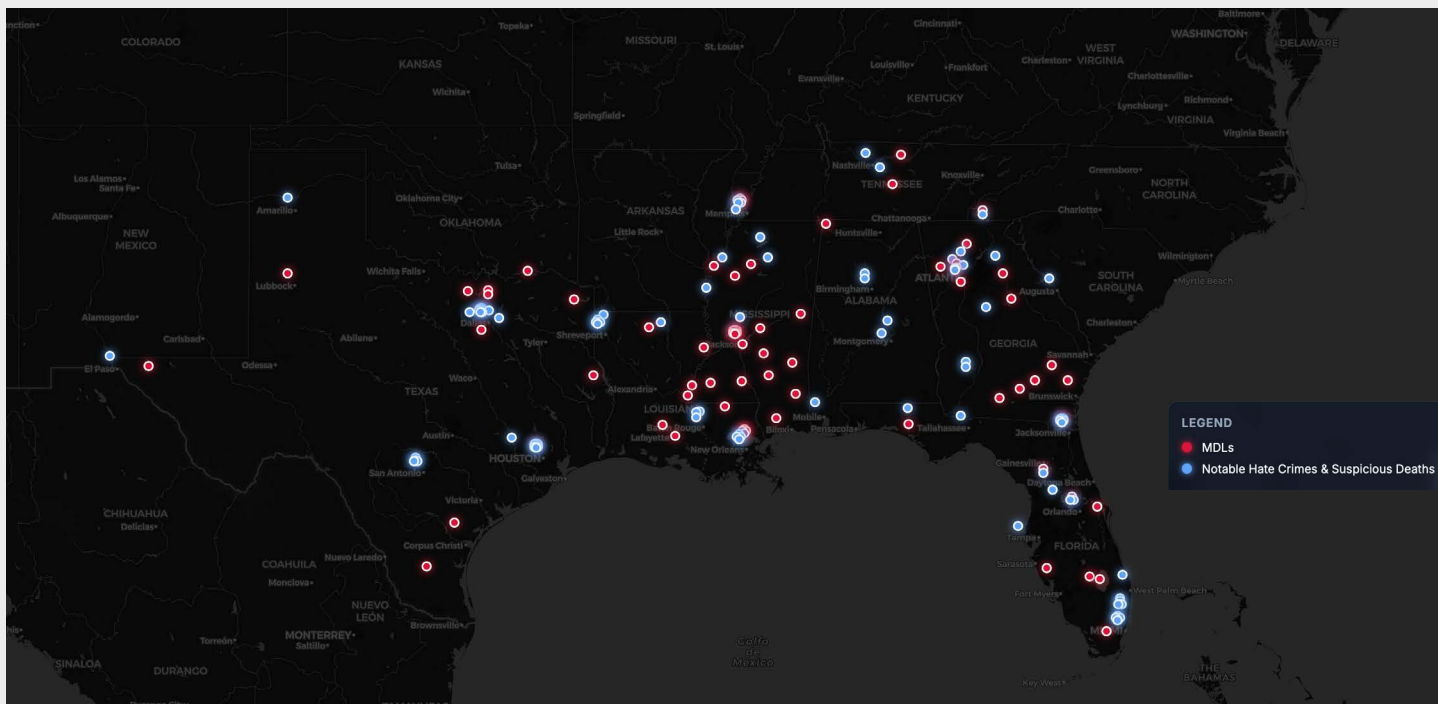
Police killings were excluded unless the incident involved multiple officers acting against a victim under circumstances in which discriminatory motives appeared to be a significant factor.



FINDINGS AND PATTERNS IN MDLS

Southern trees bear strange
fruit. Blood on the leaves
and blood at the root.

– BILLIE HOLIDAY



Here, JULIAN documents every suspected MDL—more than 70—across seven Southern states since the year 2000. However, JULIAN believes the true number of MDLs is significantly higher, given the frequency of suicide misclassifications and premature case closures. Mississippi accounts for the highest number, with 20 cases identified. The majority of cases examined in this study were officially classified as suicides, homicides without a proven discriminatory motive, or conventional hate crimes.

The form and visibility of lynchings have changed dramatically. Where lynchings were once public spectacles designed to terrorize entire communities, modern iterations are typically isolated acts, often carried out in private spaces or behind institutional walls—but still intended to send a message of domination and fear.

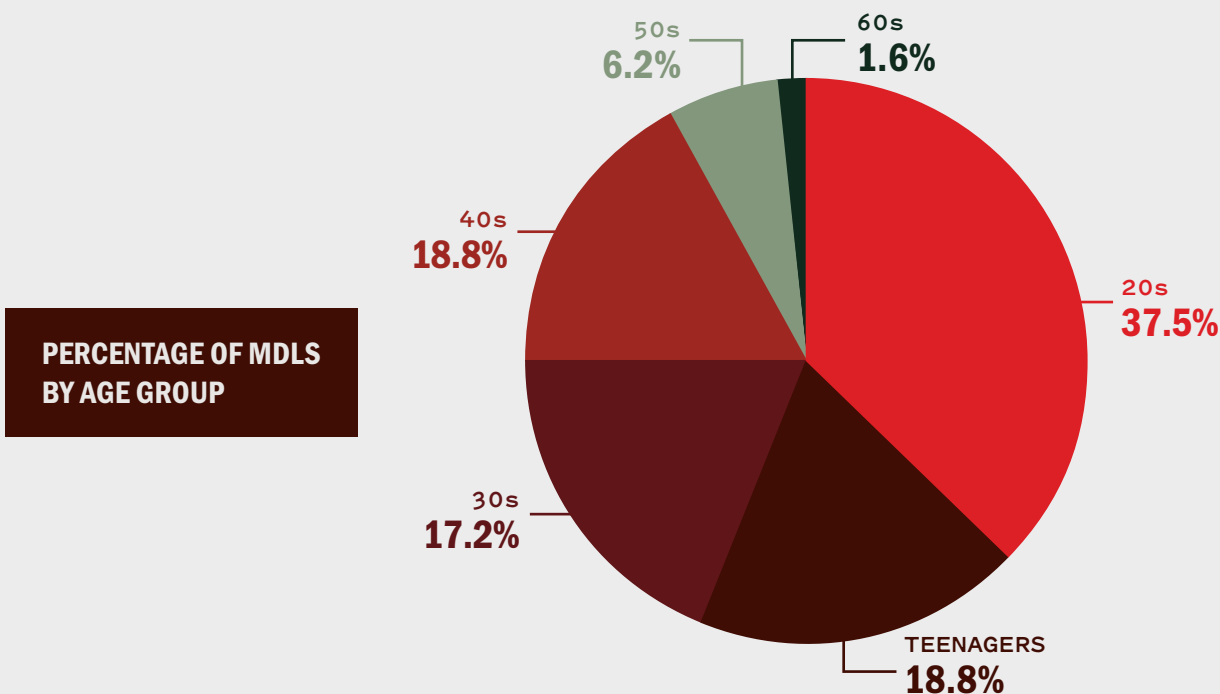
Today, many MDLs occur in jails, prisons, or other state-controlled environments, suggesting a disturbing shift in perpetrators and settings. Rather than coordinated mobs, individuals radicalized outside of formal hate groups now carry out much of the violence.

JULIAN's expanded definition of lynching reveals how state actors—such as police officers, jail officials, and military personnel—can perpetuate the same racial terror once inflicted by white vigilante mobs. Though the method and visibility have changed, the result remains constant: disproportionate Black, Brown, and transgender death, unanswered questions, and unaccountable institutions. Recognizing this historical lineage is essential to understanding both the brutality of these deaths and the community's insistence that they be named as lynchings.

Twenty-three of the more than 100 cases discussed below involved police officers or correctional guards, and 12 occurred in carceral settings.

People in their 20s comprised the largest percentage of MDLs with 37.5%. Teenagers and people in their 40s were tied in second place at 18.8% each. 17.2% of MDLs were of people in their 30s. 6.2% were people in their 50s, while 1.6% were people in their 60s. Sixty-five was the age of the oldest MDL victim, and 14 was the youngest.

◀ Billie Holiday at a recording session in 1939. The film "The United States vs. Billie Holiday" chronicles the government's efforts to suppress the song "Strange Fruit." Charles Peterson/Hulton Archive/Getty



Countless sites and organizations track the deaths of transgender Americans. Most public records in the early 2000s of trans deaths, however, have scant details. Misgendering and deadnaming often prevent accurate documentation. JULIAN only included those where hate and sending a message could have been factors.

In contrast to LGBTQIA+ deaths, public information for deaths of indigenous people that were the result of bias is limited. Few newspapers report the cases, and those that do often omit motive.

Across nearly every MDL case, a predictable investigative pattern emerges—marked by haste, neglect, and procedural breakdowns.

PREMATURE CONCLUSIONS:

Local law enforcement often issues immediate, definitive statements labeling deaths as suicides or accidents. These early pronouncements discourage further inquiry, influence medical examiner conclusions, and prevent autopsies that could establish a more accurate cause of death.

LACK OF PSYCHOLOGICAL AUTOPSIES:

In cases ruled suicides, no psychological autopsy—a crucial tool for determining state of mind—is conducted, leaving conclusions speculative and unverified. A psychological autopsy is a structured, investigative process used to understand a person's state of mind, behaviors, and circumstances leading up to their death. It involves collecting detailed information from interviews, medical and mental-health records, social media, personal writings, and the person's life history to reconstruct what they were thinking, feeling, and experiencing before they died. Unlike a medical autopsy, which focuses on physical causes, a psychological autopsy focuses on psychological, social, and environmental factors. It is often used in cases where the intent behind a death is unclear, such as distinguishing between suicide, accident, foul play, or other causes. The goal is not to assign blame, but to create the most complete picture possible of the individual's mental and emotional landscape in the period leading up to their death.

COMPROMISED CRIME SCENES:

Investigators repeatedly fail to secure or preserve the scene, contaminating or destroying physical evidence. This can stem from training deficiencies, negligence, or deliberate indifference. In several documented cases, crucial evidence was mishandled or destroyed, making reconstruction of events nearly impossible.

SHODDY INVESTIGATIONS AND EVASIVE REPORTING:

Ultimately, these deficiencies culminate in incomplete or biased investigations, where officials cite “no foul play suspected” or “no signs of trauma” as blanket conclusions. Such language provides an illusion of closure rather than transparency or truth. Families are often notified late, receive inconsistent information, and must fight for delayed or disputed autopsy reports.

JULIAN also identified a distinct but related pattern of killings involving transgender individuals, most notably in Texas, which mirrors findings from the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) showing Texas as the nation’s deadliest state for anti-transgender violence.¹⁶ Florida also had a large number of transgender deaths. Notably, most trans victims were killed by gunfire, contrasting with the hanging deaths more frequently seen among Black male victims in other MDL cases.

Historically, MDLs in Texas occurred sporadically—separated by intervals of seven, five, or four years. However, beginning in 2019, the state has seen multiple MDLs, hate crimes, or suspicious cases every year, signaling a clear escalation.

Post-Katrina Louisiana, particularly Orleans Parish, witnessed a concentration of MDLs. After periods of relative quiet—gaps of seven to eight years—the pattern re-emerged in 2020, when several cases were recorded within months. New incidents continued into 2023 and 2024, marking a resurgence of racial and bias-motivated violence.

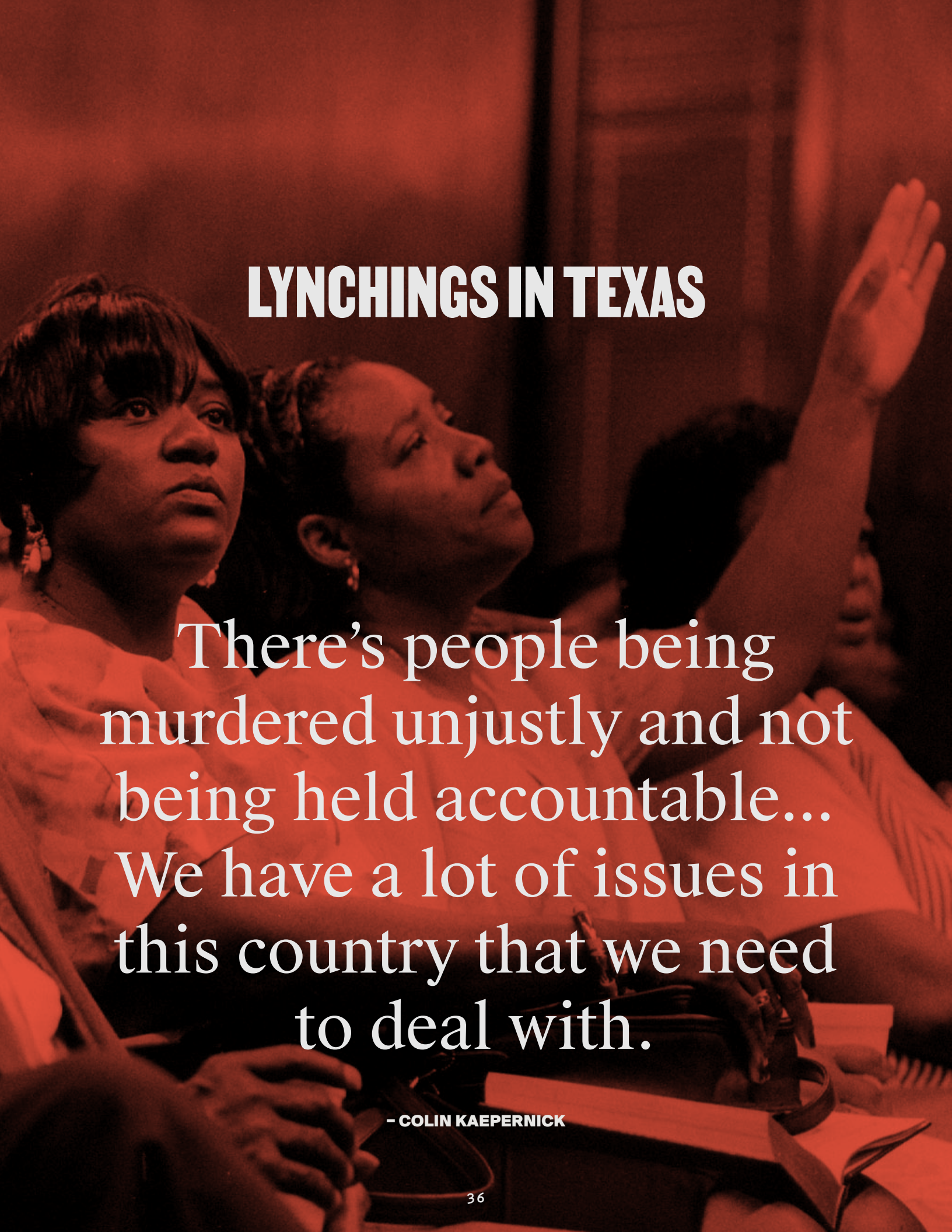
In Mississippi, MDLs have steadily increased since 2021, with multiple incidents each year and a record number of cases in 2024. Mississippi’s most recent suspected MDL occurred in September 2025. Mississippi’s trend reflects a broader national rise in bias-linked deaths.

Although this report focuses on seven Southern states, JULIAN has also documented or investigated cases in North Carolina, New York, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Missouri, Illinois, Oregon, Arkansas, and others. The geographic spread underscores that MDLs are not confined to the South, but rather a national phenomenon tied to the country’s unresolved caste divisions.

Lynchings are evolving, not disappearing. Their forms have adapted to contemporary structures of power, shifting from public trees to private cells, from mob gatherings to isolated executions.

Given the escalation in political division, online radicalization, and racialized rhetoric, JULIAN anticipates that the number of MDLs will continue to rise in the coming years—unless institutional accountability, investigative integrity, and public awareness catch up to the changing nature of violence in America.

¹⁶ “HRC Mourns Diamond Brigman, ‘Larger than Life’ Black Trans Woman Fatally Shot in Houston, TX.” 2024. Human Rights Campaign. March 22, 2024. <https://www.hrc.org/news/hrc-mourns-diamond-brigman-larger-than-life-black-trans-woman-fatally-shot-in-houston-tx>.



LYNCHINGS IN TEXAS

There's people being
murdered unjustly and not
being held accountable...
We have a lot of issues in
this country that we need
to deal with.

- COLIN KAEPERNICK

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

THE LYNCHING IN TEXAS DATABASE HAS DOCUMENTED OVER 700 LYNCHINGS FROM BETWEEN 1882 AND 1945 IN THE STATE OF TEXAS.¹⁷ OF THOSE, THERE ARE *AT LEAST* 37 HISTORICAL TEXAS LYNCHINGS THAT WERE MISREPORTED. THE NAACP, HOWEVER, REPORTS AT LEAST 493 LYNCHINGS IN TEXAS BETWEEN 1882 AND 1968. THUS, ONE MAY OBSERVE THAT LYNCHING DATA REMAINS DIFFICULT TO DOCUMENT BECAUSE THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A FORMAL TRACKING SYSTEM FOR LYNCHING IN THE PAST AND THE TOTAL NUMBERS, LOCALLY AND NATIONALLY, ARE LIKELY UNDERREPRESENTATIONS.

¹⁷ Sam Houston State University. 2025. "About | Lynching in Texas." Lynching in Texas. 2025. <https://www.lynchingintexas.org/about>.

◀ Members of the Byrd family attend the funeral of James Byrd in 1998. Jana Birchum / Getty Images

There were 18 lynchings against African-Americans in 1922 in Texas alone— a significant spike greater than any other state in the nation (total of 57 lynchings nationally).¹⁸ This number does not include any of the 58 attempted lynchings that year in Texas that were prevented by officers of the law.

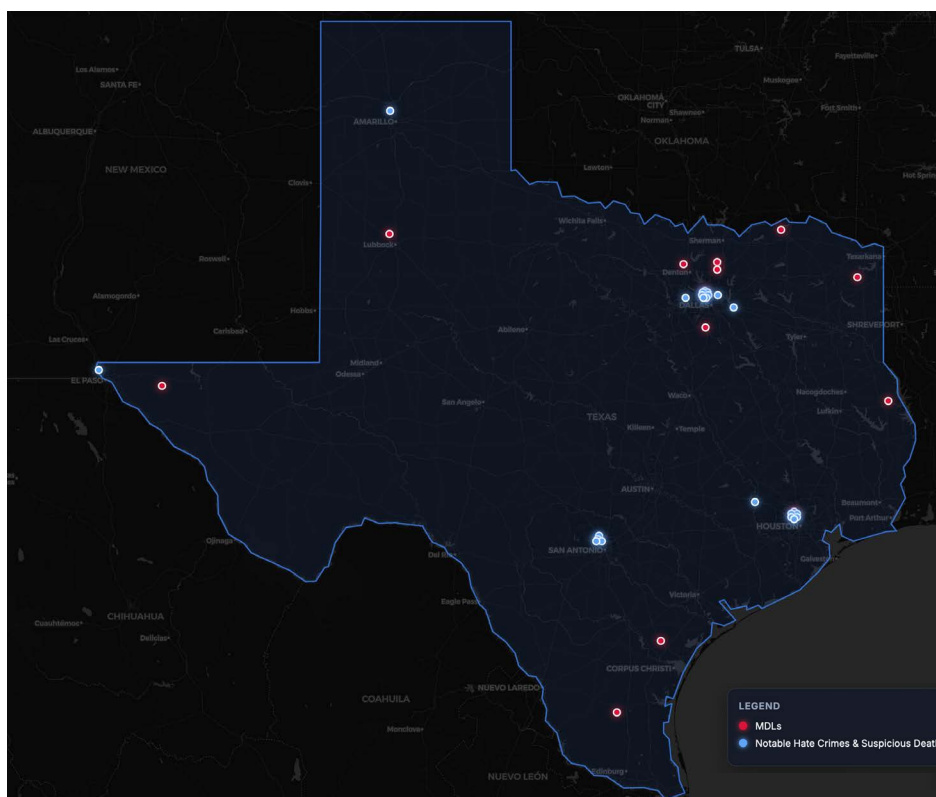
However, lynchings were not exclusive to African-Americans as Mexican-Americans in particular have historically faced racial violence in Texas. Mexican-Americans were also targeted in a brutal campaign of extrajudicial violence, especially during the period from 1910 to 1920, known as *La Matanza*. During this time, at least 100 lynchings

and countless other forms of violence, including massacres and so-called “disappearances,” occurred in Texas, with estimates of total Mexican and Tejano deaths ranging from 300 to 5,000.¹⁹ One of the most egregious acts was the Porvenir Massacre of January 28, 1918, in which 15 unarmed Mexican-American men and boys were forcibly removed by Texas Rangers, U.S. soldiers, and vigilante ranchers, then executed and falsely accused of criminal activity.²⁰ Investigations later confirmed they were innocent, but no one was ever held accountable. These findings underscore that lynching and racial violence in Texas cannot be reduced to mere numbers: they reflect long-term, systemic terror and invisibilization.

MODERN-DAY LYNCHING CASES IN TEXAS

13
SUSPECTED MDLS

22
HATE CRIMES OR
SUSPICIOUS DEATHS



¹⁸ NY Times. 1923. “57 Lynchings in Year 1922; Texas Leads with 18.” The New York Times, January 1, 1923. <https://www.nytimes.com/1923/01/01/archives/57-lynchings-in-year-1922-texas-leads-with-18.html>.

¹⁹ Monica Muñoz Martinez. 2018. *The Injustice Never Leaves You: Anti-Mexican Violence in Texas*. Cambridge, Massachusetts Harvard University Press.

²⁰ Monica Martinez, 1996. “TSHA | Porvenir Massacre.” www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/porvenir-massacre.

Texas has long been a focal point of racial violence in the United States, with its legacy of lynching leaving an indelible mark on the present. The modern era has not seen this violence disappear; rather, it has evolved. Through the framework developed by JULIAN several recent Texas deaths fit the criteria for MDLs and several more are suspected.

There have been at least 13 suspected MDLs in Texas since the year 2000 and at least 22 notable hate crimes or suspicious deaths. Four of the suspected MDLs were by hanging while others were by drowning, dragging, or other means. Two particularly illustrative cases—Sandra Bland (2015) and Marvin D. Scott III (2021)—highlight the persistent convergence of state violence, racial bias, and institutional neglect. Each of these cases involves a victim whose death occurred under suspicious circumstances while in custody or under state supervision, and whose cause of death was quickly ruled a suicide or natural causes despite strong community suspicion and evidence of potential misconduct.



1. MICHAEL LYNCH (AKA BRONSON RALPH) – LUBBOCK, TX (MAY 2025)

In May 2025, Michael Lynch was found hanging at his school in Lubbock, Texas. Michael reportedly faced persistent harassment from a group of white

men in Snyder, Texas—a threat so intense that he uprooted his life and moved to Lubbock in search of safety and a fresh start. Not long afterward, his family was told that he had died by suicide and that he had left a suicide note. When they asked to see the note and obtain full details from the medical examiner, those requests were refused.

Later they discovered that Michael’s body had already been released to a funeral home—and when the family saw him, they noticed lacerations on his ear and other wounds that did not comport with the official suicide narrative.

2. UNNAMED MEXICAN MIGRANT – BROOKS COUNTY, TX (OCTOBER 2021)

In a harrowing scene that echoes the worst of South Texas’s borderland tragedies, Border Patrol agents in early October 2021 discovered a severely decomposed body in a wooded patch on a ranch in Brooks County—just an hour north of McAllen and the Mexican border. The body was suspended by a noose fashioned from a shirt and hung from a branch of a rugged oak tree. His head dangled to one side, and his feet were missing—likely consumed by wildlife. Nearby lay neatly folded clothing and identity cards belonging to a Mexican man.²¹ Sheriff’s deputies confirmed they had identified the man, described as being in his twenties, and had notified Mexican consular officials. They declined to release his name until next of kin in Mexico had been informed.²²

News of the discovery sparked condemnation and calls for accountability. San Antonio Congressman Joaquín Castro condemned the case, calling it “a lynching of a Mexican man in South Texas.” He also urged an FBI investigation—if one had yet to begin.²³

²¹ Pablo De La Rosa. 2021. “Brooks County Sheriff Looks to Protect Migrant Lives Days after a Man Was Found Hanging from a Tree.” TPR. October 8, 2021. <https://www.tpr.org/border-immigration/2021-10-08/migrant-hanging-brooks-county-investigation>.

²² Xander Landen. 2021. “Remains of Migrant Found Hanging from Tree 80 Miles from Border in Texas.” Newsweek. October 2021. <https://www.newsweek.com/remains-migrant-found-hanging-tree-80-miles-border-texas-1634852>.

²³ De La Rosa. 2021.



3. ALFRED WRIGHT – SABINE COUNTY, TX (NOVEMBER 25, 2013)

Alfred Wright, age 28, a physical therapist and father from Jasper, Texas, was driving in rural Sabine County, Texas, when his truck broke down.²⁴ He called his wife and then his in-laws for assistance.²⁵ According to a store clerk, after exiting his vehicle, he was seen running toward town, breathing heavily and sounding distressed. His wallet, watch, and ID were later found abandoned in a nearby field, tangled in barbed wire.²⁶

Wright's body was located 18 to 19 days later on November 25, 2013 by a volunteer search party in a wooded area of Sabine County—remarkably, in terrain that had been previously searched by law enforcement. The official autopsy ruled his death accidental, attributing it to a toxic combination of cocaine and methamphetamine. However, Wright's family rejected that conclusion. They commissioned an independent autopsy which reported trauma to his head and neck, a slashed throat, and other signs inconsistent with a simple overdose.²⁷ The official report claimed there were no signs of trauma, and asserted that missing lips, eyes, tongue, teeth and fingernails

were the result of decomposition, scavenging by animals or insects.²⁸ In August 2014, a man named Shane Dwayne Hadnot was indicted on federal charges tied to the events surrounding Wright's death, including distribution of cocaine that allegedly contributed to Wright's overdose.²⁹ Hadnot later pled guilty to federal drug offenses. The plea deal centered on his role in supplying narcotics; no homicide charge was ever brought to trial.³⁰ However, the Wright family and many observers view Hadnot's plea as a "scapegoat" outcome. They point to serious flaws in the local investigation: the sheriff's department's early decisions, the halting of searches, the handling of evidence, and how quickly the overdose narrative was adopted.³¹

In sum, while authorities maintain that Alfred Wright's death was an accidental drug overdose, many unanswered anomalies persist: the traumatic injuries alleged by private pathologists, the proximity of his body to "searched" areas, the refusal by officials to pursue homicide charges, and deep mistrust from the family and community about how the case was handled. The tension between the official narrative and the family's convictions has made Wright's story a potent symbol of possible racial injustice in criminal investigations.

4. CLARENCE OTIS COLE – LINDEN, TX (2001)

Clarence Otis Cole, a 43-year-old Black man from Linden, Texas, was found dead on April 2, 2001. His body was discovered hanging from a pine tree by an extension cord in a rural area of Cass County. Nearby, authorities found a

²⁴ KTRE. 2014. "Sabine County Sheriff Breaks Silence on Alfred Wright Investigation." <https://www.ktre.com>. KTRE. August 22, 2014. <https://www.ktre.com/story/26342119/sabine-county-sheriff-breaks-silence-on-alfred-wright-investigation/>.

²⁵ ABC News. 2014. "Family Searching for Answers after Man's Mysterious Death." ABC News. February 5, 2014. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/family-searching-answers-mans-mysterious-death/story?id=22373567>.

²⁶ ABC News, 2014.

²⁷ Patrick Michels. 2014. "Fight for Wright." The Texas Observer. March 25, 2014. <https://www.texasobserver.org/alfred-wright-jasper-east-texas-mystery/>.

²⁸ Michels, 2014.

²⁹ "Jasper County Man Guilty of Distributing Cocaine." 2015. Justice.gov. March 12, 2015. <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edtx/pr/jasper-county-man-guilty-distributing-cocaine>.

³⁰ Justice.gov, 2015.

³¹ Ibid.

³² "State Briefs." 2001. Chron. August 24, 2001. <https://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/article/state-briefs-2032871.php>.

suicide note in his vehicle, and the Cass County Sheriff's Department, Texas Rangers, and the FBI concluded that his death was a suicide.³³ However, Cole's family and some community members questioned this conclusion.³³ They noted that Cole had no history of depression, was a Sunday school teacher, and had plans for the future, including a daughter and an impending graduation. They also questioned the suicide note's authenticity, saying that it looked nothing like Cole's handwriting. His mother, Azzie Lee Cole, suspected foul play, possibly related to his interracial relationship with a white woman.³⁴

The case drew national attention, with some viewing it as a modern-day lynching. State Representative Ron Wilson and others called for a federal investigation into the circumstances surrounding Cole's death.³⁵ Despite the official ruling, the questions surrounding Clarence Otis Cole's death remain a point of contention in Linden, Texas, highlighting ongoing concerns about racial tensions and justice in the region.



5. BRANDON MCCLELLAND – LAMAR COUNTY, TX (2008)

Brandon McClelland, a 24-year-old Black man from Paris, Texas, was found dead on September 16, 2008, in a rural area of Lamar County. His

body had been dragged beneath a pickup truck for approximately 40 feet, resulting in severe injuries. McClelland had been with two white men, Shannon Finley and Charles Ryan Crostley, earlier that evening. Witnesses reported that the trio had argued over who was sober enough to drive after a late-night beer run to Oklahoma. According to affidavits, Finley allegedly ran over McClelland and dragged him under the truck.

The case drew national attention due to its similarities to the 1998 murder of James Byrd Jr. in Jasper, Texas. Activists and McClelland's family suspected racial motives, especially given Finley's alleged ties to white supremacist groups.³⁶

In June 2009, murder charges against Finley and Crostley were dropped due to insufficient evidence, leading to public outcry. The Lamar County District Attorney's Office cited a lack of eyewitnesses and conflicting statements, including one from a gravel truck driver who suggested he might have accidentally run over McClelland.³⁷

Following the dismissal, civil rights activists called for a federal investigation, alleging mishandling of the case and potential racial bias. Despite the official ruling, many, including McClelland's mother, believed justice had not been served, and the case remains a point of contention in Paris, Texas.

³³ State Briefs, 2001.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Howard Witt. 2009. "Was His Death a Hate Crime?" The Texas Observer. June 10, 2009. https://www.texasobserver.org/was_his_death_a_hate_crime/.

³⁷ "Charges Dropped in Texas Dragging Death." 2009. Cbsnews.com. June 5, 2009. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/charges-dropped-in-texas-dragging-death>.



6. GLORIA BAMBO – COLLIN COUNTY, TX (JULY 2020)

On July 12, 2020, 20-year-old Gloria Bambo, a South African citizen residing in McKinney, Texas, was found hanging in the garage of her home, which she shared with a 19-year-old white male roommate. The McKinney Police Department ruled her death a suicide after a preliminary investigation, noting that the roommate had fully cooperated and that no evidence contradicted the initial findings.³⁸

However, questions arose due to the fact that Bambo had been reported missing on July 9, yet her body was discovered three days later in a space that had been occupied during that period.³⁹ The case has been viewed by some as part of the broader pattern of incidents involving Black individuals found hanging, leading to calls for increased scrutiny and accountability in such investigations.⁴⁰



7. LERMONT STOWERS-JONES – DENTON COUNTY, TX (2018)

Lermont Stowers-Jones, a 17-year-old senior at Denton High School, was found dead on November 20, 2018, near the Old Alton Bridge in Denton County, Texas. The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) ruled his death an accidental drowning, concluding that he had jumped into Hickory Creek from the bridge and did not resurface.⁴¹

However, his family and supporters have raised concerns about the investigation's thoroughness and transparency. They point to several inconsistencies, including conflicting witness statements, delayed communication from authorities, and a lack of engagement with the family during the investigation. Additionally, the family has highlighted the bridge's historical association with racial violence, which has fueled suspicions of foul play.⁴² In response, the family has initiated an independent investigation and advocacy efforts under the "Justice for Mont" campaign, aiming to uncover the truth behind Lermont's death and ensure accountability.⁴³

³⁸ "McKinney Police Department" 2025. Facebook.com. 2025. <https://www.facebook.com/mckinneypolice/posts/the-mckinney-police-department-typically-does-not-comment-on-suicides-including-/1341987116010995/>.

³⁹ Cedric Thornton. 2020. "20-Year-Old Texas Woman Found Hanging in Garage of White Roommate." Black Enterprise. July 24, 2020. <https://www.blackenterprise.com/20-year-old-texas-woman-gloria-bambo-found-hanging/>.

⁴⁰ Stephon Johnson. 2020. "Another Black Person Found Hanged, Community's Skeptical of Authorities Conclusions." New York Amsterdam News. July 30, 2020. <https://amsterdamnews.com/news/2020/07/30/another-black-person-found-hanged-communitys-skept/>.

⁴¹ FOX. 2018. "Officials: Denton Teen Died after Jumping into Creek." FOX 4 News Dallas-Fort Worth. FOX 4 Dallas-Fort Worth. November 26, 2018. <https://www.fox4news.com/news/officials-denton-teen-died-after-jumping-into-creek>.

⁴² Rachel Card. 2019. "Parents of Drowned Teenager Dissatisfied with Investigation." THE DENTONITE. April 8, 2019. <https://www.thedentonite.com/culture/parents-of-drowned-teenager-dissatisfied-with-investigation>.

⁴³ "Justice for Mont." 2025. Justice for Mont. 2025. <https://justiceformont.com>.

Lermont was remembered as a talented musician and a compassionate individual who was active in his church and aspired to a career in law enforcement. His family continues to seek justice and closure regarding the circumstances of his death.⁴⁴



8. JESÚS IVÁN SEPÚLVEDA MARTÍNEZ—HUDSPETH COUNTY, TX (SEPTEMBER 27, 2022)

On September 27, 2022, 22-year-old Jesús Iván Sepúlveda Martínez, a Mexican migrant, was fatally shot near Sierra Blanca, Texas, while traveling with a group of 13 migrants. The group had stopped at a reservoir to drink water when Michael Sheppard, then 60, the warden of the West Texas Detention Center, arrived on the scene. Sheppard, accompanied by his twin brother Mark, allegedly fired a shotgun at the group, killing Sepúlveda Martínez and injuring Brenda Berenice Casias Carrillo, who was shot in the abdomen and later hospitalized.⁴⁵

The Sheppards claimed they were hunting animals and did not realize they had shot people. However, witness statements contradicted this account, with some migrants reporting that Sheppard yelled at them before firing. The Sheppards were arrested on suspicion of manslaughter but were later released on bond. Despite the serious nature of the incident,

no criminal charges have been filed against them, with three different district attorneys in El Paso opting not to pursue the case.⁴⁶

In August 2025, a federal lawsuit was settled involving LaSalle Corrections, the company that employed Sheppard. The lawsuit alleged that Sheppard acted “intentionally and knowingly” while on duty and that LaSalle Corrections was liable for his actions. The terms of the settlement were not publicly disclosed.⁴⁷

Sepúlveda Martínez had left his home in Durango, Mexico, to seek work in Austin, Texas, with plans to support his family. He was described by his family as a hardworking individual who dreamed of building a home for his wife and daughter. His tragic death has drawn attention to the treatment of migrants and raised questions about accountability and justice in such cases.⁴⁸



9. MOLLIE OLGIN—SAN PATRICIO COUNTY, TX (2012)

On June 22, 2012, 19-year-old Mollie Olgin and her 18-year-old girlfriend, Mary Kristene Chapa, were brutally attacked at Violet Andrews Park in Portland, Texas. The couple was bound, sexually assaulted, and shot in the head. Olgin was pronounced dead at the scene, while Chapa was

⁴⁴ Simone Carter. 2021. “I Want Answers”: In Denton, a Virtual Event Celebrates the Life of Late Teen.” Dallas Observer. March 4, 2021.

<https://www.dallasobserver.com/news/virtual-fundraiser-to-honor-life-of-black-teen-who-died-under-unusual-circumstances-11992063/>.

⁴⁵ Uriel J. García. 2022. “A Mexican Farmworker Crossed the Border Dreaming of Building His Family a Home. Days Later, He Was Fatally Shot in West Texas.” The Texas Tribune. October 5, 2022. <https://www.texastribune.org/2022/10/05/texas-migrant-shooting-warden-sierra-blanca>.

⁴⁶ García, 2022.

⁴⁷ Angela Kocherga. 2025. “Wrongful Death Lawsuit Settled in Shooting of Migrant near Sierra Blanca but No Criminal Charges Filed Yet.” KTEP 88.5 FM. KTEP. August 20, 2025. <https://www.ktep.org/2025-08-20/wrongful-death-lawsuit-settled-in-2022-shooting-of-migrant-near-sierra-blanca-but-no-criminal-charges-filed-yet>.

⁴⁸ García, 2022.

found unconscious but alive and later hospitalized in critical condition. Despite the severity of the attack, investigators did not initially classify it as a hate crime.⁴⁹

Chapa, who had been left with significant injuries, gradually regained consciousness and was able to assist authorities by providing a description of the assailant. Her testimony and a composite sketch led to the identification of David Malcolm Strickland as a suspect. In 2014, Strickland was arrested after an anonymous letter containing details about the crime, not previously released to the public, was sent to Chapa's father. The letter implicated Strickland and led to further investigation, including the discovery of evidence linking him to the crime scene.

In 2016, Strickland was convicted of capital murder and aggravated sexual assault. He was sentenced to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. However, in 2018, new DNA evidence brought to light the involvement of another individual, Dylan Spellman, whose DNA was found at the scene. Despite this revelation, Strickland's conviction was upheld after an appeal in 2020.

The case has drawn attention to issues of justice and accountability, particularly regarding the handling of new evidence and the potential involvement of multiple perpetrators. Chapa has since become an advocate for survivors of violence, sharing her story to raise awareness and support for others affected by similar tragedies.



10. MARVIN D. SCOTT III – COLLIN COUNTY, TX (2021)

Marvin David Scott III was a 26-year-old Black man from Frisco, Texas. He was described by his family as a gentle, artistic individual who struggled with schizophrenia.⁵⁰ On March 14, 2021, Scott was arrested for possessing less than two ounces of marijuana. Instead of being taken to a hospital for mental health evaluation—as his family believed was appropriate – Scott was booked into the Collin County Jail. He died in custody at the jail that evening in McKinney, Texas.⁵¹

Surveillance footage reportedly showed Scott restrained to a bed, pepper-sprayed, and fitted with a spit hood while in a mental health crisis. He was later found unresponsive and pronounced dead. The medical examiner initially listed the cause of death as “fatal acute stress response in an individual with schizophrenia during restraint,” which the county labeled “natural causes.” Seven jailers were fired, but no indictments were issued after a grand jury reviewed the case.⁵²

The discriminatory motive lies in the fact that Scott's death occurred within a carceral system

⁴⁹ Ryan Devereaux. 2012. “Shooting of Lesbian Teen Couple Leaves Texas Town Searching for Answers.” *The Guardian*. The Guardian. June 28, 2012. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jun/28/texas-lesbian-teenagers-shot-crime?>

⁵⁰ Jacey Fortin. 2021. “Marvin Scott's Family Holds Nightly Jail Protests over His Death.” *The New York Times*, April 6, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/06/us/marvin-scott-protests-texas.html>.

⁵¹ Sophia Beausoleil. 2021. “Scott's Family Wants Answers after In-Custody Death at Collin County Jail.” *NBC 5 Dallas-Fort Worth*. March 23, 2021. <https://www.nbcdfw.com/news/local/family-of-man-who-died-while-in-custody-at-the-collin-county-jail-speaks-out/2586931/>.

⁵² Jolie McCullough. 2021. “He Died in Jail Hours after a Minor Pot Arrest. Now 7 Corrections Officers Have Been Fired.” *The Texas Tribune*. April 2, 2021. <https://www.texastribune.org/2021/04/02/texas-marvin-scott-death-collin-county>.

known to disproportionately harm Black people, especially those with mental illness. There were multiple perpetrators – at least seven officers were involved in the fatal restraint, and there was a lack of fair trial or due process because Scott died before any arraignment or trial could take place. There are also signs of a cover-up. Official reports emphasized “no foul play” and “natural causes,” despite footage of brutal restraint and clear neglect of Scott’s mental health condition (Drug Policy Alliance, 2021). The lack of criminal charges and the suppression of full video evidence suggest a systemic failure to value Black life, especially when disability intersects with race.

11. JANE DOE – ELLIS COUNTY, TX (2012)

In Ellis County, Texas, on July 23, 2012, the decomposed body of an African-American woman was discovered in a secluded, wooded area. The victim, estimated to be around 5’4” tall and weighing approximately 115 pounds, was found wearing a black or dark gray tank top, blue jean shorts, and white Nike tennis shoes with purple laces. Investigators believe she may have been missing since July 17, 2012.⁵³

The Ellis County Sheriff’s Office released a forensic artist’s rendering of the woman, along with photographs of tattoo markings on her body, in an effort to identify her.⁵⁴ Sheriff’s Department Investigator Joe Fitzgerald reported that the victim had connections to Dallas and Irving and was likely a member of the LGBTQIA+ community. Trauma evidence indicated she was murdered elsewhere and then transported to the rural area where she was found. Investigator Fitzgerald remarked, “Someone killed her and threw her to the side of the road.”⁵⁵

The absence of a missing persons report matching the victim’s description has raised concerns among activists. C.D. Kirven, a board member of GetEQUAL Texas, stated, “If this was a lesbian woman, this makes a third lesbian woman of color brutally attacked in Texas within a month’s time. As a member of the LGBT community and a woman of color, this is not just an attack on this woman but on me and others in my community.”⁵⁶

GetEQUAL Texas has launched a campaign to identify the victim and seek justice for her. They are urging anyone with information to come forward and assist in bringing those responsible to justice.⁵⁷ The victim’s likely sexual orientation, the fact that the murderer left the body for public display as if to send a message, and the fact that she was murdered during a pattern of murders of LGBTQIA+ individuals, suggests that this case could be a modern-day lynching.



12. MUHLAYSIA BOOKER – DALLAS, TX (MAY 2019)

Muhlaysia Booker was a Black transgender woman in Dallas, Texas, born January 14, 1997, and died May 18, 2019. About a month before her death (April 12, 2019) she was involved in a minor car accident at a Dallas apartment complex. Following the accident, she was assaulted by a

⁵³ “Ellis County Sheriff Seeks ‘Jane Doe’ Ibid.” 2012. Cbsnews.com. July 30, 2012. <https://www.cbsnews.com/texas/news/ellis-county-sheriff-seeks-jane-doe-id>.

⁵⁴ “Murdered African-American Woman Remains Unidentified–Was She Lesbian?” 2012. Unfinished Lives. August 2012. <https://unfinishedlivesblog.com/2012/08/01/murdered-african-american-woman-remains-unidentified-was-she-lesbian>

⁵⁵ Unfinished Lives, 2012.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

crowd of people. The video of the assault went viral. On the morning of May 18, 2019, police found her body in the street in East Dallas (in the 7200 block of Valley Glen Drive) with a gunshot wound.⁵⁸ In June 2019, the suspect Kendrell Lavar Lyles was arrested in connection with her killing (as well as the murders of others). In November 2023 he pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 48 years in prison.⁵⁹ Some questions remain about whether there were other perpetrators or co-conspirators. Booker's family and community advocates believe there may have been more involved.⁶⁰



13. SHANTE THOMPSON – HOUSTON, TEXAS (APRIL 10, 2016)

On April 10, 2016, Shante Thompson – described as a 34-year-old Black transgender woman – was found fatally attacked along a roadway in Midtown Houston (Dennis Street, near Fannin and McGowen).⁶¹ At the scene was also her friend Willie Sims (age 33). Witnesses and police report that a group of up to eight people approached

the two; the assailants reportedly used blunt instruments (crowbars or tire irons) to beat them, then shot them. Both Thompson and Sims died at the scene.⁶² The violence was sudden and brutal: multiple assailants, weapons, beating first – then shooting. One witness recalled an initial barrage of bullets fired in the air, apparently as a warning, before the fatal shots.⁶³ Police later arrested Tariq Lackings (age 23 at time of arrest) and charged him with the murders of Thompson and Sims.⁶⁴

Lackings was initially charged with capital murder, but after a 2018 trial, he accepted a plea deal and was sentenced to 12 years in prison for Thompson's death. Prosecutors reportedly dropped charges related to Sims's killing as part of the deal.⁶⁵ Ultimately, the conviction for Thompson's killing did not include a hate crime enhancement. Authorities reportedly did not make public that the crime was prosecuted as motivated by bias.⁶⁶

The brutal nature of the attack – group violence, beating, stabbing or blunt-force trauma, then shooting – suggests more than a random crime of opportunity. Community members, advocates, and some witnesses argued that transphobia and prejudice played a role.⁶⁷ The case shows both the possibility of legal accountability (a suspect was arrested and convicted) and the limits of justice when bias is involved: even with a conviction, the failure to treat or acknowledge the killing explicitly as a hate crime reflects systemic barriers to recognition, prosecution, and protection for transgender victims.

⁵⁸ "Remembering Our Dead - Muhlaysia Booker (18 May 2019)." 2019. Remembering Our Dead. 2019. https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/reports/2019/05/18/muhlaysia-booker_dallas-texas-usa_9198acdd.

⁵⁹ K.C. Baker, 2019. "Man Sentenced to 48 Years for Murdering Transgender Woman in 2019." People.com. 2019. <https://people.com/man-sentenced-48-years-murdering-transgender-woman-2019-8399652/>

⁶⁰ Candace Sweat. 2023. "Kendrell Lyles Pleads Guilty to Murder of Transgender Woman Muhlaysia Booker." NBC 5 Dallas-Fort Worth. November 6, 2023. <https://www.nbcdfw.com/news/local/trans-advocate-remembers-muhlaysia-booker-four-years-later/3379293/>.

⁶¹ Drew Karedes. 2016. "2 Beaten, Fatally Shot along Midtown Roadway." Khou.com. KHOU. April 11, 2016. <https://www.khou.com/article/news/crime/2-beaten-fatally-shot-along-midtown-roadway/285-128331643>.

⁶² Karedes, 2016.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ "Arrest in Double Murder of Texas Man, Transgender Woman." Cbsnews.com. April 21, 2016. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/suspect-in-murder-of-houston-transgender-woman-man-arrested/>.

⁶⁵ Brian Rogers. 2018. "Surprise Plea Deal in Midtown Houston Murder of Transgender Woman." Chron. August 30, 2018. <https://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Surprise-plea-deal-in-Midtown-Houston-murder-of-13194347.php>.

⁶⁶ Rogers, 2018. "Houston Trial Begins in Slaying of Midtown Transgender Woman, Friend." Chron. August 28, 2018. <https://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Houston-trial-begins-in-slaying-of-midtown-13186514.php>.

⁶⁷ Karedes, 2016.

A dark, red-tinted photograph of a person sitting at a desk. The person is wearing a light-colored shirt and is looking down at a desk. On the desk, there is a large stack of papers or documents. The background is dark and out of focus.

NOTABLE HATE CRIMES AND SUSPICIOUS DEATHS POST-2000

Show me, in history, where
all lives matter. Show me, in
history, where there has been
liberty and justice for all.

- SANDRA BLAND



1. FELITA BAILEY – AMARILLO, TX (AUGUST 2024)

Felita Bailey spent Labor Day weekend in Amarillo with her cousins – but when dawn broke, her life was gone. The leading suspect – a white man in his early 20s – initially denied carrying a firearm at the party where she was shot. That lie stood until police confronted him with video proof. He was arrested and charged with her murder. But then, in a move that stunned the Bailey family, he was released.

Now police assert he discharged a weapon that night – but insist he did not fire the fatal shot. The family sees it differently. In a city long haunted by its legacy as a “sundown town,” they allege a systematic cover-up by local law enforcement.⁶⁸



2. AARON MARTINEZ – KAUFMAN COUNTY, TX (MAY 1, 2023)

On May 1, 2023, Aaron Martinez, a 35-year-old Hispanic man and horse rancher from Forney, Texas, was fatally shot by his neighbor, Trevor McEuen. McEuen allegedly made racially charged remarks to Martinez, stating that “Hispanics aren’t welcome in Kaufman County.” Prior to the incident, Martinez had reported McEuen for threatening behavior, including pointing a gun at him and firing at his property. Despite these reports, McEuen was initially released on bond after his arrest in May 2023. However, he violated bond conditions by posting photos of Martinez and his relatives on social media and making threats, leading to his re-arrest in November 2023. In May 2025, McEuen removed his court-ordered ankle monitor and fled, prompting a month-long manhunt. He was eventually captured in June 2025 during a SWAT standoff at his grandparents’ home. McEuen faces charges including capital murder, four counts of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, and arson. The trial is currently underway in Kaufman County, with the victim’s family advocating for the case to be treated as a hate crime.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Sam Judy 2025. “‘In Amarillo, Black Women Die:’ the Unresolved Murder of Felita Bailey.” The Barbed Wire. June 18, 2025. <https://thebarbedwire.com/2025/06/18/murder-amarillo-felita-bailey/>.

⁶⁹ Julia Falcon, and Amelia Mugavero. 2025. “Trial for Trevor McEuen, Kaufman County Man Accused of Murder and Who Fled before First Trial Date, Begins Monday.” Cbsnews.com. October 20, 2025. <https://www.cbsnews.com/texas/news/trial-trevor-mceuen-kaufman-county-murder-fled/>.

◀ Sandra Bland stands before a desk at the Waller County Jail in Hempstead, Texas, in this undated image made from video provided by the Waller County Sheriff’s Department. ASSOCIATED PRESS



3. JARVIS MCINTRYE - SAN ANTONIO, TX (2024)

On or around June 14, 2024, police discovered a body on the northeast side of San Antonio in a wooded area off the 1200 block of Holbrook Road. The discovery came days after a 911 call was made from that same location at 1:36 p.m. on June 9. The caller, whose voice was filled with panic, stated that he was being chased by someone with a rifle but provided limited details on his whereabouts. When police arrived at the scene, they found no sign of the caller or any witnesses, and at that time, detectives did not suspect foul play.⁷⁰ Five days later, the body of missing Navy Veteran Jarvis McIntyre was found, and his family identified him. McIntyre's mother, Monikki Williams Tippet, recounted that she was informed by San Antonio police about the 911 call and was told McIntyre had reportedly called his pursuer a "racist."⁷¹



4. JONATHAN JOSS – BEXAR COUNTY, TX (JUNE 1, 2025)

On June 1, 2025, Jonathan Joss, a 59-year-old actor renowned for voicing John Redcorn in *King of the Hill* and portraying Chief Ken Hotate in *Parks and Recreation*, was fatally shot outside his San Antonio home. The incident occurred during a confrontation with his neighbor, Sigfredo Ceja Alvarez, who had a history of disputes with Joss and his husband, Tristan Kern de Gonzales. According to de Gonzales, the assailant shouted homophobic slurs before opening fire. De Gonzales also stated that Joss pushed him out of the line of fire, saving his life.⁷²

Alvarez was arrested and charged with murder. While police initially found no evidence to suggest the shooting was a hate crime, they later acknowledged that the possibility was part of the ongoing investigation.⁷³

Joss, of Comanche and White Mountain Apache descent, had recently married de Gonzales on Valentine's Day.

⁷⁰ Jennifer Flores, and Warren Brown. 2024. "Body Found in San Antonio Park Identified as Jarvis McIntyre." MySA. June 15, 2024. <https://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local/article/jarvis-mcintyre-body-found-san-antonio-19516271.php>.

⁷ Rania Kaur. 2024. "Body Found in Northeast San Antonio Is Missing Navy Veteran from St. Louis, Medical Examiner Says." Kens5.com. KENS. June 14, 2024. <https://www.kens5.com/article/news/local/family-searches-for-missing-navy-veteran-jarvis-mcintyre-st-louis-san-antonio-texas/273-9dbc61a8-13fd-4d22-87bc-0721e5730145>.

⁷² Juan A. Lozano. 2025. "‘King of the Hill’ Voice Actor Killed in Texas Shooting." AP News. June 2, 2025. <https://apnews.com/article/king-of-hill-actor-fatally-shot-joss-35845e25be4a4b42ea9c9cddb2a2a66e8>.

⁷³ Lozano, 2025.



5. SANDRA BLAND – WALLER COUNTY, TX (2015)

Sandra Annette Bland was a 28-year-old Black woman from Chicago, Illinois, visiting Texas to start a new job at her alma mater, Prairie View A&M University.⁷⁴ On July 10, 2015, Bland was pulled over in Waller County by State Trooper Brian Encinia for failing to signal a lane change. What began as a minor traffic stop quickly escalated when the officer forcibly removed her from her vehicle and arrested her for allegedly assaulting a public servant.⁷⁵ Bland was booked into the Waller County Jail that evening. She was found dead in her cell on July 13, 2015.

Authorities ruled her death a suicide by hanging using a plastic trash bag. However, family members, activists, and legal experts questioned the ruling due to jail procedural failures, Sandra's positive outlook about her new job, and inconsistencies in intake documentation. Despite public outrage, a grand jury declined to indict anyone for her death. A wrongful death lawsuit later resulted in a \$1.9 million settlement.⁷⁶

Bland's death catalyzed the national #SayHerName movement, as highlighted by Workers.org.⁷⁷ This led to the passage of the Sandra Bland Act in Texas, which sought to reform jail mental health protocols – but fell short of addressing systemic policing violence.⁷⁸



6. EL PASO WAL-MART MASS SHOOTING (2019)

This is both a case of hate crimes and domestic terrorism. On August 3, 2019, at about 10:38 a.m. MDT, a gunman entered the Walmart Supercenter – Cielo Vista Mall in El Paso, Texas. The shooter was identified as Patrick Wood Crusius, age 21 at the time of the attack. Crusius travelled from Allen (near Dallas, Texas) to El Paso – approximately 600+ miles – specifically to carry out the attack.⁷⁹ He used a semi-automatic rifle (a WASR-10 variant) and fired into the store and parking lot during a busy shopping period. The death toll was 23 people killed and 22 wounded in the shooting.⁸⁰ Many of the victims were Hispanic or Latino; the attack has been described as the deadliest anti-Latino massacre in U.S. history. Crusius reportedly published a manifesto shortly before the attack in which he explicitly stated hatred of Hispanics/Latinos and anti-immigrant beliefs.

Crusius surrendered to law enforcement at the scene (he identified himself as the shooter) and was arrested.⁸¹ On the federal level, he faced 90 federal charges, including hate crimes resulting in death, use of a firearm to commit murder, and hate crimes involving attempted murder. On July 7, 2023, Crusius was sentenced in federal court to 90 consecutive life sentences without the

⁷⁴ ABC News. 2015. "Sandra Bland's Family Orders Independent Autopsy after Alleged Jail Suicide." ABC News. July 19, 2015. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/sandra-blands-family-orders-independent-autopsy-jail-suicide/story?id=32552928>.

⁷⁵ Tom Dart. 2015. "Sandra Bland Dashcam Video Shows Officer Threatened: 'I Will Light You Up.'" The Guardian. The Guardian. July 22, 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/jul/21/sandra-bland-dashcam-video-arrest-released>.

⁷⁶ Dart, 2015.

⁷⁷ Rubac, Gloria. 2025. "Ten Years after Her Lynching – Sandra Bland: Still 'Say Her Name!'" Workers World. July 11, 2025. <https://www.workers.org/2025/07/86811/>.

possibility of parole.⁸² On the state level, in April 2025, he pleaded guilty to state charges of capital murder and aggravated assault, and was sentenced to life in prison without parole.⁸³

The attack highlighted the lethal convergence of white-supremacist ideology, anti-immigrant rhetoric, and easily accessible firearms. It forced renewed attention on mass shootings motivated by hate and the concept of domestic terrorism. The case galvanized activism and policy discussions around gun control, hate crime enforcement, and the role of extremist online communities. Last, for the city of El Paso and for U.S. border-communities, it underscored vulnerabilities tied to racialized narratives of “immigration” and “invasion.”

The El Paso gunman posted a brief, four-page manifesto titled *“The Inconvenient Truth.”* Reflecting the way far-right extremists often reference one another, the very first line expressed admiration for the Christ church mass shooter and claimed that his own attack was meant as retaliation against what he called a “Hispanic invasion of Texas.” Crusius portrayed his actions as defensive, insisting, “They are the aggressors, not me. I am only protecting my country from cultural and ethnic replacement caused by an invasion.” He also asserted that his motives were not “personal,” while implying that the Christ church attack had influenced him: “In fact, the

Hispanic community was not my target until I read [Tarrant’s manifesto] *“The Great Replacement.”* His wording suggests he had already been contemplating violence, but that Tarrant’s writing provided him with a justification and framework.

Crusius believed that the Republican Party’s anti-immigrant rhetoric, combined with the nation’s changing demography, meant that the “ever increasing Hispanic population” would flock to the Democrats: “America will soon become a one party-state. The Democrat party will own America and they know it.”⁸⁴



7. KIÉR LAPRÍ KARTIER SOLOMON – ARLINGTON, TX (SEPTEMBER 30, 2021)

Kiér was a 21-year-old Black transgender woman residing in the Dallas area.⁸⁵ On September 30, 2021, she was found shot inside her vehicle parked at an apartment complex in Arlington, Texas (1100 block of Stonetrail Road) around 9:30 p.m.⁸⁶

⁷⁸ Johnathan Silver. 2017. “Texas Gov. Abbott Signs ‘Sandra Bland Act’ into Law.” The Texas Tribune. June 15, 2017. <https://www.texastribune.org/2017/06/15/texas-gov-greg-abbott-signs-sandra-bland-act-law/>.

⁷⁹ U.S. Department of Justice. 2023. “Texas Man Sentenced to 90 Consecutive Life Sentences for 2019 Mass Shooting at Walmart in El Paso, Texas, Killing 23 People and Injuring 22 Others.” Justice.gov. July 7, 2023. <https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/texas-man-sentenced-90-consecutive-life-sentences-2019-mass-shooting-walmart-el-paso-texas>.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Hillhouse, 2019.

⁸² U.S. Department of Justice. 2023.

⁸³ Associated Press. “Man Who Killed 23 People in Racist Attack at Walmart in El Paso Pleads Guilty to Capital Murder.” Kvue.com, KVUE, 21 Apr. 2025, www.kvue.com/article/news/local/texas/el-paso-walmart-shooter-guilty-capital-murder/269-bf6671f0-367c-4e74-8a08-d2997abcacaa.

⁸⁴ Kristina Hummel. 2019. “The El Paso Terrorist Attack: The Chain Reaction of Global Right-Wing Terror.”

⁸⁵ Violet Lhant. 2021. “HRC Mourns Kiér Laprí Kartier, Black Transgender Woman Killed in Arlington, Texas.” Human Rights Campaign. October 4, 2021. <https://www.hrc.org/news/hrc-mourns-ki%C3%A9r-lapri%C3%AD-kartier-black-transgender-woman-killed-in-arlington-texas>.

⁸⁶ Krista Summerville. 2025. “Arlington Police Arrest, Charge Suspect in 2021 Murder of Transgender Woman.” Wfaa.com. WFAA. October 15, 2025. <https://www.wfaa.com/article/news/crime/arlington-police-arrest-suspect-2021-murder-transgender-woman-kier-kartier/287-c75682b2-41ab-4712-aa61-013f82e6a1ff>.

She was taken to a hospital where she died from her injuries.⁸⁷ Authorities reported that she did *not* have any known connection to that apartment complex, which raised additional questions about why she was there.⁸⁸

Police charged Arthur Morris with her murder. According to reports from Fox4, investigators recovered Solomon's cellphone from her vehicle during the early stages of the investigation. Data from the device revealed that she had been communicating with an unidentified individual through a mobile app and had arranged to meet that person at the site where her body was later discovered.⁸⁹

Detectives later determined that the phone number used to contact Solomon was a temporary number generated by the app. Further inquiry uncovered that, two weeks earlier, another person had received messages from a user on the same app who had also requested a meeting at the identical location.⁹⁰ Police found Morris to be a "person of interest" in that earlier encounter, as well, which signals that he was meeting and luring specific people to a location in order to harm them. This makes it more likely that the motive was Solomon's identity.

Her death is part of a larger, alarming pattern of violence against transgender and gender non-conforming people in the United States – especially Black trans women. When her case

was reported, it was cited as *at least* the 38th fatal violent act against a trans or gender-non-conforming person in 2021.⁹¹



8. TIFFANY THOMAS – DALLAS, TX (APRIL 2021)

On April 24, 2021, Tiffany Thomas, a 38-year-old Black person, was found fatally shot outside a car wash at 7171 American Way in the Red Bird area of Dallas.⁹² A passerby flagged down a police sergeant around 1:45 a.m., who found Thomas laying on the ground with a gunshot wound; Dallas Fire & Rescue pronounced Thomas dead at the scene.⁹³ The victim was identified in the media and by advocacy groups as a Black transgender woman; however, family members reportedly stated that the victim did not identify as transgender.⁹⁴ At the time of reporting, the case was under investigation by the Dallas Police Department Homicide Unit, with no public announcement of an arrest.⁹⁵

⁸⁷ "Remembering Our Dead - Kiér Lapri Kartier (30 Sep 2021)." 2021. Remembering Our Dead. 2021. https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/reports/2021/09/30/kiér-lapri-kartier-arlington-texas-usa_e83abeff.

⁸⁸ Remembering Our Dead, 2021.

⁸⁹ Amber Kite. 2025. "Arlington Police Make Arrest in 2021 Murder of Transgender Woman." FOX 4 News Dallas-Fort Worth. FOX 4 Dallas-Fort Worth. October 16, 2025. <https://www.fox4news.com/news/arlington-police-make-arrest-2021-murder-transgender-woman>.

⁹⁰ Tammye. 2025. "Suspect Charged in 2021 Murder of Trans Woman in Arlington." Dallas Voice. October 19, 2025. <https://dallasvoice.com/suspect-charged-in-2021-murder-of-trans-woman-in-arlington/>.

⁹¹ Vic Parsons. 2021. "Kiér Lapri Kartier, a 21-Year-Old Black Trans Woman, Shot Dead in Texas." PinkNews | Latest Lesbian, Gay, Bi and Trans News | LGBTQ+ News. October 9, 2021. <https://www.thepinknews.com/2021/10/09/kiér-lapri-kartier-black-trans-woman>.

⁹² David Taffett. 2021. "What Happened to Tiffany?" Dallas Voice. May 21, 2021. <https://dallasvoice.com/what-happened-to-tiffany/>.

⁹³ Taffett, 2021.

⁹⁴ Sue. 2021. "38-Year-Old Black Trans Woman Tiffany Thomas Fatally Shot in Dallas - Pittsburgh Lesbian Correspondents." Pittsburgh Lesbian Correspondents - Pittsburgh's LGBTQ Blog since 2005. April 26, 2021. <https://www.pghlesbian.com/2021/04/38-year-old-black-trans-woman-tiffany-thomas-fatally-shot-in-dallas/>.

⁹⁵ Alex Rozier. 2021. "Still No Arrests after Death of Black Transgender Woman in Dallas." Wfaa.com. WFAA. May 14, 2021. <https://www.wfaa.com/article/news/local/no-arrests-death-black-transgender-woman-dallas-tiffany-thomas/287-ee96a3ab-5889-4dc9-8bcd-fc9e372af087>.

Like Katrier's death, Tiffany Thomas's came amid a disturbing trend of violence against transgender and gender-nonconforming people, particularly Black transgender women; the Human Rights Campaign noted the death was at least the 19th known killing of a transgender person in 2021.⁹⁶

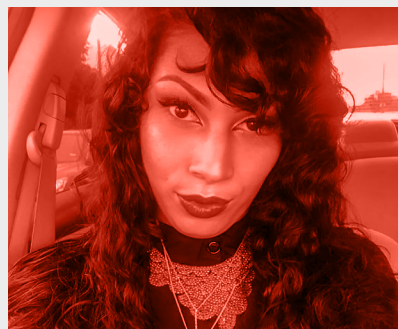


9. ZACHARY LEARD – SAN ANTONIO, TX (FEBRUARY 2024)

On February 21, 2023, Zachary Leard, who openly identified as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community, was shot and killed in a parking lot, according to San Antonio police. His family fears he may have been targeted because of his sexuality.

Leard's sister, Joslin Leard, continues to relive the pain of that night. Police said Zach was found fatally shot in the parking lot of an apartment complex on Vandiver Road near Eisenhower Road. Investigators reported that the shooter left him to die, then stole his car and cellphone before fleeing the scene.

Joslin believes her brother may have met the person responsible through a dating app, a possibility that has intensified the family's concern that his killing was not random.



10. IRIS SANTOS – HOUSTON, TX (APRIL 23, 2021)

Iris Santos was a 22-year-old Latina transgender woman living in Houston.⁹⁷ On the evening of April 23, 2021 at approximately 9:30 p.m., she was shot while sitting at a picnic table outside a fast-food restaurant in the 8600 block of Westheimer Road (near a Chick-fil-A) in west Houston.⁹⁸ A restaurant manager heard the gunshots and alerted police; officers found her wounded and she later died at the hospital from her injuries.⁹⁹ A suspect captured on surveillance video was described as a person wearing a dark top and light-colored sweatpants fleeing the scene; as of the most recent reports, the killer remains outstanding.¹⁰⁰ Family and community advocates have raised concerns that her identity as a trans Latina woman may have been a factor in the attack, especially given the location (public, nearby a busy road) and lack of clear motive.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ Lily Wakefield. 2021. "Tiffany Thomas Is the 19th Known Trans Person Violently Killed This Year. It's Only Been Four Months." PinkNews | Latest Lesbian, Gay, Bi and Trans News | LGBTQ+ News. May 4, 2021. <https://www.thepinknews.com/2021/05/04/tiffany-thomas-black-trans-woman-murder-dallas-texas>.

⁹⁷ Jose Soto. 2021. "HRC Mourns Iris Santos, Latina Trans Woman Killed." Human Rights Campaign. May 4, 2021. <https://www.hrc.org/news/hrc-mourns-iris-santos-latinx-trans-woman-killed-in-houston>.

⁹⁸ Soto, 2021.

⁹⁹ Michelle Homer. 2021. "'Why Didn't God Take Me?' Mother of Murdered Transgender Woman Prays for Justice." Khou.com. KHOU. May 5, 2021. <https://www.khou.com/article/news/crime/surveillance-video-of-suspect-in-murder-of-transgender-woman-released-by-houston-police/285-dc74ce07-a2bb-4b71-a9de-c63a076045c0>.

¹⁰⁰ Jessica Willey. 2021. "Family's Message to Transgender Woman's Murder Suspect: 'We're Going to Find This Person.'" ABC13 Houston. May 5, 2021. https://abc13.com/post/woman-shot-iris-santos-chick-fil-a-southwest-houston-crime/10581670/?userab=abc_web_player-460.

¹⁰¹ Willey, 2021.



11. PALOMA VAZQUEZ – HOUSTON, TX (FEBRUARY 26, 2022)

Paloma Vazquez was a 29-year-old Latina transgender woman.¹⁰² She had recently immigrated to the United States from Latin America (friends say she'd been in the U.S. about six months before her death) – mobilizing in search of safety and respect as a trans Latina.¹⁰³ She was connected to community and advocacy: she was a member of Organización Latina de Trans en Texas (OLTT), an organization supporting Latina trans women in Texas.¹⁰⁴ On February 26, 2022, Vazquez was found shot to death inside her apartment in the Gulfton/Southwest Houston area (address listed in reports as 6600 Dunlap Street).¹⁰⁵ Police said there were no signs of forced entry into the apartment. Her boyfriend reportedly found her body after entering the unlocked apartment.¹⁰⁶ According to the police, she had been shot – multiple gunshot wounds – though initial reports, given her gender identity and misgendering, did not name her.¹⁰⁷

Friends and community members noted that Vazquez had fled violence against trans people in Latin America. One friend expressed sorrow that the “danger she escaped found her here.”¹⁰⁸ As of the latest publicly available sources (2025), Vazquez’s killing remains unsolved; no suspect has been publicly identified.¹⁰⁹



12. MISS COCO CHANEL WORTHAM – DALLAS, TX (AUGUST 7, 2021)

Miss CoCo was a 44-year-old Black transgender woman.¹¹⁰ On the night of August 7, 2021, she was fatally shot at a homeless encampment in downtown Dallas – in the 500 block of Park Avenue (between Marilla Street and Young Street).¹¹¹ Emergency responders (Dallas Fire and Rescue) transported her to a local hospital; she died from her injuries.¹¹² A silver sedan was seen leaving the area shortly after the shooting, heading westbound on Marilla Street. This vehicle was considered part of the investigation.¹¹³

¹⁰² “Paloma Vazquez Murdered or Death by Force in Houston, Texas.” 2022. Crimesolverscentral.com. 2022. <https://crimesolverscentral.com/homicide/164125>.

¹⁰³ “Transgender Woman Killed in Houston Apartment Fled Violence in Latin America, Friends Say.” 2022. ABC13 Houston. March 4, 2022. <https://abc13.com/post/transgender-woman-killed-paloma-vazquez-vigil-for-murder-investigation/11618711/>.

¹⁰⁴ “Honoring Paloma Vazquez, a Latina Trans Woman Remembered by Her...” 2022. HRC. March 8, 2022. <https://www.hrc.org/news/honoring-paloma-vazquez-a-latina-trans-woman-remembered-by-her-community>.

¹⁰⁵ ABC13.com, 2022.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ ABC13.com, 2022.

¹⁰⁹ Zachery Lashway. 2025. “Trans Murders Unsolved: Four Years Later, Family Seeks Justice for Iris Santos.” KPRC. KPRC Click2Houston. April 25, 2025. <https://www.click2houston.com/news/local/2025/04/25/trans-murders-unsolved-four-years-later-family-seeks-justice-for-iris-santos/>.

¹¹⁰ “HRC Mourns Miss CoCo, Transgender Woman of Color Killed in Dallas.” 2021. HRC. August 12, 2021. <https://www.hrc.org/news/hrc-mourns-miss-coco-transgender-woman-of-color-killed-in-dallas>.

¹¹¹ “Remembering Our Dead - CoCo Chanel Wortham (7 Aug 2021).” 2021. Remembering Our Dead. 2021. https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/reports/2021/08/07/coco-chanel-wortham_dallas-texas-usa_d1021031.

¹¹² Remembering Our Dead, 2021.

¹¹³ Ibid.

Authorities launched a homicide investigation into her death. The homicide unit treated the case as potentially a hate crime, though under Texas law gender identity is not a protected category.¹¹⁴ As of the latest publicly available information, no suspect has been publicly identified or arrested.



13. SHADE SCHULER – DALLAS, TX (JULY 29, 2015)

Shade Schuler was a 22-year-old African-American transgender woman living in Dallas, Texas.¹¹⁵ On July 29, 2015, police found her body in a vacant field in northeast Dallas (near the Medical District / Stemmons Freeway-Harry Hines Boulevard area).¹¹⁶ Her remains were badly decomposed, which delayed identification. Authorities initially mis-classified her as male based on body presentation.¹¹⁷ Her death was classified a homicide – she had been shot.¹¹⁸ Despite media attention and police appeals for help, as of the most recent public records, no suspect has been arrested or publicly charged in connection with her murder.¹¹⁹ The case remains unsolved, part of

a larger pattern of trans-women homicides that become cold cases, often due to misidentification, under-resourcing, and systemic neglect.¹²⁰



14. WAQAR HASAN AND VASUDEV PATEL – DALLAS & MESQUITE, TX (SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2001)

In the weeks after the September 11, 2001 attacks, Mark Anthony Stroman embarked on a hate-motivated shooting spree in the Dallas area.¹²¹ On September 15, 2001, he entered a convenience store in Dallas (Mom's Grocery) and fatally shot Waqar Hasan, a 46-year-old Pakistani immigrant, as Hasan was grilling hamburgers.¹²² On October 4, 2001, Stroman entered a gas station operated by Vasudev Patel, a 49-year-old Indian immigrant, in Mesquite, Texas, demanded money, then shot him in the chest. Patel died; the murder was captured on security video.¹²³ Stroman reportedly said he was hunting "Arabs" and people he believed were Muslim or Middle Eastern – as revenge for the 9/11 attacks.¹²⁴

Stroman was arrested on October 5, 2001.¹²⁵ He was convicted of murder, sentenced to death, and

¹¹⁴ Trudy Ring, 2021. "Black Trans Woman Miss CoCo Killed in Dallas." Yahoo News. August 13, 2021. <https://www.yahoo.com/news/black-trans-woman-miss-coco-164326356.html>.

¹¹⁵ "Remembering Our Dead - Shade Schuler (29 Jul 2015)." 2015. Remembering Our Dead. 2015. https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/reports/2015/07/29/shade-schuler_dallas-texas-usa_fa3b6833.

¹¹⁶ Remembering Our Dead, 2015.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Bil Browning. 2015. "Victim Number 13: Transgender Woman of Color Murdered in Dallas." Advocate.com. August 13, 2015. <https://www.advocate.com/crime/2015/08/13/victim-number-13-transgender-woman-color-murdered-dallas>.

¹¹⁹ Remembering Our Dead, 2015.

¹²⁰ Jerome Weeks. 2017. "'In the Tall Grass' at Bishop Arts: A Transgender Murder in Dallas | Art & Seek." Art & Seek. September 14, 2017. <https://artandseek.org/2017/09/14/in-the-tall-grass-at-bishop-arts-a-transgender-murder-in-dallas/>.

¹²¹ "Death Row Information." 2025. Texas.gov. 2025. https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/death_row/dr_info/stromanmark.html.

¹²² "Widow, daughters of man slain in 9/11 hate crime in Dallas become Americans." Dallas News. West Windsor, New Jersey. March 16, 2012.

¹²³ "Execution Report: Mark Stroman - Page 1." 2025. Txexecutions.org. 2025. <https://www.txexecutions.org/reports/472-Mark-Stroman.htm>.

¹²⁴ Texas.Gov, 2025.

¹²⁵ "URGENT ACTION SHOOTING SURVIVOR OPPOSES GUNMAN EXECUTION." 2011. June 28, 2011. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/amr510572011en.pdf>.

executed by lethal injection on July 20, 2011, at the Huntsville Unit in Texas.¹²⁶



15. MYRA CHANEL ICAL & CHARLIE RODRIGUEZ – HOUSTON, TX (JANUARY 18, 2010)

Myra Chanel Ical was a transgender woman in Houston, Texas.¹²⁷ Her body was discovered on January 18, 2010, in a vacant field near the 4300 block of Garrott Street, in the Montrose area of Houston.¹²⁸ When found, she was only partially clothed, and had numerous bruises and defensive wounds, indicating a violent struggle before death.¹²⁹ The medical examiner ruled the cause of death as ligature strangulation.¹³⁰ Community members and local LGBTQIA+-advocacy groups held vigils and called publicly for justice, decrying the murder and urging witnesses to come forward.¹³¹

Authorities believe that serial killer Lucky Ward is responsible for Ical's death.¹³² Ward also killed

Charlie Rodriguez, another transgender woman.¹³³ It is unclear whether the cases were ever officially classified or investigated as hate crimes, despite Ical and Rodriguez's gender identities and the brutality of the killings.¹³⁴ The case sparked activism and community mobilization. A vigil in her memory was reportedly the largest transgender-focused event Houston had seen to that point.¹³⁵



16. NICOLE HALL – DALLAS, TX (MAY 12, 2018)

On May 12, 2018, a body was discovered floating in White Rock Creek in Dallas, Texas.¹³⁶ The body was later identified by police as Nicole Hall, a 39-year-old Black transgender woman.¹³⁷ Because of decomposition, initial identification was difficult: police issued sketches and asked the public for help to identify the body.¹³⁸ Friends, community members, and transgender-rights advocates described Nicole Hall as "a pioneer in the Texas Black trans community," and as someone who helped others through their transition and supported younger trans people.¹³⁹

¹²⁶ Edecio Martinez. 2011. "Texas Man Executed for 9/11 Revenge Killing of Store Clerk, despite Plea from Surviving Victim." Cbsnews.com. July 21, 2011. [https://www.cbsnews.com/news/texas-man-executed-for-9-11-revenge-killing-of-store-clerk-despite-plea-from-surviving-victim/#:~:text=\(CBS%2FKTVT%2FAP\),the%20September%2011%2C%202001%20attacks](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/texas-man-executed-for-9-11-revenge-killing-of-store-clerk-despite-plea-from-surviving-victim/#:~:text=(CBS%2FKTVT%2FAP),the%20September%2011%2C%202001%20attacks).

¹²⁷ "Remembering Our Dead - Myra Chanel Ical (18 Jan 2010)." 2018. Remembering Our Dead. 2018. https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/reports/2010/01/18/myra-chanel-ical_houston-texas-usa_8e997a5d.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ "Myra Chanel Ical Murdered or Death by Force in Houston, Texas." 2025. Crimesolverscentral.com. 2025. <https://crimesolverscentral.com/homicide/179458>.

¹³⁰ "Community Holds Vigil to Highlight Murder of Transgender Victim | ABC13 Houston | Abc13.com." 2025. ABC13 Houston. 2025. <https://abc13.com/archive/7238529/>.

¹³¹ "Trans Community Demands Justice for Myra Ical." 2017. Unfinished Lives (blog). 2017. <https://unfinishedlivesblog.com/2010/01/25/>.

¹³² Lisa Carter. 2020. "Convicted Serial Killer Sentenced to Death for Role in 4 Houston Murders." Khou.com. KHOU. March 10, 2020. <https://www.khou.com/article/news/crime/convicted-serial-killer-sentenced-to-death-for-role-in-4-houston-murders/285-ca8f2f21-0e29-49aa-9621-c629b63d5891>.

¹³³ Carter, 2020.

¹³⁴ Unfinished Lives. 2017.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

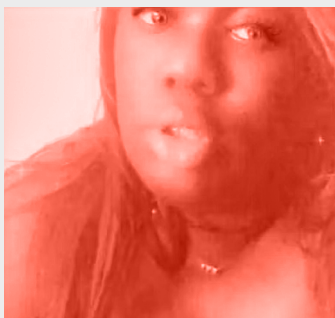
¹³⁶ "Remembering Our Dead - Nicole Hall (12 May 2018)." 2018. Remembering Our Dead. 2018. https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/reports/2018/05/12/nicole-hall_dallas-texas-usa_50b0b40e.

¹³⁷ Remembering Our Dead, 2018.

¹³⁸ Tammye Nash. 2018. "Police ID Trans Woman Found in White Rock Creek." Dallas Voice. May 25, 2018. <https://dallasvoice.com/police-id-trans-woman-found-in-white-rock-creek/>.

¹³⁹ Alex Bollinger. 2018. "A Transgender Woman Who Was Found Dead in Dallas Has Been Identified - LGBTQ Nation." LGBTQ Nation. May 25, 2018. <https://www.lgbtqnation.com/2018/05/transgender-woman-found-dead-dallas-identified/>.

As of the last publicly available information, the official cause and manner of death remain undetermined. The medical examiner reportedly could not publicly confirm what killed Hall.¹⁴⁰ Investigators have stated they found “some signs of injury” on her body, but they have not publicly released enough forensic detail (if any) to clarify whether the death was the result of homicide, suicide, or accident.¹⁴¹ As of the latest reporting, no suspect has been identified or charged, and no official determination of motive – including whether the killing was related to her gender identity – has been made public.¹⁴²



17. LAKENDRA ANDREWS – DALLAS, TX (APRIL 29, 2023)

On April 29, 2023, at about 8:35 a.m., officers with the Dallas Police Department (DPD) responded to a call in the 200-block of S. Jim Miller Road in southeast Dallas.¹⁴³ When police arrived, they found 26-year-old LaKendra Andrews suffering from at least one gunshot wound.¹⁴⁴ She died from her injuries at the scene.¹⁴⁵

Andrews was born in Shreveport, Louisiana, and later moved with her family to Dallas.¹⁴⁶ She had attended James Madison High School and studied at Dallas College’s Eastfield Campus.¹⁴⁷ She had a range of interests – cooking, drawing, dance, baking, music – and ran a nonprofit.¹⁴⁸ Friends, supporters, and community advocates described her as proud of her identity – referring to herself as a “beautiful single trans woman.”¹⁴⁹

Her death was initially misgendered and dead-named in early media/police reports – using her legal name and incorrect gender, which delayed recognition by LGBTQIA+ and trans advocacy communities.¹⁵⁰ Because of that misgendering and omission, her death went unrecognized in major LGBTQIA+ media and memorial lists for over six months.¹⁵¹ The investigation remains open and unsolved. As of the latest public reporting, no suspects have been identified or publicly named.¹⁵²

18. MICHAEL HURD – HOUSTON, TX (JUNE 18 2003)

On June 18, 2003, Michael Hurd was driving their green four-door Saturn northbound on the 5900 block of Antoine in Houston, wearing women’s clothing. At some point, someone shot at Hurd’s vehicle, and Hurd died at the scene. Activists at the time stated that they believed the victim’s appearance played a role in their death.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁰ “NCAVP Mourns the Death of Nicole Hall, a 39 Year Old Black Transgender Woman, in Dallas, TX - NYC Anti-Violence Project.” 2018. NYC Anti-Violence Project. May 30, 2018. <https://avp.org/2018/05/30/ncavp-mourns-the-death-of-nicole-hall-a-39-year-old-black-transgender-woman-in-dallas-tx/>.

¹⁴¹ Payton Potter. 2018. “Woman Found Dead in White Rock Creek Identified.” Dallas, TX Patch. Patch. May 23, 2018. <https://patch.com/texas/dallas-ftworth/police-identify-woman-found-dead-white-rock-creek?>

¹⁴² Nash, 2018.

¹⁴³ David Taffet. 2023. “LaKendra Andrews Murder Remains Unsolved.” Dallas Voice. November 21, 2023. <https://dallasvoice.com/lakendra-andrews-murder-remains-unsolved/>.

¹⁴⁴ Taffet, 2023.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Sue. 2023. “We Just Learned That the Name of a Black Trans Woman Shot to Death in April Is LaKendra Andrews - Pittsburgh Lesbian Correspondents.” Pittsburgh Lesbian Correspondents - Pittsburgh’s LGBTQ Blog since 2005. November 9, 2023. <https://www.pghlesbian.com/2023/11/we-just-learned-that-the-name-of-a-black-trans-woman-shot-to-death-in-april-is-lakendra-andrews/>.

¹⁴⁷ Taffet, 2023.

¹⁴⁸ Violet Lhant. 2023. “Honoring LaKendra Andrews, Black Trans Woman Taken Too Soon.” Human Rights Campaign. November 15, 2023. <https://www.hrc.org/news/honoring-lakendra-andrews-black-trans-woman-taken-too-soon>.

¹⁴⁹ Lhant, 2023.

¹⁵⁰ Sue, 2023.

¹⁵¹ Lhant, 2023.

¹⁵² Taffet, 2023.

¹⁵³ “JUNE 18 2003 - HURD MICHAEL.” 2025. Texasobituaryproject.org. 2025. <https://texasobituaryproject.org/061803hurd.html>.



19. KEENE MCFADDEN – SAN ANTONIO, TX (APRIL 8, 2017)

Kenne McFadden was a 26-year-old Black transgender woman living in San Antonio. Initial reports misgendered her, and local advocates had to correct official descriptions of her identity.¹⁵⁴ On April 9, 2017, McFadden's fully clothed body was discovered floating in the San Antonio River along the River Walk. A barge operator first spotted her.¹⁵⁵ At first, authorities treated her death as a drowning, but later the San Antonio Police Department and the Bexar County Medical Examiner ruled the death a homicide.¹⁵⁶ Police identified a person of interest and a grand jury later indicted Mark Daniel Lewis on manslaughter charges, alleging he pushed McFadden into the river and failed to help her, leading to her drowning.¹⁵⁷

The case drew criticism because of how it was handled – including issues with misgendering

and investigative challenges—and ultimately the manslaughter prosecution did not result in a trial or conviction, which sparked protests from LGBTQIA+ groups demanding justice.¹⁵⁸



20. CHYNAL LINDSEY – DALLAS, TX (JUNE 1, 2019)

Chynal Lindsey was a 26-year-old Black transgender woman whose body was found in White Rock Lake in Dallas, Texas, on June 1, 2019, after a passerby called police about a body in the water. Dallas Police reported that her remains showed “obvious signs of homicidal violence,” and authorities treated her death as a homicide.¹⁵⁹

Investigators later arrested Ruben Alvarado in connection with the case. He was charged with her murder and, at trial in 2021, was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to 37 years in prison for strangling and beating her before dumping her body in the lake.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁴ Beverly Tillery, 2017. “NCAVP Mourns the Homicide of Kenne McFadden, a Black Transgender Woman Killed in San Antonio, Texas - NYC Anti-Violence Project.” NYC Anti-Violence Project. June 8, 2017. <https://avp.org/2017/06/08/ncavp-mourns-homicide-kenne-mcfadden-black-transgender-woman-killed-san-antonio-texas/>.

¹⁵⁵ Sam Sanchez. 2018. “Protest Planned after Judge Rules Kenne McFadden's Death Not a Crime.” San Antonio Current. March 9, 2018. <https://www.sacurrent.com/news/protest-planned-after-judge-rules-kenne-mcfaddens-death-not-a-crime-9882589/>.

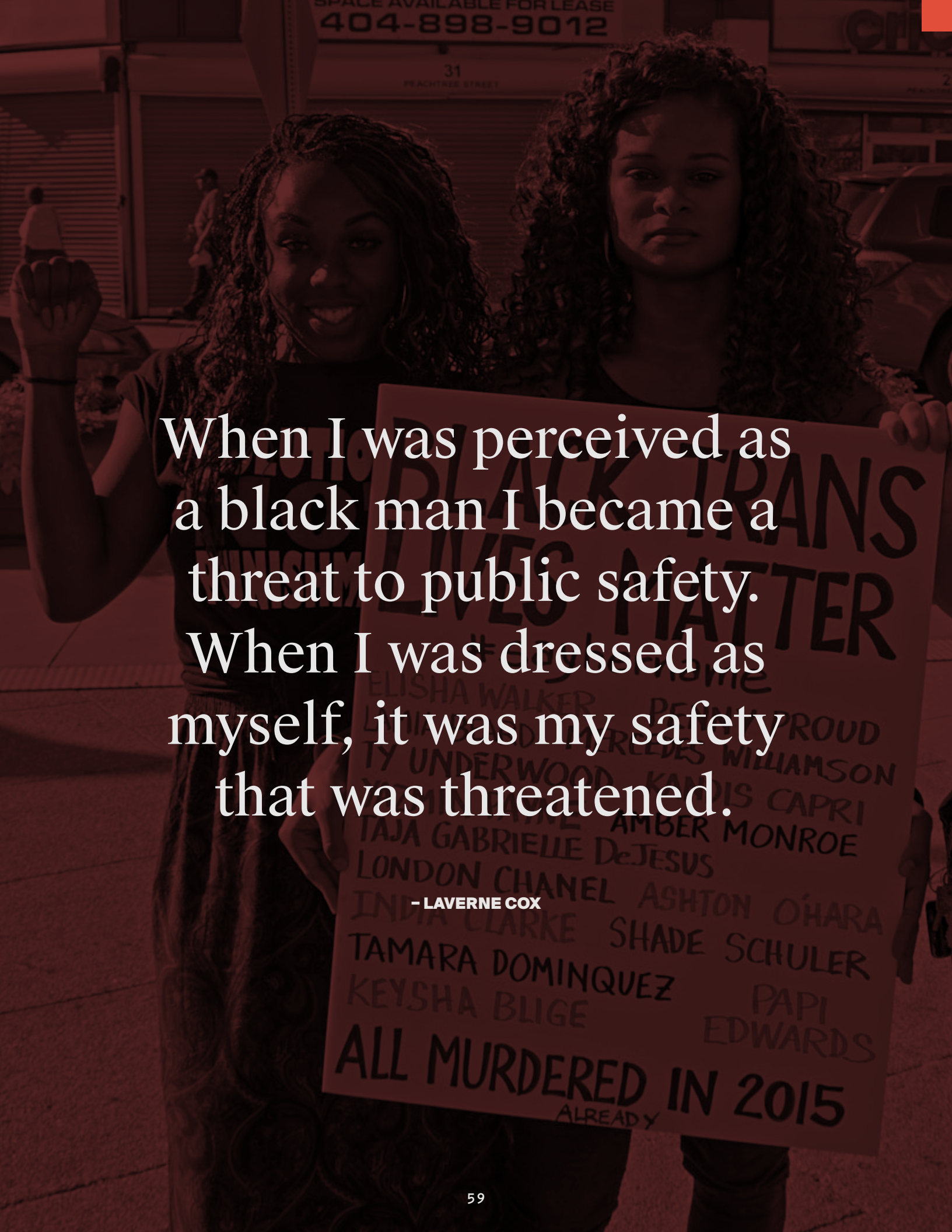
¹⁵⁶ Tillery, 2017.

¹⁵⁷ Elizabeth Zavala. 2017. “Grand Jury Indicts Live Oak Man in Death of Transgender Woman on River Walk.” MySA. November 29, 2017. <https://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local/article/Grand-jury-indicts-Live-Oak-man-in-death-of-12390293.php?ipid=artem>.

¹⁵⁸ David Lynch. 2025. “The Last Time the Bexar Co. DA Pursued a Hate Crime, the Case Was Dismissed.” KENS5.com. KENS. June 5, 2025. <https://www.kens5.com/article/news/crime/san-antonio-jonathan-joss-hate-crime-kenne-mcfadden-da-texas/273-ae7fdc7c-e65d-4ab0-a814-bb49ceb9fe10>.

¹⁵⁹ “Remembering Our Dead - Chynal Lindsey (1 Jun 2019).” 2019. Remembering Our Dead. 2019. https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/reports/2019/06/01/chynal-lindsey_dallas-texas-usa_ddae4420.

¹⁶⁰ “Man Found Guilty, Sentenced in 2019 Killing of Black Transgender Woman.” 2021. NBC 5 Dallas-Fort Worth. November 11, 2021. <https://www.nbcdfw.com/news/local/dallas-county-man-found-guilty-of-killing-black-transgender-woman-in-2019/2813271/>.

A photograph of two Black women at a protest. The woman on the left is smiling and raising her fist. The woman on the right is holding a large sign. The background shows a city street with a building that has a sign for 'SPACE AVAILABLE FOR LEASE 404-898-9012' and '31 WACHTREE STREET'.

When I was perceived as
a black man I became a
threat to public safety.
When I was dressed as
myself, it was my safety
that was threatened.

— LAVERNE COX

ALL MURDERED IN 2015
ALREADY

PATTERNS AND FINDINGS

A recurring theme in MDL cases is the pattern of rapid, official conclusions that fail to address critical inconsistencies. Sandra Bland, a 28-year-old Black woman, was found dead in her Waller County jail cell three days after a traffic stop and violent arrest. Her death was ruled a suicide by asphyxiation using a plastic trash bag. However, independent reviews and a \$1.9 million wrongful death settlement suggest failures in duty of care and possible coercive conditions that contributed to her death.

In the case of Marvin D. Scott III, a 26-year-old Black man arrested for marijuana possession, his death occurred in the custody of Collin County Jail. He was pepper-sprayed, restrained with a spit hood, and left unresponsive. Although initially deemed a death by natural causes, the involvement of seven officers – later fired but never indicted – points to systemic abuse of power and neglect.

The investigative procedures following these deaths also reflect critical gaps. In Sandra Bland’s case, dashcam footage revealed aggressive policing tactics, but jail logs and footage from the holding cell lacked clarity, fueling conspiracy theories and public mistrust.

In Marvin Scott’s case, despite widespread attention, the grand jury declined to indict any officers involved. Key medical examiner documents and full surveillance footage have still not been made fully public, hindering independent review. The lack of indictment despite clear

procedural violations highlights a broader failure of accountability.

These cases reflect a common pattern: missing or incomplete police records, dismissive language toward family claims, and inconsistent medical examiner findings. Public records requests often go unanswered, and critical evidence – such as video footage, medical records, and witness statements – is suppressed, redacted, or outright ignored.

Another pattern is grassroots movements and civil society organizations stepping in to fill the void left by failed official inquiries. Sandra Bland’s death became a national rallying point, spawning the “Say Her Name” movement and inspiring protests across the country. In Texas, organizers demanded an independent investigation, leading to temporary reforms in jail intake and mental health evaluations.

In Marvin Scott’s case, protests erupted across Collin County, with support from Black Lives Matter and local NAACP chapters. His family has continued to advocate for reform, legal accountability, and a reopening of the case. The incident has also catalyzed broader policy conversations around jail restraint procedures and mental health care during custody.

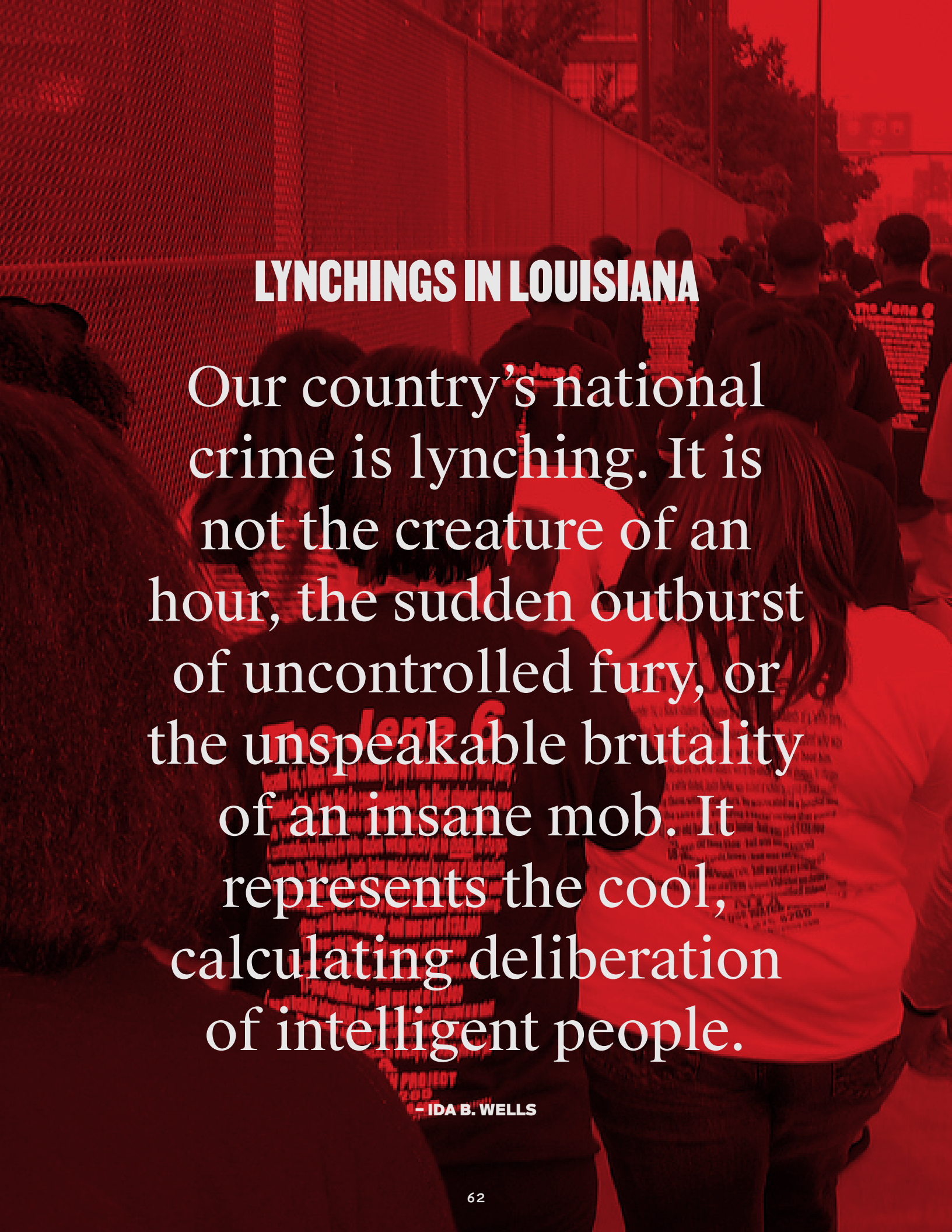
In each case, local organizers and family-led coalitions have served as primary investigators, archivists, and public pressure points—often in

the absence of meaningful government response. These grassroots responses reflect a deep mistrust between communities of color and law enforcement in Texas, rooted in the historical memory of lynching and racial violence.

JULIAN found a higher concentration of migrant deaths and disappearances in Texas than any other state. The violent deaths discussed herein cannot be understood in isolation from Texas's long history of lynching. From *La Matanza*, to the infamous 1916 Waco Horror, in which Jesse Washington was burned alive in front of thousands, to the 1998 murder of James Byrd Jr., lynching in Texas has consistently served as a

tool of racial control and public spectacle. While today's cases may lack the large mob or overt rituals of Jim Crow-era lynchings, they carry forward the same racialized logics: allegations of criminality, dehumanization, and a presumption of guilt.

Suspected MDL cases on the Mexico and United States border are expected to rise and should be closely monitored. These investigations pose a difficult challenge due to underreporting of violent crimes committed against Latin migrants, the width of the border, the rural nature of communities along the border and the immigration status of potential victims and witnesses.

A photograph of a crowd of people walking away from the camera, behind a chain-link fence. The image is heavily overlaid with a red color. The crowd is diverse in age and appearance. Some people are wearing t-shirts with text, including "The Jena 6" and "IDA B. WELLS".

LYNCHINGS IN LOUISIANA

Our country's national crime is lynching. It is not the creature of an hour, the sudden outburst of uncontrolled fury, or the unspeakable brutality of an insane mob. It represents the cool, calculating deliberation of intelligent people.

— IDA B. WELLS

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

LOUISIANA HAS BEEN THE SITE OF NUMEROUS SUSPICIOUS DEATHS AND ACTS OF VIOLENCE IN WHICH RACE, GENDER IDENTITY, OR SYSTEMIC NEGLECT WERE CENTRAL FACTORS. THIS HISTORY IS A PAINFUL CHAPTER IN THE BROADER STORY OF RACIAL VIOLENCE AND INJUSTICE IN THE UNITED STATES. THESE ACTS OF RACIAL TERROR WERE NOT ONLY EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS BUT ALSO DELIBERATE TOOLS OF WHITE SUPREMACY, EMPLOYED TO ENFORCE RACIAL HIERARCHIES AND SUPPRESS BLACK POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT DURING AND AFTER RECONSTRUCTION.¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ A. L. Wood (2018). The spectacle of lynching: Rituals of White supremacy in the Jim Crow South. *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 761–762. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45129336>

◀ An image of a march in support of the Jena Six, held in Cleveland, Ohio. Source: jenamarch on Flickr

Between 1877 and 1950, Louisiana recorded over 550 documented lynchings, placing it among the deadliest states in the Deep South for racialized mob violence (EJI, 2017).¹⁶² The last officially recorded lynching in Louisiana occurred in 1936. However, many incidents went undocumented or were falsely classified as suicides, accidents, or disappearances.¹⁶³ The full scope of lynching and the trauma it inflicted is likely far greater than the historical record can fully convey. Even today,

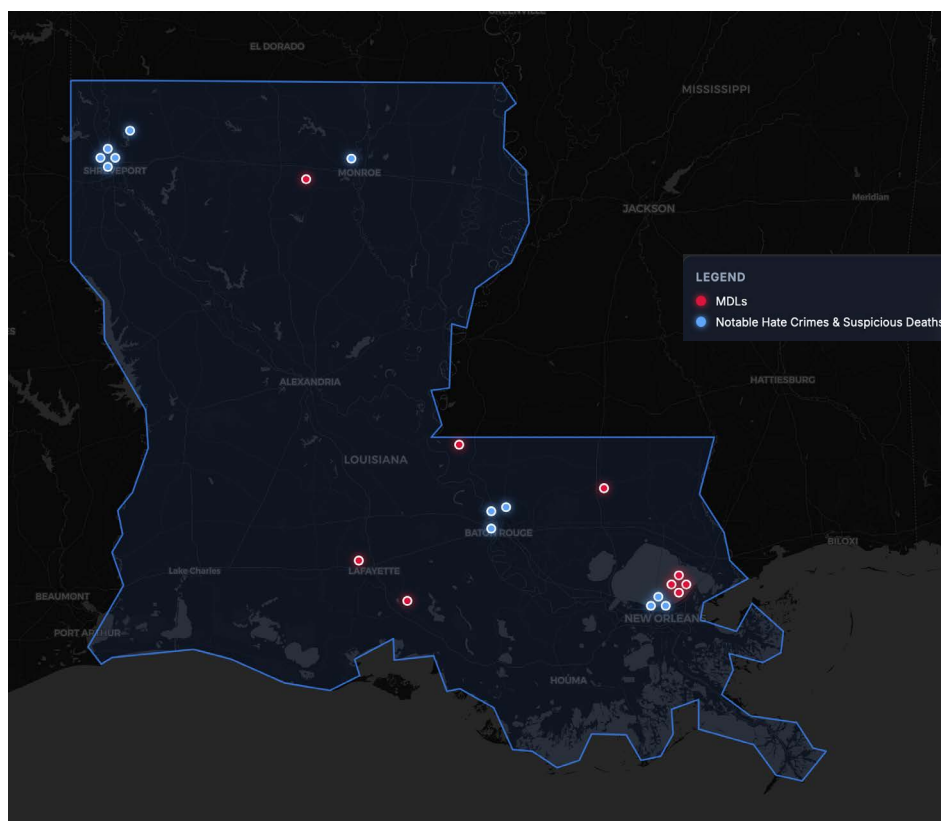
the legacy of lynching lingers in the form of institutionalized racism, structural inequality, and deep mistrust between marginalized communities and the systems meant to protect them.¹⁶⁴

Although the peak of public, mob-style lynchings occurred in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, racial terror killings have not disappeared, they have evolved.

MODERN-DAY LYNCHING CASES IN LOUISIANA

11
SUSPECTED MDLS

14
NOTABLE HATE
CRIMES OR
SUSPICIOUS DEATHS



¹⁶² Equal Justice Initiative. (2017). Explore the map: Lynching in America. *Lynching in America: Confronting the legacy of racial terror*. <https://lynchinginamerica.eji.org/explore>

¹⁶³ K. Finley, (2012, December 21). Lynching. *64 Parishes*. <https://64parishes.org/entry/lynching>

¹⁶⁴ D. Rigby & Seguin, C. (2021). Capital punishment and the legacies of slavery and lynching in the United States. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 694(1), 211. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27111001>

1. YELLA CLARK JR. – WEST FELICIANA PARISH, LA (APRIL 2, 2024)

Yella Clark, also known as Robert Clark Jr., a 45-year-old Black transgender person, was killed on April 2, 2024, following a fight with three other inmates at the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola, Louisiana.¹⁶⁵ Correctional officers responding during morning rounds around 10 a.m. “immediately began treatment on Clark.”¹⁶⁶ The exact nature of Clark’s fatal injuries was not disclosed, and prison officials said that “possible criminal charges [were] pending against the other involved inmates, after the investigation into Clark’s death [was] completed.”¹⁶⁷

Clark had a complex incarceration history. They were initially sentenced to 75 years for armed robbery in Bossier Parish in 2011. In 2018, they were convicted of second-degree murder for killing fellow inmate Dolan Franklin and was sentenced to life imprisonment at hard labor, with no possibility of parole, probation, or suspension of the sentence.¹⁶⁸

Clark’s transgender identity made them particularly vulnerable in prison. They had been diagnosed with gender dysphoria and had begun taking female hormones while incarcerated. Early media and law enforcement reports often deadnamed and misgendered Clark, despite their testimony in court regarding their gender identity. Terrance Winn, a former inmate and criminal justice reform advocate, described Clark as a “loyal and trustworthy person” and noted that their

identity made them “a target” at Angola, where “that kind of thing (being trans and/or queer) can make things a little bit more dangerous for you.”¹⁶⁹

The Human Rights Campaign reported that Clark’s death was part of a larger pattern of fatal violence against transgender and gender-expansive people while incarcerated, with misgendering and misreporting by media and authorities compounding systemic inequities. Tori Cooper, Director of Community Engagement for HRC’s Transgender Justice Initiative, said: “Yella was finally living their truth – something that everyone deserves to do, no matter their circumstances. Yet the circumstances of their death, and the harassment and violence faced while incarcerated, show that the system failed them as it does far too often for trans and gender-expansive people.”¹⁷⁰



2. SHAKI PETERS – TANGIPAHOA PARISH, LA (JULY 2020)

Shaki Peters, a 31 year-old Black transgender woman, was found dead in early July 2020 on Opal Bennett Road near Amite City, Louisiana.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁵ S. K. Goldberg. (2024, June 11). Honoring Yella (Robert) Clark Jr., transgender inmate killed in Louisiana. HRC. <https://www.hrc.org/news/honoring-yella-robert-clark-jr-transgender-inmate-killed-in-louisiana>; Daley, K. (2024, April 3). Inmate killed in prison fight at Angola, officials say. *Fox 8 Live*. <https://www.fox8live.com/2024/04/03/inmate-killed-prison-fight-angola-officials-say/>; Ring, T. (2024, June 18). Transgender inmate killed in prison fight in Louisiana. *Advocate.com*.

¹⁶⁶ R. Pellitteri. (2024, April 3). Angola inmate serving life for fellow inmate’s murder killed in prison fight, officials say. *WAFB*. <https://www.wafb.com/2024/04/03/angola-inmate-serving-life-fellow-inmates-murder-killed-prison-fight-officials-say/>

¹⁶⁷ Pellitteri, 2024.

¹⁶⁸ Trudy Ring. 2024. “Transgender Inmate Killed in Prison Fight in Louisiana.” *Advocate.com*. June 18, 2024. <https://www.advocate.com/news/transgender-inmate-killed-louisiana>.

¹⁶⁹ Ring, 2024.

¹⁷⁰ Shoshana K. Goldberg. 2024. “Honoring Yella (Robert) Clark Jr., Transgender Inmate Killed In....” HRC. June 11, 2024. <https://www.hrc.org/news/honoring-yella-robert-clark-jr-transgender-inmate-killed-in-louisiana>.

¹⁷¹ WBRZ Staff. (2020, September 9). *Second suspect arrested in St. Helena killing of transgender woman*. <https://www.wbrz.com/news/second-suspect-arrested-in-st-helena-killing-of-transgender-woman>; E. Donaghue, (2020, July 14). “Horrific spike” in fatal violence against transgender community. *CBS News*. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/transgender-community-fatal-violence-spike/>; Kozuch, E. (2020, July 6). HRC mourns Shaki Peters, Black trans woman killed in Louisiana. *HRC*. <https://www.hrc.org/news/hrc-mourns-shaki-peters-black-transgender-woman-killed-in-louisiana>; N. Lang. (2020, August 31). Two suspects indicted in murder of Shaki Peters, Black trans woman found dead in Louisiana. *Them*. <https://www.them.us/story/suspect-arrested-in-murder-of-black-trans-woman-shaki-peters>

Peters, a performance artist and community organizer, had been misgendered and deadnamed in early media reports, highlighting the ongoing disrespect and stigma that transgender people face.¹⁷²

Two suspects, Lynette Muse and Christopher Causey, were later arrested and indicted on second-degree murder charges in connection with their death. In the end, Lynette, 37, of Denham Springs, Louisiana, received a suspended 15-year prison sentence and three years of probation after pleading no contest to manslaughter while Christopher Causey, was found not guilty of second-degree murder in December 2022.¹⁷³

Peters' murder occurred amid a spike in violence against transgender and gender non-conforming people in the United States. According to the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), at least 21 transgender or gender non-conforming individuals had been killed by mid-2020, marking the most violent year to date since HRC began tracking such deaths.¹⁷⁴ Black transgender women, in particular, faced heightened risks due to "a toxic mix of transphobia, racism and misogyny."¹⁷⁵ HRC's Tori Cooper described the period as "the deadliest period we have on record" and emphasized that "members of our beloved community [were] being killed because of who they [were]. Racism, toxic masculinity, misogyny and transphobia [were] destroying lives and taking away our loved ones."¹⁷⁶

Peters was remembered by friends as joyful and resilient. Nathalie Nia Faulk said Peters was "consistently laughing, consistently joking, and the first person to get up and dance." Advocates called for urgent action to address systemic anti-transgender violence and noted that Louisiana lacked explicit statewide protections for transgender people in employment, housing, education, public accommodations, and hate crime laws.¹⁷⁷



3. QUAWAN "BOBBY" CHARLES – IBERIA PARISH, LA (NOVEMBER 4, 2020)

Quawan "Bobby" Charles, a 15-year-old from Baldwin, Louisiana, was reported missing from his father's home on October 30, 2020, and found dead four days later in a rural area near Loreauville.¹⁷⁸ His mother contacted the St. Mary Parish Sheriff's Office around 8:10 p.m., stating her son had not returned home and was wearing his West St. Mary High School jacket. Police spoke with both parents, who said Charles had only recently been staying with his father and

¹⁷² Jeff Truesdell. 2020. "Murdered for Being Transgender: No Arrests Made in Case of La. Activist Found Slain along Roadside." People.com. 2020. <https://people.com/crime/skatie-peters-transgender-activist-murdered>.

¹⁷³ Staff, WAFB. (2023, February 15). Judge sentences woman arrested for death of transgender person. <https://www.wafb.com/2023/02/15/judge-sentences-woman-arrested-death-transgender-person/>

¹⁷⁴ Kozuch, 2020.

¹⁷⁵ Donaghue, 2020.

¹⁷⁶ Kozuch, 2020.

¹⁷⁷ Truesdell, 2020.

¹⁷⁸ KATC News. (2020, November 12). New details emerge on disappearance of Baldwin teen who was later found dead. KATC News. <https://www.katc.com/news/katc-investigates/new-details-emerge-on-disappearance-of-baldwin-teen-who-was-later-found-dead>

had never left home without permission. Charles' father discovered him missing after returning from a store and checking his room.¹⁷⁹

Initially, authorities speculated Charles might have been at a local football game or a community event, but searches yielded no results. His name was entered into the National Crime Information Center as a missing juvenile, and later was found deceased on November 4, 2020. The coroner initially suggested he likely drowned, and later autopsy reports indicated "there were no signs of a struggle prior to Charles' drowning." Yet, the manner of death was classified as "undetermined."¹⁸⁰

In February 2021, Janet Irvin, 37, was charged in connection with Charles' death with "contributing to the delinquency of a minor and failure to report a missing child."¹⁸¹ Charles' family alleged he had been picked up from his home by Irvin and her 17-year-old son without parental consent. A video released by police appeared to show Charles leaving voluntarily with the two individuals, though the family disputed this account.¹⁸² Attorneys for Charles' family shared an audio recording in which Irvin admitted, "Yes, I should have called the cops. I should have went further," and indicated that her son and Charles "did drugs at Irvin's home."¹⁸³ The family argued that Irvin "knew something was wrong and did nothing... It speaks volumes as to what her involvement was in this case."¹⁸⁴

Charles' family has consistently criticized law enforcement for allegedly mishandling the case,

claiming that the initial police response was slow and that they were dismissed because Charles was Black. No Amber Alert was issued, and the Baldwin Assistant Police Chief stated there was "no evidence that Charles was abducted or that an Amber Alert was necessary." Local advocacy group Stand Black described Irvin's arrest as "a starting point, but this is a marathon and not a sprint," emphasizing the need for stronger protections for children and police accountability.¹⁸⁵

In June 2025, the family renewed calls for justice, demanding the investigation be reopened following the release of new video evidence by KLFY. The footage reportedly showed "a person walking behind a line of trees in a sugarcane field," but Celina Charles, Quawan's cousin, stated it "does not prove Quawan was alone when he died."¹⁸⁶ She accused Sheriff Tommy Romero of misleading both the family and the public, saying, "Sheriff Tommy Romero lied to the public and to Quawan's family... Why was the public misled?"¹⁸⁷

The family plans to exhume Quawan's body for a third autopsy and has called for Romero's resignation, declaring, "The time now is for justice. We're done. We're done with fighting. We're done with begging. We're done with waiting. We want justice for Quawan."¹⁸⁸ Throughout the case, Charles' family has maintained that the only "reasonable conclusion" is that his death involved foul play, despite autopsy reports suggesting accidental drowning or possible suicide.¹⁸⁹

¹⁷⁹ KATC News, 2020.

¹⁸⁰ Peter Martinez. 2021. "Louisiana Woman Janet Irvin Facing Charges after Teen Quawan 'Bobby' Charles Found Dead in Sugar Cane Field - CBS News." [www.cbsnews.com](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/quawan-bobby-charles-found-dead-janet-irvin-charges-louisiana). February 10, 2021. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/quawan-bobby-charles-found-dead-janet-irvin-charges-louisiana>.

¹⁸¹ Martinez, 2021.

¹⁸² Martinez, 2021.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Martinez, 2021.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ B. Lofaso. (2025, June 30). Quawan Charles' family demands justice, urges case review. KLFY. <https://www.kfy.com/local/iberia-parish/family-quawan-charles-demands-investigation>

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Lofaso, 2025.

¹⁸⁹ Martinez, 2021.



4. MICHAEL LUKE DARBY – LAFAYETTE PARISH, LA (OCTOBER 14, 2012)

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, Michael Luke “Boulon” Darby, a 24-year-old Louisiana man, was fatally stabbed on October 14, 2012, in Lafayette after he had been confronted by three white men while “hanging out” with two African-American friends. According to reports, the men shouted “racial slurs” at him and “questioned why he was hanging out with his two black companions.” The initial altercation involved Darby allegedly charging one of the men, after which his friends intervened to break up the fight. A few minutes later, Darby became involved in another altercation with one of the same men before sending his friends to retrieve their vehicle. When they returned, Darby was missing and was later found dead behind some bushes several blocks from the scene. An autopsy confirmed he had died from stab wounds.¹⁹⁰

Investigators identified two suspects based on surveillance footage and witness statements. Kyle James Toups, 24, of Carencro, Louisiana, was arrested in Texas and faced a state charge of second-degree murder. His brother, Travis Toups, 35, was charged as an accessory to second-

degree murder but was released on bail. A knife believed to be the murder weapon was recovered, and multiple witnesses were questioned, with no further suspects being sought.¹⁹¹

Darby’s father, Jerry Darby, emphasized the racial element of the crime, stating, “There’s no doubt this was a racial crime, and there’s no reason why my son should have been murdered because of his friendships.” He described his son as well-loved and non-confrontational. The victim’s former football teammates honored him by permanently retiring his high school jersey number and placing stickers on their helmets during homecoming.¹⁹² FBI spokesman Kyle Hanrahan noted, “This would constitute a hate crime” and that he was “aware of the incident and evaluating whether to initiate a federal investigation.” Lafayette police had other thoughts not classifying the case as a hate crime.¹⁹³

5. HURRICANE KATRINA & ALGIERS POINT VIGILANTE KILLINGS – ORLEANS PARISH, LA (2005)

Amid the chaos of Hurricane Katrina, vigilante violence emerged in neighborhoods like Algiers Point. Armed residents, including Paul Gleason, targeted Black civilians, with eyewitnesses reporting indiscriminate shootings. In home video footage, Gleason told police officers, “Not anymore...They’re all dead...We shot them.” When pressed about the number shot, he replied, “Thirty-eight...” Signs posted by Gleason warned, “you’ll be shot if you cross this path,” exemplifying the lethal combination of racial animus, fear, and self-appointed authority.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁰ Bill Morlin. 2024. “FBI May Investigate Apparent Hate Murder of White with Black Friends.” Southern Poverty Law Center. November 30, 2024. <https://www.splcenter.org/resources/hatewatch/fbi-may-investigate-apparent-hate-murder-white-black-friends>.

¹⁹¹ Morlin, 2024.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Morlin, 2024.

¹⁹⁴ WDSU I-Team, 2009. (2009, July 14). Video shows confession of Post-Katrina Vigilante. WDSU. <https://www.wdsu.com/article/video-shows-confession-of-post-katrina-vigilante/3348293>

One high-profile case illustrating post-Katrina racial violence involved Roland J. Bourgeois Jr., a white man from Mississippi. In 2010, he was charged with conspiring to commit a hate crime and using a firearm against African-American men in Algiers Point, wounding one while they were evacuating the city.¹⁹⁵ Prosecutors alleged that Bourgeois had discussed targeting African-Americans, displayed a victim's bloody cap as a trophy, and attempted to influence witnesses to lie to federal authorities. After prolonged legal delays due to health concerns, Bourgeois pleaded guilty in 2018 to interference with rights and use of a firearm in a violent crime and was sentenced to ten years in federal prison in 2019.¹⁹⁶ His case highlighted the lethal combination of racial animus, vigilantism, and the confusion of law enforcement during the post-Katrina crisis.

At least 11 people were injured in the Algiers Point shootings with at least two of them dying. The full scope of the violence and the total number of casualties remain unclear due to the chaotic aftermath of the storm, lack of investigation, and missing or unreliable records.



6. HENRY GLOVER – ORLEANS PARISH, LA (AUGUST 2005)

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in August 2005, the charred remains of Henry Glover, a 31-year-old Black man, were discovered near a New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) station. Former Orleans Parish Coroner Frank Minyard described finding a “body bag full of bones” but left the cause of death blank, ruling out a homicide investigation.¹⁹⁷ Glover had been shot by rookie officer David Warren on September 2, 2005, and his body was later set ablaze by another officer.

The case gained attention when reporter A.C. Thompson investigated post-Katrina deaths, resulting in FRONTLINE’s 2010 documentary *Law & Disorder*, which traced Glover’s death to the NOPD and highlighted lawlessness within the department. Five NOPD officers were charged

¹⁹⁵ Federal Bureau of Investigation. 2025. “FBI Releases 2010 Crime Statistics.” FBI. 2025. <https://www.wtlv.com/article/news/local/katrina/man-gets-10-year-sentence-in-algiers-point-post-katrina-racial-shooting/289-4b56eeee-8829-4ab4-85b9-af22c59aaaae>.

¹⁹⁶ K. McGill. (2019, February 14). *Man gets 10-year sentence in Algiers Point, post-Katrina racial shooting*. 4WWL. <https://www.wtlv.com/article/news/local/katrina/man-gets-10-year-sentence-in-algiers-point-post-katrina-racial-shooting/289-4b56eeee-8829-4ab4-85b9-af22c59aaaae>

¹⁹⁷ I. Sayki. (2023, October 25). *Henry Glover’s Killing & the NOPD’s Efforts to End Federal Oversight*. PBS. <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/henry-glover-new-orleans-police-departments-consent-decree/>

with 11 federal civil rights violations in 2010, though four were eventually cleared. Following these revelations, Mayor Mitchell J. Landrieu requested a Justice Department investigation, culminating in a 2012 consent decree placing the NOPD under federal oversight.¹⁹⁸

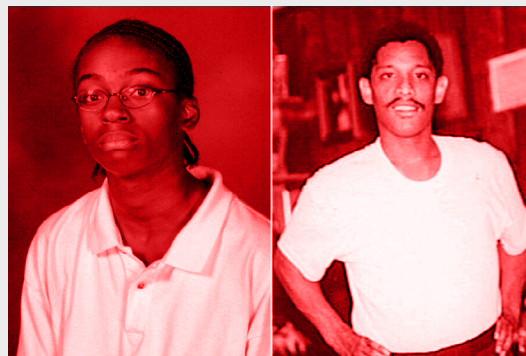
In December 2010, a federal jury convicted three NOPD officers: David Warren, Greg McRae, and Lt. Travis McCabe in connection with Glover's killing and its cover-up. Warren was found guilty of a civil rights violation "resulting in death" and of using a firearm during a crime of manslaughter. Evidence showed he shot Glover "in the back as Glover was running away from him," while McRae burned Glover's body in a car using a traffic flare.¹⁹⁹

McRae was convicted of two civil rights violations, obstruction of justice, and using fire in the commission of a felony, facing a potential 50-year sentence. McCabe was convicted of obstruction of justice, lying to the FBI, and committing perjury, with a maximum sentence of 30 years. Lt. Dwayne Scheuermann and Lt. Robert Italiano were acquitted.²⁰⁰

Despite the convictions, Warren's 2011 conviction was overturned in 2012 due to "specific and compelling prejudice" from being tried alongside other officers, and he was acquitted in a 2013 retrial after testifying he "feared for his life when he fired his gun at the unarmed Glover." In 2015, Glover's death was officially reclassified as a homicide by Coroner Jeffrey Rouse, offering the family hope for state prosecution.²⁰¹

By 2014, the only person serving time in connection to the case was McRae, whose sentence was reduced to 11 years and nine months in 2016. That same year, the City of New Orleans reached a \$13.3 million settlement with victims' families, including \$1.13 million to Glover's family, accompanied by a public apology from Mayor Landrieu.²⁰²

The 2010 DOJ investigation found NOPD officers engaged in "excessive force and conducted unlawful stops, searches and arrests with few repercussions," along with racial and gender-based profiling.²⁰³ Under the 2012 consent decree, approved by a federal judge in 2013, the NOPD was required to implement extensive reforms.



7. JAMES BRISSETTE & RONALD MADISON – ORLEANS PARISH, LA (SEPTEMBER 2005)

In the days following Hurricane Katrina, on September 4, 2005, five officers from the New Orleans Police Department were involved in a fatal shooting on the Danziger Bridge that resulted in the deaths of two innocent civilians, James Brissette, 17, and Ronald Madison, 40. Four

¹⁹⁸ Sayki, 2023.

¹⁹⁹ U.S. Department of Justice. (2010, December 9). Three New Orleans police officers found guilty in the post-Katrina shooting and burning of Henry Glover. *United States Department of Justice*. <https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/three-new-orleans-police-officers-found-guilty-post-katrina-shooting-and-burning-henry-glover>

²⁰⁰ U.S. Department of Justice, 2010.

²⁰¹ Campbell Robertson. 2013. "Ex-Officer Is Cleared in Hurricane Katrina Shooting." *The New York Times*, December 12, 2013. <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/12/us/ex-officer-is-cleared-in-hurricane-katrina-shooting.html>.

²⁰² Robertson, 2013.

²⁰³ Ibid.

others were seriously injured. On April 4, 2012, the U.S. Department of Justice announced that the officers involved were sentenced in connection with the shootings. U.S. District Court Judge Kurt Englehardt imposed prison terms of 38 to 65 years on four officers directly involved in the shootings: Sergeant Kenneth Bowen (40 years), Sergeant Robert Gisevius (40 years), Officer Robert Faulcon (65 years), and Officer Anthony Villavaso (38 years) while Sergeant Arthur “Archie” Kaufman, a supervisor who helped cover up the crimes, was sentenced to six years.²⁰⁴

The DOJ described the event, stating officers had “opened fire with assault rifles and a shotgun, shooting at an unarmed family walking on the east side of the bridge,” seriously wounding Susan Bartholomew and others, while killing James Brissette. Minutes later, Officer Faulcon would fatally shoot Ronald Madison, a mentally and physically disabled man, while he was fleeing.²⁰⁵

The officers engaged in an extensive cover-up, planting evidence and fabricating witnesses. On December 19, 2016, Mayor Mitch Landrieu announced that the city had reached settlements totaling \$13.3 million with 17 plaintiffs and issued a public apology, saying, “I am hoping that in some sense the strength of these families will help the city find peace in our future.” Families of victims, including Sherrel Johnson, mother of James Brissette, accepted the apology. Federal prosecutions and civil suits followed, addressing both the Danziger Bridge shootings and other post-Katrina incidents.²⁰⁶



8. RAYMOND ROBAIR – ORLEANS PARISH, LA (JULY 30, 2005)

Raymond Robair was a 48-year-old handyman living in the Tremé neighborhood of New Orleans.²⁰⁷ On the morning of July 30, 2005, officers from the NOPD encountered him on Dumaine Street. The officers – veteran officer Melvin Williams and his partner trainee Matthew Dean Moore – stopped Robair. According to bystander testimony, Robair turned away, the officers engaged him, Moore pinned him to the ground, and Williams kicked him and struck him repeatedly with a metal police baton while Robair was subdued.²⁰⁸ Robair sustained multiple broken ribs and a ruptured spleen, causing massive internal bleeding.²⁰⁹

The officers transported Robair to the emergency department at Charity Hospital. They told hospital staff that Robair had been found under a bridge, was a drug user, and implied a medical overdose, omitting the violent encounter. This misrepresentation delayed appropriate trauma care.²¹⁰ Robair died within hours of arriving at the hospital, from complications of internal

²⁰⁴ U.S. Department of Justice. (2012, April 4). FBI – Five New Orleans police officers sentenced on civil rights and obstruction of justice violations in the Danziger Bridge shooting case. *Federal Bureau of Investigation*. <https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/neworleans/press-releases/2012/five-new-orleans-police-officers-sentenced-on-civil-rights-and-obstruction-of-justice-violations-in-the-danziger-bridge-shooting-case>

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ CBS News. 2016. “New Orleans Mayor Announces \$13.3M Settlement for Police Shootings after Hurricane Katrina.” *Cbsnews.com*. December 20, 2016. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/new-orleans-mayor-announces-13-3-million-settlement-for-police-shootings-after-katrina/#:~:text=NEW%20ORLEANS%20%2D%2D%20The%20mayor,on%20behalf%20of%20the%20city>.

²⁰⁷ Matthew Dean, and Moore Melvin. 2013. “IN the UNITED STATES COURT of APPEALS for the FIFTH CIRCUIT No. 11-30877 UNITED STATES of AMERICA Plaintiff-Appellee V.” <https://www.ca5.uscourts.gov/opinions/pub/11/11-30877-CR0.wpd.pdf>.

²⁰⁸ Dean, 2013.

²⁰⁹ Sergio Hernández. 2011. “NOPD Officers Convicted in Handyman’s Beating Death.” *ProPublica*. April 13, 2011. <https://www.propublica.org/article/nopd-officers-convicted-in-handymans-beating-death>.

²¹⁰ Matthew Dean, and Moore Melvin. 2013.

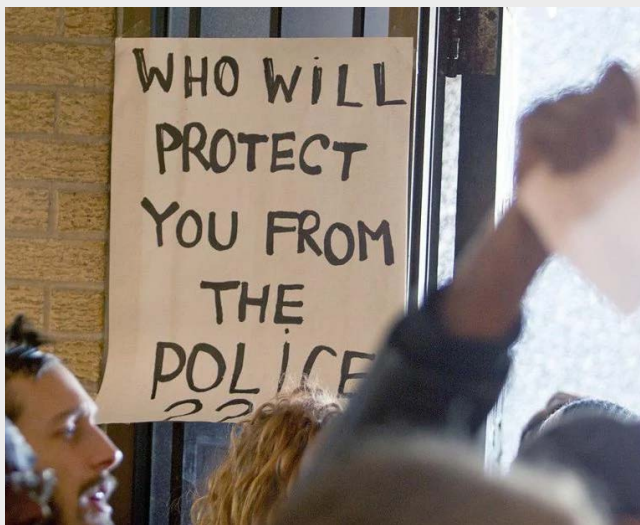
bleeding due to the ruptured spleen.²¹¹ A federal jury convicted Williams of violating Robair's civil rights (based on use of excessive force) and convicted both Williams and Moore on obstruction of justice and false reporting charges.²¹² On September 15, 2011, Williams was sentenced to 262 months (nearly 22 years) in prison; Moore was sentenced to 70 months (about 5-6 years) in prison for the related cover-up and false statements.²¹³

The case underscored concerns of police abuse of force and cover-ups within the New Orleans police department.²¹⁴ From a medical-forensic standpoint, the case featured conflicting autopsy analyses: the local pathologist initially called the death an "accident," but an independent forensic autopsy found clear evidence of a brutal beating and homicide.²¹⁵ The delay in recognizing Robair's traumatic injuries (rather than a drug overdose) raised questions about hospital response and the officers' misleading of medical staff.



9. JASON SMITH – EROS, LA (2011)

Jason Smith, 14, was found in a lake in Eros, Louisiana in 2011. Although his death was officially ruled an "accidental drowning," his father, Bruce Smith, does not believe it; he says his son did not swim and would have had no reason to be near a lake or any body of water.²¹⁶ Reports indicate that once retrieved, Smith's body was found to have bruises and trauma consistent with a struggle.²¹⁷



Protesters enter the foyer of the offices of Orleans Parish Coroner Frank Minyard demanding murder charges against David Warren in the death of Henry Glover, Monday, December 16, 2013. After meeting with the Glover family, Minyard agreed to reopen the Glover case. Glover was shot by NOPD officer David Warren in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. (Photo by Ted Jackson, Nola.com | The Times-Picayune)

²¹¹ Associated Press. 2011. "Two N.O. Officers Found Guilty in Beating Death." Police1. April 13, 2011. <https://www.police1.com/legal/articles/two-no-officers-found-guilty-in-beating-death-iN3L9kjLNIXW5UAZ/>.

²¹² Office of Public Affairs. 2011. "Two New Orleans Police Officers Convicted on Civil Rights and Obstruction of Justice Charges in Connection with the Beating Death of a Civilian." Justice.gov. April 13, 2011. <https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/two-new-orleans-police-officers-convicted-civil-rights-and-obstruction-justice-charges>.

²¹³ Office of Public Affairs. 2025. "Two Former New Orleans Police Officers Sentenced in Connection with the Death of Raymond Robair." FBI. 2025. <https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/two-former-new-orleans-police-officers-sentenced-connection-death-raymond-robair>.

²¹⁴ Office of Public Affairs. 2025.

²¹⁵ Sergio Hernández. 2011. "NOPD Officers Convicted in Handyman's Beating Death." ProPublica. April 13, 2011. <https://www.propublica.org/article/nopd-officers-convicted-in-handymans-beating-death>.

²¹⁶ @Mula_smith33 And @Millionhits333, "Hood Affirmation: The Story Of My Lil Cousin Who Was At The Time 14 Jason Smith," August 27, 2025. <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DN4jrb0EYJK/>

²¹⁷ Forest Parks. 2017. "COVER-UP? Black Louisiana Teen Found Dead in a Lake with His Organs Removed in 'Accidental Drowning' | Urban Intellectuals." Urbanintellectuals.com. 2017. <https://urbanintellectuals.com/cover-black-louisiana-teen-found-dead-lake-organs-removed-accidental-drowning>.

NOTABLE HATE CRIMES AND SUSPICIOUS DEATHS POST-2000



1. KENNETH GLEASON KILLINGS – EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH, LA (2017)

Kenneth Gleason, a Baton Rouge man, was found guilty of first-degree murder on April 26, 2021, for the killing of Donald Smart and was also charged with the second-degree murder of Bruce Coefield, as well as two counts of attempted second-degree murder related to a non-fatal shooting on Sandy Ridge Drive.²¹⁸ Race played a central role in the case, with prosecutor Dana Cummings stating that Gleason was “hunting black men” during his five-day “reign of terror.”²¹⁹ Gleason was sentenced to life in prison for the killings. On September 22, 2021, he was found dead at the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola. The Department of Corrections confirmed that Gleason “committed suicide” after being found hanging in his cell. He had been transferred to Angola just two days prior and was quarantined in a single-man cell

per COVID-19 protocols. Defense attorney Ashly Van Earl stated that Gleason’s family was not informed of the transfer and expressed doubt that his death was a suicide. Despite his death, the Louisiana Supreme Court reinstated his first-degree murder conviction, noting that “the appeal has been dismissed and the conviction is upheld.”

2. UNIDENTIFIED MALE – BOSSIER PARISH, LA (2000)

In Bossier City, Louisiana, an African-American man was found hanged from a tree near a park, “gagged, handcuffed and wearing women’s clothes”.²¹⁹ Police characterized the death as “accidental and sexual in nature,” with spokesperson Mike Halphen emphasizing that the man was “not lynched.” Television reports noted the man was around 19 years old and corroborated that he was gagged, handcuffed, and dressed in women’s clothing, though Halphen declined to comment on these details.²²⁰ Authorities rushed to judgment based on the women’s clothing and the gagging, assuming that those elements meant the death was sexual and self-inflicted. These easily could have been methods for lynchers to embarrass the male before his death. This is a case that requires further scrutiny.

²¹⁸ A. Kemker. (2021, April 27). Jury finds Kenneth Gleason guilty of first-degree murder. *WAFB*. <https://www.wafb.com/2021/04/26/jury-finds-kenneth-gleason-guilty-first-degree-murder/>

²¹⁹ Democracy Now. 2000. “African-American Man Found Hanged from Tree in Bossier City, Louisiana.” Democracy Now! July 11, 2000. https://www.democracynow.org/2000/7/11/headlines/african_american_man_found_hanged_from_tree_in_bossier_city_louisiana.

²²⁰ Democracy Now. 2000.



3. DON'TAVIA BRYANT – SHREVEPORT, LA (FEBRUARY 26, 2023)

On February 26, 2023, Don'Tavia Bryant disappeared following what his family describes as a racially charged encounter with police. The 31-year-old had been on his way to meet friends at a casino near Shreveport, Louisiana.

That night, someone called 911 to report a white man carrying a gun on the property. When Bossier City police arrived, they approached Bryant – who was in the parking lot – but he suddenly ran. There is video footage of the chase and an audio recording of the 911 caller.

According to Fox 26 Houston, in the recording, the caller can be heard expressing confusion:

“He was just walking down the middle, had the gun behind his back. He was looking down the road. He’s a white guy. This is a Black guy they were chasing,” he tells police, realizing that the man being pursued – Bryant – didn’t match the description of the armed suspect.

Bryant’s mother shares that same confusion. Officers later said they lost sight of her son near the Red River, and he hasn’t been seen since. One

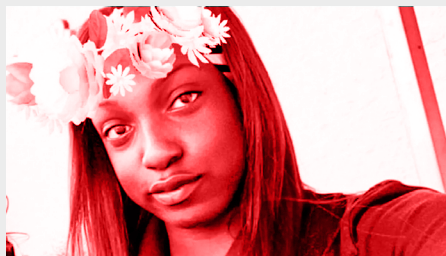
officer is heard calling out into the darkness:

“We know you’re out here. The camera sees you. Surveillance sees you. If you come out now, you won’t get bitten by the dog.”

Bryant’s mother, Ms. Nunn, told the news station she struggles to articulate her anguish:

“I can’t even describe the pain and hurt that I go through. I know people understand, but the ones that need to understand, don’t,” she says through tears. She feels that no one is listening or taking her son’s disappearance seriously, perhaps because of his prior drug charge.²²¹

“He wasn’t facing a life sentence. There was no reason for him to run or hide,” she adds.



4. GODDESS DIAMOND – NEW ORLEANS, LA (JUNE 5, 2016)

Goddess Diamond was a 20-year-old Black transgender woman living in New Orleans.²²² She worked at a retail store (Walmart, in the French Quarter) and was described by coworkers and friends as “very kind,” “very loved,” and someone with a “big heart.”²²³ On June 5, 2016, Diamond was found dead inside a burning car in New Orleans East.²²⁴ A medical examiner

²²¹ Damali Keith. 2024. “Missing Texas Man Last Seen Heading to Louisiana Casino.” FOX 26 Houston. February 13, 2024. <https://www.fox26houston.com/news/missing-texas-man-last-seen-heading-to-louisiana-casino>.

²²² Mari Brighe. 2016. “Trans Woman Killed in New Orleans, Police Considering Hate Crime.” Advocate.com. June 16, 2016. <https://www.advocate.com/crime/2016/6/15/trans-woman-killed-new-orleans-police-considering-hate-crime>.

²²³ Brighe, 2016.

²²⁴ “Devin Diamond Murdered or Death by Force in New Orleans, Louisiana.” 2016. Crimesolverscentral.com. 2016. <https://crimesolverscentral.com/homicide/11196?>

later determined that she died from blunt force trauma, not from the fire – meaning she had been killed before the car was set alight.²²⁵ Her death was ruled a homicide with arson.²²⁶ Authorities said they were investigating the case as potential hate-related violence, but as of the most recent public reporting, no suspect has been identified or arrested, and the motive remains undetermined.²²⁷



5. JOCK MAURICE MCKINNEY (AKA “VALARIE”) – SHREVEPORT, LA (JULY 12, 2013)

On July 12, 2013, at about 1:00 a.m., police responded to an assault and battery call in the 5600 block of Kennedy Drive in Shreveport (in the Mooretown neighborhood).²²⁸ There, they found Jock Maurice McKinney, age 50, lying in the street with a gunshot wound to the lower body.²²⁹ McKinney was transported to LSUHSC hospital, where he later died from their injuries.²³⁰ McKinney was known to friends as “Valarie.” Valarie was an openly gay man who often dressed

in women’s clothing.²³¹ Friends and community members believe McKinney’s murder may have been motivated by bias against his sexual orientation or gender expression.²³² As of the most recent publicly available records, no suspect has been publicly identified or charged in connection with McKinney’s death.²³³



6. QUEASHA D. HARDY – BATON ROUGE, LA (JULY 27, 2020)

Queasha Hardy was a Black transgender woman, described by friends and community members as a hairstylist, business-owner, and beloved member of her community.²³⁴ On July 27, 2020, her body was found in the street in the Windsor Place neighborhood on the east side of Baton Rouge. Police and media reported she had sustained fatal gunshot wounds and died at the scene.²³⁵ The shooting occurred in broad daylight – initial reports indicate the victim was discovered around 1:15 p.m. It was one of many violent deaths of transgender and gender-nonconforming people reported nationwide at that time.²³⁶

²²⁵ Brighe, 2016.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Brighe, 2016.

²²⁸ “Jock Maurice McKinney (1962-2013) - Find a Grave...” 2015. Findagrave.com. 2015. https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/151267287/jock_maurice-mckinney.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Find A Grave, 2015.

²³¹ “Remembering Our Dead - Jock Maurice McKinney (‘Valarie’) (12 Jul 2013).” 2018. Remembering Our Dead. 2018. https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/reports/2013/07/12/jock-maurice-mckinney-valarie_shreveport-louisiana-usa_92a0f3fc.

²³² Ibid.

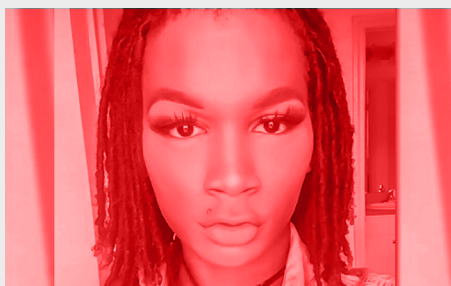
²³³ Angela Thomas. 2013. “Shooting in Mooretown Area Leaves Shreveport Man Dead.” News Radio 710 KEEL. July 12, 2013. <https://710keel.com/shooting-in-mooretown-area-leaves-shreveport-man-dead/>.

²³⁴ Elliott Kozuch. 2020. “HRC Mourns Queasha D Hardy, Black Trans Woman Killed in Louisiana.” HRC. July 28, 2020. <https://www.hrc.org/news/hrc-mourns-queasha-d-hardy-black-trans-woman-killed-in-louisiana>.

²³⁵ “Remembering Our Dead - Queasha Hardy (27 Jul 2020).” 2020. Remembering Our Dead. 2020. https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/reports/2020/07/27/queasha-hardy_baton-rouge-louisiana-usa_99e988ea.

²³⁶ Sue. 2020. “22-Year-Old Black Trans Woman Queasha D. Hardy Shot to Death in Baton Rouge - Pittsburgh Lesbian Correspondents.” Pittsburgh Lesbian Correspondents - Pittsburgh’s LGBTQ Blog since 2005 ... July 28, 2020. <https://www.pghlesbian.com/2020/07/22-year-old-black-trans-woman-queasha-d-hardy-shot-to-death-in-baton-rouge/>.

In the immediate aftermath, major civil rights and LGBTQIA+ organizations – including Human Rights Campaign (HRC) and New York City Anti-Violence Project (AVP) – issued statements mourning Hardy’s death and calling for justice.²³⁷ As of the most recently available public information, no suspect has been publicly identified or charged in connection with Hardy’s killing. Police have asked for information from the public, but no publicly disclosed breakthroughs have been reported.²³⁸



7. POOH JOHNSON (AKA “TITANIZER MUA”) – SHREVEPORT, LA (AUGUST 23, 2021)

In the early morning hours of August 23, 2021, local police in Shreveport, Louisiana were called to check on a vehicle parked behind a home on the 300-block of W 74th Street, in the Cedar Grove neighborhood. Officers arrived around 5:30 a.m. to discover the body of 25-year-old Pooh Johnson inside, having suffered multiple gunshot wounds. She was pronounced dead at the scene.²³⁹

In the wake of her death, local law enforcement opened a homicide investigation and ordered an autopsy.²⁴⁰ Authorities encouraged anyone with information to contact the Shreveport Police Department or Caddo-Shreveport Crime Stoppers; a reward was offered for information leading to an arrest.²⁴¹

Advocacy organizations joined family and community members in mourning her death. Human Rights Campaign (HRC) publicly recognized Johnson as a victim of anti-transgender violence, marking her as at least the 35th transgender or gender-nonconforming person killed in the U.S. in 2021.²⁴² The National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) also issued a statement condemning the violence and calling for accountability.²⁴³

Family members told media and advocacy groups that Johnson was transgender, and many believe her gender identity may have played a role in her killing.²⁴⁴ No suspect has been publicly identified or charged in connection with Johnson’s murder.²⁴⁵

²³⁷ Kozuch, 2020.

²³⁸ TDoR Trans Lives Matter, 2020.

²³⁹ “Remembering Our Dead – Pooh Johnson (‘Titanizer Mua’) (23 Aug 2021).” 2021. Remembering Our Dead. 2021. https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/reports/2021/08/23/pooh-johnson-titanizer-mua_shreveport-louisiana-usa_16aace3b.

²⁴⁰ “Pooh Johnson Murdered or Death by Force in Shreveport, Louisiana.” 2021. Crimesolverscentral.com. 2021. <https://crimesolverscentral.com/homicide/142155>.

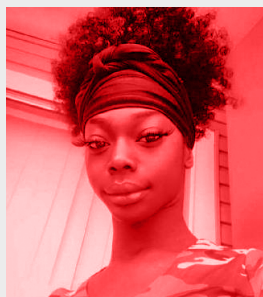
²⁴¹ Violet Lhant. 2021. “HRC Mourns Pooh Johnson, Black Transgender Woman Killed in Louisiana.” HRC. August 31, 2021. <https://www.hrc.org/news/hrc-mourns-pooh-johnson-black-transgender-woman-killed-in-louisiana>.

²⁴² Lhant, 2021.

²⁴³ “The National Black Justice Coalition Mourns the Death of Pooh Johnson – NBJC.” 2021. Nbjc.org. 2021. <https://nbjc.org/nbjc-mourns-the-death-of-pooh-johnson/>.

²⁴⁴ “Transgender Woman Murdered in Shreveport Monday, Family Says It Was a Hate Crime.” 2021. Planetrans.org. 2021. <https://www.planetrans.org/2021/08/transgender-woman-murdered-in.html>.

²⁴⁵ “Louisiana Police Don’t Know Who Killed This 25-Year-Old Trans Woman or Why – LGBTQ Nation.” 2021. LGBTQ Nation. September 2021. <https://www.lgbtqnation.com/2021/09/louisiana-police-dont-know-killed-25-year-old-trans-woman/>.



8. BROOKLYN DESHAUNA SMITH – SHREVEPORT, LOUISIANA (OCTOBER 7, 2020)

On October 7, 2020, police in Shreveport responded to a report of a deceased person inside an apartment at a complex on the 7200 block of Bernstein Avenue. When officers arrived, they found Brooklyn DeShauna Smith – a 20-year-old Black transgender woman – dead from a gunshot wound.²⁴⁶ Friends and community members described Smith as bright, hopeful, and full of promise. She was studying cosmetology at a local community college and working at a call-center job.²⁴⁷ Authorities publicly stated they were “working to determine if gender identification was a factor” in her death.²⁴⁸ As of the last publicly available reporting, no suspect has been identified or charged, and the case remains unsolved.²⁴⁹ Her age – only 20 – underscores how young many victims are. She had recently celebrated her birthday and was working toward a career, yet her life was brutally cut short.²⁵⁰



9. KEEVA SCATTER – BATON ROUGE, LA (OCTOBER 15, 2021)

Keeva Scatter was a 34-year-old Black transgender woman.²⁵¹ On October 15, 2021, police responded to a call and found her body in a grassy field in the 4100 block of W. Brookstown Drive (near Prescott Road), in Baton Rouge.²⁵² According to officials, Keeva died from a gunshot wound.²⁵³ Her death was officially investigated as a homicide.²⁵⁴

As of the most recent publicly available information, no suspect has been publicly identified or charged in connection with her death.²⁵⁵ According to available public-records requests, the local police department has refused to release investigatory records (other than maybe the initial report), citing an “open investigation.” As a result, many investigative details – e.g., on the firearm, ballistics, leads – remain inaccessible to the public.²⁵⁶

²⁴⁶ “Remembering Our Dead - Brooklyn DeShauna Smith (7 Oct 2020).” 2020. Remembering Our Dead. 2020. https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/reports/2020/10/07/brooklyn-deshuna-smith_shreveport-louisiana-usa_fed99fe5.

²⁴⁷ “HRC Mourns Brooklyn Deshuna, Black Trans Woman Killed in Louisiana - HRC.” 2020. Human Rights Campaign. October 9, 2020. <https://www.hrc.org/news/hrc-mourns-brooklyn-deshuna-black-trans-woman-killed-in-louisiana>.

²⁴⁸ Trudy Ring. 2020. “Trans Homicides Reach Tragic Milestone with Louisiana Woman’s Death.” Advocate.com. October 9, 2020. <https://www.advocate.com/crime/2020/10/09/trans-homicides-reach-tragic-milestone-louisiana-womans-death>.

²⁴⁹ “Brooklyn DeShauna Smith Murdered or Death by Force in Shreveport, Louisiana.” 2020. Crimesolverscentral.com. 2020. <https://crimesolverscentral.com/homicide/142605>.

²⁵⁰ Remembering Our Dead. 2020.

²⁵¹ “Remembering Keeva Scatter, Black Trans Woman Killed in Baton Rouge,....” 2022. HRC. February 11, 2022. <https://www.hrc.org/news/remembering-keeva-scatter-black-trans-woman-killed-in-baton-rouge-louisiana>.

²⁵² “Remembering Our Dead - Keeva Scatter (15 Oct 2021).” 2021. Remembering Our Dead. 2021. https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/reports/2021/10/15/keeva-scatter-baton-rouge-louisiana-usa_270af3c4.

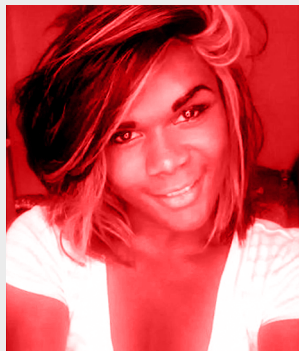
²⁵³ Remembering Our Dead. 2021.

²⁵⁴ “Battlerack Scatter Murdered or Death by Force in Baton-Rouge, Louisiana.” 2021. Crimesolverscentral.com. 2021. <https://crimesolverscentral.com/homicide/142079>.

²⁵⁵ [Crimesolverscentral.com](https://crimesolverscentral.com), 2021.

²⁵⁶ “Keeva Scatter (Baton Rouge Police Department).” 2024. MuckRock. March 25, 2024. <https://www.muckrock.com/foi/baton-rouge-east-baton-rouge-16213/keeva-scatter-baton-rouge-police-department-161128/>.

The fact that her body was found in a public field – rather than in a private or concealed place – underscores the brazenness of violence faced by transgender people. The lack of arrests or public updates illustrates how many of these cases go unsolved, leaving families and communities without closure.



10. CIARA MCELVEEN – NEW ORLEANS, LA (FEBRUARY 27, 2017)

On February 27, 2017, McElveen – a Black transgender woman – was found stabbed in the 7th Ward of New Orleans. Police responded to a stabbing call on Columbus Street/North Claiborne Avenue just before 9 a.m. and discovered her suffering from multiple stab wounds. She was taken to the hospital, where she later died.²⁵⁷ Witnesses described a man exiting a black two-door car (a vehicle of interest), stabbing the victim while she sat in the vehicle, then dragging her out, slamming her head to the ground, and fleeing.²⁵⁸

McElveen was known for doing outreach work with the homeless community. After news of her death, LGBTQIA+-advocacy organizations mourned her, raised public awareness, and called for justice.²⁵⁹

A few months after the killing, on July 18, 2018, police issued a warrant for second-degree murder for Leonard Ward, age 55, identifying him as a “person of interest” in McElveen’s death.²⁶⁰ The local police department has not publicly released evidence that identifies a definitive motive (e.g. anti-trans bias) or established whether a hate crime enhancement is being pursued.²⁶¹

11. GITHE GOINES – NEW ORLEANS (DECEMBER 29, 2011)

Githe Goines was a 23-year-old Black transgender woman.²⁶² The local coroner determined that she had been strangled to death.²⁶³ Her death was recorded as the 198th homicide in New Orleans in 2011.²⁶⁴ According to reporting from LGBTQIA+ / anti-violence memorial efforts, Goines had been reported missing roughly two weeks before her body was found.²⁶⁵

²⁵⁷ Aaron E. Looney. 2017. “Person of Interest Sought in Homicide on Columbus Street - NOPD News.” Nopdnews.com. 2017. <https://nopdnews.com/post/april-2017/person-of-interest-sought-in-homicide-on-columbus/>.

²⁵⁸ Sue. 2017. “Ciara McElveen 2nd Trans Woman of Color Murdered during Mardi Gras Weekend - Pittsburgh Lesbian Correspondents.” Pittsburgh Lesbian Correspondents - Pittsburgh’s LGBTQ Blog since 2005 ... February 28, 2017. <https://www.pghlesbian.com/2017/02/ciara-mcelveen-2nd-trans-woman-of-color-murdered-during-mardi-gras-weekend-2/>.

²⁵⁹ “NCAVP Mourns the Homicide of Ciara McElveen, a Black Transgender Woman Killed in New Orleans, Louisiana; the 6th Reported Killing of a Transgender/Gender Non-Conforming Person NCAVP Has Responded to in 2017 - NYC Anti-Violence Project.” 2017. NYC Anti-Violence Project. February 28, 2017. <https://avp.org/2017/02/28/ncavp-mourns-homicide-ciara-mcelveen-black-transgender-woman-killed-new-orleans-louisiana-6th-reported-killing-transgendergender-non-conforming-person-ncavp-responded/>.

²⁶⁰ “Remembering Our Dead - Ciara McElveen (27 Feb 2017).” 2017. Remembering Our Dead. 2017. https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/reports/2017/02/27/ciara-mcelveen_new-orleans-louisiana-usa_ab77e952.

²⁶¹ Juan Sanchez. 2017. “Two Deaths of Transgender Women in New Orleans Not Related, NOPD Says.” WDSU. March 2017. <https://www.wdsu.com/article/nopd-gives-update-on-transgender-deaths/9079907>.

²⁶² “A Report from the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs.” 2011. Accessed December 9, 2025. <https://avp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/NCAVP-IPV-Report-2016.pdf>.

²⁶³ AVP.org, 2011.

²⁶⁴ “Orlando Goines Murdered or Death by Force in New Orleans, Louisiana.” 2022. Crimesolverscentral.com. 2022. <https://crimesolverscentral.com/homicide/11717>.

²⁶⁵ Aida Manduley. 2012. “NCAVP Monthly Update: Reports of Violence Affecting LGBTQH Communities in December 2011 - Aida Manduley, LICSW.” Aida Manduley, LICSW. January 26, 2012. <https://aidamanduley.com/ncavp-monthly-update-reports-of-violence-affecting-lgbtqh-communities-in-december-2011/>.



12. CHYNA GIBSON – NEW ORLEANS, LA (FEBRUARY 25, 2017)

Gibson, 31, was fatally shot on Saturday, Feb. 25, 2017, at approximately 8:30 p.m., outside the Bella Plaza shopping center on the 4300 block of Downman Road in New Orleans East. Police discovered her body between two parked cars in front of a clothing store, suffering from multiple gunshot wounds. Residents in the area reported hearing between eight and ten shots.²⁶⁶

Family members and close friends, including Brown, said Gibson was a transgender woman and a lifelong New Orleans resident who traveled nationwide performing in drag shows. She was also widely known by her stage name, Chyna Doll Dupree. She had been in town celebrating Mardi Gras. Chyna's murder happened two days before Ciara McElveen's. Police at the time did not think the two cases were connected.



13. JAQUARRIUS HOLLAND – MONROE, LA (FEBRUARY 19, 2017)

Jaquarrius Holland was an 18-year-old Black transgender woman who was fatally shot on February 19, 2017, in Monroe, Louisiana during what authorities described as a verbal altercation with another person.²⁶⁷ Initial local news reports misgendered her, and her identity as a transgender woman only became widely acknowledged after friends and advocates corrected the record on social media.²⁶⁸

Police issued a warrant charging a suspect with second-degree murder in connection with her death.²⁶⁹ Holland's killing was part of a series of violent deaths of transgender women of color in Louisiana in early 2017, drawing attention from LGBTQIA+ advocacy groups about the disproportionate violence faced by transgender people.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁶ Beau Evans. 2017. "A Hole in Our Hearts": Family, Friends Mourn Murder Victim Chyna Gibson." NOLA.com. March 2, 2017. https://www.nola.com/news/crime_police/a-hole-in-our-hearts-family-friends-mourn-murder-victim-chyna-gibson/article_105599e9-dc36-53a7-b8f2-9e2f3d5205f4.html.

²⁶⁷ Mathew Rodriguez. 2017. "Jaquarrius Holland, 18-Year-Old Trans Woman, Killed in Louisiana, Misgendered in Reports." Mic. February 28, 2017. <https://www.mic.com/articles/169896/jaquarius-holland-18-year-old-trans-woman-killed-in-louisiana-misgendered-in-reports>.

²⁶⁸ Rodriguez, 2017.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ "HRC Mourns Jaquarrius Holland, Third Black Trans Woman Killed In...." 2017. HRC. February 28, 2017. <https://www.hrc.org/news/hrc-mourns-jaquarrius-holland-third-black-trans-woman-killed-in-louisiana-t>.

PATTERNS AND FINDINGS

Several patterns repeatedly arose while examining the Louisiana cases. First, there was systemic neglect and mishandled investigations. Many cases lacked timely autopsies, thorough evidence collection, or transparent reporting.

Second, in a number of the cases, law enforcement were the perpetrators. Officers were directly involved in multiple killings and cover-ups, particularly during post-Katrina chaos.

Third, there were several LGBTQ lynchings, specifically of transgender individuals. Black transgender victims faced heightened risks due to intersecting biases.

Fourth, a high number of the Louisiana cases have been brought to justice, reflecting a pattern that JULIAN has not seen in other states.

One prominent finding was the increase in MDLs in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. In that aftermath, New Orleans was not only devastated by natural forces but also plunged into a profound social and racial crisis, amplified by governmental inaction and a heavy militarized response. James Ridgeway characterized the city's condition as "no less than a war, in which victims whose only crimes were poverty and blackness were treated as enemies of the state." While civilian aid remained scarce, private security forces including Blackwater contractors were deployed, often armed with automatic rifles and operating under federal contracts or deputized authority from the state governor. National Guard troops framed their mission as fighting an "insurgency," while local police confiscated civilian weapons. Simultaneously, private security personnel for wealthy residents

openly carried assault rifles, highlighting a stark contrast between the protection of property and the neglect of human life.²⁷¹

Community-led relief efforts faced systematic hostility. Groups like the Common Ground Collective were surveilled, harassed, or infiltrated, as in the case of co-founder Brandon Darby, who became a federal informant. Volunteers were sometimes treated as criminals, forcing reliance on white volunteers to safely deliver aid.

Collectively, these accounts depict post-Katrina New Orleans as a city transformed into a militarized, racially polarized landscape. The convergence of private security forces, armed citizens, government inaction, and systemic racism created a dangerous environment for ordinary residents – especially Blacks – who faced not only the challenges of survival and reconstruction but also the threat of targeted violence. Even as community members sought to aid one another, they navigated a city governed by fear, militarized control, and racialized hostility, illustrating the social and human costs that compounded the physical devastation of the hurricane.

The reviewed cases and moments in time illustrate an ongoing pattern of racial and identity-based violence in Louisiana, revealing systemic failures in investigation and accountability. These incidents, whether classified as MDLs or not, demonstrate that historical forms of terror persist in altered forms. Addressing these issues requires structural reforms, robust oversight, and societal commitment to justice.

²⁷¹ James Ridgeway. 2009. "The Secret History of Hurricane Katrina." Mother Jones. August 28, 2009. <https://www.motherjones.com/environment/2009/08/secret-history-hurricane-katrina/>.

Rocky Ford, Miss., lynching Photograph shows a crowd of white men prior to lynching an African-American man, J.P. Ivy. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print>

LYNCHINGS IN MISSISSIPPI

What most people don't know is it's still going on. I've heard of other lynchings in Mississippi. You hear stuff on the news. ...But I never put in my head what's going on, until it happened to my son.

— TAMMY TOWNSEND

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

BETWEEN 1877 AND 1950, MORE THAN 654 AFRICAN-AMERICANS WERE LYNCHED IN MISSISSIPPI, THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF RECORDED LYNCHINGS IN ANY U.S. STATE DURING THAT PERIOD.²⁷² THESE KILLINGS WERE NOT RANDOM EXPLOSIONS OF MOB RAGE BUT SYSTEMATIC ACTS OF RACIAL TERROR DESIGNED TO ENFORCE WHITE SUPREMACY IN THE AFTERMATH OF RECONSTRUCTION. LYNCHING SERVED AS BOTH PUNISHMENT AND PERFORMANCE—PUBLIC SPECTACLES INTENDED TO TERRORIZE BLACK COMMUNITIES AND REASSERT WHITE CONTROL OVER LABOR, POLITICS, AND SOCIAL BEHAVIOR.

The surge in lynching following Reconstruction cannot be separated from the erosion of federal power to protect Blacks. The 1876 Supreme Court ruling in *United States v. Cruikshank* marked a critical turning point. Emerging from the Colfax Massacre (1873)—in which an armed white militia slaughtered over one hundred Black men defending a Reconstruction-era government in Louisiana—the Court’s decision stripped the Fourteenth Amendment of its protective teeth, declaring that constitutional rights to due process and equal protection constrained only *state* actions, not those of private citizens.²⁷³

This ruling dismantled the federal government’s capacity to prosecute white violence under the Enforcement Acts of the early 1870s. In Mississippi, as across the South, *Cruikshank* emboldened local white militias and vigilantes who could now act with impunity. Without federal oversight, the Mississippi state apparatus became complicit in racial terror, allowing mobs to execute Black citizens in the name of “justice” without legal consequence.²⁷⁴

By the 1880s, lynching had become a ritualized instrument of control. In Leflore County (1889), for example, Richard Roscoe, a prosperous Black landowner, was lynched after refusing to sell his land to a white planter. In Carroll County (1894), Luther Holbert and his wife were tortured and burned alive before hundreds of spectators; newspapers justified the killing as revenge for a white man’s death. And in Lowndes County (1904), Will Thorne, accused without evidence of assault, was seized from jail and hanged before dawn while deputies “looked the other way.”²⁷⁵

Each of these episodes was endorsed by silence: grand juries refused to indict, coroners ruled deaths as “suicide” or “unknown causes,” and

newspapers framed victims as criminals. The public nature of these acts and the absence of legal redress reinforced a social order sustained by fear.

The Mississippi Constitutional Convention of 1890 completed the transformation from Reconstruction’s fragile pluralism to Jim Crow authoritarianism. By institutionalizing poll taxes, literacy tests, and “understanding clauses,” the new constitution disenfranchised nearly all Black voters.²⁷⁶ The loss of political power removed any institutional barrier to racial violence. Lynchings, once tools of political suppression, became instruments of daily governance—“extralegal law enforcement” that substituted for trials in a state where justice was racially defined.

While the frequency of lynching declined in the 1930s and 1940s, the logic of racial terror persisted. The decline was less a result of moral awakening than of modernization, migration, and international scrutiny: as Black Mississippians fled to northern cities and as national attention turned toward fascism abroad, local elites sought subtler methods of control.²⁷⁷

The story of lynching in Mississippi is thus not a grim anomaly but a structural feature of American racial governance. It flourished in the vacuum left by federal retreat, operated under the sanction of state complicity, and evolved to fit new political eras. Ida B. Wells, herself a native of Holly Springs, understood this continuity when she wrote that “a Winchester rifle should have a place of honor in every Black home.” Her warning underscored a truth the state refused to acknowledge: until the law itself protected Black lives, self-defense was the only justice Mississippi offered.

²⁷² Equal Justice Initiative, *Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror*, 3rd ed. (Montgomery, AL: EJI, 2017).

²⁷³ *United States v. Cruikshank*, 92 U.S. 542 (1876).

²⁷⁴ George C. Rable. 2007. *But There Was No Peace: The Role of Violence in the Politics of Reconstruction*. Athens Ga.: University Of Georgia Press.

²⁷⁵ Philip Dray. 2003. *At the Hands of Persons Unknown: The Lynching of Black America*. New York: Modern Library.

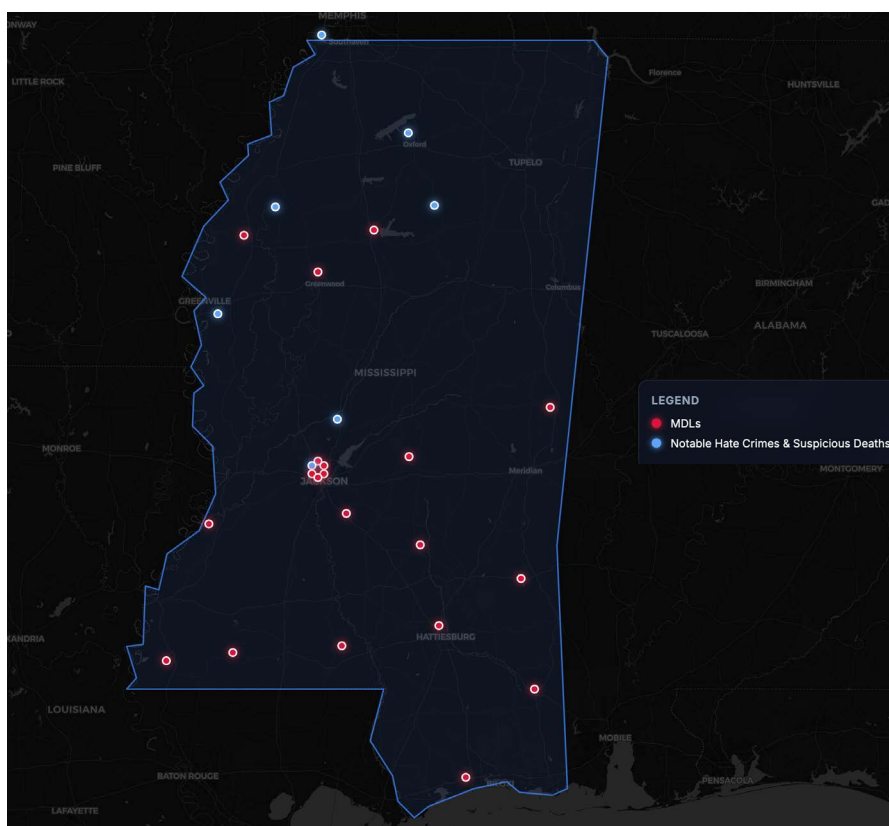
²⁷⁶ E. Tolnay Stewart and E. M. Beck. 1995. *A Festival of Violence*. University of Illinois Press.

²⁷⁷ Charles M. Payne and Adam Green. 2003. *Time Longer than Rope: A Century of African-American Activism, 1850-1950*. New York: New York University Press.

MODERN-DAY LYNCHING CASES IN MISSISSIPPI

20
SUSPECTED MDLS

7
NOTABLE HATE
CRIMES OR
SUSPICIOUS DEATHS



In Mississippi, there have been at least 20 suspected MDLs – the highest number of MDLs in the nation – and seven notable hate crimes or suspicious deaths since the year 2000. Ten MDLs occurred by hanging and two by decapitation.

1. LEON HAYES – WAYNE COUNTY, MS (JANUARY 2021)

In January 2021, Leon Hayes was found decapitated in his backyard in Wayne County, Mississippi. Mr. Hayes had been seeing white women – a mother and daughter – whose husband/father was a butcher. There was no blood at the crime scene, suggesting that Mr. Hayes was lynched elsewhere, and his blood-drained body was dropped at his home. JULIAN was asked by a law enforcement officer to conduct this investigation as he believed a thorough and proper investigation would never take place. Authorities never tested the butcher's equipment or facilities for Mr. Hayes' blood or DNA. Instead, authorities claim that Mr. Hayes' small dog chewed his head off. However, the cut that separated his head from his body was straight, suggesting it was done by a sharp object in a swift motion. This has been confirmed by an independent medical examiner.



2. WILLIE ANDREW JONES, JR. – SCOTT COUNTY, MS (FEBRUARY 8, 2018)

On February 8, 2018, it was the dead of night in Scott County, Mississippi, when Willie Andrew Jones Jr., a 21-year-old Black man, was found hanging from a tree in his white girlfriend's front yard. Within forty minutes of Willie's mother arriving on the scene and no interviews

conducted, a sheriff's department investigator told her, "It was suicide. It was nothing else." JULIAN solved the case and found every gap and inconsistency in witness statements, proving that the suspects had lied to authorities. We later discovered that the main suspect had attempted to murder another Black man just two years earlier who had also been in an interracial relationship with his stepdaughter. JULIAN won an \$11.4 million dollar civil judgment against Willie's lynchers in April 2021. JULIAN's work recently led the Mississippi Bureau of Investigations to reopen their investigation into Willie's death.



3. FREDERICK JERMAINE CARTER – GREENWOOD, MS (DECEMBER 2010)

In early December 2010, 26-year-old Frederick Carter was found hanging from an oak tree in a predominantly white neighborhood of Greenwood, Mississippi. Despite his history of mental illness, Frederick was a hardworking young man who did handy work with his stepfather. Authorities failed to conduct a thorough investigation and his death was immediately ruled it a suicide without evidentiary support. Leflore County Sheriff Ricky Banks concluded that there was little evidence to support the homicide theory, but the Mayor of Greenwood found the death to be highly suspicious due to his personal knowledge

of Carter's character. An independent medical examiner recently confirmed to JULIAN that Carter's death was a lynching.



4. ROY VEAL – WOODVILLE, MS (APRIL 23, 2004)

Roy Veal was a 55-year-old Black man who was found hanging in a tree in rural Woodville, Mississippi on April 23, 2004. He traveled to his hometown from Washington state to prepare for a lawsuit along with other family members regarding their property. He was found hanging in with a pillowcase over his head from his mother's home. The family said there may have been people who were trying to prevent the family from making progress in their legal efforts due to possible oil production on their land. JULIAN is working to locate family and friends of Mr. Veal, who may be able to shed some light on potential suspects.



5. OTIS BYRD, JR. – PORT GIBSON, MS (MARCH 19, 2015)

Otis Byrd was found near his hometown of Port Gibson, Mississippi, where his body was found hanging from a bedsheet on a tree deep in the

Mississippi woods with a skullcap over his head. Byrd was reported missing for over a week before his body was found by Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks who assisted in the search party. The FBI, the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Mississippi, and the Claiborne County Sheriff's Department all took an interest in the case and yielded no results other than a suicide ruling. One of the major hindrances in the case was the premature cremation of his body before an independent autopsy could be arranged. JULIAN believes this could be a lynching and is investigating the case now.

6. PHILLIP CARROLL – JACKSON, MS (MAY 28, 2017)

Phillip Carroll was 22-years-old when he was found hanging from a tree on May 28, 2017, in Jackson, Mississippi. Law enforcement immediately ruled his death a suicide. Initial reports claimed his hands were tied behind his back when he was found but law enforcement has disputed this allegation. His death came just weeks around the time of Jeremy Jerome Jackson's and occurred in the same area.



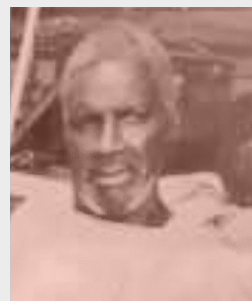
7. JEREMY JEROME JACKSON – JACKSON, MS (JUNE 10, 2017)

On June 10, 2017, Jackson, age 30, was found deceased in two separate locations in Jackson, Mississippi. His severed head was found on the steps of a home on Deer Park Street, and his burned body was discovered hours later a mile away in a wooded area. Jackson sustained a non-

fatal gunshot wound to his leg, but it was noted that he was alive during the act of decapitation. Multiple federal agencies were a part of the investigation at the appealed request for federal assistance by Jackson Police.

Kaitlyn Hampshire, a criminal psychologist and president of Hutton Forensics, explained that in a case like this, the victim would almost certainly have had to be fully unconscious—potentially drugged—and that the person carrying out the decapitation would require considerable upper-body strength and a large, extremely sharp blade. She also believes more than one person was involved, given the use of multiple weapons and the complexity of committing such a killing. According to Hampshire, the homicide likely occurred elsewhere and the head was placed at the scene afterward, since there were no major blood spatters on the stairs. The fact that the head was positioned so openly, “like a trophy,” may suggest the perpetrator intended to deliver a message.²⁷⁸

JULIAN believes that despite the different manners of death, the proximity in time and location of Jackson and Carroll’s deaths is suspicious. Both men were left on display. The nonfatal gunshot wound to Jackson’s leg is also suspicious and suggests a variety of hypotheticals. Among them is the possibility that Mr. Jackson was trying to escape his attackers and was shot in the leg in an attempt to stop him from running, creating the possibility that Mr. Jackson was hunted.



8. PERCY MIXON – JACKSON, MS (OCTOBER 2024)

Percy Nixon was reported missing in Jackson, Mississippi on October 2, 2024. His body was found 9 days later in a wooded area. Fishermen discovered his body hanging upside down by his ankles. Prior to going missing, he informed his family that he had received threats due to his interracial relationship. Unfortunately, there have not been any reports or updates about the status of his case.

9. NICK NAYLOR – PORTERVILLE, MS (JANUARY 9, 2003)

On January 9, 2003, 23-year-old Nick Naylor, from near Porterville, Mississippi in rural Kemper County, Mississippi, left his home apparently to walk his dogs. His dogs would later return home without him. Naylor’s body was later discovered hanging from a tree at a hunting club property about 11 miles from his house with a dog chain wrapped around his neck. Authorities initially ruled the death a suicide. Naylor’s family reports to JULIAN that there was a hole in Nick’s chest that looked like it could have been made by a crossbow.

²⁷⁸ Alissa Zhu. 2019. “His Severed Head Was Found on a Porch 2 Years Ago. No Killer Found.” The Clarion-Ledger. Mississippi Clarion Ledger. October 22, 2019. <https://www.clarionledger.com/story/news/2019/10/22/jackson-mississippi-man-decapitated-burned-two-years-later-update-his-killer-still-free/3933700002/>.



10. RAYNARD JOHNSON – KOKOMO, MS (JUNE 16, 2000)

The death of Raynard Johnson is one of the earliest suspected modern-day hate crimes. The 17-year-old young Black man who had been in interracial relationships with white girls was found hanging from a pecan tree outside his house in Kokomo, Mississippi, on June 16, 2000. This case is a complicated story with multiple narratives and storylines that sprawl across all of 20 years. Authorities showed up, compromised the scene, and shortly thereafter started spreading the word that Raynard had hanged himself. The FBI and U.S. Department of Justice became involved in the investigation after public outcry. Federal officials reaffirmed the suicide finding, stating they found no evidence of a hate crime. Yet, witnesses report that a man named Scottie Forbes confessed to killing Raynard. Another witness reported seeing a group of men in Raynard's yard near the time of his death. What's more, Raynard's brother tells JULIAN that he found a note in his car after Raynard's death that said, "We're coming back for you, Roger." The independent medical examiner who performed the independent autopsy, however, has confirmed to JULIAN that given new facts, it is impossible to conclude whether Raynard's death is a lynching or suicide from the state of his body alone.



11. JAKOBE LINDSEY – HATTIESBURG, MS (SEPTEMBER 17, 2024)

Jakobe Jamar Lindsey, an 18-year-old from Hattiesburg, Mississippi, tragically passed away on September 17, 2024. His body was discovered hanging from a tree near an elementary school, prompting local authorities to initiate an investigation into the circumstances of his death. Further suspicious activity occurred after the discovery of his body, such as the tree being chopped down only a few days later. He was found elevated from the ground with his arms crossed, knees slightly bent, and a sweater over his head. Hattiesburg Police ruled his death a suicide.



12. JAMES CRAIG ANDERSON – JACKSON, MS (JUNE 26, 2011)

On June 26, 2011, a group of white teenagers from the Jackson suburb of Brandon, led by 18-year-old Deryl Paul Dedmon, drove into a predominantly

Black area of Jackson with the expressed intention of “messing with” Black individuals. The group encountered 47-year-old James Craig Anderson in a motel parking lot. According to witness accounts and security video, they assaulted and robbed him. Then Dedmon deliberately backed his pickup truck over Anderson, causing fatal injuries. The perpetrators also shouted racial slurs during the attack (“white power!”) as they fled. Anderson succumbed to his injuries and died as a result of the beating and vehicle collision. His killing was ruled a racially motivated hate crime.

Dedmon was indicted on state capital murder and federal hate crime charges, pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole at the state level, along with a concurrent 50-year federal sentence. Several of Dedmon’s accomplices pleaded guilty to various federal conspiracy and hate crime charges and received sentences ranging from several years to two decades.²⁷⁹



13. ROBERT LOGGINS – GRENADA, MS (NOVEMBER 29, 2018)

26-year-old Robert Loggins was arrested on November 29, 2018 and taken into custody by Grenada Police after a call was received for

a potential burglary attempt. According to video evidence, Loggins was placed in a prone position (face-down) on the floor of the jail lobby, handcuffed behind his back, and several officers and jail personnel piled on top of him and/or restrained him for several minutes. After more than three minutes of being restrained in that posture, he ceased to move.²⁸⁰ More than six minutes passed before anyone checked his pulse or breathing. Emergency medical intervention was delayed. Loggins was eventually transported to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead. The official initial classification by the state was that his death was an “accident,” attributed by state authorities to methamphetamine toxicity.²⁸¹ Use of force: According to court documents, officers used Tasers on Loggins (at least 10 times, according to one judge’s summary) and struck him with a flashlight multiple times despite him not exhibiting weaponized aggression or attempting to harm officers. A forensic pathologist, Michael Baden, reviewed the case and concluded the death was a homicide from asphyxia.^{282 283} On March 13, 2023, a federal judge ruled that the officers could be sued and rejected the argument of qualified immunity. Five officers were placed on paid administrative leave for five months following the incident.²⁸⁴

²⁷⁹ Lacey McLaughlin. 2025. “Divided We Fall: The Killing of James Craig Anderson.” Jacksonfreepress.com. 2025. <https://www.jacksonfreepress.com/news/2011/oct/05/divided-we-fall-the-killing-of-james-craig>.

²⁸⁰ Jerry Mitchell. 2023. “Grenada Officers Can Be Sued for Robert Loggins’ Death - Mississippi Today.” Mississippi Today. MS Today. March 13, 2023. <https://mississippitoday.org/2023/03/13/robert-loggins-grenada-sue/>.

²⁸¹ Mitchell, 2023.

²⁸² Ibid.

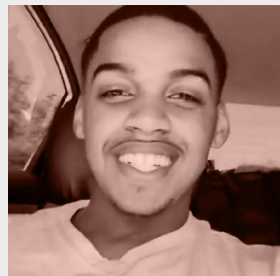
²⁸³ Jessica Jaglois. 2021. “Investigators: Questions Surround Mississippi Man’s Death in Police Custody as Lawsuit Is Filed.” <https://www.actionnews5.com/2021/05/06/investigators-questions-surround-mississippi-mans-death-police-custody-lawsuit-is-filed/>. Action News 5. May 7, 2021. <https://www.actionnews5.com/2021/05/06/investigators-questions-surround-mississippi-mans-death-police-custody-lawsuit-is-filed/>.

²⁸⁴ Mitchell, 2023.



14. TREY REED – CLEVELAND, MS (SEPTEMBER 15, 2025)

On the morning of September 15, 2025, 21-year-old Trey Reed – a student at Delta State University in Cleveland, Mississippi—was found hanging from a tree near the campus pickleball courts. Initial statements by campus and local law enforcement officials reported no immediate signs of foul play: the local coroner said there were no lacerations, contusions, broken bones or other injuries consistent with an assault. An autopsy by the Mississippi State Medical Examiner’s Office, announced on September 18, determined the manner of death to be suicide by hanging.²⁸⁵ His family disputes this claim and retained attorneys to further investigate due to a report of blunt force trauma. Colin Kaepernick graciously covered the costs for an independent autopsy.²⁸⁶ The case is also under review by JULIAN, the FBI, and the U.S. Attorney’s Office.



15. RASHEEM CARTER – TAYLORSVILLE, MS (OCTOBER 2, 2022)

25-year-old Rasheem Carter went missing on or around October 2, 2022. The day before or on the day of his disappearance, Carter reportedly sent a text message to his mother saying he feared for his life and that “white men” in three trucks were after him. On November 2, 2022, his remains were found in a wooded area south of Taylorsville, Mississippi. The remains found included his skull and spinal cord (in separate locations), and subsequent additional remains have been found in the same general area and submitted for DNA testing. Unfortunately, the medical examiner could not determine a cause and manner of death. Rasheem was also said to have notified Taylorsville Police of the concern for his safety on two separate occasions.²⁸⁷ According to Marquell Bridges of the Building Bridges Coalition in a

²⁸⁵ Freya Scott. 2025. “Lynching or Suicide?: The Death of Trey Reed.” The BPR. October 5, 2025. <https://www.bostonpoliticalreview.org/post/lynching-or-suicide-the-death-of-trey-reed>.

²⁸⁶ Nick Judin. 2025. “Autopsy Finds Trey Reed’s Hanging Death at Delta State Was a Suicide; Kaepernick to Fund Private Autopsy.” Mississippi Free Press. September 18, 2025. <https://www.mississippifreepress.org/autopsy-finds-trey-reeds-hanging-death-at-delta-state-was-a-suicide>.

²⁸⁷ Tesfaye Negussie. 2023. “A Year after Black Man Disappeared under Mysterious Circumstances, Questions Remain.” ABC News. October 2, 2023. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/rasheem-carters-mother-speaks-1-year-after-disappearance/story?id=103660675>.

statement to JULIAN, “What makes Mr. Carter’s death an MDL is that you have a 25-year-old Black man who Facetimed his mother and told her a group of white men were following him. He went to the police station twice and requested help. The nature in which he was found – He was found with his head severed. Animals do not take a man’s head off. He was also found in a sundown town and near other well-known sundown towns, such as Mize. Next, you’re telling me a Black man would be in the woods without shoes or a shirt with a stick wasn’t protecting himself? The state has also refused to call a racist killing by name.” Carter’s family has informed JULIAN that there is information that local authorities kept from them and that the case is now under federal control with updates expected soon.



16. DAMIEN CAMERON – BRAXTON, MS (JULY 26, 2021)

On July 26, 2021, 29-year-old Damien Cameron was at his family home in the rural community of Braxton, Mississippi (in Rankin County, Mississippi) when deputies from the Rankin County Sheriff’s Office responded to a reported

burglary/vandalism call. According to the sheriff’s deputies (notably Hunter Elward and Luke Stickman), Cameron fled and resisted arrest.²⁸⁸ They say he was tased, punched, and at some point was found unresponsive in the back of a patrol car. According to his family, Cameron did not initiate violence; they allege that during the arrest the deputies subdued him with excessive force – including kneeling on his back/neck for several minutes – after he said, “I can’t breathe.” Cameron was taken to hospital(s), including the University of Mississippi Medical Center, where he died from injuries sustained that day.²⁸⁹ The state’s chief medical examiner’s office ruled the manner of death as “undetermined.” But in the months after, three independent forensic pathologists reviewed the evidence (autopsy photos, records, statements) and concluded that the death *should* have been classified as a homicide – specifically due to neck/neck-compression asphyxia. They said the deputy restraint likely caused the death. As of mid-2023, no criminal charges have been filed against the deputies in the Cameron case.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁸ Mina Corpuz. 2023. “Family Wants Deputies Accountable for Man’s Fatal Injuries.” Mississippi Today. June 22, 2023. <https://mississippitoday.org/2023/06/22/family-wants-rankin-sheriff-deputies-accountable-in-death-of-son/>.

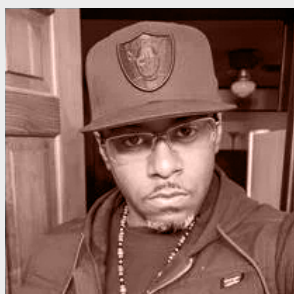
²⁸⁹ Erin Pickens. 2021. “‘I Don’t Understand Why It Led to That Point’: Mother of Man Who Died in Custody Wants Answers.” WAPT. July 29, 2021. <https://www.wapt.com/article/mother-of-man-who-died-in-rankin-county-custody-speaks-out/37159125>.

²⁹⁰ Nate Rosenfield and Brian Howey. 2023. “New Evidence Raises Questions in Controversial Mississippi Law Enforcement Killing.” Mississippi Today. August 22, 2023. <https://mississippitoday.org/2023/08/22/new-evidence-controversial-law-enforcement-killing/>.



17. KENNETH BROWN – JACKSON, MS (OCTOBER 31, 2022)

At approximately 1:29 a.m., a doorbell camera recorded Kenneth Brown on the front porch of his Jackson home, visibly anxious and scanning his surroundings. He told a relative that a group of white men were chasing him and firing shots. That was the last time anyone heard from him. He has not been seen since.²⁹¹



18. TRUMAINE WHITE – LIBERTY, MS (OCTOBER 4, 2024)

41-year-old Trumaine White was a truck driver from Liberty, Mississippi. He died while in custody after being beaten during an unlawful arrest. On October 4, 2024, White went to a tire shop. As he was leaving, he tossed a roll of paper towels out the window of his truck. One of the workers called the police, saying he threw a plastic bag filled with a white powdery substance.

While eating at a nearby diner, police arrested and assaulted White. He died the night of his arrest at the Amite County Jail.²⁹² Records show that White didn't have any charges during the arrest or while in custody. His mother visited him the day police arrested him. White told her the police were going to kill him. His mother stated that she was never given clarity on the charges against her son. Next to nothing about the cause of death has been revealed, but one deputy said he "was laying there like he was asleep" when found.²⁹³ The MBI opened a formal investigation into White's death and the case remains open.²⁹⁴



19. BILLY JOE JOHNSON - LUCEDALE, MS (2008)

Johnson was in an on-again-off-again relationship with a young white woman. Reports say that Johnson had run a red light and a four-way stop sign. Police pursued Johnson until the young man finally stopped. He allegedly got out of his car and walked toward the police officer, who had been in pursuit; he gave the officer his driver's license and headed back to his car, as directed. The official account is that when Johnson got back to his car, the officer heard a loud noise; he looked up to see Johnson lying on the ground, mortally wounded

²⁹¹ "The National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs)." 2025. NamUs.gov. 2025. <https://www.nam.us.gov/MissingPersons/Case#/101581?nav>.

²⁹² Quentin Smith. 2024. "'How Does Such a Minor Moment End in Death?': Family and Attorneys Seeking Answers on Inmate's Death." <https://www.wlbt.com/2024/10/30/how-does-such-minor-moment-end-death-family-attorneys-seeking-answers-inmates-death/>.

²⁹³ David Money. 2024. "Protestors Seek Answers in 2024 Amite County Jail Death." The Enterprise Journal. Enterprise-Journal. 2024. <https://www.enterprise-journal.com/protestors-seek-answers-2024-amite-county-jail-death>.

²⁹⁴ Smith, Quentin. 2024.

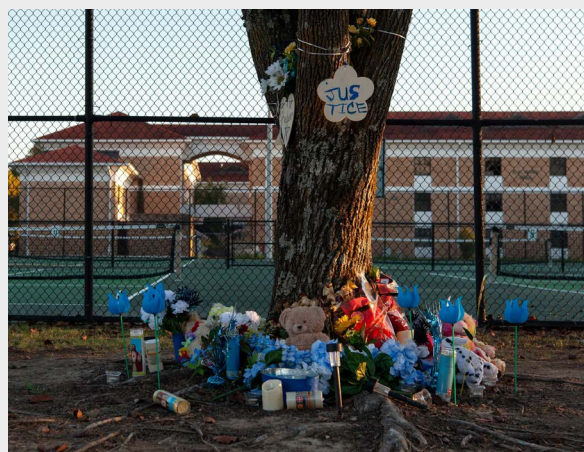
with a gunshot wound to the head, apparently self-inflicted. The weapon used was a 12-gauge shotgun, which police say was lying on top of Johnson's lifeless body. Johnson's family says the official story is problematic. It would have been difficult for Johnson to reach the trigger from the length of the barrel. A pathologist found that the barrel was in Johnson's mouth at the time of his death. Potential witnesses say they never said Johnson was suicidal, and there were flaws within the police investigation. Johnson was a star athlete with many offers from major colleges to play football and had decided to attend Auburn and would not have committed suicide, they say.²⁹⁵



20. KIMBELLA KIMBLE – GULFPORT, MS (AUGUST 6, 2022)

Kimbella Kimble was a 21-year-old Black transgender woman from Gulfport, Mississippi.²⁹⁶ On August 6, 2022, she died while in custody at the Harrison County Adult Detention Center.²⁹⁷ A video surfaced showing correctional officers using a stun-gun (taser) on her – even as she cried out that she couldn't breathe, while apparently already in distress.²⁹⁸

Her family and supporters publicly raised demands for transparency, including calls for a full independent investigation and for prosecutors to release video and records related to her detention and death.²⁹⁹ There has been no confirmed criminal charge against any officer or staff member in relation to her death. As of now, no publicly identified suspect or formal accountability has been announced.



▲ A memorial for student Demartravion "Trey" Reed at the Delta State University campus in September. Rory Doyle

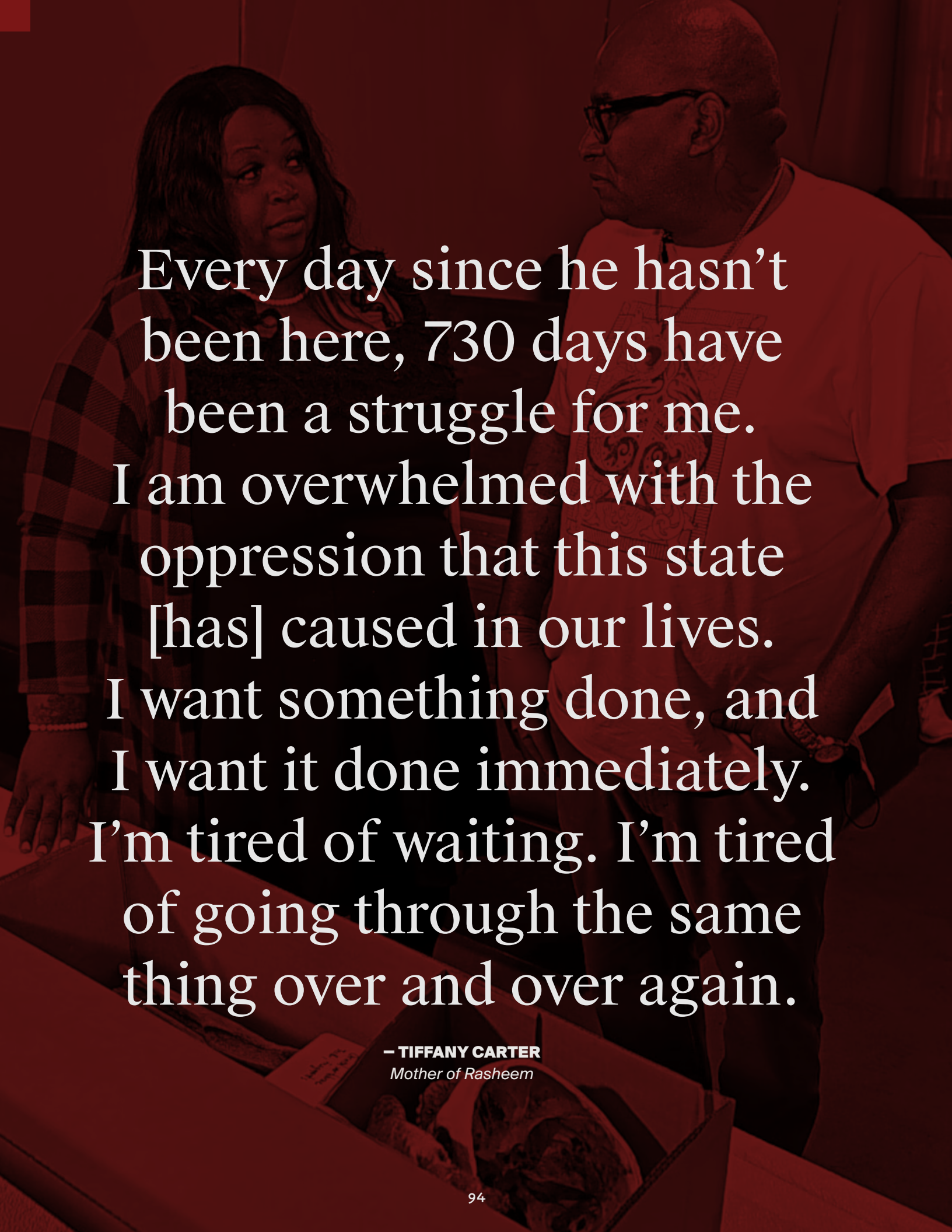
²⁹⁵ "Mississippi Goddam - Reveal." 2023. Reveal. August 31, 2023. <https://revealnews.org/mississippi-goddam-2/>

²⁹⁶ "Remembering Our Dead - Kimbella Kimble (6 Aug 2022)." 2022. Remembering Our Dead. 2022. https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/reports/2022/08/06/kimbella-kimble_gulfport-mississippi-usa_4e9a5764.

²⁹⁷ Remembering Our Dead. 2022.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Leo Carney. 2023. "Police Violence and Abuse Spark Protests on the Mississippi Gulf Coast." Mississippi Free Press. February 8, 2023. <https://www.mississippifreepress.org/police-violence-and-abuse-spark-protests-on-the-mississippi-gulf-coast/>.

A photograph of a Black woman, Tiffany Carter, and a Black man, Rasheem Carter, standing together. Tiffany is on the left, looking towards Rasheem. Rasheem is on the right, looking down. They are both wearing casual clothing. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter. White text is superimposed over the center of the image.

Every day since he hasn't
been here, 730 days have
been a struggle for me.
I am overwhelmed with the
oppression that this state
[has] caused in our lives.
I want something done, and
I want it done immediately.
I'm tired of waiting. I'm tired
of going through the same
thing over and over again.

— TIFFANY CARTER
Mother of Rasheem

NOTABLE HATE CRIMES AND SUSPICIOUS DEATHS POST-2000



1. JAMES IRBY JR. – WALLS, MS (MAY 4, 2013)

On May 4, 2013, 55-year-old James Irby Jr., a Black man from Memphis, Tennessee, was pulled over by the Walls Police Department (DeSoto County) at the corner of U.S. 61 and Church Road in Walls, MS.³⁰⁰ Irby's family has not seen him since the day he vanished. "I just want my son – I don't care if he's dead or alive," his mother, Ethel Allen, told *Action News 5*. The last known sighting of Irby was in a field in Walls, Mississippi, the location where Allen says he disappeared.

According to Allen, her son had been on his way to a funeral in Clarksdale when he was stopped by police. She says she spoke to him during the traffic stop; the officer had planned to issue a citation and then release him so he could continue on his way. But the situation changed when the officer said he smelled marijuana. "The marijuana he had was just in two small bags," Allen recalled. At some point during the vehicle search, Irby fled. Witnesses reported that he ran across Highway

61, a four-lane road, and that an officer fired a taser, striking him. Even so, Irby kept running, disappearing into a nearby wooded area.³⁰¹

His family is still baffled by how the officer was unable to catch him – especially since Irby suffered from gout and a bad foot, conditions that would have made running difficult.³⁰²



2. DOMINIQUE JACKSON – JACKSON, MS (JANUARY 25, 2021)

Dominique Jackson was a 30-year-old Black transgender woman. On the night of January 25, 2021, Jackson was found shot in her vehicle after it crashed into a utility pole at the intersection of Rose Street and Grand Avenue in Jackson. She died at the scene from the gunshot wound.³⁰³ Civil rights organizations such as the ACLU of Mississippi have cited her case as a stark example of why Mississippi needs expanded hate crime protections for LGBTQ+ people.³⁰⁴ In February 2021, police arrested a suspect in Dominique's death.³⁰⁵

³⁰⁰ Mississippi State University. 2023. "226 | Mississippi Repository for Missing and Unidentified Persons." Mississippi Repository for Missing and Unidentified Persons. September 15, 2023. <https://www.missinginms.msstate.edu/case/226>.

³⁰¹ Action News 5. 2013. "Memphis Man Missing after Pulled over for Traffic Stop." <https://www.actionnews5.com>. Action News 5. May 29, 2013. <https://www.actionnews5.com/story/22448489/memphis-man-missing-after-pulled-over-for-traffic-stop/>.

³⁰² Action News 5, 2013.

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ "Murder of Trans Woman, Dominique Jackson, Raises Need for Hate Crime Law Expansion - ACLU of Mississippi." 2021. ACLU of Mississippi. 2021. <https://www.aclu-ms.org/press-releases/murder-trans-woman-dominique-jackson-raises-need-hate-crime-law-expansion>

³⁰⁵ "Man Arrested for January 2021 Homicide of Transgender Woman." 2021. WJTV. February 3, 2021. <https://www.wjtv.com/news/jackson-police-investigate-homicide-of-transgender-woman/>.

◀ Carter's head was severed from his body, with his spinal cord recovered in an area separate from his head, according to Attorney Ben Crump. Courtesy of Rasheem Carter's family <https://abcnews.go.com/US/rasheem-carters-mother-speaks-1-year-after-disappearance/story?id=103660675>



3. JIMMIE "JAY" LEE - OXFORD, MS (JULY 8, 2022)

At the time of Lee's death, Lee was a graduate student at the University of Mississippi. Lee was last seen leaving their apartment on July 8, 2022. Two weeks later, a witness stated that Lee had been in a romantic relationship with a man named Sheldon Herrington, Jr. Herrington was subsequently arrested and indicted by a Lafayette County grand jury on capital murder charges, including kidnapping. A search of Herrington's phone revealed that he had previously researched how to strangle someone.³⁰⁶ In December 2024, Herrington's trial ended in a mistrial because the jury was unable to reach a unanimous verdict.³⁰⁷ On February 1, 2025, deer hunters discovered human skeletal remains in a wooded gully in Carroll County, Mississippi. A gold necklace matching one Lee wore was found nearby.³⁰⁸ On February 5, 2025, the Mississippi State Crime Lab confirmed the remains belong to Lee. Although remains were found and identified, the exact cause of death and manner (homicide method, location) have not been fully publicly disclosed.³⁰⁹ Herrington pled guilty and subsequently received a 40-year sentence on December 2, 2025.³¹⁰



4. JOSHUA NORMAN - PARCHMAN, MS (JANUARY 26, 2020)

Joshua Norman was serving a five-year sentence when he was found hanging from his one-man cell. The coroner found no immediate indication of foul play, but the case occurs within a troubled environment of multiple prison deaths and raises concerns about prison conditions and oversight. The cause and manner of death were pending an autopsy and medical examiner review, and no public update has appeared detailing final results.³¹¹

³⁰⁶ Donald Padgett. 2023. "Trial Date Set for Suspect Accused of Killing Gay Ole Miss Student." Advocate.com. November 7, 2023. <https://www.advocate.com/crime/jimmie-lee-suspect-trial-date>.

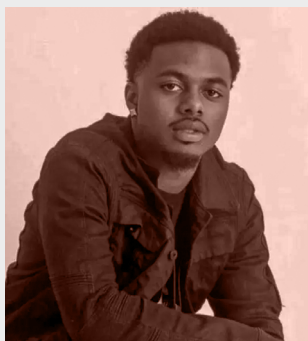
³⁰⁷ Molly Minta. 2024. "'Hopelessly Deadlocked': Judge Declares Mistrial in Tim Herrington Trial - Mississippi Today." Mississippi Today. MS Today. December 12, 2024. <https://mississippitoday.org/2024/12/11/hopelessly-deadlocked-judge-declares-mistrial-in-tim-herrington-trial/>

³⁰⁸ Christopher Fields. 2025. "Carroll County Residents' Reaction to Jay Lee's Remains Found in the Area." <https://www.wlbt.com/2025/02/07/carroll-county-residents-reaction-jay-lees-remains-found-area/>. WLBT. February 7, 2025.

³⁰⁹ Charlie Drape. 2025. "Human Remains Found in Carroll County Confirmed to Be Ole Miss Student Jimmie 'Jay' Lee." The Clarion-Ledger. Mississippi Clarion Ledger. February 5, 2025. <https://www.clarionledger.com/story/news/local/2025/02/05/carroll-county-remains-are-ole-miss-student-jimmie-jay-lee-according-to-dna-test/78251565007?gnt-cfr=1&gca-cat=p&gca-uir=true&gca-epti=z115744d00----v115744b0058xxd005865&gca-ft=184&gca-ds=sophi>.

³¹⁰ Pam Dankins. 2025. "Man given 40-Year Sentence for Killing Ole Miss Student Jimmie Jay Lee." The Clarion-Ledger. Mississippi Clarion Ledger. 2025. <https://www.clarionledger.com/story/news/local/2025/12/02/sheldon-timothy-herrington-sentenced-after-pleading-guilty-in-ole-miss-student-jay-lee-death/87555401007/>.

³¹¹ "Inmate Found Dead at Mississippi Prison." 2020. Mississippi Free Press. January 27, 2020. <https://www.mississippifreepress.org/inmate-found-dead-at-mississippi-prison/>.



5. JAMES COOPER – WASHINGTON COUNTY, MS (MAY 2023)

Cooper, aged 23, had recently moved from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to Greenville, Mississippi (in Washington County) with his girlfriend.³¹² On May 10, 2023, his family was informed that Cooper had been found hanging from a tree in a rural area – the 1000 block of Metcalfe Road in Washington County.³¹³ A GoFundMe campaign launched by his family describes Cooper's arrival in Mississippi around April 28, shortly before the incident, and expresses serious concern over the circumstances of his death.³¹⁴ Although authorities are investigating the death and the sheriff's office has identified it as a hanging, Cooper's family disputes that it was a suicide, suggesting the case may involve foul play or a cover-up.³¹⁵ The family reports that Cooper had relocated to Mississippi to seek a better life, and they question how he came to be found in this situation just weeks after the move.³¹⁶



6. TYKAVEON HARBIN – CALHOUN, MS (APRIL 19, 2025)

Tykaveon Harbin was a 21-year-old transgender woman. She was found dead in her car under a bridge in Calhoun, Mississippi on April 19th, 2025. The police claim that the vehicle ran off the road in a single-vehicle accident. Harbin's mother asserts foul play was involved. She believes police chased Harbin and ran her off the road or police drove Harbin's car off the bridge and placed her back inside. Harbin told the mother she had been harassed by police before and if it happened again, she wouldn't stop. The mother believes Harbin may have been drugged, sexually assaulted, and killed, then someone placed her at the scene of the accident, because she had only a scratch on her chest.

³¹² Niara. 2023. "Mother Seeks Answers after 23-Year-Old Son Was Discovered Hanging from a Tree Less than a Month after Moving to Mississippi." Onsite! TV. May 26, 2023. <https://itsonsitev.com/mother-seeks-answers-after-23-year-old-son-was-discovered-hanging-from-a-tree-less-than-a-month-after-moving-to-mississippi/>.

³¹³ Patrick. Ervin. 2025. "Hanging Death Being Investigated as Suicide." Delta Democrat-Times. DDT Online. 2025. <https://www.ddtonline.com/crime/hanging-death-being-investigated-suicide>.

³¹⁴ Niara, 2023.

³¹⁵ Justice Jones, 2023. "Petition for a Federal Investigation into the Suspicious Death of James Cooper." Change.org. November 2, 2023. <https://www.change.org/p/petition-for-a-federal-investigation-into-the-suspicious-death-of-james-cooper>.

³¹⁶ Niara, 2023. "Mother Seeks Answers after 23-Year-Old Son Was Discovered Hanging from a Tree Less than a Month after Moving to Mississippi." Onsite! TV. May 26, 2023. <https://itsonsitev.com/mother-seeks-answers-after-23-year-old-son-was-discovered-hanging-from-a-tree-less-than-a-month-after-moving-to-mississippi/>.



7. MESHA CALDWELL – CANTON, MS (JANUARY 4, 2017)

Mesha Caldwell was a 41-year-old Black transgender woman from Canton, Mississippi.³¹⁷ She was a well-known beautician/make-up artist in her community.³¹⁸ Friends and loved ones described her as sociable, stylish, and full of warmth – someone who “never met a stranger.”³¹⁹

On January 4, 2017, Caldwell’s body was discovered shot several times on a road outside the city limits of Canton (near Heindl Road / Old Yazoo City Road, Madison County).³²⁰ Her death was ruled a homicide.³²¹

Her death was recognized by national LGBTQ-justice groups – including Human Rights Campaign (HRC) and National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) – as a tragic instance of anti-transgender violence.³²² Caldwell’s killing was the first publicly reported murder of a transgender person in the United States in 2017.³²³



▲
Photo by: Patrick Perkins

³¹⁷ “Remembering Our Dead - Mesha Caldwell (4 Jan 2017).” 2017. Remembering Our Dead. 2017. https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/reports/2017/01/04/mesha-caldwell_canton-mississippi-usa_48e60849.

³¹⁸ Mathew Rodriguez. 2017. “Mississippi Transgender Woman Mesha Caldwell Is First Reported Trans Killing of 2017.” Mic. January 5, 2017. <https://www.mic.com/articles/164462/mississippi-transgender-woman-mesha-caldwell-is-first-reported-trans-death-of-2017>.

³¹⁹ Rodriguez, 2017.

³²⁰ “Omario Meesha Caldwell Murdered or Death by Force in Canton, Mississippi.” 2017. Crimesolverscentral.com. 2017. <https://crimesolverscentral.com/homicide/87318>.

³²¹ “HRC Mourns Mesha Caldwell, First Reported Trans Murder Victim of 2017.” 2017. HRC. January 5, 2017. <https://www.hrc.org/news/hrc-mourns-mesha-caldwell-first-reported-trans-murder-victim-of-2017>.

³²² HRC, 2017.

³²³ Feliks Garcia. 2017. “Mesha Caldwell: Mississippi Woman Is the First US Transgender Person Reported Killed in 2017 | the Independent.” The Independent. January 6, 2017. <https://www.the-independent.com/news/world/americas/mesha-caldwell-first-transgender-woman-us-mississippi-american-person-killed-in-2017-lgbtq-a7513576.html>.

PATTERNS AND FINDINGS

It was in Mississippi that JULIAN first noticed the pattern that reverberates across states: First, authorities informally rule the death a suicide shortly after they arrive on the scene. In Willie Jones Jr.'s case, for example, authorities said it was suicide within 40 minutes of arriving on the scene. In Nick Naylor's case, an investigator allegedly raised his voice at the family, telling them, "I don't care what you say. I rule this a suicide!"

Next in the pattern, the crime scene is not preserved. This dates back to the 2000 hanging of Raynard Johnson in Kokomo where authorities failed to secure the crime scene, allowing it to be contaminated. They did the same in 2018 when Willie Jones Jr. was lynched. They allowed individuals who were not affiliated with authorities to trample in and out of the scene.

Then, there is a shoddy investigation, a formal ruling of suicide, even despite strong evidence to the contrary, and the case is rarely heard of again, unless someone digs it up. Additionally, the medical examiners in many of the Mississippi cases have a problematic history (i.e., Steven Hayne; Adel Shaker). In the least, this pattern prevents accurate numbers of MDLs and hate crimes. At worst, it helps perpetuate these killings.

Another notable pattern that JULIAN discovered in Mississippi is that Black men would often go missing around the same date and place every couple of years. For example, on January 11, 2008, twenty-eight year old Clinton Javon Prator went missing from Flowood, Mississippi. On January 11, 2010, twenty-six year old Lester Raymond Jones went missing from Flowood,

Mississippi. On January 11, 2012, forty-one year old Ricky Lee Donnell went missing from Flowood, Mississippi. And on January 16, 2016, twenty-six year old Kourtenay Keefe Davis went missing from Flowood, Mississippi. These dates could be coincidental, but it is not coincidental that Flowood, Mississippi is adjacent to two of Mississippi's "sundown" towns, Pearl and Brandon, and is in a county known for its racism and brutality, especially among law enforcement.

Mississippi also has a pattern of inmate deaths in prison. For example, in 2020, there were 26 deaths in two months at Mississippi prisons³²⁴ – the most infamous of which is Parchman prison, a former plantation now known as the Mississippi State Penitentiary. On December 29, 2019, a "major disturbance" occurred at Parchman.³²⁵ In the weeks that followed, the death toll continued to mount. More than two dozen inmates housed in the prison filed suit in the United States District Court for the Northern District of Mississippi, alleging a "culmination of years of severe understaffing and neglect."³²⁶ Two celebrities filed a second lawsuit against the Department of Corrections on behalf of 152 Parchman inmates.³²⁷

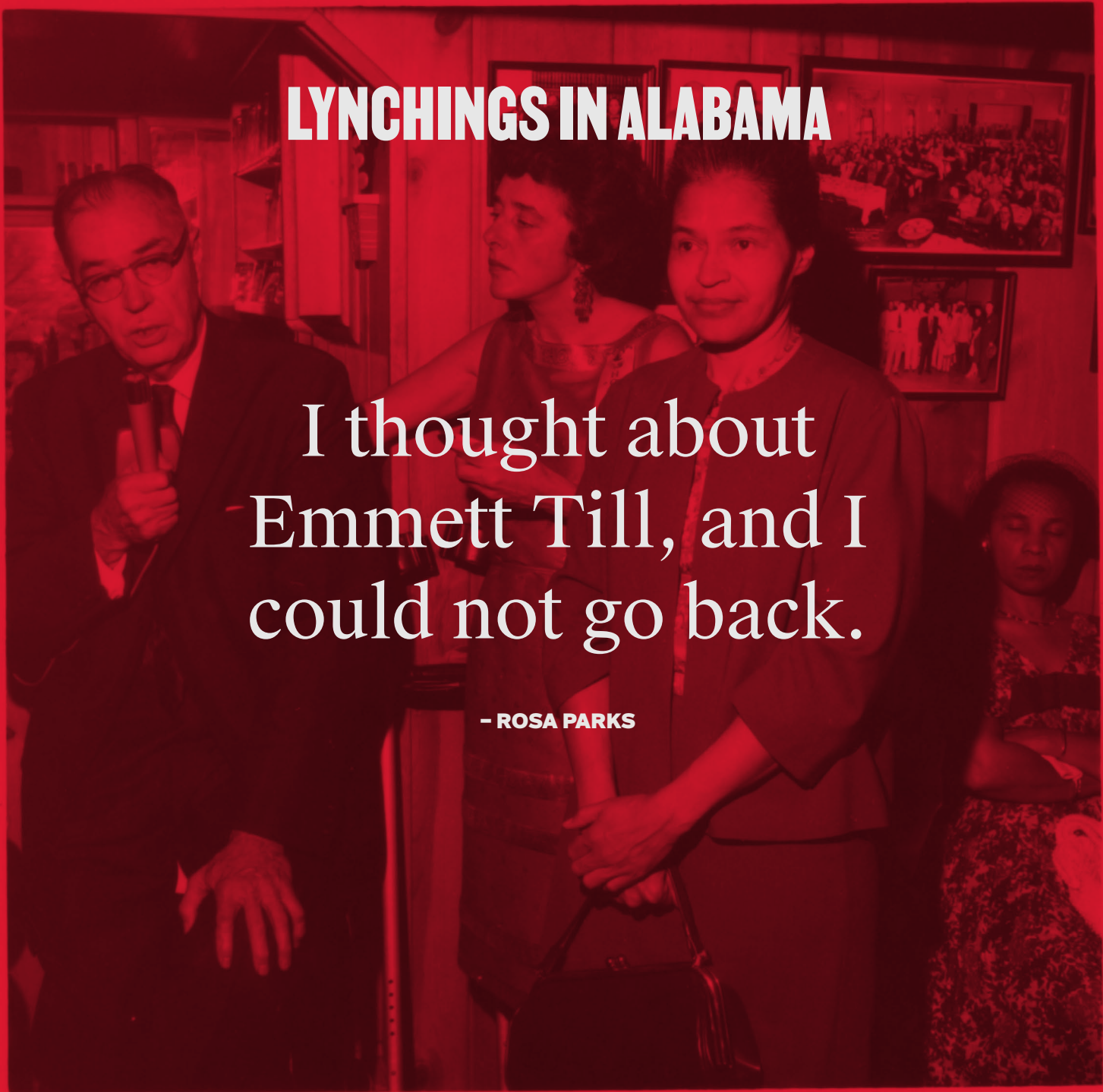
Mississippi also has the longest pattern of misclassified MDLs and sub-par investigations. This is due in part to low job requirements. To be a coroner in Mississippi, one need only obtain a high school diploma or equivalent and pass a test. Books, such as *The Cadaver King and the Country Dentist* by Radley Balko and Tucker Carrington, document the corruption and incompetence inherent in Mississippi's medical examiner system.

³²⁴ Alissa Zhu. 2020. "Inmate Dies at Parchman, Bringing Death Toll to 27 in Mississippi Prisons." The Clarion-Ledger. Mississippi Clarion Ledger. March 12, 2020. <https://www.clarionledger.com/story/news/2020/03/12/inmate-dies-parchman-making-death-toll-27-mississippi-prisons/5037239002/?gnt-cfr=1&gca-cat=p&qca-uir=true&qca-epti=z114138d00----v114138d--41--b--41--&qca-ft=162&qca-ds=sophi>.

³²⁵ Lici Beveridge. 2020. "Mississippi Prison Crisis: 18th Inmate Dies since Dec. 29, Second in 24 Hours." USA TODAY. The Clarion-Ledger. February 16, 2020. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/02/16/mississippi-inmate-deaths-18th-dies-state-prison-since-dec-29/4779704002/>.

³²⁶ Christina Maxouris. 2020. "Rappers Jay-Z and Yo Gotti Are behind a Lawsuit Targeting Mississippi's Prison Conditions." CNN. January 15, 2020. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/01/14/us/jay-z-yo-gotti-mississippi-prisons-lawsuit-trnd>.

³²⁷ Maxouris and Lynch. 2020.



LYNCHINGS IN ALABAMA

I thought about
Emmett Till, and I
could not go back.

- ROSA PARKS

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

BETWEEN THE LATE 19TH CENTURY AND THE MID-20TH CENTURY, ALABAMA STOOD AMONG THE EPICENTERS OF RACIAL TERROR IN THE UNITED STATES. ACCORDING TO DATA FROM THE EQUAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE, AT LEAST 361 AFRICAN-AMERICANS WERE LYNCHED IN ALABAMA BETWEEN 1877 AND 1950, MAKING IT ONE OF THE STATES WITH THE HIGHEST RECORDED NUMBERS OF LYNCHINGS IN HISTORY. THESE ACTS WERE NOT ISOLATED OR SPONTANEOUS; THEY REPRESENTED A DELIBERATE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SYSTEM DESIGNED TO ENFORCE WHITE SUPREMACY AND SUPPRESS BLACK ADVANCEMENT AFTER THE FALL OF RECONSTRUCTION.

◀ (June 1963) Text on back of print: "another party man unknown to me. Anne Shore, Civil Rights Congress, Anne, Rosa Parks". Visual Materials from the Rosa Parks Papers (Library of Congress).

Notable examples include the 1891 lynching of Jesse Thornton in Luverne, who was killed for failing to address a white man as “Mister,” and the 1904 lynching of Horace Maples in Huntsville, whose body was burned in front of hundreds of onlookers after he was dragged from jail. Each case reflected both the brutality and the communal nature of Alabama’s racial violence.

After the 1901 Alabama Constitution formally disenfranchised Black citizens through poll taxes and literacy tests, lynching evolved into an unofficial arm of Jim Crow governance. Violence enforced the social order where law codified inequality.

Throughout the early 20th century, lynchings were concentrated in counties such as Dallas, Lowndes, Marengo, Perry, and Jefferson, areas with large Black populations and entrenched

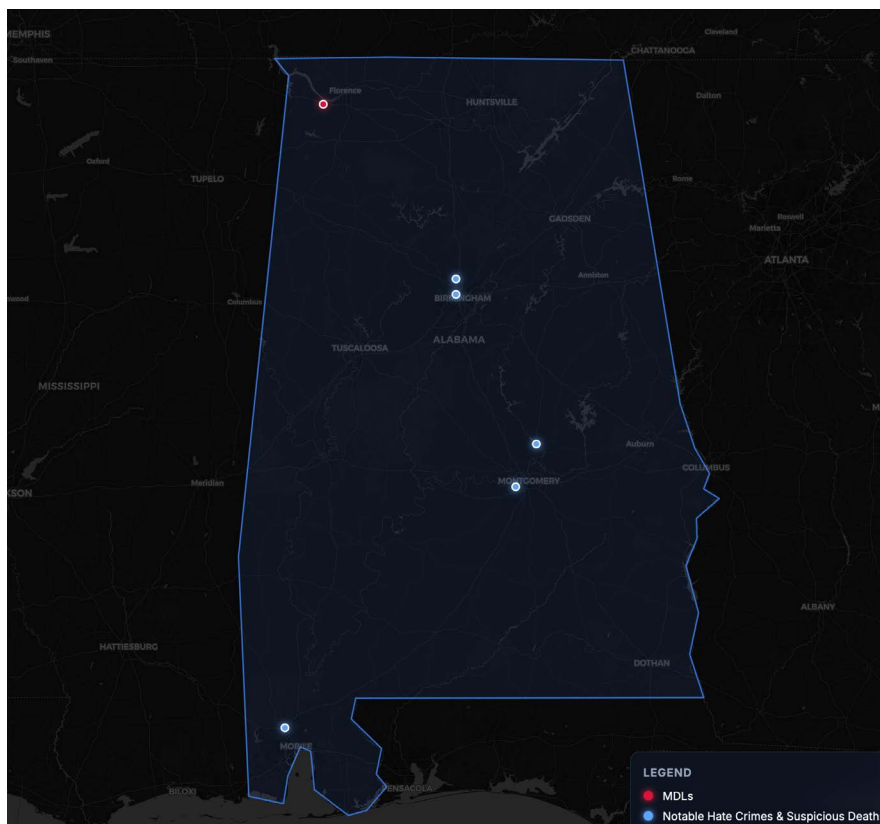
plantation economies. While most victims were men, women were also targeted – such as Mary Turner, whose 1918 lynching in neighboring Georgia reverberated across the South and mirrored the treatment of women in Alabama’s own racial terror regime.

By the 1930s, public lynchings began to decline, largely due to national condemnation and the work of anti-lynching activists, including the NAACP and local Black journalists. Lynchings in Alabama were acts of political and social enforcement, not random eruptions of mob anger. They served to uphold an entire racial caste system in which law, custom, and violence were intertwined. The legacy of those crimes remains visible today – in the economic and social disparities rooted in that terror, and in the ongoing struggle for truth, acknowledgment, and reconciliation.

MODERN-DAY LYNCHING CASES

1
SUSPECTED MDLS

5
**NOTABLE HATE
CRIMES OR
SUSPICIOUS DEATHS**



In Alabama, there has been at least one suspected MDL and five notable hate crimes or suspicious deaths since the year 2000.

They
harassed
him his
whole life.

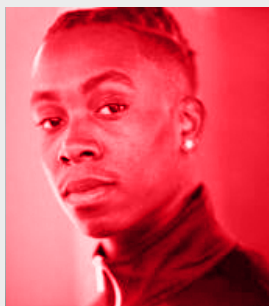
- LEIGH RICHARDSON



1. DENORISS RICHARDSON - COLBERT COUNTY, AL (SEPTEMBER 28, 2024)

Denoriss Richardson was found hanging in an abandoned house on September 28, 2024. Richardson's death was initially ruled a suicide by the Colbert County Sheriff's Office. Months prior to his death, Richardson filed a civil suit against the Sheffield County Sheriff's Office. Richardson believed he was being targeted and harassed by Sheffield County prior to his death. In the suit, he alleged "he was assaulted, denied medical attention, sprayed with tear gas and shocked with a taser while in jail." He was also urged to drop the lawsuit in exchange for the dismissal of his pending drug charges. Leigh Richardson, his widow, believes foul play may be involved since her husband did not leave a note and had no ties to the abandoned home in which he was found. He also had severe asthma, which would often lead to panic attacks. After a five-year prison sentence, Richardson was arrested at least fifteen times by Sheffield County Sheriff's Office, yet none of those arrests led to any convictions. An independent autopsy did not find any conclusive evidence of suicide. In October of 2024, the FBI opened an investigation at the request of Colbert County Sheriff Eric Ballentine.

NOTABLE HATE CRIMES AND SUSPICIOUS DEATHS POST-2000



1. MINGO DEMOND ALLEN II – BIRMINGHAM, AL (APRIL 2025)

Mingo Demond Allen II (30) went missing after leaving his apartment in the Birmingham area; he had left his car, phone, keys, wallet, and a note on his front seat.³²⁸ On April 4, 2025, his family was notified that a “John Doe” matching his description had been found and later identified as him. His body was discovered hanging from a tree in Bradford Park, near the tennis courts, with jumper cables reportedly wrapped around his neck. The case was ruled by the homicide division of the Birmingham Police Department as a self-inflicted death (i.e., suicide). Allen’s family questions that outcome, citing the unusual circumstances (left belongings behind, odd wording in the note, and being denied access to view his body or obtain body camera footage).³²⁹ Allen’s parents have reported significant challenges in obtaining information regarding their son’s death. They state that both the Birmingham Police Department and the

Alabama Law Enforcement Agency’s State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) have demonstrated limited cooperation throughout the process. In a public statement titled “*What TF Happened to Our Son?*,” the family emphasized their ongoing struggle for transparency and the lack of substantive updates since April. According to the family, two formal open-records requests submitted to the agencies were denied, and communications directed to the Mayor’s Office have not received a response.

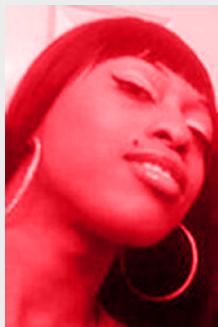


2. RICHARD EARL TRIMBLE – WETUMPKA, AL (OCTOBER 2007)

Trimble was last seen at his residence in Wetumpka, Alabama, around midnight on October 8, 2007. At that time, he was in the company of Joey Dale Ward, a 27-year-old white male. The two were reportedly traveling in a blue and tan 1987 Ford F-150 pickup truck. Since that evening, Trimble has not been seen or heard from, and Ward also disappeared approximately one week later.

³²⁸ Aisha Adams. 2025. “Mingo Demond Allen II Birmingham Case.” Nappy Thoughts. September 29, 2025. <https://nappythoughts.com/the-curious-case-of-mingo-demond-allen-ii-what-happened-to-our-son>.

³²⁹ Adams, 2025.



3. DANA MARTIN – HOPE HULL, AL (JANUARY 6, 2019)

Dana Martin was a 31-year-old transgender Black woman from Hope Hull, Alabama. On January 6, she was found in a crashed vehicle, deceased with a fatal gunshot wound to the head in Montgomery, Alabama. The local police department identified her as a male. To this day, there have been no arrests made in relation to Martin's killing.³³⁰ Even if someone is eventually identified and charged in connection with her death, prosecutors in Alabama cannot pursue a hate crime enhancement. The state's hate crime statute does not recognize sexual orientation or gender identity as protected categories under the law.



4. JAHEIM PUGH (AKA "JAHEIM BARBIE"/"BELLA PUGH") – PRICHARD, ALABAMA (DECEMBER 13, 2020)

Jaheim Pugh was a 19-year-old Black, gender-nonconforming (some sources say "trans or gender-nonconforming") person.³³¹ On December 13, 2020, Jaheim was fatally shot after leaving a Christmas party at a residence on Rosedale Avenue in Prichard.³³² Two other individuals at the party were also injured in the shooting.³³³ According to family, Jaheim used both he/him and she/her pronouns, and sometimes went by the name Bella or Jaheim Barbie.³³⁴ On the night of the shooting, Jaheim's mother said Jaheim was wearing a "rainbow-colored jumpsuit" (women's

³³⁰ R. Willis (2025). Welcome To Zscaler Directory Authentication. Retrieved October 14, 2025, from Out.com website: <https://www.out.com/news-opinion/2019/2/01/behind-first-trans-murder-2019>

³³¹ "HRC Mourns Jaheim Pugh Jaheim Barbie, Black Gender Non-Conforming..." 2020. HRC. December 23, 2020. <https://www.hrc.org/news/hrc-mourns-jaheim-pugh-jaheim-barbie-black-gender-non-conforming-teen-killed-in-alabama>.

³³² "Jaheim Oneal Pugh Murdered or Death by Force in Mobile, Alabama." 2020. Crimesolverscentral.com. 2020. <https://crimesolverscentral.com/homicide/33355?>

³³³ Crimesolverscentral.com. 2020

³³⁴ Chris Tuttle 2020. "NCAVP Mourns the Death of Jaheim 'Barbie' Pugh, a 19-Year-Old Black Gender Non-Conforming Person in Prichard, al - NYC Anti-Violence Project." NYC Anti-Violence Project. December 30, 2020. <https://avp.org/2020/12/30/ncavp-mourns-the-death-of-jaheim-barbie-bella-pugh-prichard-al/>.

clothing). She believes that this – and Jaheim’s gender presentation – motivated the killing: “They took somebody special because he wore a dress.”³³⁵

A suspect, James Lee James Jr. (33 at the time), was arrested about three days later (on December 16, 2020), and was charged with murder and two counts of second-degree assault in connection to the shooting.³³⁶ Officials have not publicly confirmed the motive.³³⁷ Despite the family’s assertion that the murder was a hate crime motivated by gender expression, local police said there was “no clear-cut motive” and no firm evidence yet that gender identity or expression was the definitive driver.³³⁸



5. HASON “JAZZ” ALFORD – BIRMINGHAM, AL (SEPTEMBER 23, 2016)

Hason “Jazz” Alford was a 30-year-old Black transgender woman.³³⁹ She was from North Carolina, and according to family members and community sources she was known as a loving person.³⁴⁰

On September 23, 2016, Alford was found fatally shot inside a room at the Kings Inn hotel in Birmingham, Alabama. Housekeeping staff discovered her body.³⁴¹ According to the reporting, gunshots were heard at the scene. Early media coverage and police reports misgendered her – referring to her by a birth name/male gender.³⁴²

A man, Denzell Thomas (age 22 at time of arrest), was indicted for her murder. The same individual was also linked to a separate shooting targeting another transgender woman.³⁴³ In June 2019, Thomas pleaded guilty to the murder of Alford (and related attempted murders/robberies targeting transgender women) and was sentenced to 25 years in prison.³⁴⁴ Prosecutors – including the Chief Deputy District Attorney – publicly stated that both victims (Alford and the other survivor) had been targeted because they were “transgender and vulnerable.”³⁴⁵

³³⁵ Andrea Ramey 2020. “Family Calls Prichard Christmas Party Killing a Hate Crime.” WEAR2. December 17, 2020. <https://mynbc15.com/news/local/family-calls-prichard-christmas-party-murder-a-hate-crime>.

³³⁶ “Man Charged with Murder in Shooting at Christmas Party.” 2020. AP News. December 17, 2020. <https://apnews.com/4ce2a8d20fc8c7c5b766393865f9672e>.

³³⁷ AP News, 2020.

³³⁸ Ramey, 2020.

³³⁹ “Hason Amin Jazz Alford Murdered or Death by Force in Birmingham, Alabama.” 2016. Crimesolverscentral.com. 2016. <https://crimesolverscentral.com/homicide/34758?>

³⁴⁰ “Remembering Our Dead – Jazz Alford (28 Sep 2016),” TDoR Trans Lives Matter, September 28, 2016, accessed December 8, 2025, https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/reports/2016/09/28/jazz-alford_birmingham-alabama-usa_b14ef63b

³⁴¹ Crimesolverscentral.com, 2016.

³⁴² Meka Beresford. 2016. “Black Transgender Woman Shot and Killed in Alabama Hotel Room.” PinkNews | Latest Lesbian, Gay, Bi and Trans News | LGBTQ+ News. October 8, 2016. <https://www.thepinknews.com/2016/10/08/black-transgender-woman-shot-and-killed-in-alabama-hotel-room/>.

³⁴³ TDoR Trans Lives Matter, 2016.

³⁴⁴ “Man, 24, Pleads Guilty in Transgender Woman’s 2016 Death.” 2016. Ksl.com. ksl.com. 2016. <https://www.ksl.com/article/46576006/man-24-pleads-guilty-in-transgender-womans-2016-death?>

³⁴⁵ “Birmingham Man Pleads Guilty in Transgender Woman’s 2016 Death.” 2019. WVTM. June 18, 2019. <https://www.wvtm13.com/article/birmingham-man-pleads-guilty-in-transgender-womans-2016-death/28082964>.

PATTERNS AND FINDINGS

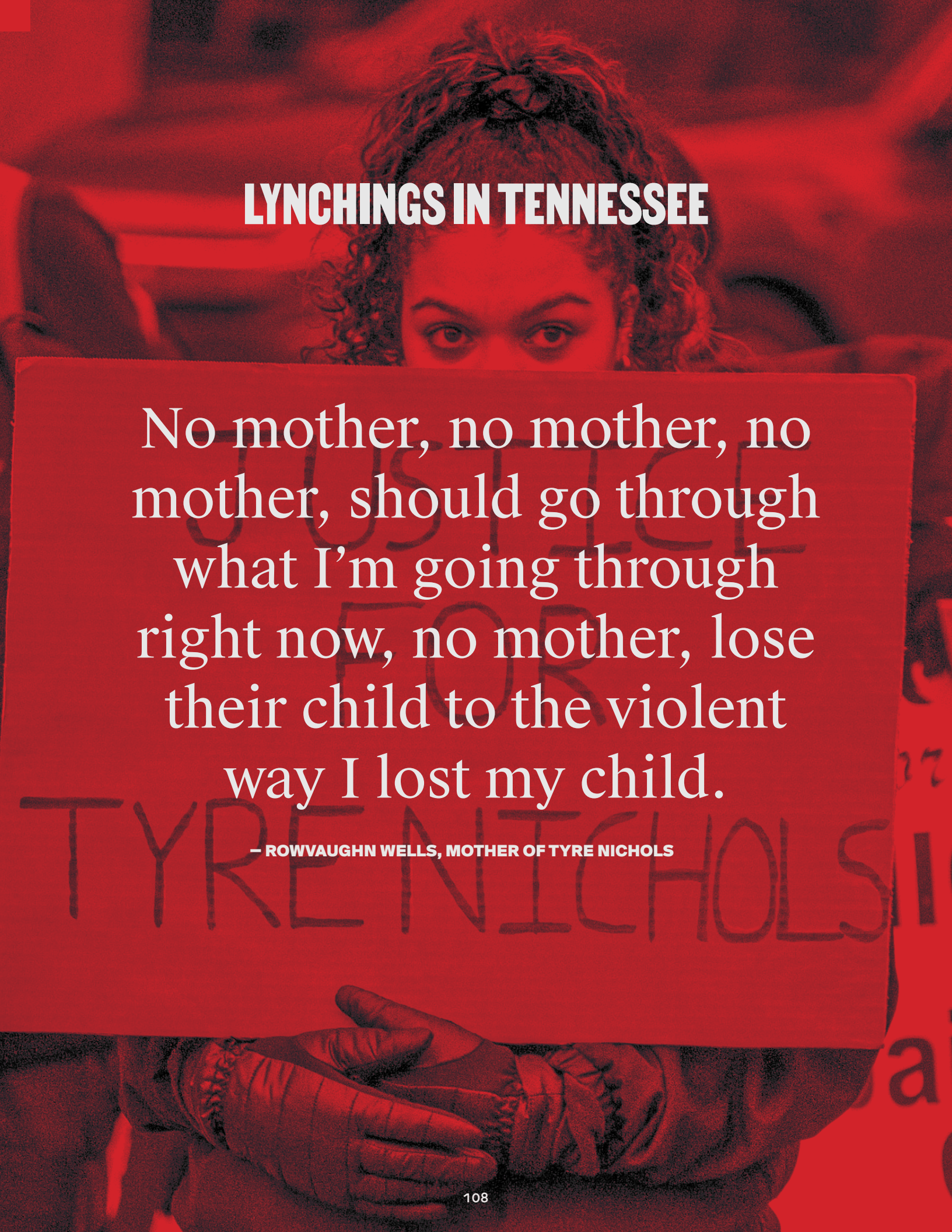
Three of the four crimes discussed above for Alabama occurred in predominantly white areas, with two occurring in the areas surrounding Montgomery. The victims were almost all Black in their late 20s or 30s.

Selma, Alabama, is a town in south central Alabama with a predominantly Black population. At least five Black people went missing from Selma between 2002 and 2010 under suspicious circumstances. Foul play is suspected in all five cases examined. JULIAN noticed the Selma missing persons cases because of their proximity to one another and the similarities between the evidence of foul play, which is largely repetitive in each case.

Due to a variety of factors, Alabama and Tennessee were the most challenging states to analyze in this study. In Alabama, autopsy reports, investigative records, and police bodycam footage are not automatically public—making external scrutiny nearly impossible unless the case attracts national attention. Local newspapers often rely on sheriff's office press releases rather

than conducting independent investigations. Additionally, national media attention typically comes only when the family or civil rights organizations mobilize, which can take months.

But because of national solidarity, one of the most notable cases is accessible and noted in this report. Denoriss Richardson's case aligns with the classic historical lynching precedent of the white community lynching Black men when they challenge power structures and threaten systems of systematic oppression. In this case, Richardson was lynched after filing a federal complaint against the local Alabama police department for discriminatory actions. This case endangered the white power structure enabled by law enforcement. When Richardson refused to buckle under pressure, his attackers attempted to suppress further resistance actions by Black residents by making an example of him. Nonetheless, while MDLs have failed to make public exposure, violent prejudice persists throughout the state in the form of hate crimes and attacks.

A woman with curly hair is holding a large white protest sign. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter. The woman's face is visible above the sign, and her hands are visible at the bottom holding the sign. The sign has text on it, which is partially obscured by the red overlay and the text blocks.

LYNCHINGS IN TENNESSEE

No mother, no mother, no
mother, should go through
what I'm going through
right now, no mother, lose
their child to the violent
way I lost my child.

— ROWVAUGHN WELLS, MOTHER OF TYRE NICHOLS

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

BETWEEN 1877 AND 1950, OVER 230 DOCUMENTED LYNCHINGS OCCURRED IN TENNESSEE. IN 1868, TENNESSEE HAD ITS FIRST DOCUMENTED LYNCHINGS WITH THE BIERFIELD & BOWMAN MURDERS AND THE LAST RECORDED CASE OF A HISTORICAL LYNCHING WAS ELBERT WILLIAMS IN BROWNSVILLE. HE WAS LYNCHED IN 1940 OUT OF RETALIATION AGAINST HIM REGISTERING BLACK VOTERS. MOST DOCUMENTED LYNCHINGS IN TENNESSEE'S HISTORY FALL BETWEEN 1877 AND 1940.

◀ Tyre Nichols protests at the Ohio State House in Columbus, Ohio
Author Becker1999 <https://www.flickr.com/photos/21426642@N07/52657239566/>

Lynchings occurred in at least 70 of Tennessee's 95 counties. Shelby County led the state (at least 18 cases), followed by Obion (at least 17). Hamilton, Davidson, and Knox counties also had multiple lynchings.

Similar to other southern states like Texas, lynch mobs in Tennessee often held public spectacles of hanging, burning, and mutilation. These mobs were often accompanied by crowds, with no accountability or prosecution, so many perpetrators escaped justice. The Trenton Massacre distinctly shows how state and federal

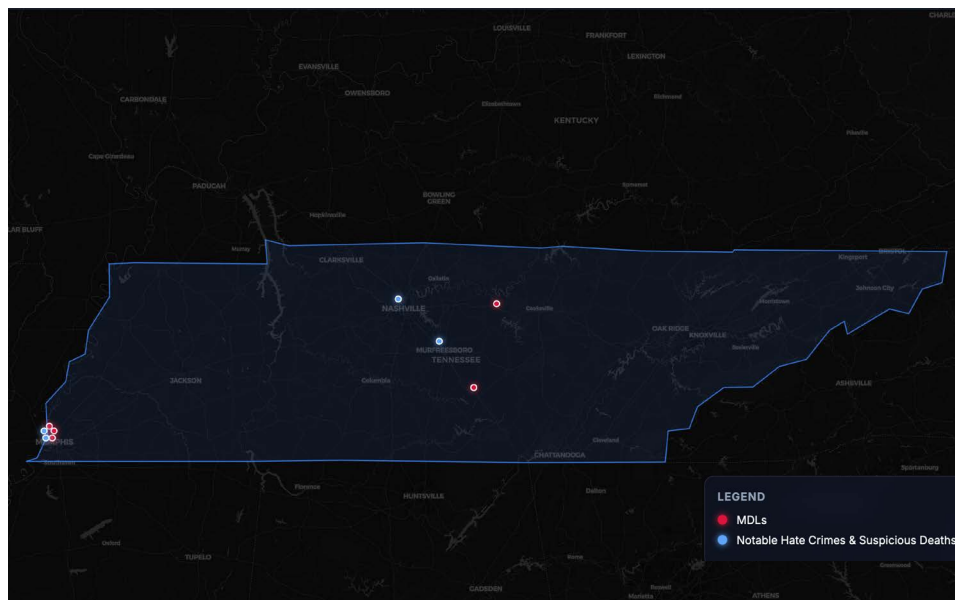
authorities failed to convict lynch mobs despite investigations. Moreover, in 1909, a Black man named Ed Johnson who had been wrongfully convicted and sentenced to capital punishment, was brutally lynched, later forcing the Supreme Court to intervene in *United States v. Shipp*, 215 U.S. 580 (1909), due to state inaction.

It must also be noted that in Tennessee, cases like that of Eliza Woods (1886) and Ballie Crutchfield (1901) demonstrate racial terror extended to women and girls too who were often targeted arbitrarily.

MODERN-DAY LYNCHING CASES IN TENNESSEE

5
SUSPECTED MDLS

4
NOTABLE HATE
CRIMES OR
SUSPICIOUS DEATHS



In Tennessee, there have been at least five suspected MDLs and at least four notable hate crimes or suspicious deaths since the year 2000. Two MDLs were at the hands of police and one was by hanging.

Tennessee’s history of racial violence continues into the modern era through state and vigilante actions that meet JULIAN’s definition of an MDL. Two cases in particular – Tyre Nichols and Robert Miller Jr. – have emerged as clear examples of MDLs, with public records, news investigations, and court filings confirming discriminatory motives, group perpetration, and extrajudicial or excessive use of force.

These incidents demonstrate the ongoing evolution of racialized violence, wherein victims are subjected to lethal harm by law enforcement or civilians in ways that recall the dynamics of historical lynching: over-policing, public spectacle, racial terror, and a lack of true accountability.



1. TYRE DEANDRE NICHOLS – MEMPHIS, TN (JANUARY 2023)

Tyre Nichols was a 29-year-old Black father, skateboarder, and FedEx employee living in Memphis. On January 7, 2023, Nichols was pulled over by the SCORPION police unit for alleged reckless driving. He was dragged from his vehicle,

fled briefly in fear, and was eventually caught and brutally beaten by at least five officers. The assault occurred in a residential area of Memphis. Nichols died in the hospital three days later. Nichols sustained blunt-force trauma, including internal bleeding and brain hemorrhaging. An independent autopsy concluded the cause of death was homicide by blunt-force trauma. Despite initial framing by police that Nichols suffered a “medical emergency,” video footage later showed the violent and prolonged beating, as well as the delay in medical care.

This case shows discriminatory targeting and racialized over-policing, multiple perpetrators using state power, the denial of medical aid and evidence of obstruction

2. RODNEY THOMPSON – MEMPHIS, TN (2009)

Rodney Thompson’s body was found hanging from a tree in his backyard on November 18, 2009 in Southeast Memphis. Neighbors cut down the body before authorities arrived. What makes this case so compelling is that investigators immediately ruled it a suicide before fully examining his body. A gunshot wound to the back of the head was found after the initial ruling for suicide. Although a chair was found next to the tree, there is still some foul play at hand. Family members are adamant that Rodney would have no reason to take his own life and did not, given the gunshot wound.



3. MYESHA SHARP – COFFEE COUNTY, TN (APRIL 2004)

Myesha Sharp was reported missing in April of 2004 around Coffee County. Her beaten and bruised remains were found days later. Social media reports an encounter with Coffee County officers that resulted in her death. Coffee County Mayor Judd Matheny took a particular interest in Myesha's case and reached out to her mother with the intent to open an investigation. Matheny's body was then found in his vehicle at his home. At the time of reports, there were no causes of death for Sharp or Matheny. One of the most compelling factors in this suspicious case is the silencing of Mayor Matheny.



4. CAMERON WILSON – LANCASTER, TN (JUNE 9, 2019)

Cameron Wilson, age 19 and a resident of Smyrna, Tennessee, was found dead on June 9, 2019 in the community of Lancaster, Tennessee (Smith County) alongside Seabowisha Lane beside railroad tracks. Wilson's body was discovered by a man going fishing around 9:30 a.m.³⁴⁶ Investigators from the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI) and the Smith County Sheriff's Office are treating the death as a homicide.³⁴⁷ In October 2019, two individuals – Donald Lee Reynolds (of Antioch) and Justin Gage Cease (of Arkansas) – were indicted for abuse of a corpse in connection with the case. Investigators say that Wilson's body was taken from another county and placed at that Lancaster location.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁶ Smith County Insider. 2019. "UPDATE: Body Found down an Embankment on Seabowisha Lane in Lancaster." Smith County Insider. June 9, 2019. <https://smithcountyinsider.com/home-page-featured/body-found-down-an-embankment-on-seabowisha-lane-in-lancaster>.

³⁴⁷ WTVF. 2019. "TBI Is Investigating the Death of a Teenager from Smyrna as a Homicide." News Channel 5 Nashville (WTVF). June 9, 2019. <https://www.newschannel5.com/news/tbi-is-investigating-the-death-of-a-teenager-from-smyrna-as-a-homicide>.

³⁴⁸ Josh DeVine. 2019. "Two Men Arrested Following Smith County Investigation." TBI Newsroom.com. October 23, 2019. <https://tbinewsroom.com/2019/10/23/two-men-arrested-following-smith-county-investigation/>.



5. DUANNA JOHNSON – MEMPHIS, TN (NOVEMBER 9, 2008)

Duanna Johnson was a Black transgender woman living in Memphis, Tennessee.³⁴⁹ Earlier in 2008 (in February), Johnson was arrested on a prostitution charge by the Memphis Police Department (MPD). While in custody, she was brutally beaten and pepper-sprayed by two officers – one identified as Bridges McRae – and reportedly subjected to verbal abuse including slurs. The beating was captured on videotape.³⁵⁰ The video led to public outrage; both officers involved were eventually fired, and the city faced national condemnation from civil rights and LGBTQ+ groups. At the time of her death, Johnson was reportedly in the process of suing the city for civil rights violations.³⁵¹

On November 9, 2008, Johnson was found shot to death on a street in North Memphis, near

Hollywood Avenue and Staten Avenue – likely some time before midnight. She had suffered a gunshot wound to the head. Witnesses reported hearing gunfire and seeing three men fleeing the scene, but police stated they had no suspects, no arrests, and no identified motive.³⁵² Despite public outrage over the police beating (with video evidence) and repeated calls for justice after her murder, the homicide remains unsolved. This reflects a broader pattern of under-investigation, under-prosecution, and invisibility for deaths of transgender individuals, particularly Black trans women.³⁵³ Duanna Johnson has become part of a larger historical record of violence against transgender people of color. Her case is frequently cited on memorial lists, in advocacy materials, and in documentaries – such as *Who Killed Duanna Johnson?* – as a stark reminder of the ongoing crisis of transphobic and racially motivated violence.³⁵⁴

³⁴⁹ “Remembering Our Dead - Duanna Johnson (9 Nov 2008).” 2018. Remembering Our Dead. 2018. https://tdortranslivesmatter.info/reports/2008/11/09/duanna-johnson_memphis-tennessee-usa_bba84b16.

³⁵⁰ JD Uy. 2008. “Duanna Johnson Murdered: Famed Transgender Well-Known Victim of Police Brutality [Video].” Metro Weekly. November 15, 2008. <https://www.metroweekly.com/2008/11/duanna-johnson-murdered-famed/>.

³⁵¹ “Human Rights Campaign Calls for a Thorough Investigation into the Murder of Duanna Johnson.” 2008. Human Rights Campaign. November 12, 2008. <https://www.hrc.org/press-releases/human-rights-campaign-calls-for-a-thorough-investigation-into-the-murder-of>.

³⁵² Remembering Our Dead. 2018.

³⁵³ Uy, 2008.

³⁵⁴ “Who Killed Duanna Johnson?” 2025. IMDb. 2025. <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4527122/>.

NOTABLE HATE CRIMES AND SUSPICIOUS DEATHS POST-2000

1. ROBERT MILLER JR. – MURFREESBORO, TN (MARCH 2018)

Robert Miller Jr. was a Black man living in Murfreesboro, TN. On March 17, 2018, Miller was intentionally set on fire inside his home by white neighbor John Daniel Carothers. The incident occurred in Rutherford County, Tennessee. Miller sustained third-degree burns over most of his body and died a week later in a hospital. Carothers later admitted in a handwritten letter sent from jail that he burned Miller because he was Black. The letter was addressed to a white supremacist group and declared the act a form of racial “cleansing.”



amid the deadliest year on record for transgender and gender-nonconforming homicides in the U.S. Her death was identified as at least the 34th such killing in 2020. Advocates and her loved ones believe her transgender identity may have played a role in her death. Her friend noted that Angel was travelling from her hometown of Jackson, Tennessee, to Memphis for the night and never made it safely.³⁵⁷ Media and reporting outlets noted that her case reflects systemic issues: predominantly gun violence in trans-victim cases, the vulnerability of Black trans women, and the frequent absence of swift justice.³⁵⁸



2. ANGEL UNIQUE (ALSO REPORTED AS ANGEL HAYNES) – MEMPHIS, TN (OCTOBER 25, 2020)

Angel Unique was a 25-year-old Black transgender woman and licensed cosmetologist.³⁵⁵ On October 25, 2020, she was found shot to death at a motel in the Whitehaven neighborhood of Memphis (Motel 6 on East Brooks Road near Fontaine Road) at approximately 2:19 a.m.³⁵⁶ Angel’s killing came

4. TIFFANY BERRY – MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE (FEBRUARY 16, 2006)

Tiffany Berry, age 21, was a Black transgender woman living in South Memphis. She was known within her neighborhood and among local trans women; friends described her as kind and independent. Tiffany was shot and killed on February 16, 2006, near the 300 block of South

³⁵⁵ Madeleine Roberts. 2020. “HRC Mourns Angel Unique, Black Trans Woman Killed in Memphis, Tenn.” HRC. November 2, 2020. <https://www.hrc.org/news/hrc-mourns-angel-unique-black-trans-woman-killed-in-memphis-tenn>.

³⁵⁶ “Remembering Our Dead - Angel Haynes (‘Angel Unique’) (25 Oct 2020).” 2020. Remembering Our Dead. 2020. https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/reports/2020/10/25/angel-haynes-angel-unique-whitehaven-memphis-tennessee-usa_20fede45.

³⁵⁷ Trudy Ring. 2020. “Angel Unique Is 34th Trans American to Die by Violence in 2020.” Advocate.com. November 3, 2020. <https://www.advocate.com/crime/2020/11/03/angel-unique-34th-trans-american-die-violence-2020>.

³⁵⁸ “Angel Unique’s Shooting Death Is a Tragic Reminder of Continued Violence against the Trans Community.” 2020. Everytown. November 6, 2020. <https://www.everytown.org/press/angel-uniques-shooting-death-is-a-tragic-reminder-of-continued-violence-against-the-trans-community/>.

Wellington Street in Memphis. She was found lying outside an apartment building, suffering from gunshot wounds. Emergency responders transported her to The MED (now Regional One Health), where she later died.

A suspect has been arrested for Tiffany's death, and the case is being treated as a hate crime.³⁵⁹ Her death is considered one of the early cases highlighting the vulnerability of Black trans women in Tennessee.



NAKIA LADELLE BAKER – NASHVILLE, TN (JANUARY 7, 2007)

Nakia Ladelle Baker was found dead on January 7, 2007, in Nashville, Tennessee.³⁶⁰ Her body was found next to her car – a blue 1998 Oldsmobile Intrigue – in the parking lot behind Club Aventura & Billiards on Nolensville Pike.³⁶¹ Though initial reports suggested the death might have resulted from a beating, an autopsy determined that Baker had been shot.³⁶² There were reportedly signs of a struggle around the car. However – and unusually – no witnesses (including any nearby security or club staff) reported hearing a gunshot.³⁶³

No suspect has been publicly identified or charged. Baker's death remains an unsolved homicide.³⁶⁴ No witnesses came forward claiming to see or hear the fatal shooting, though people were reportedly nearby.³⁶⁵ It remains a cold case, demonstrating how even a case with relatively clear forensic conclusion (gunshot wound, scene of violence) can still go unresolved – raising deep questions about investigative follow-through, witness silence, or systemic neglect.



▲
Credit: Patsy Lynch/MediaPunch/IPx

³⁵⁹ Monica Roberts. 2025. "TPPC-Prosecute Berry Murder as a Hate Crime." Blogspot.com. December 17, 2025.

<https://transgriot.blogspot.com/2008/08/tppc-prosecute-berry-murder-as-hate.html>.

³⁶⁰ "Remembering Our Dead - Nakia Ladelle Baker (7 Jan 2007)." 2018. Remembering Our Dead. 2018. https://tdortranslivesmatter.info/reports/2007/01/07/nakia-ladelle-baker-nashville-tennessee-usa_622ff772.

³⁶¹ "Nashville Cold Case." 2020. Nashville Cold Case. August 14, 2020. <https://nashvillecoldcase.gov/2007-013694-nakia-baker>.

³⁶² Remembering Our Dead. 2018.

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ "Nakia L Baker Murdered or Death by Force in Nashville, Tennessee." 2022. Crimesolverscentral.com. 2022. <https://crimesolverscentral.com/homicide/25764>.

³⁶⁵ Remembering Our Dead. 2018.

PATTERNS AND FINDINGS

In the Tennessee MDL cases, JULIAN observed common misclassification tactics that obscure the gravity of the violence inflicted. In the case of Tyre Nichols, law enforcement initially framed the incident as a routine traffic stop gone wrong. Early police statements failed to mention the sustained assault he endured at the hands of multiple officers, instead offering vague phrasing such as the “confrontation occurred” and “he complained of shortness of breath.” This language downplayed the extent of the injuries until video footage and an independent autopsy revealed death by blunt-force trauma – a clear homicide. In Rodney Thompson’s case, like MDLs in other states, authorities ruled it a suicide almost immediately.

Similarly, in Robert Miller Jr.’s case, the violent nature of the act – being set on fire – was initially overshadowed by a delay in reporting the motive. It was only after the perpetrator, John Daniel Carothers, admitted in a written confession to targeting Miller because he was Black that the racial motive was publicly confirmed. Despite the clarity of this admission, the case received limited media attention and minimal national outrage, compared to similar hate crimes.

Such misclassification through vague terminology (“medical emergency,” “no known motive”) and delayed transparency reinforces a systemic pattern where Black death is neutralized through bureaucratic language and passive framing.

All of these cases underscore critical breakdowns in investigative processes and transparency. In Tyre Nichols’ case, it took over a week for Memphis authorities to release footage from bodycams and pole cameras that clearly showed Nichols being beaten by five officers from the now-disbanded SCORPION unit. Only after national protests and media coverage did prosecutors bring federal civil rights charges. Yet state-level murder charges resulted in acquittals, and two additional officers had their misconduct shielded from public view due to civil service protections. Additionally, there was substantial delay in emergency medical aid at the scene, which likely contributed to Nichols’ death – yet this has not resulted in EMS accountability.

In Miller’s case, local police did not initially inform the public about the perpetrator’s white supremacist affiliations. The confession letter was discovered later by reporters and civil rights organizations. There is limited documentation about how the police investigated possible hate group ties, and the lack of public transparency regarding whether the crime was initially treated as racially motivated raises concerns over investigative thoroughness.

These cases also reflect broader data suppression and delays in autopsy releases, incomplete incident reports, and limited proactive updates to the victim’s families – all indicators of systems protecting themselves rather than centering truth and justice.

LYNCHINGS IN GEORGIA

I am only a mouthpiece through which to tell the story of lynching, and I have told it so often that I know it by heart. I do not have to embellish; it makes its own way.

— IDA B. WELLS

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

THE HISTORY OF LYNCHING IN GEORGIA OCCUPIES A CRUCIAL PLACE WITHIN THE BROADER NARRATIVE OF RACIAL TERROR IN THE AMERICAN SOUTH, A TROUBLING REFLECTION OF DEEP-SEATED RACIAL HIERARCHIES, POLITICAL DISENFRANCHISEMENT, AND THE NORMALIZATION OF EXTRAJUDICIAL VIOLENCE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF WHITE SUPREMACY. ACCORDING TO THE TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE ARCHIVES, FROM 1882 TO 1968, GEORGIA WITNESSED AT LEAST 531 DOCUMENTED RACIAL TERROR LYNCHINGS, PLACING IT SECOND ONLY TO MISSISSIPPI IN ABSOLUTE NUMBERS, AND ILLUSTRATING THE SYSTEMIC SCALE OF THIS FORM OF RACIALIZED VIOLENCE.³⁶⁶ THESE ACTS WERE NOT MERELY SPONTANEOUS ERUPTIONS OF MOB BRUTALITY; THEY WERE OFTEN PUBLIC, PERFORMATIVE SPECTACLES SERVING TO ENFORCE RACIAL CONTROL THROUGH INTIMIDATION, HUMILIATION, AND THE ERASURE OF THE AFRICAN- AMERICAN EXPERIENCE.

³⁶⁶ Lynching Information – Tuskegee University Archives” (Tuskegee University, n.d.), <https://archive.tuskegee.edu/repository/digital-collection/lynching-information/>.

Rural agricultural counties bore disproportionate burdens of such violence. Clustered in rural counties dependent on Black labor, central cotton counties and southwestern timber regions were hotspots. In contrast, cities and more integrated areas saw less violence. Counties such as Brooks, Lowndes, and Oconee were epicenters. Brooks County alone accounted for at least thirteen lynchings during the infamous May 1918 rampage.³⁶⁷ The Watkinsville Jail raid of 1905, where a mob extricated nine Black prisoners from jail and executed eight by rifle fire, stands as one of the most organized and deadly episodes of extrajudicial mass killing in Georgia's history.³⁶⁸

Several cases in Georgia's history illustrate the mechanics and brutality of lynchings. One of the most infamous was the lynching of Mary Turner in 1918 in Lowndes County. Turner, eight months pregnant, publicly condemned the lynching of her husband, Hayes Turner, and was subsequently seized by a mob, hanged upside down, set aflame, and subjected to the forced removal and killing of her unborn child. This atrocity occurred during a broader lynching rampage that claimed at least 13 African-American lives over several days.³⁶⁹ Decades later, the Moore's Ford Bridge lynching of 1946 in Walton County marked one of the last mass lynchings in U.S. history. Two African-American couples, George and Mae Murray Dorsey, and Roger and Dorothy Malcom, were dragged from a car by a white mob, beaten, and shot multiple times. Despite widespread national

outrage and a high-profile FBI investigation, no one was ever prosecuted.³⁷⁰

Other cases reveal the diversity of contexts in which lynching occurred. In 1899, Sam Hose (born Tom Wilkes) was accused of killing his white employer and assaulting his employer's wife in Coweta County. Despite Hose's denials, and conflicting accounts about the alleged assault, he was captured, tortured, burned alive before a crowd estimated at over 2,000, and his body mutilated for souvenirs.³⁷¹ The Sam Hose lynching, widely publicized and justified by white newspapers of the time, also galvanized early anti-lynching activism, including the involvement of Ida B. Wells and Black intellectual circles in the North. In several cases, lynchings were based on unfounded suspicions. This is exemplified by the lynching of 18-year-old Dennis Hubert in 1930. A Morehouse College student was mistaken for someone accused of insulting a white woman. He was lynched by seven white men on a playground in Atlanta, despite having done nothing wrong.³⁷²

By the mid-20th century, lynching in Georgia, as elsewhere, began to decline in frequency but not in symbolic potency. The decline reflected a shift toward more covert forms of racial violence, reflected extensively even today, police brutality, legal lynchings through capital punishment, and economic repression, rather than the abolition of racial control.

³⁶⁷ Stewart E. Tolnay and E.M. Beck, "Lynching," New Georgia Encyclopedia, August 12, 2020, <https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/lynching/>.

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

³⁶⁹ MADEO. n.d. "May 19, 1918 | Mary Turner, Pregnant, Lynched in Georgia for Criticizing Husband's Lynching." Calendar.eji.org. <https://calendar.eji.org/racial-injustice/may/19>.

³⁷⁰ "Marker Monday: Moore's Ford Lynching - Georgia Historical Society." n.d. <https://www.georgiahistory.com/>. <https://www.georgiahistory.com/marker-monday-moores-ford-lynching>.

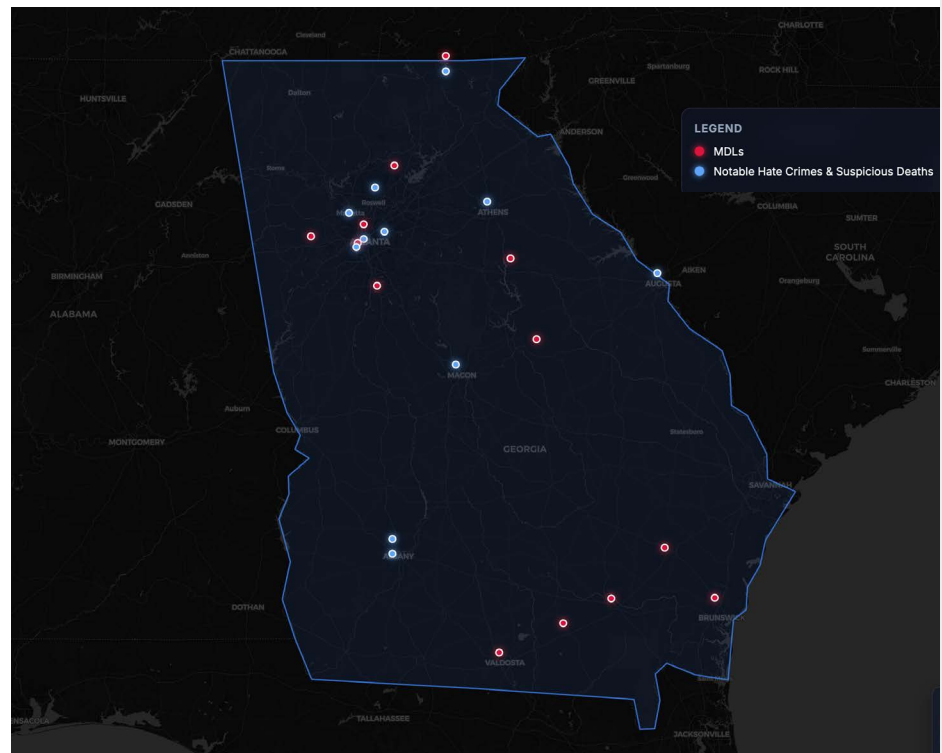
³⁷¹ "Hose Lynching Was International News in 1899." 2019. Times-Herald.com. April 27, 2019. https://www.times-herald.com/news/local/hose-lynching-was-international-news-in-1899/article_66a7d4bf-c7c2-57bf-9850-68b007d1ee8a.html.

³⁷² "Lynching in America / the Lynching of Dennis Hubert | Memorializing Racial Terror: Lynching Markers in the United States." 2022. Jmu.edu. 2022. <https://sites.lib.jmu.edu/lynchingmarkers/ga1930061501>.

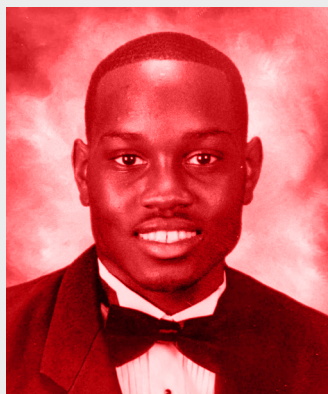
MODERN-DAY LYNCHING CASES IN GEORGIA

14
SUSPECTED MDLS

11
NOTABLE HATE
CRIMES OR
SUSPICIOUS DEATHS



There have been at least 14 suspected MDLs in Georgia since 2000 with three involving hanging. There have been at least 11 notable hate crimes or suspicious deaths.



1. AHMAUD ARBERY – GLYNN COUNTY, GA (FEBRUARY 23, 2020)

On February 23, 2020, Ahmaud Arbery, a 25-year-old unarmed Black man, was fatally shot while jogging through Satilla Shores, a predominantly white neighborhood in Glynn County, Georgia. He was pursued by Gregory McMichael, a former police officer and investigator for the local district attorney; his son, Travis McMichael, a former Coast Guard mechanic; and their neighbor William “Roddie” Bryan, who recorded the incident on his phone. The men claimed Arbery resembled a suspect in local break-ins, although surveillance footage only showed him briefly entering a construction site – something others in the neighborhood had also done without consequence.

Arbery, dressed in athletic gear, ran for several minutes as the men chased him in two pickup trucks, attempting to cut off his path. Bryan used his vehicle to corner Arbery into the street, at which point he encountered the McMichaels, one armed with a .357 Magnum and the other with a shotgun. In the ensuing confrontation, Travis McMichael fired three close-range shots

into Arbery’s torso. He collapsed and died on the scene, alone and unaided.³⁷³ Despite the graphic footage, it took 74 days, and significant public pressure, for authorities to arrest the three men, who were initially shielded by prosecutorial conflicts of interest stemming from Gregory McMichael’s ties to local law enforcement.³⁷⁴

All three men were later convicted of murder in state court and subsequently found guilty of federal hate crimes in 2022, with the Department of Justice affirming Arbery was targeted explicitly because of his race.³⁷⁵ White men deputizing themselves as enforcers of racial order and hunting a Black man without grounds are an unmistakable replication of historical racial terror.



2. QAADIR AND NAAZIR LEWIS – TOWNS COUNTY, GA (MARCH 2025)

Qaadir Malik Lewis and Naazir Rahim Lewis, 19-year-old identical Black twins from Lawrenceville, Georgia, were found dead from gunshot wounds on March 8, 2025, near the summit of Bell Mountain in Towns County, 90 miles from their home.³⁷⁶ The Georgia Bureau

³⁷³ Richard Fausset. 2022. “What We Know about the Shooting Death of Ahmaud Arbery.” The New York Times, August 8, 2022, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/article/ahmaud-arbery-shooting-georgia.html>.

³⁷⁴ Fausset, 2022.

³⁷⁵ Rich McKay. 2022. “‘Rest in Power:’ Arbery’s Killers Guilty on All Federal Hate-Crimes Charges.” Reuters, February 22, 2022, sec. United States. <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/jury-deliberates-hate-crimes-charges-against-ahmaud-arberys-killers-georgia-2022-02-22/>.

³⁷⁶ Sarah Grossbart. 2025. “Unpacking the Unanswered Questions from the Apparent Murder-Suicide of Qaadir Lewis, Naazir Lewis.” E! Online. E! News. March 18, 2025. <https://www.eonline.com/news/1414921/twins-qaadir-lewis-naazir-lewis-murder-suicide-what-to-know>

of Investigation (GBI) initially ruled the deaths a murder-suicide following autopsy reports finalized March 16, 2025. On May 21, the GBI revised its conclusion, stating both died by suicide. Officials cited gun purchase receipts, internet searches related to firearm loading and suicide rates.³⁷⁷

The family contests the official ruling, citing that the twins had no documented history of mental illness, violence, or suicidal behavior. Both had upcoming travel plans to Boston, with unused plane tickets discovered in their wallets.³⁷⁸ According to relatives, neither brother had previously visited Bell Mountain, and neither owned a car, raising questions about how they arrived. Their bodies were discovered positioned on the ground in a parallel configuration, arms outstretched, which family members described as “ritualistic” and in an “execution style.”³⁷⁹ Surveillance footage, digital data timelines, and gun shipping records cited by GBI have not been made fully public. The location, identified by the family as a former sundown town with white supremacist associations, specifically terming it terms “Ku Klux Klan territory” is cause for suspicion. This case bears the hallmarks of a modern-day lynching, masked as suicide and staged to obscure racial terror.



3. STEPHEN STYLES – WINSTON, GA (2021)

Stephen Styles, a 43-year-old Black man, was reported missing in February 2021 after his car was found abandoned near his grandparents’ home in Winston, Georgia. The vehicle exhibited clear signs of distress; broken windows, a muddy interior, and missing personal items such as his wallet and identification, but no missing persons alert was issued by law enforcement. Weeks later, Styles was discovered hanging from a tree in a wooded area nearby. Despite the scene’s irregularities and the absence of a medical examiner at the site, the Douglas County Sheriff’s Office hastily ruled the death a suicide.³⁸⁰

Authorities have provided minimal updates since the initial ruling, and no public evidence suggests a comprehensive investigation into potential foul play. Basic investigative protocols such as forensic analysis of the car and surrounding area have been neglected.³⁸¹ The sheriff’s office maintains

³⁷⁷ Sam Gillette. 2025. “Sister Details Last Conversation She Had with 19-Year-Old Twin Brothers as Officials Determine They Died by Suicide.” People.com. 2025. <https://people.com/twin-brothers-found-dead-mountain-died-by-suicide-sister-details-last-conversation-11740995>.

³⁷⁸ Gillette, 2025.

³⁷⁹ Anisah Muhammad. 2025. “Final Call Exclusive Interview with Family Members of Qaadir and Naazir Lewis.” Final Call News. April 14, 2025. <https://new.finalcall.com/2025/04/14/final-call-exclusive-interview-with-family-members-of-qaadir-and-naazir-lewis/>.

³⁸⁰ Alex Whittler. 2021. “Family: Douglas County Man Found Dead Hanging from Tree Is Suspicious.” FOX 5 Atlanta. March 9, 2021. <https://www.fox5atlanta.com/news/family-douglas-county-man-found-dead-hanging-from-tree-is-suspicious?>

³⁸¹ Keka Araujo. 2021. “A Georgia Man’s Family Isn’t Convinced That Stephen Styles Committed Suicide, His Body Was Found Hanging from a Tree.” Newsonyx. March 14, 2021. <https://www.newsonyx.com/a-georgia-mans-family-isnt-convinced-that-stephen-styles-committed-suicide-his-body-was-found-hanging-from-a-tree/?>

the case remains open, but no substantial updates have followed, and no suspects have been identified.³⁸² The lack of transparency only deepens the theory that race played a role in how the case has been handled. Styles's death bears all the hallmarks of an MDL. It remains unresolved, racialized, and institutionally ignored.



4. ROOSEVELT CHAMPION III – GREENSBORO, GA (MAY 11, 2015)

On the morning of May 11, 2015, Roosevelt Champion III, a 43-year-old Black man from Greensboro, Georgia, was found dead, hanging by an orange ratchet strap from a tree behind a residential property that did not belong to him. According to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI), Champion's knees were slightly bent, and his feet touched the ground. The GBI conducted a forensic autopsy and concluded that the manner of death was suicide, citing the absence of signs of trauma, binding, or foul play.³⁸³

In the days prior to his death, Champion had been interviewed twice by law enforcement regarding the May 2 homicide of Carol Renee Edwards Lewis. He was not charged, nor identified publicly

as a suspect. His family disputed the suicide ruling. His sister, Miranda Wright, stated that he appeared to be in good spirits the evening before and had spoken to relatives, expressing affection.³⁸⁴

Despite receiving regional and national media attention, there is no indication of an independent or federal investigation.³⁸⁵ The circumstances – Champion's recent police interviews, the ambiguous physical positioning, and the ruling – replicate dynamics of racial control historically seen.



5. OMARI BRYANT – HOMERVILLE, GA (DECEMBER 5, 2020)

On December 5, 2020, at approximately 7:19 a.m., 18-year-old Omari Zachias-Shaquan Bryant, an African-American from Clinch County, was found hanging from a rope tied to the exterior railing of the Southern Pines Inn in Homerville, Georgia. He had been arrested on November 30 for allegedly stabbing two individuals and was released on bond shortly before his death.³⁸⁶ Police and emergency responders arrived quickly,

³⁸² Whittier, 2021.

³⁸³ Staff, Crimesider. 2015. "Georgia Bureau of Investigation: Hanging of Black Man Roosevelt Champion III from Tree in Greensboro, Georgia Was Suicide." Cbsnews.com. May 12, 2015. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/georgia-bureau-of-investigation-black-mans-hanging-from-tree-was-suicide/>.

³⁸⁴ ABHM. 2015. "Black Man Found Hanging from Tree in Georgia Committed Suicide: Officials - America's Black Holocaust Museum." America's Black Holocaust Museum. May 13, 2015. <https://www.abhmuseum.org/black-man-found-hanging-from-tree-in-georgia-committed-suicide-officials/>.

³⁸⁵ "Black Ga. Man's Hanging Death Ruled a Suicide: Authorities." 2015. NBC10 Philadelphia. NBC 10 Philadelphia. May 12, 2015. <https://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/national-international/death-of-ga-man-found-hanged-ruled-a-suicide-authorities/2013251>.

³⁸⁶ Kim McCullough. 2020. "Victim Identified in Homerville Suspicious Death Investigation." <https://www.wctv.tv/2020/12/07/victim-identified-in-homerville-suspicious-death-investigation/>.

and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) was called to conduct an autopsy.

Witnesses and family members noted that Bryant's feet were on the ground at the time he was found.³⁸⁷ Friends, including Octavis Butler and Jocelyn Walker, described him as neither suicidal nor inclined to "put himself on display."³⁸⁸ Despite the motel's claim of 24-hour surveillance, all six external security cameras were reportedly non-functional during the incident, eliminating potential video evidence. These anomalies, coupled with the public nature of the scene, elicit suspicions of foul play.

The GBI's autopsy determined Bryant's death to be a suicide.³⁸⁹ On January 19, 2021, the Homerville Police Department formally closed the case, concurring with the GBI's findings. However, the interplay of the physical impossibility, missing surveillance, and abrupt decisions suggest a potential modern-day lynching.



6. KENDRICK JOHNSON – VALDOSTA, GA (JANUARY 11, 2013)

On January 11, 2013, Kendrick Johnson, a 17-year-old Black high-school student, was discovered

head-first with feet exposed inside a vertically rolled-up wrestling mat at Lowndes High School in Valdosta, Georgia. The Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) initially ruled his death accidental, citing positional asphyxia, suggesting he had climbed inside to retrieve a shoe and became trapped.³⁹⁰

Unsatisfied, Johnson's parents commissioned an independent autopsy by Dr. William R. Anderson after exhumation. This examination revealed their son's body was stuffed with newspaper, and several organs, including the brain, heart, lungs, liver, and intestines, were missing, which the funeral home replaced with printed ads.³⁹¹ Dr. Anderson also identified blunt-force trauma to the right side of Kendrick's neck, inconsistent with an accidental death.³⁹²

In June 2016, the U.S. Department of Justice formally closed its federal civil rights investigation, stating investigators found insufficient evidence to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Kendrick's civil rights were violated or that a prosecutable crime occurred.³⁹³ A later reinvestigation by the Lowndes County Sheriff's Office in 2021 likewise concluded there was no homicide, cover-up, or conspiracy, characterizing the tragedy simply as another as a bizarre accident.³⁹⁴ Yet, all things considered, the situation in its entirety—the missing organs, funeral home coverup, and the independent autopsy—points to a different conclusion, one of deliberate motivation to harm, injure and inflict Black suffering.

³⁸⁷ Bruce C.T. Wright. 2020. "Justice for Omari Bryant: Black Teen in 'Suspicious' Hanging Was Not Suicidal, Friends and Family Say." NewsOne. December 9, 2020. <https://newsone.com/4060017/omari-bryant-homerville-georgia-hanging-death>.

³⁸⁸ Wright, 2020.

³⁸⁹ WCTV Staff. 2021. "Clinch County Suspicious Hanging Death Officially Ruled a Suicide." <https://www.wctv.tv>. WCTV. January 25, 2021. <https://www.wctv.tv/2021/01/25/clinch-county-suspicious-hanging-death-officially-ruled-a-suicide/>.

³⁹⁰ Nadia El-Yaouti. 2021. "Kendrick Johnson's Death Reopened after 13 Years of Unanswered Questions." Lawcommentary.com. March 19, 2021. <https://www.lawcommentary.com/articles/kendrick-johnsons-death-reopened-after-13-years-of-unanswered-questions?>

³⁹¹ ABC7. 2025. "Kendrick Johnson Missing Organs, Newspaper Found Instead on 2nd Autopsy after Wrestling Mat Death in Georgia | ABC7 Chicago | Abc7chicago.com." ABC7 Chicago. 2025. <https://abc7chicago.com/archive/9282320/?>

³⁹² Nash Jenkins. 2014. "Family of Georgia Teen Found Dead at School Files New Lawsuit." TIME. Time. July 29, 2014. <https://time.com/3049673/family-of-georgia-teen-found-dead-at-school-files-new-lawsuit/>.

³⁹³ WTXL. 2016. "Department of Justice Closes Kendrick Johnson Death Investigation." WTXL ABC 27 Tallahassee News. June 20, 2016. https://www.wtxl.com/news/departments-of-justice-closes-kendrick-johnson-death-investigation/article_4cc98516-36f8-11e6-8116-b32a5d89b4f4.html.

³⁹⁴ Dan Raby. 2025. "Kendrick Johnson: Court Denies Lawsuit's Dismissal in Teen's Gym Mat Death." FOX 5 Atlanta. February 25, 2025. <https://www.fox5atlanta.com/news/kendrick-johnson-court-denies-dismissal-lawsuit-teen-gym-mat-death-investigation>



7. NOAH BUSH – WAYNE COUNTY, GA (MAY 2024)

On May 15, 2024, eight-year-old Noah Bush, a Black second-grader from Wayne County, Georgia, was reported missing. His body was recovered the next day from a county-owned clay “borrow pit,” initially deemed a drowning accident by local authorities. A medical examiner later ruled the death to be a homicide by drowning, prompting a reopening of the case.

An 11-year-old white juvenile and a 10-year-old white juvenile were subsequently charged; the older admitted in court to luring Noah to the site, pushing him into deep water, and holding his head down until he drowned. He pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter, battery, trespassing, and concealing a death, receiving the maximum juvenile sentence of two years’ confinement. The younger boy pled guilty to trespassing and concealment of a death, also receiving two years.³⁹⁵ The Bush family believes that the attack was driven by race, describing it as a consequence of racist attitudes and adult complicity.³⁹⁶

This case reflects a familiar historical pattern; white juveniles killed a Black child, adults are alleged to have concealed evidence, and authorities first framed it as an accident, clear hallmarks of racial bias and, in effect, a modern-day lynching.



8. EURIE MARTIN – DEEPSTEP, GA (JULY 7, 2017)

Eurie Martin, a 58-year-old African-American man with schizophrenia, died on July 7, 2017, in rural Deepstep, Georgia, after being shock-stunned repeatedly by three white Washington County deputies. Martin had been walking, up to 30 miles, to visit relatives when, overheated, he stopped to ask a stranger for water; that bystander called 911, deeming him “suspicious.”³⁹⁷ The deputies, Henry Lee Copeland, Michael Howell, and Rhett Scott, responded and, over less than five minutes, discharged tasers against Martin 15 times, while kneeling on his shoulders, waist, and legs, restraining him until he collapsed and became motionless.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁵ Samira Asma-Sadique. 2024. “Police Initially Said No Foul Play in 8-Year-Old’s Death. Weeks Later, Police Reveal How He Was Killed.” People.com. July 17, 2024. <https://people.com/noah-bush-death-ruled-homicide-two-boys-arrested-8679272>.

³⁹⁶ “Second Juvenile Sentenced in Drowning Death of 8-Year-Old Noah Bush Victim’s Mother Speaks out on Son’s Death.” 2024. On Common Ground News - 24/7 Local News - Your Community, Your News. On Common Ground News - 24/7 local news. August 23, 2024. <https://ocgnews.com/second-juvenile-sentenced-in-drowning-death-of-8-year-old-noah-bush-victims-mother-speaks-out-on-sons-death/>.

³⁹⁷ AP News. 2021. “Murder Trial Opens for Georgia Ex-Deputies in Stun-Gun Death.” AP News. October 14, 2021. <https://apnews.com/article/georgia-088d71ba522389ab758851cfde0bb214>.

³⁹⁸ Sydney Hood. 2024. “New Trial in Stun-Gun Death Stirs Hope for Eurie Martin’s Family.” <https://www.wrdw.com/2024/05/30/new-trial-stun-gun-death-renews-hope-eurie-martins-family/>. May 30, 2024.

The medical examiner ruled the death a homicide due to electrocution from repeated taser shocks, with no drugs found in his system.³⁹⁹ Deputies delayed administering aid, and the charges they contemplated shifted, from trespassing to simply walking on the road, suggesting a retrofitted justification. The three were fired and charged with felony murder, involuntary manslaughter, aggravated assault, false imprisonment, simple assault, and reckless conduct. The 2021 trial ended in a mistrial after the jury deadlocked.⁴⁰⁰

The truth is that Martin was racially profiled as “suspicious” for merely walking while Black, and that prejudice escalated into excessive, ultimately fatal force at the hands of the police.

9. NATHANIEL LEE III – WAYCROSS, GA (2012)

In 2012, Nathaniel Lee III, a 20-year-old Black man from Waycross, Georgia, was shot in the back and killed by two white men – both convicted felons – under circumstances that remain deeply contested. Despite clear evidence of homicide and contradictions in witness testimony, no murder charges were filed against either assailant. The prosecutor ultimately declined to pursue first-degree murder charges, a decision that drew outrage from community members and civil rights advocates who viewed the case as emblematic of racial inequity in Georgia’s criminal justice system.



10. FERNANDO OCTAVIO RODRIGUEZ – HAMPTON, GA (SEPTEMBER 2019)

On the night of September 20, 2019, Fernando Octavio Rodriguez, aged 24, was walking naked down a street in Hampton, Georgia, after attending the Imagine Music Festival held at Atlanta Motor Speedway.⁴⁰¹ Police from the Henry County Police Department and the Hampton Police Department responded to a 911 call regarding an unclothed man walking.⁴⁰² According to a civil complaint, officers stunned Rodriguez with a taser at least 15–16 times during the encounter.⁴⁰³

Body-camera footage shows that after Rodriguez was stunned and fell to the ground, officers placed him in the prone position (face-down) and restrained him by kneeling and standing on his neck, back, head, arms, and legs – effectively compressing his chest and limiting his ability to breathe.⁴⁰⁴ Emergency responders arrived to find Rodriguez unresponsive, not breathing, pulseless, after which he was revived and taken to hospital,

³⁹⁹ Grant Blankenship. 2021. “Jury Deliberation Begins Friday in Eurie Martin Murder Trial.” Georgia Public Broadcasting. October 21, 2021. <https://www.gpb.org/news/2021/10/21/jury-deliberation-begins-friday-in-eurie-martin-murder-trial>.

⁴⁰⁰ Grant Blankenship. 2021. “State Rests Its Case against the Three Deputies Charged with Murder of Eurie Martin.” Georgia Public Broadcasting. October 19, 2021. <https://www.gpb.org/news/2021/10/19/state-rests-its-case-against-the-three-deputies-charged-murder-of-eurie-martin>.

⁴⁰¹ Associated Press. 2021. “Lawsuit Says Police Caused Asphyxiation Death of Naked Man.” FOX 5 Atlanta. May 13, 2021. <https://www.fox5atlanta.com/news/lawsuit-says-police-caused-asphyxiation-death-of-naked-man>.

⁴⁰² Asia Simone Burns. 2021. “Wrongful Death Suit Says Officers Stunned Naked Henry Man 16 Times after Music Festival.” Aja. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. May 13, 2021. https://www.ajc.com/news/wrongful-death-suit-says-officers-stunned-naked-henry-man-16-times-after-music-festival/MC2PBPHCWZHLMWZNCUUCVTRI4?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

⁴⁰³ News Staff. 2021. “Lawsuit Says Police Caused Asphyxiation Death of Naked Man.” CityNews Vancouver. May 12, 2021. <https://vancouver.citynews.ca/2021/05/12/lawsuit-says-police-caused-asphyxiation-death-of-naked-man/>.

⁴⁰⁴ Burns, 2021.

where he died on September 23, 2019. The Georgia medical examiner ruled his death a homicide, specifying the cause as “asphyxia due to physical restraint in prone position with compression of chest” occurring during an interaction with law enforcement.⁴⁰⁵

In May 2021, a federal civil lawsuit was filed by Rodriguez’s family against Henry County, the City of Hampton, and the involved officers, alleging excessive force, failure to render aid, and constitutional rights violations. In November 2021, a grand jury in Henry County indicted five officers (two from Henry County PD and three from Hampton PD) on charges including malice murder, felony murder, aggravated assault, and violation of oath of office.⁴⁰⁶ Separately, the family accepted a \$3 million settlement from the City of Hampton for the wrongful-death claims against the Hampton officers; legal action continues against Henry County and its officers.⁴⁰⁷



11. MANUEL ESTEBAN PAEZ TERÁN – ATLANTA, GA (JANUARY 18, 2023)

Manuel Esteban Paez Terán, known as “Tortuguita,” a 26-year-old Indigenous environmental activist, was fatally shot by Georgia

State Patrol officers on January 18, 2023, during a raid. While the Georgia Bureau of Investigation claims Terán fired first, a private autopsy found no gunpowder residue on Tortuguita’s hands. Activists and Terán’s family assert that Terán was among the few Black or Brown protesters and was deliberately targeted and publicly identified by authorities due to Tortuguita’s race. A clear act of hate, the authorities specifically targeted a Black and Indigenous activist, a tactic aimed at singling out and suppressing minority voices in a protest.⁴⁰⁸



12. JAMARION ROBINSON – EAST POINT, GA (AUGUST 5, 2016)

Jamarion Robinson, a 26-year-old Black man with paranoid schizophrenia, was killed by a multi-agency task force on August 5, 2016. Officers, all of whom were white, were serving warrants and claimed Robinson fired at them before they opened fire, resulting in 76 gunshot wounds to Robinson. None of the officers were harmed, and none were wearing body cameras. Cellphone audio captured nearly three minutes of continuous gunfire.⁴⁰⁹ When the medical examiner recovered the body, it was reportedly wearing an oxygen

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶ Dennis Romero. 2021. “5 Georgia Officers Indicted on Murder Charges in Festivalgoer’s Death.” NBC News. November 21, 2021. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/5-georgia-officers-indicted-death-festivalgoer-rcna6223>

⁴⁰⁷ Jonmaesha Beltran, Tyler Dedrick, and Tirzah Christopher. 2024. “Despite Safety Warnings, Police Departments Continue Misapplying Restraint Positions and Techniques.” FOX 5 Atlanta. May 14, 2024. <https://www.fox5atlanta.com/news/despite-safety-warnings-police-departments-continue-misapplying-restraint-positions-and-techniques>.

⁴⁰⁸ Timothy Pratt. 2024. “‘Tortuguita Vive’: Campaigners across US Hail Anti-Cop City Activist Killed by Police.” The Guardian. The Guardian. January 21, 2024. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/jan/21/atlanta-cop-city-tortuguita-anniversary>.

⁴⁰⁹ Jonathan Raymond. 2023. “Officers Charged with Murder in Shooting Death of Jamarion Robinson Arguing This Week for Immunity.” 11Alive.com. WXIA. May 25, 2023. <https://www.11alive.com/video/news/crime/trials/officers-charged-with-murder-in-shooting-death-of-jamarion-robinson-arguing-this-week-for-immunity/85-2be90e36-a719-4437-98d2-5d527f3fd2e7>.

rebreathing mask. According to the family, a pathologist determined that Robinson had sustained multiple gunshot wounds through the palms of both hands. Testimony presented during a pretrial hearing further alleged that the officers continued firing even after realizing Robinson was no longer responsive.⁴¹⁰

An investigator retained by the family reported that evidence indicated police handcuffed Robinson's hands behind his back after fatally shooting him, then dragged his body down a flight of stairs from the second floor to the living room below. The investigator further alleged that officers detonated a flash-bang grenade at the scene after the shooting, apparently in an effort to disrupt or obscure the subsequent investigation.⁴¹¹

In 2021, two officers were indicted on felony murder and other charges. Robinson's mother frames the killing as a "heinously executed" act of violence against her mentally ill Black son, who she insists posed no threat, and for which she holds all the officers involved accountable.⁴¹²



13. TAMLA HORSFORD – CUMMING, GA (NOVEMBER 4, 2018)

Tamla Horsford, a 40-year-old Black mother of five, was found dead on November 4, 2018, after attending an overnight gathering in Cumming, Georgia, where she was the only Black guest among a group of white middle-aged adults.⁴¹³ Her body was discovered face-down in the backyard beneath a 14-foot deck. Authorities ruled the death accidental, a fall, citing a broken neck, dislocated wrist, lacerated heart, and a blood-alcohol level of .238, alongside traces of Xanax and THC.⁴¹⁴

However, the family and supporters highlighted multiple irregularities: abrasions on her face, hands, shins, and back inconsistent with a simple fall; missing or altered witness statements; a cigarette at the scene though Horsford was a non-smoker; and unauthorized access to the case file by a party attendee who worked in the court system.⁴¹⁵ These elements, compounded by Forsyth County's historical racial tensions, fuel skepticism about racial motivations and foul play.

⁴¹⁰ Megan Butler. 2023. "Federal Judge to Decide If Georgia Officers Who Shot Black Man 59 Times Immune to Murder Charges." Courthouse News Service. May 25, 2023. <https://www.courthousenews.com/federal-judge-to-decide-if-georgia-officers-who-shot-black-man-59-times-immune-to-murder-charges>.

⁴¹¹ George E. Franco. 2018. "DA's Office to File Federal Lawsuit in Jamarion Robinson Case." FOX 5 Atlanta. December 28, 2018. <https://www.fox5atlanta.com/news/das-office-to-file-federal-lawsuit-in-jamarion-robinson-case>.

⁴¹² Zack Linly. 2021. "Grand Jury Indicts 2 Officers Accused of Shooting Black Georgia Man 76 Times on Charges Including Murder, Burglary and Making False Statements." NewsOne. October 27, 2021. <https://newsone.com/4239869/officers-indicted-in-shooting-death-of-jamarion-robinso>.

⁴¹³ FOX 5 Atlanta. 2021. "GBI: No Criminal Charges in Forsyth County Woman's Death." FOX 5 Atlanta. July 27, 2021. <https://www.fox5atlanta.com/news/gbi-no-criminal-charges-in-forsyth-county-womans-death>.

⁴¹⁴ Grace Waruguru. 2025. "Tamla Horsford Case Updates: What Has Changed since Her 2018 Death?" Tuko.co.ke - Kenya News. June 27, 2025. <https://www.tuko.co.ke/facts-lifehacks/celebrity-biographies/593295-tamla-horsford-case-updates-what-changed-2018-death>.

⁴¹⁵ 'This Case Is Just Beginning' | Tamla Horsford's Family Releases Full Independent Autopsy Report." 2022. 11Alive.com. 2022. <https://www.11alive.com/article/news/investigations/tamla-horsford-investigation-independent-autopsy/85-a7ad99b5-58f9-4c18-8be8-a0172aa8fbd7>.

NOTABLE HATE CRIMES AND SUSPICIOUS DEATHS POST-2000



1. JOHNNY LORENZO BOLTON – SMYRNA, GA (DECEMBER 17, 2020)

On December 17, 2020, Johnny Lorenzo Bolton, a 49-year-old Black man, was killed during a no-knock search warrant at his Smyrna, Georgia, apartment. A Cobb County SWAT deputy shot Bolton multiple times upon entry. Family attorneys contend Bolton was unarmed and asleep, and that officers delayed providing first aid.⁴¹⁶ The family has demanded transparency and the release of body-camera footage to no avail. The unwarranted use of a no-knock warrant and the fatal shooting of an unarmed Black man by law enforcement is representative of a broader pattern of state-sanctioned violence that disproportionately targets Black communities.



2. SAMUEL LAWRENCE – FULTON COUNTY, GA (AUGUST 26, 2023)

Samuel Lawrence, a Black inmate, died at Fulton County Jail on August 26, 2023, after sending a handwritten civil rights complaint detailing abuse and neglect. Lawrence claimed he had been beaten, isolated, and denied medical care. Both a family-commissioned autopsy and the official medical examiner's report determined his death was a homicide caused by strangulation and blunt-force trauma. Lawrence's cellmate, who was white, was charged with his murder, and the family is suing the Sheriff's Office for institutional negligence. This incident is an institutional failure to protect a Black inmate from violence.⁴¹⁷



3. SANTONIO COLEMAN – ATHENS, GA (OCTOBER 19, 2024)

San Coleman, age 48, was found critically injured on October 19, 2024, along the Trail Creek Trail behind the University of Georgia

⁴¹⁶ Al Jazeera. 2021. "US Police Shooting of Black Man in Georgia Echoes Breonna Taylor." Al Jazeera. June 15, 2021.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/15/us-police-shooting-of-black-man-in-georgia-echoes-breonna-taylor>

⁴¹⁷ ABC News. 2023. "Another Inmate Dies at Fulton County Jail, 10th Inmate Death This Year." ABC News. September 6, 2023.

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/inmate-dies-fulton-county-jail-atlanta-10th-death-this-year/story?id=102974414>.

Chicopee Complex in Athens, Georgia.⁴¹⁸ They were transported to a hospital where they subsequently died.⁴¹⁹ The local law enforcement agency, Athens-Clarke County Police Department (ACCPD), is investigating the death as a homicide or at least under suspicious circumstances.⁴²⁰ San Coleman was a Black person who presented in a gender-nonconforming or trans-affirming way; some sources refer to them as a transgender woman, others as gender-nonconforming.⁴²¹ Family and community members have raised serious concerns that San's identity may have been a factor in their death—particularly given the lack of clarity around motive and the trail-side location of the attack. The ACCPD has stated the case is active but has released limited information. Community advocates have called for more openness and for the case to be considered for hate crime classification.⁴²²



4. SERENITY HOLLIS – ALBANY, GA (MAY 8, 2021)

Serenity Hollis was a 24-year-old Black transgender woman living in Albany, Georgia. On May 8, 2021, she was fatally shot while walking along West Highland Avenue in Albany.⁴²³

Surveillance video released by the Albany Police Department showed someone approach Hollis from behind and shoot her in the back of the head before fleeing the scene. Law enforcement officials indicated that her death is being investigated as a possible hate crime, though no motive has been publicly confirmed.⁴²⁴ In 2021, Robert Harvey was charged in connection with Serenity's death.⁴²⁵



5. TREVONTAE SHUBERT-HELTON – TOWNS COUNTY, GA (FEBRUARY 21, 2024)

Trevonte Jamal Shubert-Helton (29) of Sautee Nacoochee, Georgia, was found hanging from a tree on February 21, 2024. His body was discovered around 2:00 p.m. by a hiker in the Swallow Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Towns County, Georgia – near the trail to High Shoals Falls. The investigation by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation determined that his death was by suicide. However, given the setting, circumstances and social context, there are questions and concerns in the public domain about whether all aspects of the case are clear. Shubert-Helton was also allegedly in an interracial relationship, and Towns County's population is over 90% white.

⁴¹⁸ Cody Alcorn. 2024. "Family Shocked after Loved One Brutally Killed While Walking on Popular Trail in Athens." 11Alive.com. WXIA. October 23, 2024. <https://www.11alive.com/article/news/crime/family-in-disbelief-after-athens-man-brutally-killed-walking-on-popular-trail/85-8c70848b-4f50-4ec8-8d4a-8b36b70d508f>.

⁴¹⁹ Sue. 2024. "Police Investigate Suspicious Death of a 48 Year Old Black Trans Person in Georgia - Pittsburgh Lesbian Correspondents." Pittsburgh Lesbian Correspondents - Pittsburgh's LGBTQ Blog since 2005. November 2024. <https://www.pghlesbian.com/2024/10/police-investigate-suspicious-death-of-a-48-year-old-black-trans-person-in-georgia/>.

⁴²⁰ Trudy Ring. 2024. "Death of Santonio Coleman, a Gender-Nonconforming Person, Is Being Investigated as a Homicide in Georgia." Advocate.com. November 20, 2024. <https://www.advocate.com/crime/santonio-coleman-homicide-georgia>.

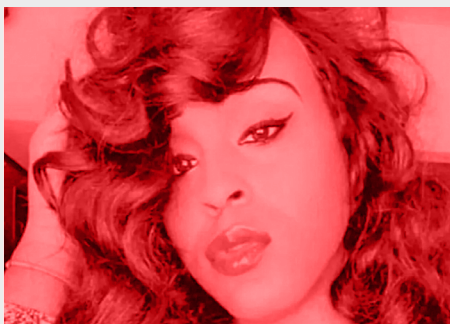
⁴²¹ Jarred Keller. 2024. "Santonio 'San' Coleman, a Black Transgender Woman, Affectionately... " HRC. November 15, 2024. <https://www.hrc.org/news/santonio-san-coleman-a-black-transgender-woman-affectionately-known-as-the-life-of-the-party-by-friends-and-family-found-dead-in-athens-georgia>

⁴²² Mutzman, Lindsay. 2024. "ACCPD Investigating Homicide." The Red & Black. October 23, 2024. https://www.redandblack.com/athensnews/accpd-investigating-homicide/article_23e4ffb6-90dd-11ef-a210-1bc4e7fbcaf3.html

⁴²³ "Remembering Our Dead - Serenity Hollis (8 May 2021)." 2021. Remembering Our Dead. 2021. https://www.tdor2.translivesmatter.info/reports/2021/05/08/serenity-hollis_albany-georgia-usa_15ffd69f.

⁴²⁴ Ring, Trudy. 2021. "Black Trans Woman Serenity Hollis Fatally Shot in Georgia." Advocate.com. May 19, 2021. <https://www.advocate.com/crime/2021/5/19/black-trans-woman-serenity-hollis-fatally-shot-georgia>.

⁴²⁵ Molly Godley. 2021. "Man Indicted in May Albany Homicide." <https://www.walb.com>. WALB. September 7, 2021. <https://www.walb.com/2021/09/07/man-indicted-may-albany-homicide/>.



6. SHANNON BOSWELL – DEKALB COUNTY, GA (JULY 2, 2024)

Shannon Boswell was a 30-year-old Black transgender woman from the Atlanta/Stone Mountain area.⁴²⁶ She was remembered by friends and family as a “sweet soul,” someone who “loved people,” enjoyed movies and living life to the fullest.⁴²⁷ On the night of July 2, 2024, Boswell was found dead in a roadway in DeKalb County (near North Hairston Road/Trace Terrace, in the Atlanta area).⁴²⁸ At first, authorities characterized her death as a “hit-and-run” car crash.⁴²⁹ But the next day, after a medical examiner’s investigation, it was revealed she had also been shot.⁴³⁰ Friends, her partner, and family members had reportedly called police the night she died to say she had been shot – but police initially said there had been no shooting report. The shooting wound was

only discovered once the autopsy returned.⁴³¹ One unnamed neighbor said they heard what sounded like a gunshot, then a few seconds later a crash – which aligns with the post-mortem finding of both a gunshot and a vehicular impact.⁴³²

As of mid-2025, the investigation remains open. There have been no public reports of arrests or identified suspects. Boswell’s family continues to press authorities for answers.⁴³³ Many are calling her death a likely hate crime, given that trans people – especially Black trans women – remain disproportionately targeted for fatal violence in Georgia and across the U.S.⁴³⁴ Civil rights groups and her loved ones highlight the fact that her death was initially misreported (as a crash), that she was misgendered, and that the delay in identifying the gunshot suggests serious failures in how investigations of trans victims are handled.

7. PRECIOUS ARMANI – ATLANTA, GA (FEBRUARY 29, 2004)

Precious Armani was a 37-year-old transgender woman living in Atlanta, Georgia.⁴³⁵ On February 29, 2004, Armani was found shot to death inside a car – a rented white Chevrolet Cavalier – parked outside a high-rise apartment building in the Buckhead neighborhood (near 2400 Peachtree Road).⁴³⁶ According to reports, the gunshot wound

⁴²⁶ Clara Gauthier. 2024. “Shannon Boswell, a Black Trans Woman in Georgia, Was Murdered - out FRONT.” OUT FRONT. July 29, 2024.

<https://outfrontmagazine.com/shannon-boswell-a-black-trans-woman-in-georgia-was-murdered/>; “Shannon Latrell Boswell Obituary (2024) - Atlanta, GA - Alfonso Dawson Mortuary, Inc.” 2024. Legacy.com. Legacy. July 9, 2024. <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/shannon-boswell-obituary?id=55532699>.

⁴²⁷ Emily Ulizio. 2024. “HRC Mourns ‘Very Sweet Person’ Shannon Boswell, 30-Year-Old....” HRC. July 19, 2024. <https://www.hrc.org/news/hrc-mourns-very-sweet-person-shannon-boswell-30-year-old-transgender-woman-killed-in-atlanta>; Legacy, 2024.

⁴²⁸ “Remembering Our Dead - Shannon Boswell (2 Jul 2024).” 2024. Remembering Our Dead. 2024. https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/reports/2024/07/02/shannon-boswell_atlanta-georgia-usa_021554fa; “Police Seek Information after Murder of Transgender Victim in Stone Mountain - the Champion Newspaper | 404-373-7779 | Georgia.” 2024. The Champion Newspaper | 404-373-7779 | Georgia. July 18, 2024. <https://thechampionnewspaper.com/police-seek-information-after-murder-of-transgender-victim-in-stone-mountain/>.

⁴²⁹ Thom Chandler. 2024. “Trans Woman Fatally Shot in Stone Mountain Days before Her Birthday.” The Georgia Sun. July 10, 2024. <https://thegeorgiasun.com/crime/trans-woman-fatally-shot-in-stone-mountain-days-before-her-birthday/>; Sue. 2024. “Black Trans Woman Shannon Boswell Mortally Shot, Run over in Atlanta. She Was 30. - Pittsburgh Lesbian Correspondents.” Pittsburgh Lesbian Correspondents - Pittsburgh’s LGBTQ Blog since 2005 ... July 9, 2024. <https://www.pghlesbian.com/2024/07/black-trans-woman-shannon-boswell-mortally-shot-run-over-in-atlanta-she-was-30/>.

⁴³⁰ Trudy Ring. 2024. “Trans Woman Shannon Boswell Fatally Shot in Georgia.” Advocate.com. July 8, 2024. <https://www.advocate.com/crime/transgender-woman-shannon-boswell-killed>; Remembering Our Dead, 2024.

⁴³¹ “Victim Shot, Killed, ‘Left in the Street like a Deer’ Moments before Being Hit by Car.” 2024b. Yahoo News. July 4, 2024. <https://www.yahoo.com/news/transgender-woman-shot-killed-left-213829765.html>.

⁴³² Ring, 2024. Pghlesbian.com, 2024.

⁴³³ Courtney Francisco. 2025. “DeKalb Family Desperate for Answers One Year after Loved One Shot, Run Over.” WSB-TV Channel 2 - Atlanta. July 4, 2025. <https://www.wsbtv.com/news/local/dekalb-county/dekalb-family-desperate-answers-one-year-after-loved-one-shot-run-over/UNIREB4KGBF6HACA7XZ3M4ZTV/>; Champion, 2024.

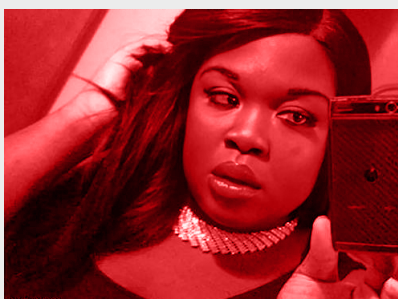
⁴³⁴ Champion, 2024; Gauthier, 2024.

⁴³⁵ “Remembering Our Dead - Precious Armani (29 Feb 2004).” 2018. Remembering Our Dead. 2018. https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/reports/2004/02/29/precious-armani_atlanta-georgia-usa_8cbea393.

⁴³⁶ TDOR Trans Lives Matter, 2018.

was to the head.⁴³⁷ Police would not publicly say whether signs of a struggle had been found.⁴³⁸

Despite public mourning and community pressure, the case remains unsolved. No suspect was publicly identified or convicted.⁴³⁹ At the time of her death, Precious Armani was recorded as the 10th known transgender homicide victim in Atlanta and the 14th in the state since 1990.⁴⁴⁰ Her murder prompted the Atlanta Police Department to create the LGBTQ+ liaison position to combat violence and improve relations with the community.⁴⁴¹



8. KEYMORI SHATOYA JOHNSON – ALBANY, GA (DECEMBER 6, 2014)

Keymori was a 24-year-old Black transgender woman living in Albany, Georgia.⁴⁴² On December 6, 2014, she was shot to death in or near her home on West Gordon Street in the early hours of the morning.⁴⁴³ On the same day, police arrested a man identified as Kuyaunnis James (age 25) and charged him with involuntary

manslaughter, possession of a firearm during a crime, and solicitation of prostitution – though the prosecution's decisions around formal murder or hate crime charges became controversial.⁴⁴⁴ Johnson's mother publicly described the crime scene as showing multiple gunshots fired into the door, TV, and walls. She stated her child had been shot twice, then tried to run but was fatally wounded. She also claimed that Johnson had an (unloaded) gun at the time.⁴⁴⁵

Local media and police reports frequently misgendered or dead-named Johnson – using her birth name and male pronouns even after her identity was clarified. This misidentification complicates record-keeping, public memory, and community acknowledgement of her death as part of anti-trans violence.⁴⁴⁶

While James was initially charged, a magistrate later dropped the felony manslaughter charges, reducing them to a misdemeanor solicitation charge. He was released on a low bond (~\$1,000), pending potential grand jury review – raising grave concern among Johnson's family and supporters that he might avoid meaningful punishment.⁴⁴⁷ The District Attorney told the public that Johnson's gender identity, occupation, or personal lifestyle would not be considered legally relevant in court – even though community

⁴³⁷ Ibid.

⁴³⁸ TDoR Trans Lives Matter, 2018.

⁴³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁰ TDoR Trans Lives Matter, 2018.

⁴⁴¹ Autumn Sanford, "(Trans)forming the 'Epidemic of Violence': LGBTQ+ Police Liaisons and Transgender Victimization," *Georgia Criminal Law Review* 3, no. 2 (2025): art. 7, <https://digitalcommons.law.uga.edu/gclr/vol3/iss2/7>

⁴⁴² "Remembering Our Dead - Keymori Shatoya Johnson (6 Dec 2014)." 2015. Remembering Our Dead. 2015. https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/reports/2014/12/06/keymori-shatoya-johnson_albany-georgia-usa_bc138adf.

⁴⁴³ Remembering Our Dead. 2015.

⁴⁴⁴ Mitch Kellaway. 2014. "Suspect Charged in Shooting Death of Ga. Trans Woman, but Media and Police Still Get It Wrong." *Advocate.com*. December 16, 2014. https://www.advocate.com/crime/2014/12/16/suspect-charged-shooting-death-ga-trans-woman-media-and-police-still-get-it-wrong?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

⁴⁴⁵ Kellaway, 2014.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁷ Dyana Bagby. 2015. "Georgia Transgender Woman Killed in Shooting, Suspect out on \$1,000 Bond." *Rough Draft Atlanta*. February 6, 2015. <https://roughdraftatlanta.com/2015/02/06/georgia-transgender-woman-killed-shooting-suspect-1000-bond/>.

and advocacy groups consider such factors central to understanding the motive.⁴⁴⁸

As of public reporting, there has been no conclusive resolution of the case – no definitive determination that this was a hate crime, and uncertain accountability beyond the initial arrest and dismissed charges.⁴⁴⁹



9. TEETEE DANGERFIELD – COLLEGE PARK, GA (JULY 31, 2017)

TeeTee Dangerfield, a 32-year-old Black transgender woman, was found shot to death in her car in College Park, Georgia on July 31, 2017. Although a suspect was arrested, he was later acquitted – and no motive has been legally confirmed. Her death remains emblematic of deep, unresolved problems: the lethal vulnerability of transgender people of color, institutional neglect of bias-motivated violence, and a justice system that too often leaves families and communities with unanswered questions.⁴⁵⁰



10. CANDACE TOWNS – MACON, GEORGIA (OCTOBER 2017)

Candace Towns was a 30-year-old Black transgender woman living in Macon, Georgia.⁴⁵¹ She was reported missing around October 29–30, 2017 after last being seen alive Saturday night; friends and family became worried when she did not return but had not heard from her.⁴⁵² On October 31, 2017 (Halloween), a Bibb County public works employee found her body lying at the end of a driveway between two abandoned houses on Rosecrest Avenue.⁴⁵³ The coroner determined Towns's death was a homicide by gunshot; she had been shot, including in the face.⁴⁵⁴

In July 2020, authorities announced that a suspect – Horace Jamal Marsh (age 26 at arrest) – was charged with Towns's murder. Investigators said a firearm tied to Marsh, through ballistic matching, linked him to her 2017 killing.⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁴⁸ Kellaway, 2014.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁰ "TeeTee Dangerfield Murdered or Death by Force in Atlanta, Georgia." 2017. Crimesolverscentral.com. 2017. <https://crimesolverscentral.com/homicide/133416>; Williams, Jeremy. 2017. "Transgender Woman Fatally Shot in Georgia - Watermark out News." Watermark out News. August 3, 2017. <https://watermarkoutnews.com/2017/08/03/transgender-woman-fatally-shot-georgia/>; Taylor, Jeff. 2017. "Atlanta Woman Found Outside Apartment Complex Is 16th Trans Murder Victim - LGBTQ Nation." LGBTQ Nation. August 2, 2017. <https://www.lgbtqnation.com/2017/08/atlanta-woman-murdered-outside-apartment-complex-16th-trans-murder-victim/>; Alcorn, Cody. 2023. "'Hard Slap in the Face' | Mother of Slain Transgender Woman Reacts to Lawsuit of Man Who Was Charged, Acquitted in Case." 11Alive.com. WXIA. December 6, 2023. <https://www.11alive.com/article/news/local/tee-tee-dangerfield-killing-atlanta-mother-lawsuit/85-f9b76fa1-222e-43c0-9840-6d03f2a243a5>.

⁴⁵¹ "Remembering Our Dead - Candace Towns (28 Oct 2017)." 2017. Remembering Our Dead. 2017. https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/reports/2017/10/28/candace-towns_macon-georgia-usa_ffc50568.

⁴⁵² Patrick Saunders. 2017. "Transgender Woman Found Murdered in Macon." Rough Draft Atlanta. November 2, 2017. <https://roughdraftatlanta.com/2017/11/02/transgender-woman-found-murdered-macon/>.

⁴⁵³ "Candace Towns Murdered or Death by Force in Macon, Georgia." 2017. Crimesolverscentral.com. 2017. <https://crimesolverscentral.com/homicide/133280>.

⁴⁵⁴ Anna Swartz. 2017. "Candace Towns, Transgender Woman, Fatally Shot in Macon, Georgia." Mic. November 2, 2017. <https://www.mic.com/articles/185779/candace-towns-transgender-woman-fatally-shot-in-macon-georgia>.

⁴⁵⁵ "Macon Man Charged with 2017 Murder of Trans Woman." 2020. WMAZ. July 17, 2020. <https://www.13wmaaz.com/article/news/local/macon-man-charged-with-2017-murder-of-trans-woman/93-622bf14c-4da4-4303-9095-b3f56aafd7d7>.



11. FELYCYA HARRIS – AUGUSTA, GA (OCTOBER 3, 2020)

On October 3, 2020, the body of Felycya Harris – a 33-year-old Black trans woman – was discovered in Meadowbrook Park, in Augusta, Georgia. She had been shot; the death was later ruled a homicide.⁴⁵⁶ According to the coroner's report, Harris suffered at least one gunshot wound.⁴⁵⁷ Harris was an interior decorator who ran her own business; she was known for using her creative eye to transform people's living spaces and homes.⁴⁵⁸ In addition to decorating, she taught dance – and friends remember her for her bright personality, her sense of style, joy, humor, and warmth.⁴⁵⁹

On November 20, 2021, a suspect – Jerrome T. Miller – was arrested in connection with her murder.⁴⁶⁰ A second individual, previously known by a street name, was also taken into custody shortly thereafter under a grand jury warrant, indicating possible involvement beyond a lone perpetrator.⁴⁶¹ As of the most recent public record, the investigation remains ongoing.



▲ Demonstrators protest lynching in the South. Keystone-France / Gamma-Keystone via Getty Images

⁴⁵⁶ "Remembering Our Dead - Felycya Harris (3 Oct 2020)." 2020. Remembering Our Dead. 2020. https://tdortranslivesmatter.info/reports/2020/10/03/felycya-harris-augusta-georgia-usa_c5136259.

⁴⁵⁷ Greg Rickabaugh. 2020. "Who Shot Felycya Harris & Left Her Body in Augusta Park?" AugustaCrime.com. AugustaCrime. October 5, 2020. <https://augustacrime.com/who-shot-felycya-harris-left-her-body-in-augusta-park/>.

⁴⁵⁸ "HRC Mourns Felycya Harris, Trans Woman Killed in Georgia." 2020. HRC. October 6, 2020. <https://www.hrc.org/news/hrc-mourns-felycya-harris-trans-woman-killed-in-georgia>.

⁴⁵⁹ Alex Bollinger. 2020. "Transgender Interior Designer Felycya Harris Shot to Death in Georgia Park - LGBTQ Nation." LGBTQ Nation. October 7, 2020. <https://www.lgbtqnation.com/2020/10/transgender-interior-designer-felycya-harris-shot-death-georgia-park/>.

⁴⁶⁰ Scott Hudson. 2022. "Murder Suspect in Felycya Harris' Death Indicted, So-Called 'Gunslinger' Unmasked." The Augusta Press. February 9, 2022. <https://theaugustapress.com/murder-suspect-in-felycya-harris-death-indicted-so-called-gunslinger-unmasked/>.

⁴⁶¹ Hudson, 2022.

PATTERNS AND FINDINGS

Across the documented incidents identified as potential MDLs or hate crimes, a clear concentration appears in the decade spanning 2015–2025. Over one-third of these deaths occurred in custodial settings, jails, prisons, or during direct police encounters. Cases such as those of Anthony Ajibade, Gregory Martin, Jimmy Atchison Robinson, Lashawn Lawrence, Dennis Hayes, Kelvin Glasco, and Jenna Mitchell emphasize a recurring pattern: the use of excessive force, denial of adequate medical care, and falsification of official records. The punitive nature of carceral environments positions them as sites of racially inflected violence and hate, exacerbated by institutional safeguards. Perpetrators are more often than not insulated from accountability.

Geographically, the cases show visible clustering in rural counties within Georgia such as Clinch, Washington, Lowndes, and Greene. Interestingly, these are areas with long-standing histories of racial segregation and “sundown town” practices. Several incidents occurred in locations with deep symbolic resonance for racial terror: the bodies of Qaadir and Naazir Lewis on Bell Mountain, Roosevelt Champion III found hanging

in Greensboro, and Omari Bryant suspended from a Homerville motel railing, all in areas families have identified as former Ku Klux Klan strongholds.

An additional trend, particular to Georgia, is the intersection between race and mental health. Several victims were in psychiatric crises. Their plight was misunderstood and reframed as signs of aggression, prompting violent armed interventions rather than medical support. The absence of trained personnel and overmilitarized policing escalates encounters, turning psychiatric affliction into a potential death sentence.

Taken together, these cases reveal a troubling continuity between the racial terror killings of the past and present-day deaths occurring under violent, suspicious, or state-involved circumstances. The same patterns, targeting of vulnerable individuals, symbolic staging of deaths, and opaque investigations, mirror the state’s dark history and its failure to protect marginalized communities or deliver accountability.

FOR THE GOOD OF AMERICA

Do you know that the United States is
the only country in the world where
beings are BURNED AT THE STAKE?

In Four Years, 1918-1921, Twenty-Eight People were publicly
BURNED BY AMERICAN MOBS

3436 People Lynched, 1889 to 1922

For What Crimes Have Mobs Nullified Government and Inflicted the Death Penalty?

The Allied Crime	Why Sought
Murder	571
Rape	615
Crimes against the Person	333
Crimes against Property	453
Miscellaneous Crimes	175
Absence of Crime	175
Why Sought	Being a relative of a person who was lynched
	Being a labor contract
	Being a member of the Non-Partisan League
	Being a man

To sin by silence, when
they should protest,
makes cowards of men.

Of 3436 people murdered by mobs in our country, only 571, or less than 17 per cent., were even accused of the crime of rape.

83 WOMEN HAVE BEEN LYNCHED IN THE UNITED STATES

Do lynchings - **- ELLA WHEELER WILCOX** - a real crime?

AND THE LYNCHERS GO UNPUNISHED

There were four lynchings in eight days after the failure to pass the Dyer Anti-Lynching bill. One of the victims being publicly burned at the stake.

TO MAINTAIN CIVILIZATION IN AMERICA

AND FOR THE GOOD NAME OF THE NATION
BEFORE THE WORLD

YOU

CANNOT ESCAPE YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

Will You Not at Least Aid the Organization Which Has
Been Fighting for Ten Years to Wipe Out Our Shame?

Send your check to J. E. SPINGARN, Treasurer of the

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE

70 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY

THIS ADVERTISEMENT IS PAID FOR IN 136 BY THE ANTI-LYNCHING CRUSADERS.

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

FLORIDA'S HISTORY OF RACIAL TERROR OCCUPIES A UNIQUELY BRUTAL CHAPTER IN THE BROADER AMERICAN NARRATIVE OF WHITE SUPREMACY AND ANTI-BLACK VIOLENCE. FROM THE END OF RECONSTRUCTION THROUGH THE CIVIL RIGHTS ERA, FLORIDA BECAME ONE OF THE MOST DANGEROUS PLACES IN AMERICA TO BE BLACK. BETWEEN 1882 AND 1968, THE STATE OFFICIALLY REPORTED 282 LYNCHINGS, WITH 257 VICTIMS, OVER 91 PERCENT BEING BLACK, WHILE ONLY 25 WERE WHITE, AS PER THE TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE ARCHIVES.⁴⁶² THIS RANKED FLORIDA AS THE MOST LETHAL SOUTHERN STATE FOR AFRICAN-AMERICANS WITH RESPECT TO POPULATION SIZE. A 1993 STUDY EMPHASIZED THIS STARK REALITY: ONE IN EVERY 1,250 BLACK INHABITANTS IN FLORIDA WAS LYNCHED FROM 1882 TO 1930, A RATE DOUBLE THAT OF GEORGIA AND SEVEN TIMES THAT OF NORTH CAROLINA.⁴⁶³

⁴⁶² "Lynching Information – Tuskegee University Archives." n.d. Tuskegee University. <https://archive.tuskegee.edu/repository/digital-collection/lynching-information>.

⁴⁶³ Ben Brotemarkle. 2016. "Florida Frontiers: The Lynching of James Clark." Florida Today. August 29, 2016. <https://www.floridatoday.com/story/news/2016/08/29/florida-frontiers-lynching-james-clark/89531344/>.

◀ Anti-lynching broadside by the NAACP stating "The United States is the Only Land on Earth where Human Beings are Burned at the Stake"

The Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) documents 331 lynchings in Florida, highlighting the disparity between official records and more comprehensive historical inquiries.⁴⁶⁴ While violence occurred statewide, certain counties emerged as epicenters. Jackson County, where Claude Neal was murdered, recorded at least 29 lynchings, more than any other county.⁴⁶⁵ Columbia County reported 17, while Hamilton and Marion each documented over a dozen. In Manatee County, racial violence peaked in the 1890s. In 1896 alone, six unnamed Black men were lynched, and over 100 Black workers were forcibly expelled from the Manatee Lemon Company in a coordinated act of racial cleansing, reflecting broader patterns of displacement across the South.⁴⁶⁶

Lynchings in Florida were profoundly racialized acts of social control, occurring for a range of alleged infractions. Nationally, the leading accusation was homicide (40.84%), followed by rape (19.22%), “all other causes” (22.85%), and lesser charges such as insults to whites, robbery, or attempted rape.⁴⁶⁷ In Florida, numerous lynchings occurred following unfounded or petty allegations, frequently exacerbated by racist hysteria and white supremacy. A significant number of these homicides were extrajudicial and presumably sanctioned or, at the very least, condoned by local law enforcement.

Spectacle lynchings were particularly gruesome, publicly proclaimed beforehand, and viewed by large audiences, frequently comprising entire families. The lynching of Claude Neal in Marianna, Florida, in 1934 is recognized as the final documented “spectacle” lynching in the United States. Neal, charged with the murder

of a Caucasian female, was detained from an Alabama correctional facility, subjected to prolonged torture, castration, burning, multiple gunshot wounds, and ultimately hanged from a tree outside the Jackson County Courthouse.⁴⁶⁸ Images of his disfigured corpse were sold for fifty cents.

Lynchings were not solely punitive; they aimed to maintain white supremacy and instill terror in Black communities to ensure their subjugation. Lynchings frequently occurred alongside instances of Black political engagement or migration. The 1926 lynching of James Clark in Brevard County, following an allegation of assaulting a white girl, exemplifies how racialized violence was strategically deployed to reinforce control. Clark was abducted from police custody by masked assailants and subsequently murdered; his corpse was discovered perforated with gunshots and suspended from a tree.⁴⁶⁹ The avenue next to the lynching site, formerly designated as “Lynching Tree Drive,” was rebranded as “Legendary Lane” in 1980—an act of erasure rather than acknowledgment.

One particularly harrowing incident included Willie James Howard, a 15-year-old Black boy who was killed in 1944 following his writing of a Christmas card to a white girl. He was abducted by the girl’s father and two other men, forced to jump into the Suwannee River, and later drowned.⁴⁷⁰ Instances of mass racial violence occurred, serving as communal lynchings. The Rosewood Massacre of 1923, during which a Black community was executed due to an unfounded allegation of rape, resulted in several fatalities and displacements.⁴⁷¹ Likewise, the 1916

⁴⁶⁴ EJI. 2025. “Explore the Map | Lynching in America.” Eji.org. 2025. <https://lynchinginamerica.eji.org/explore/florida>

⁴⁶⁵ Brotemarkle, 2016.

⁴⁶⁶ Hailey Erin Praught. 2017. “A Bare Bones History: Lynching in Manatee County.” Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. 2017. <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/honorstheses/91>

⁴⁶⁷ “Lynching Information – Tuskegee University Archives.” n.d. Tuskegee University. <https://archive.tuskegee.edu/repository/digital-collection/lynching-information/>.

⁴⁶⁸ “PBS – Freedom Never Dies: The Story of Harry T. Moore – Florida Terror – Lynchings – Claude Neal Lynching.” n.d. Www.pbs.org. <https://www.pbs.org/harrymoore/terror/cneal.html>.

⁴⁶⁹ Brotemarkle, 2016.

⁴⁷⁰ PBS, 2000

⁴⁷¹ David R. Colburn. 2022. “Rosewood and America in the Early Twentieth Century.” STARS. 2022. <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol76/iss2/6/>.

Newberry lynchings resulted in the execution of six Black men in Alachua County within a 24-hour period.⁴⁷² The case of Cellos Harrison, a Black man wrongfully accused of murder and subsequently executed in 1943, highlighted police malpractice and racial injustice. Harrison's demise, akin to numerous others, was dismissed without repercussions for the offenders.⁴⁷³

The personal sacrifices of individuals such as Harry T. Moore provide a poignant contrast to this period of impunity. Moore, a Black educator and field secretary for the NAACP, devoted his life to the investigation and opposition of lynchings throughout Florida. His campaign encompassed correspondence with governors, independent inquiries, and appeals for federal assistance.⁴⁷⁴ His

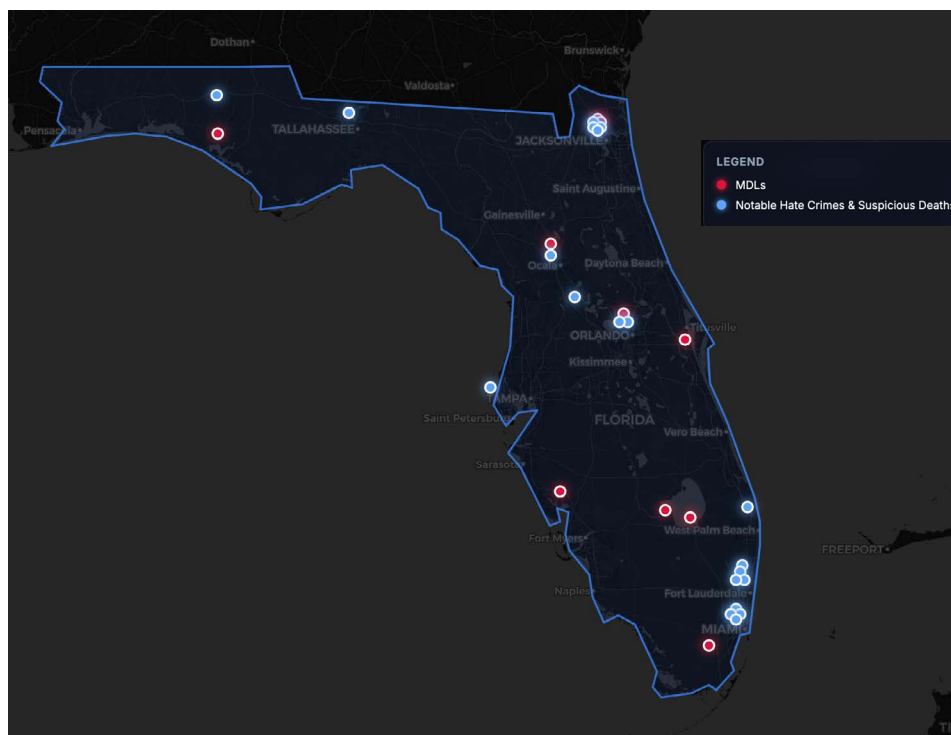
efforts in the Howard case illustrated his proactive approach: gathering affidavits, urging the NAACP for justice, and challenging state officials. Moore and his wife, Harriette, were murdered by a Klan bombing on Christmas Day, 1951, presumably in retribution for his advocacy.

Florida's history of lynching is not only a remnant of the past but a fundamental component of its contemporary racial and political framework. The horrific execution of Claude Neal and the subtle obliteration of James Clark's legacy illustrate the pervasive enforcement of white supremacy through both mob violence and institutional participation. These tragedies necessitate not only remembering but also systemic accountability throughout all spheres of society.

MODERN-DAY LYNCHING CASES IN FLORIDA

11
SUSPECTED MDLS

20
NOTABLE HATE
CRIMES OR
SUSPICIOUS DEATHS



In Florida, there have been at least 11 suspected MDLs and at least 20 notable hate crimes or suspicious deaths since the year 2000. Three of the suspected MDLs involved hanging.

⁴⁷² Colburn, 2022.

⁴⁷³ Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore. 2008. *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919-1950*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.

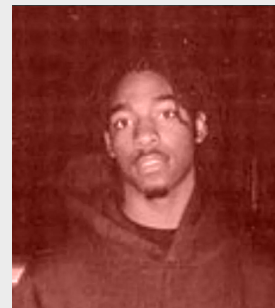
⁴⁷⁴ PBS, 2000.



1. NEVAN BAKER – ORLANDO, FL (2020)

Nevan Baker, a 22-year-old Black man, was found hanging from a tree in Barker Park, Orlando, around 3:30 a.m. on October 5, 2020. His body was discovered by a passerby who contacted local authorities. Baker was suspended from a tree limb with a rope around his neck, fully clothed, and with no apparent suicide note or witnesses to the event. The scene was quickly cordoned off by the Orlando Police Department (OPD), who declared no signs of foul play early in their investigation.⁴⁷⁵

Baker's family, particularly his mother Sharhonda James, strongly rejected the suicide ruling. Upon seeing his body at the morgue, James reported visible injuries to his nose, jaw, and forehead, as well as swelling on his hands and knuckles, indicating a struggle.⁴⁷⁶ She has stated that these injuries were not consistent with a hanging death. Despite repeated requests, the family has not received photographs or videos from the scene, nor access to the full autopsy report.⁴⁷⁷ While both OPD and the county medical examiner ruled the death a suicide, the rapidity of the conclusion and the lack of information from the police raises cause for alarm.



2. MARTIN LEE ANDERSON – BAY COUNTY, FLORIDA (JANUARY 6, 2006)

Martin Lee Anderson, a 14-year-old Black boy, died on January 6, 2006, just hours after arriving at the Bay County Juvenile Boot Camp in Panama City, Florida. He had been sent there for probation violations, taking his grandmother's car and trespassing at school.⁴⁷⁸ What followed was an assault, caught in full on surveillance footage: seven guards and a nurse forced Anderson through a punishing drill even after he collapsed. As he struggled, they struck him, twisted his limbs, rammed ammonia capsules up his nose, covered his mouth, and dragged his limp body across the yard.⁴⁷⁹

Anderson never received meaningful medical attention while conscious. A nurse stood by as he gasped and went limp, unresponsive. He died at a hospital later that day. Although the Bay County medical examiner initially claimed Anderson died from complications related to a sickle cell trait, a second independent autopsy concluded he had suffocated, his airway obstructed by the guards' restraint and chemical exposure.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁵ Jordan Culver. 2020. "Attorney Ben Crump Calls for 'Comprehensive Investigation' after Florida Police Rule Nevan Baker's Hanging Death as Suicide." USA TODAY. October 12, 2020. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/10/11/nevan-baker-black-man-hanging-death-ben-crump-investigation/5963485002/>.

⁴⁷⁶ Grace Toohey. 2020. "Black Man Found Hanging from Tree at Orlando Park Ruled Suicide; Family Says, 'We're Not Going to Let This Go.'" Orlando Sentinel. October 9, 2020. <https://www.orlandosentinel.com/2020/10/09/black-man-found-hanging-from-tree-at-orlando-park-ruled-suicide-family-says-were-not-going-to-let-this-go/>.

⁴⁷⁷ Orlando Police Department (@OrlandoPolice). "Tweet text here," X, August 4, 2020, accessed November 24, 2025. <https://x.com/OrlandoPolice/status/131461116006350849>

⁴⁷⁸ Rosalind Bentley. 2022. "The Tragic Death of Martin Lee." Essence. January 4, 2022. <https://www.essence.com/news/the-tragic-death-of-martin-lee>.

⁴⁷⁹ McClatchy. 2017. "The Restraint That Shocked Florida." Miami Herald. October 10, 2017. <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/special-reports/florida-prisons/article177438656.html>.

⁴⁸⁰ ABC News. 2006. "Autopsy: Boot Camp Teen Died of Suffocation." ABC News. May 6, 2006. <https://abcnews.go.com/GMA/story?id=1931010&page=1>.

Despite the video evidence and the second autopsy's findings, all eight individuals, seven guards and a nurse, were acquitted in 2007.⁴⁸¹ The FBI and Department of Justice later announced there was insufficient evidence to pursue federal civil rights charges.⁴⁸²

A Black child was brutalized into silence by agents of the state, under the guise of discipline, within public view and impunity. Anderson's killing was not just an institutional failure, but a display of social control and authority.



3. MATTHEW WALKER – PUNTA GORDA, FL (APRIL 11, 2014)

On April 11, 2014, Matthew Walker, a 46-year-old Black inmate, died after a violent encounter with correctional officers at Charlotte Correctional Institution in Punta Gorda, Florida. The

confrontation began over a minor rule infraction during a late-night cell check. In response, officers, Lieutenant Tyler Triplett, Captain David Thomas, and Sergeant William Franklin, forcibly removed Walker from his cell. They beat him with radios and boots and restrained him face-down on a concrete walkway. His larynx was crushed, and he died of asphyxiation.⁴⁸³

During the incident, Lt. Triplett reportedly screamed, "Do you know who I am? I'm going to kill you mother***!" When Walker became unresponsive, Capt. Thomas said, "Whatever game you're playing, you need to get up and walk. My staff is too tired to do this."⁴⁸⁴ The medical examiner ruled the death a homicide, identifying at least eleven separate blunt force injuries.³

Despite this, a Charlotte County grand jury declined to indict any of the officers, citing a compromised crime scene and conflicting testimonies. Some officers, including Triplett, were fired, but later rehired. No criminal charges were ever brought.⁴⁸⁵ Walker's death shows how excessive force, followed by lack of accountability, allowed a fatal act to go unpunished.

⁴⁸¹ Abby Goodnough. 2007. "8 Acquitted in Death of Boy, 14, in Florida." The New York Times, October 13, 2007. <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/13/us/13bootcamp.html>.

⁴⁸² "Federal Officials Close the Investigation into the Death of Martin Lee Anderson." 2010. Justice.gov. April 16, 2010. <https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/federal-officials-close-investigation-death-martin-lee-anderson>.

⁴⁸³ "Lawsuit Blames Fla. Prison System for Inmate's Death." 2016. Corrections1. April 12, 2016. <https://www.corrections1.com/staff-misconduct/articles/lawsuit-blames-fla-prison-system-for-inmates-death-8afelho9ak2lOjEw/>.

⁴⁸⁴ Julie K. Brown. 2016. "Lawsuit Blames Florida Prison System for Inmate's Death." Miami Herald. April 11, 2016. <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/community/miami-dade/article71249632.html>.

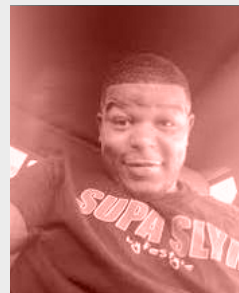
⁴⁸⁵ David M. Reutter. 2025. "Bar Complaint Revives 10-Year-Old Question: Why No Charges Filed against Florida Guards Who Killed Prisoner? | Prison Legal News." Prisonlegalnews.org. 2025. <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/news/2024/aug/15/bar-complaint-revives-10-year-old-question-why-no-charges-filed-against-florida-guards-who-killed-prisoner/>.



4. GARY JACKSON – JACKSONVILLE, FL (2023)

On May 2, 2023, Gary Jackson, a 39-year-old Black man, was found dead behind a dumpster on West Ashley Street in downtown Jacksonville, Florida. He had suffered multiple gunshot wounds to the torso. Surveillance footage from surrounding businesses showed Jackson being approached and fatally shot by a group of young white men in what prosecutors later described as an unprovoked and coordinated attack.⁴⁸⁶ Ryan Nichols, aged 20, was convicted of second-degree murder and sentenced to 40 years in prison, including a 10-year minimum mandatory term. Two others, Daniel DeGuardia (19) and Holden Dodson (22), pleaded guilty to being accessories after the fact and received probation sentences for their roles in the incident.⁴⁸⁷

While the legal proceedings resulted in a conviction, the racial dynamics of the case demand closer scrutiny. A group of white men targeting a lone Black man in a public space, inflicting fatal violence, then attempting to evade justice evokes long-standing historical patterns of racial terror and the attempted erasure of Black life.



5. KEANDRE TAYLOR – JACKSONVILLE, FL (SEPTEMBER 30, 2023)

KeAndre Taylor, a 32-year-old Black man and father of three, was found dead on September 30, 2023, behind a truck stop in Baldwin, near Jacksonville, Florida. Less than 48 hours earlier, Taylor had contacted his mother, Tawana Taylor, expressing deep fear for his life. He said he was being harassed at work by white coworkers, citing persistent racism and hostility. “I feel like I’m going to die out here,” he told her.⁴⁸⁸

On the day of his death, the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office responded to reports of a workplace dispute at the travel center. A coworker claimed Taylor had been in a heated argument and was allegedly asking others for a gun, though no weapon was ever found, nor was Taylor armed. Later that same day, officers discovered his body hanging by a cord in an abandoned structure behind the property. Tawana Taylor, who later viewed her son’s body, reported bruises on his forehead and a swollen eye, clear signs of a physical altercation that had not been addressed in the initial incident report.⁴⁸⁹ Taylor had also

⁴⁸⁶ Destiny McKeiver. 2023. “Sources Identify Man Found Shot Fatally behind a Downtown Jacksonville Dumpster.” Firstcoastnews.com. WTLV. May 5, 2023. <https://www.firstcoastnews.com/article/news/local/man-found-shot-fatally-behind-downtown-jacksonville-dumpster-has-identity-revealed/77-a5a9ff3b-7b50-4828-940c-919ff25821e4>.

⁴⁸⁷ Nick Blank. 2024. “St. Johns Man Sentenced to 40 Years in Prison for 2023 Downtown Jacksonville Slaying.” Firstcoastnews.com. WTLV. June 19, 2024. <https://www.firstcoastnews.com/article/news/local/man-found-shot-fatally-behind-downtown-jacksonville-dumpster-has-identity-revealed/77-a5a9ff3b-7b50-4828-940c-919ff25821e4>.

⁴⁸⁸ Andrew Badillo. 2023. “Tennessee Couple Looking for Answers 3 Weeks after Son Was Found Dead at Baldwin Travel Center.” Firstcoastnews.com. WTLV. October 21, 2023. <https://www.firstcoastnews.com/article/news/local/tennessee-couple-looking-for-answers-three-weeks-after-their-son-was-found-dead-at-a-baldwin-travel-center/77-94c07a8f-00a0-4e93-b559-4c0eb85070e0>.

⁴⁸⁹ Badillo, 2023.

booked a trip to return home the following week to see his children, casting further doubt on the suggestion of suicide.

Though officially unresolved, the context of Taylor's death, dehumanization, silencing, and neglect, demands recognition as more than an isolated tragedy.



6. BEE LOVE SLATER – CLEWISTON, FL (SEPTEMBER 4, 2019)

On September 4, 2019, the remains of 23-year-old Bee Love Slater, a Black transgender woman, were discovered inside a burning vehicle near Clewiston, Florida. The extent of the fire damage was so severe that her identity could only be confirmed through dental records.⁴⁹⁰ Reports later revealed that Slater had likely been restrained and shot before the car was set on fire, exemplifying the premeditated nature of the act.⁴⁹¹

Slater had been the target of escalating online threats, including explicit messages on Facebook that declared she “deserved to die” for her gender identity.⁴⁹² She had expressed fear for her life

in the days leading up to her murder and was reportedly avoiding public places. Investigators initially hesitated to categorize the killing as a hate crime, citing a lack of direct evidence linking the threats to the crime scene.⁴⁹³

The Hendry County Sheriff's Office announced that an arrest has been made in connection with the death of 23-year-old Bee Love, though the person responsible for the killing remains at large. Sheriff Steve Whidden identified the suspect as 35-year-old Marcus Lynell Thompson of Moore Haven, who authorities intend to charge with being an accessory to first-degree murder after the fact, as well as arson.⁴⁹⁴ JULIAN categorizes this case as a potential MDL rather than a general hate crime because of the potential range of suspects from multiple online threats.



7. LATANDRA ELLINGTON – OCALA, FL (OCTOBER 1, 2019)

Latandra Ellington, a 36-year-old Black woman and mother of four, was incarcerated at Florida's Lowell Correctional Institution in 2014, serving a 22-month sentence for grand theft and fraudulent ID use. In the weeks leading

⁴⁹⁰ Edward Helmore. 2019. “Police Investigate 18th Killing of a Trans Person in the US This Year.” The Guardian. The Guardian. September 14, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/sep/14/police-investigate-18th-killing-of-a-trans-person-in-the-us-this-year>.

⁴⁹¹ “HRC Mourns Bee Love Slater, a Black Transgender Woman Killed In....” 2019. HRC. September 9, 2019. <https://www.hrc.org/news/hrc-mourns-bee-love-slater-a-black-transgender-woman-killed-in-florida>.

⁴⁹² “In Memory of Bee Love Slater | Jewish Women's Archive.” 2019. Jewish Women's Archive. 2019. <https://jwa.org/blog/memory-bee-love-slater>.

⁴⁹³ Karma Allen. 2019. “Police Offer Few Details in Wake of Transgender Woman Found Burned beyond Recognition.” ABC News. September 17, 2019. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/police-offer-details-wake-transgender-woman-found-burned/story?id=65655753>.

⁴⁹⁴ “Moore Haven Man Arrested in Connection with 2019 Murder of Bee Love.” 2021. WINK News - Southwest Florida. December 22, 2021. https://www.winknews.com/news/moore-haven-man-arrested-in-connection-with-2019-murder-of-bee-love/article_c29db13f-4fd0-513c-96ff-d2d4976e62e4.html.

up to her death, Ellington wrote multiple letters to her family expressing grave fear for her life, explicitly naming Sergeant Patrick Quercioli as someone who had threatened her. She recounted incidents in which Quercioli allegedly cornered her, grabbed his radio, and said he would “bust [her] in the head” and beat her. She also mentioned that violence against inmates, particularly women, was known and witnessed by other officers. In one of her final letters dated September 21, 2014, Ellington warned her aunt that she might not make it out alive. After her family raised alarms with the prison, they were told she was placed in protective confinement. The following day, however, she was found dead in her cell.⁴⁹⁵

The Florida Department of Corrections initially offered no details about the cause of death. Dissatisfied, Ellington’s family commissioned a private autopsy, which revealed blunt-force trauma to her abdomen and toxic levels of the antihypertensive drug Amlodipine in her system.⁴⁹⁶ Her sister further described severe bruising across her body. Despite these findings, the state never launched a public investigation nor provided the family with meaningful follow-up or accountability.⁴⁹⁷

This case, where a vulnerable Black woman died despite repeated complaints under opaque and violent circumstances, exemplifies an extrajudicial killing facilitated by the very systems meant to protect life. What makes this case an MDL is the likelihood that other officers watched and/or knew of Ellington’s death—a hallmark of historical lynchings.



8. DARREN RAINEY – HOMESTEAD, FL (JUNE 23, 2012)

Darren Rainey, a 50-year-old Black man diagnosed with schizophrenia, died on June 23, 2012, at the Dade Correctional Institution in Florida. According to multiple eyewitnesses, correctional officers confined a naked Rainey inside a locked shower stall and blasted him with scalding water measured at temperatures exceeding 160°F. A punishment for defecating in his cell, a behavior not uncommon among those with untreated severe mental illness. Inmates testified that Rainey screamed in agony for nearly two hours, begging to be let out before collapsing. When guards returned, his skin was reportedly peeling off, and he was found dead, slumped on the floor with burns covering over 30% of his body.⁴⁹⁸

Despite these harrowing accounts and national scrutiny, the Miami-Dade State Attorney’s Office concluded in 2017 that there was insufficient evidence to prove the guards acted with criminal intent. Rainey’s death was officially deemed “accidental.”⁴⁹⁹ The Florida Department of Corrections initially failed to even suspend the officers involved, and none have faced legal consequences.⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁵ Julie K. Brown. 2014. “After Inmate’s Death, Sergeant to Be Questioned.” Miami Herald. October 9, 2014. <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/state/florida/article2628799.html>.

⁴⁹⁶ Alex Pickett. 2025. “Family Sues Fla. Prison over Inmate’s Death.” Courthousenews.com. 2025. <https://www.courthousenews.com/family-sues-fla-prison-over-inmates-death/>.

⁴⁹⁷ FlaglerLive. 2014. “Inmate Dies in a Florida Prison Less than a Day after Family Questioned Safety; Federal Probe Sought.” FlaglerLive. October 8, 2014. <https://flaggerlive.com/latandra-ellington-lowell-prison/>.

⁴⁹⁸ David Ovalle, 2016. “Miami-Dade Prison Inmate Death in Shower Ruled Accidental, Sources Say.” Miami Herald. January 22, 2016. <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/special-reports/florida-prisons/article56108525.html>.

⁴⁹⁹ Ovalle, 2016.

⁵⁰⁰ Laura Wamsley. 2019. “NPR Choice Page.” Npr.org. 2019. <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/03/19/520743255/after-schizophrenic-inmate-dies-in-a-shower-florida-prosecutor-finds-no-wrongdoi>.

This targeted violence against a mentally ill Black man sparked widespread outrage, with the U.S. Department of Justice eventually launching an investigation into civil rights violations within Florida prisons.



9. FERARIS S. “RAY” GOLDEN – BELLE GLADE, FL (MAY 28, 2003)

On May 28, 2003, Feraris S. “Ray” Golden, a 32-year-old Black handyman, was found dead, hanging outside his grandmother’s home in Belle Glade, Florida. A bed sheet, traced to Golden’s home, had been tied around his neck and fastened to a tree branch. Early witness accounts alleged that his hands were bound behind his back, though this was later contested by police video and autopsy evidence.⁵⁰¹

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) and the Palm Beach County Sheriff’s Office conducted a joint investigation. A public inquest was convened, overseen by Circuit Judge Harold Cohen. The autopsy revealed no ligature marks on Golden’s wrists, no defensive wounds, and no physical trauma beyond rope burns on his neck. His blood alcohol level measured 0.33,

and cocaine was also present in his system.⁵⁰² The inquest heard testimony from multiple law enforcement and forensic experts and concluded there was no evidence of foul play.⁵⁰³

Despite this conclusion, members of the Black community in Belle Glade remain skeptical. There exist unsubstantiated rumors that Golden had been in a relationship with a white police officer’s daughter, an arrangement looked down upon by many. The NAACP and a Black state legislator demanded further inquiry, but the case was closed without reopening the investigation.⁵⁰⁴

Although classified as a suicide, the racial dynamics, unverified rumors, and suspicious circumstances paint a picture of a potential modern-day lynching.



10 . ANGELO “A.J.” CROOMS & SINCERE PIERCE – COCOA, FL (NOVEMBER 13, 2020)

On the evening of November 13, 2020, sixteen-year-old Angelo “A.J.” Crooms and eighteen-year-old Sincere Pierce were driving home in Cocoa, Florida, when deputies stopped their vehicle under the belief it was stolen; dash and

⁵⁰¹ Marcus Franklin. 2005. “Hanging Awakens Ghosts of Past.” Tampa Bay Times. September 2005. <https://www.tampabay.com/archive/2003/08/28/hanging-awakens-ghosts-of-past/>.

⁵⁰² Deseret News. 2003. “Hanging from Tree Was Suicide, Florida Judge Rules.” Deseret News. July 30, 2003. <https://www.deseret.com/2003/7/30/19738459/hanging-from-tree-was-suicide-florida-judge-rules/>.

⁵⁰³ Deseret News. 2003.

⁵⁰⁴ “Black Man’s Hanging Is Declared to Be Suicide.” 2003. Los Angeles Times. September 18, 2003. <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2003-sep-18-na-briefs18.2-story.html>.

body camera footage later released to the public shows the car slowly backing out of a driveway when a deputy fired multiple rounds into the passenger compartment, killing both teens.⁵⁰⁵ Witnesses contest the official account, arguing the vehicle was moving away, not charging toward officers, and point to the absence of de-escalation, warning, or attempt to detain without lethal force. The victims were Black, and their deaths sit within a broader pattern in which law enforcement's split-second judgments about Black youth become lethal; prosecutors ultimately declined to file criminal charges, and families have pursued civil remedies while demanding transparency and reform.⁵⁰⁶



⁵⁰⁵ Jason Kelly. 2020. "Deputy Fatally Shot Boy, 16, Man, 18, in Cocoa Neighborhood Friday." WFTV. November 17, 2020. <https://www.wftv.com/news/local/brevard-county/brevard-county-deputy-fatally-shot-man-18-boy-16-cocoa-neighborhood-friday/FYNZ4SDSPFHQRGLIOPVJL3KZY/>.

⁵⁰⁶ Radio Intern. 2021. "No Charges for Brevard County Sheriff's Deputy Who Killed Two Cocoa Teenagers." Central Florida Public Media. WMFE CF Public Media. April 23, 2021. <https://www.wesh.com/article/no-charges-cocoa-deputy-shooting-angelo-crooms-sincere-pierce/36187247>.

NOTABLE HATE CRIMES AND SUSPICIOUS DEATHS POST-2000

1. PHOENIX IKNER KILLINGS – TALLAHASSEE, FL (APRIL 17, 2025)

Phoenix Ikner, a 20-year-old student, allegedly opened fire on the Florida State University campus on April 17, 2025, killing two individuals and injuring six others. Ikner, who was shot by a police officer, was charged with two counts of first-degree murder and seven counts of attempted murder.⁵⁰⁷ Court documents and a subsequent investigation revealed Ikner's history of extremist views, including explicit Nazi and white supremacist rhetoric and imagery. His online gaming profiles featured emblems of recognized white supremacist groups and antisemitic propaganda.⁵⁰⁸ Ikner's motivations were demonstrably rooted in his extremist ideology, which provides a clear motive for the indiscriminate violence and act of hate. This case can also be classified as domestic terrorism.

led authorities, including the FBI, to open a hate crime and domestic terrorism investigation. Families have since filed wrongful death suits against Dollar General and Palmeto's parents for failing to provide adequate security in a foreseeable situation.⁵¹⁰



3. KIKI FANTROY – MIAMI, FL (JULY 31, 2019)

Kiki Fantroy, a 21-year-old Black transgender woman, was found shot multiple times in the early hours of July 31, 2019. Police later arrested a 17-year-old who admitted to the killing and was charged as an adult with second-degree murder.⁵¹¹ Fantroy's mother told NBC 6 South Florida that her child had been heading home from a party with friends when someone propositioned her for sex. According to Miami-Dade Police, Fantroy declined the advance, prompting the teen suspect to begin shooting at another person in the group. The suspect then allegedly chased Fantroy down and fatally shot her.

2. RYAN CHRISTOPHER PALMETER SHOOTING – JACKSONVILLE, FL (AUGUST 26, 2023)

In another act that is both a hate crime and domestic terrorism, on August 26, 2023, 21-year-old Ryan Christopher Palmeto, armed with a swastika-labeled AR-15 rifle and a Glock, opened fire at a Dollar General in Jacksonville's predominantly Black New Town neighborhood, killing Angela Michelle Carr (52), AJ Laguerre Jr. (19), and Jerrald Gallion (29), before taking his own life.⁵⁰⁹ His previously expressed white supremacist ideology and hate-filled manifestos

⁵⁰⁷ Ryan Burkett. 2025. "Prosecutors Seeking Death Penalty for FSU Shooting Suspect Phoenix Ikner." FOX 13 Tampa Bay. June 6, 2025.

<https://www.fox13news.com/news/prosecutors-seeking-death-penalty-fsu-shooting-suspect-phoenix-ikner>.

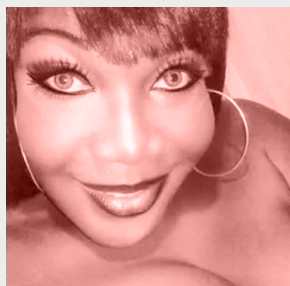
⁵⁰⁸ "Florida State University Shooter Who Killed 2 Saw Hitler as an Idol, Embraced Neo-Nazi Rhetoric." 2025. Theyeshivaworld.com. April 23, 2025. <https://www.theyeshivaworld.com/news/general/2390640/florida-state-university-shooter-who-killed-2-saw-hitler-as-an-idol-embraced-neo-nazi-rhetoric.html>.

⁵⁰⁹ AP News. 2023. "Jacksonville Shootings: What We Know about the Racist Killings." AP News. August 27, 2023. <https://apnews.com/article/deadly-shooting-florida-store-race-bd2bf9591f40903a923dbd8a46d8fb97>.

⁵¹⁰ Solcyré Burga. 2023. "Gunman Kills 3 in 'Racially Motivated' Shooting in Jacksonville. Here's What to Know." TIME. Time. August 27, 2023. <https://time.com/6308797/jacksonville-dollar-general-shooting-hate-crime-investigation>.

⁵¹¹ Charles Rabin. 2019. "Teen with Long Arrest Record Charged with Shooting Death of Transgender Woman in South Dade." Miami Herald. August 8, 2019. <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/crime/article233652327.html>.

Family and friends say they believe she was targeted because of her gender identity. Fantroy's death lies within a national pattern of fatal violence targeting trans women of color illustrating how anti-Black racism and transphobia frequently combine to make Black trans women disproportionately likely to be killed and less likely to be promptly and respectfully investigated.⁵¹²



4. ANTASH'A ENGLISH – JACKSONVILLE, FL (JUNE 2018)

On Friday, June 1, English, a transgender woman, was discovered between two houses with a gunshot wound. Before she died from her injuries, she was able to tell police that the shooter was wearing a gray hoodie and had fled the scene in a gray, four-door vehicle.



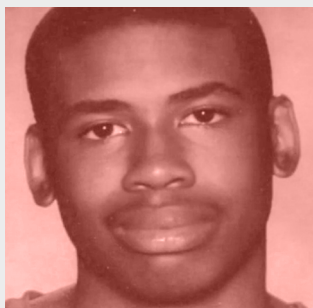
5. CATHALINA CHRISTINA JAMES – JACKSONVILLE, FL (JUNE 2018)

Cathalina Christina James, 24, was found shot dead at the Quality Inn and Suites located in the 8300 block of Dix Ellis Trail. Investigators obtained surveillance footage showing the suspect vehicle, identified as a light-colored Buick LeSabre, and witnesses provided additional descriptions. After the shooting, the gunman was seen getting into the passenger side of the car before it fled the scene. Activists and community leaders interpreted James and English's deaths as a pattern of targeted violence against Black trans women.⁵¹³ Local LGBTQ+ advocates reported repeated instances of misgendering in official records and urged law enforcement to treat the killings as possibly connected and hate motivated.⁵¹⁴

⁵¹² Madeleine Roberts. 2019. "HRC Mourns Kiki Fantroy, a Black Trans Woman Killed in Florida." HRC. August 5, 2019. <https://www.hrc.org/news/hrc-mourns-kiki-fantroy-a-black-trans-woman-killed-in-florida>.

⁵¹³ Dan Scanlan. 2018. "3rd Jacksonville Transgender Homicide Sparks Pushback for Answers." WJCT News 89.9. WJCT News. June 26, 2018. <https://news.wjct.org/first-coast/2018-06-26/3rd-jacksonville-transgender-homicide-sparks-pushback-for-answers>.

⁵¹⁴ Tracy Eaton. 2019. "Police Deadname Transgender Crime Victims, Hindering Investigations." Business Insider. October 14, 2019. <https://www.businessinsider.com/deadnaming-makes-it-difficult-to-track-crimes-against-transgender-people-2019-10>.



6. JORDAN DAVIS – JACKSONVILLE, FL (NOVEMBER 23, 2012)

Around 7:30 p.m., 17-year-old Jordan Davis and three friends were in an SUV at a Gate gas station on Jacksonville's Southside Boulevard when Michael Dunn pulled in next to them and complained about their loud music. An argument ensued.⁵¹⁵ Dunn fired 10 shots into the SUV (in three short bursts), killing Davis. Police later said no weapon was found in the teens' vehicle.⁵¹⁶ Dunn left the scene, returned to his hotel with his fiancée, and did not call police; testimony later described them ordering pizza that night. He was arrested the next day.⁵¹⁷

In a first trial (Feb. 2014), the jury deadlocked on the murder charge, producing a mistrial on that count, but convicted Dunn of three counts of attempted second-degree murder and one count of firing into an occupied vehicle.⁵¹⁸ In a retrial on October 1, 2014, Dunn was found guilty of first-degree murder for killing Davis. He received life in prison without parole, plus 90 years for the attempted murder counts and firing into an occupied vehicle.⁵¹⁹ Florida's First District Court of Appeal upheld the convictions in 2016; the

Florida Supreme Court later declined to hear the case, leaving the convictions intact.

The case became a national flashpoint in debates over race, self-defense, and Florida's "Stand Your Ground" framework (though Dunn did not pursue a pretrial SYG immunity hearing). It also spurred activism by Davis's parents and was chronicled in the HBO documentary *3½ Minutes, 10 Bullets*.⁵²⁰



7. AJIKE OWENS – OCALA, FL (2023)

On the night of June 2, 2023, in Ocala's Quail Run community, Ajike "AJ" Owens, a 35-year-old mother of four, went to her neighbor Susan Louise Lorincz's door after a dispute involving Owens's children and a long-simmering feud over kids playing near the homes. As Owens stood outside, Lorincz fired a single round through her locked front door, striking Owens in the chest; Owens was unarmed. The shooting quickly drew national attention and renewed debate over self-defense laws.⁵²¹

After an initial review of whether Florida's Stand Your Ground framework could apply, authorities arrested Lorincz and charged her

⁵¹⁵ Riley Phillips. 2024. "Father Remembers Jacksonville Teen Shot, Killed at Southside Gas Station 12 Years Later." Firstcoastnews.com. WTLV. November 23, 2024. <https://www.firstcoastnews.com/article/news/local/father-remembers-jacksonville-teen-shot-killed-at-southside-gas-station-12-years-later-jordan-davis/77-3d486382-5395-4303-946c-bcb24a0c7338>.

⁵¹⁶ Julia Dahl. 2014. "'Loud Music' Shooter Michael Dunn Gets Life in Prison." Ww.cbsnews.com. October 17, 2014. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/michael-dunn-loud-music-shooter-gets-life-in-prison/>.

⁵¹⁷ ABC News. 2014. "Why Loud Music Shooter Didn't Call Cops Right Away." ABC News. February 11, 2014. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/florida-man-loud-music-killing-thought-killed/story?id=22463003>.

⁵¹⁸ ABC News, 2014.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid.

⁵²⁰ Jeffrey Toobin. 2014. "The Political Verdict on Michael Dunn." The New Yorker. February 18, 2014. <https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/the-political-verdict-on-michael-dunn>.

⁵²¹ Curt Anderson. 2024. "White Woman Sentenced to 25 Years in Prison for Shooting Black Neighbor." AP News. November 25, 2024. <https://apnews.com/article/neighbor-killing-florida-prison-sentence-eeebdfa89b98164b87179629ca36799c>.

with manslaughter with a firearm, along with culpable negligence, battery, and two counts of assault. The delay before charges and Lorincz's self-defense claim prompted public protests.⁵²² In August 2024, a Marion County jury found Lorincz guilty of manslaughter by use of a firearm, and on November 25, 2024, Judge Robert Hodges sentenced her to 25 years in prison, noting the shooting was driven by anger and "completely unnecessary." The verdict rejected Lorincz's self-defense account.⁵²³ Given Lorincz's alleged use of racial epithets toward her neighbors, JULIAN believes this homicide was a hate crime.



8. ALEXUS "KIMMY ICON" BRAXTON – MIAMI, FL (FEBRUARY 4, 2021)

Braxton was a 45-year-old Black transgender woman who lived in the Miami area and worked as a hairstylist.⁵²⁴ On February 4, 2021, her body was discovered inside her apartment at the Carmel at the California Club Condominiums in northeast Miami-Dade County (915 NE 199 Street) around

10:31 p.m. local time.⁵²⁵ The Miami-Dade Police Department is treating her death as a homicide, and investigators have not ruled out the possibility of a hate crime.⁵²⁶ Authorities describe the attack as "very vicious and violent" and have asked the public for any information that might lead to an arrest, offering up to a \$5,000 reward for tips.⁵²⁷

Braxton's murder is part of a deeply troubling pattern of violence against Black transgender women in the U.S., and was recorded as at least the sixth violent death of a transgender person in 2021.⁵²⁸ Her family and community advocates have expressed concern that her identity as a Black trans woman may have played a role in her killing – particularly given the severity of the attack and the historic under-protection of trans women of color.⁵²⁹

9. MONIQUE BROOKS – ORLANDO, FL (JULY 19, 2024)

In the early morning hours of July 19, 2024, around 3:50 a.m., deputies with the Orange County Sheriff's Office responded to a report of shots fired in the 8200-block of South Orange Blossom Trail, near the area of the Florida Mall in Orlando.⁵³⁰ They found Brooks shot in a parked vehicle. She was alive at the scene and was transported to a hospital but succumbed to her injuries and was pronounced dead.⁵³¹ According to court documents referenced by the press, surveillance footage captured five gunshots. The

⁵²² Anderson, 2024.

⁵²³ "LORINCZ SENTENCED in MANSLAUGHTER of AJ OWENS - Office of the State Attorney, Fifth Judicial Circuit, Florida." 2024. Office of the State Attorney, Fifth Judicial Circuit, Florida. November 25, 2024. <https://www.sao5.org/lorincz-sentenced-in-manslaughter-of-aj-owens/>.

⁵²⁴ Madeleine Roberts. 2011. "HRC Mourns Alexis Braxton, Trans Woman Killed in Fla." HRC. February 11, 2011. <https://www.hrc.org/news/hrc-mourns-alexis-kimmy-icon-braxton-black-transgender-woman-killed-in-miami>.

⁵²⁵ "Remembering Our Dead - Alexis Braxton (Kimmy Icon Braxton) (4 Feb 2021)." 2021. Remembering Our Dead. 2021. https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/reports/2021/02/04/alexis-braxton-kimmy-icon-braxton_miami-florida-usa_0176dc0a.

⁵²⁶ Alex Bollinger. 2021. "Miami Trans Woman Alexis Braxton Shot to Death - LGBTQ Nation." LGBTQ Nation. February 11, 2021. <https://www.lgbtqnation.com/2021/02/miami-trans-woman-alexis-braxton-shot-death/>.

⁵²⁷ Jeff Truesdell. 2021. "Transgender Woman Is Killed in 'Vicious and Violent Attack' in Her Miami Apartment." Peoplemag. February 16, 2021. <https://people.com/crime/florida-transgender-woman-killed-violent-vicious-attack-apartment/>.

⁵²⁸ Roberts, 2011.

⁵²⁹ Carter Sherman. 2021. "Trans Woman Killed in 'Heinous Attack' Is 6th Trans Person to Die Violently This Year." VICE. February 16, 2021. <https://www.vice.com/en/article/trans-woman-killed-in-heinous-attack-is-6th-trans-person-to-die-violently-this-year/>.

⁵³⁰ Troy Campbell. 2024. "Community Seeks Justice in Transgender Woman's Slaying near Florida Mall." WKMG. WKMG News 6 & ClickOrlando. August 10, 2024. <https://www.clickorlando.com/news/local/2024/08/10/community-seeks-justice-in-transgender-womans-slaying-near-florida-mall/>.

⁵³¹ Brandon Hogan. 2024. "Man Arrested 6 Months after Shooting Death of Transgender Woman near Florida Mall." WKMG. WKMG News 6 & ClickOrlando. August 8, 2024. <https://www.clickorlando.com/news/local/2024/08/08/solve-a-murder-orange-county-sheriffs-office-seeks-info-on-suspicious-death/>.

footage reportedly shows Brooks seated in the front seat of her car with another person in the passenger seat around 2:45 a.m. A male emerges from a wooded area, approaches the driver's side of the vehicle, and opens fire. The passenger exits the vehicle and walks away; the shooter also flees separately.⁵³²

For several months, family members and community advocates pleaded for information and public help. The sheriff's office offered a \$5,000 reward for tips leading to arrest or conviction.⁵³³ On January 27, 2025, authorities arrested Jeremy Jamal Smith (age 38 at the time) and charged him with first-degree murder in connection with Brooks' killing.⁵³⁴

According to public statements, Smith was already being held on unrelated drug charges when detectives linked him to Brooks' death. Investigators reported that the passenger who had been sitting beside Brooks helped them identify Jeremy Smith as the suspect and told them that Brooks was attacked specifically because she was transgender.⁵³⁵

10. CHAYVISS "CHAY" DARICE REED – MIAMI, FL (APRIL 2017)

Chayviss "Chay" Darice Reed, who was fatally shot in April in Miami-Dade County, Florida, was the ninth known transgender woman killed in 2017. Gunshots were heard in the early morning hours. Officers located the victim about four minutes after gunshots were reported and transported her

to Community Regional Medical Center, where she died roughly half an hour later.

Police Chief Dyer stated that the victim "appears to be transgender," though investigators have not yet determined a motive. He noted that it is still unclear whether the killing was a hate crime, but detectives are examining that possibility as they gather evidence.

According to Dyer, officers believe an altercation began in an alley and then moved into the street. The position in which the victim was found suggests she had been attempting to flee from the shooter. Dyer also said investigators think a single suspect – a man – was involved. Police have asked for witnesses to come forward and were reviewing surveillance footage to identify the perpetrator.⁵³⁶

11. ANTHONY MARTILOTTO – FORT LAUDERDALE, FL (JULY 26, 2001)

On July 26, 2001, Martilotto, 39, was found dead in a hotel room in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.⁵³⁷ The cause of death was determined to be strangulation.⁵³⁸ The suspect in Martilotto's killing was identified as Adam Ezerski, then 19 years old. He was arrested on August 17, 2001 in Reno, Nevada, after a nationwide manhunt. Ezerski admitted involvement and pled guilty to second-degree murder.⁵³⁹ On October 1, 2003, he was sentenced to 25 years in prison for Martilotto's murder.⁵⁴⁰

⁵³² Abigail Lafferty. 2025. "Man Charged with First-Degree Murder in Shooting Death of Woman, Deputies Say." FOX 35 Orlando. January 28, 2025. <https://www.fox35orlando.com/news/jeremy-jamal-smith-arrest-monique-jade-brooks-shooting-death>.

⁵³³ Campbell, 2024.

⁵³⁴ "Man Arrested in Shooting Death of Transgender Woman near Florida Mall." 2025. Orlando-News.com. January 27, 2025. <https://www.orlando-news.com/2025/01/27/man-arrested-in-shooting-death-of-transgender-woman-near-florida-mall/>.

⁵³⁵ Ibid.

⁵³⁶ Joseph Patrick McCormick. 2017. "Police Consider If Violent Shooting of Trans Woman Was a Hate Crime." PinkNews | Latest Lesbian, Gay, Bi and Trans News | LGBTQ+ News. May 17, 2017. <https://www.fox35orlando.com/news/jeremy-jamal-smith-arrest-monique-jade-brooks-shooting-death>.

⁵³⁷ "Adam Ezerski: The 2001 Murder of Anthony Martilotto and a Serial Killer's Capture – True Crime Archives." 2025. Truecrimearchives.blog. April 15, 2025. <https://truecrimearchives.blog/adam-ezerski-serial-killer-suspects-reign-of-terror/>.

⁵³⁸ Ezerski, 2025.

⁵³⁹ Juan Ignacio Blanco. 2025. "Adam Ezerski | Murderpedia, the Encyclopedia of Murderers." Murderpedia.org. 2025. <https://murderpedia.org/male.E/e/ezerski-adam.htm>.

⁵⁴⁰ Blanco, 2025.

Because Martilotto was a gay man killed under circumstances that appear motivated by anti-LGBT bias, his death has been recorded in some hate crime victim memorial compilations.⁵⁴¹ The crime – and the subsequent arrest of a suspect suspected of multiple killings – generated fear and alarm within the LGBTQ community in South Florida at the time.⁵⁴²

12. ROBERT SPENCER – OKAHUMPKA, FL (JANUARY 2001)

According to police, David Leo Troutman got out of his pickup truck at the Island Food Store at U.S. Highway 27 and County Road 48 and fired at least two rounds at Robert Spencer. After the shooting, he drove about a mile west to another Island Food Store, where he shot himself in the head, reports said.⁵⁴³

Lake County investigators stated that they could find no motive other than racial hatred for Spencer's killing. What they learned was that Troutman, who was 65 at the time, had repeatedly threatened that he intended to "take out" as many Black people as possible before he died.

13. DONALD R. WILLIAMS – WASHINGTON COUNTY, FL (NOVEMBER 2006)

In November 2006, Donald R. Williams, 46, was smothered by his white cellmate at Washington Correctional Institution because⁵⁴⁴ Williams was Black and had allegedly raped a white woman previously.⁵⁴⁵ Prosecutors initially announced they

would pursue the death penalty against Johnny Reed, whom authorities identified as having ties to the Aryan Brotherhood prison gang, but the jury ultimately recommended a life sentence instead.



14. CINNAMON BROADUS – FT. LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA (JANUARY 8, 2003)

According to the South Florida Sun Sentinel, Broadus was found dead on Northwest 21st Avenue, dressed in a blond, intricately styled up-do that she had gotten done earlier that night. According to police, a man in a gray or silver Honda Accord had been driving along Sistrunk Boulevard, motioning to several women but dismissing them once he saw Broadus.

Standing about six feet tall and weighing roughly 200 pounds, Broadus walked confidently up to the vehicle, rested her arm on the roof, and leaned down toward the driver's window. The man then fired a .38-caliber handgun. The bullet entered

⁵⁴¹ "Remembering Victims of Hate Crimes." 2025. Southern Poverty Law Center. October 20, 2025. <https://www.splcenter.org/resources/reports/remembering-victims-hate-crimes/>.

⁵⁴² Tom Gardner. 2001. "Suspect in Killings of Two Gay Men in Florida Captured in Reno." Seattle Post-Intelligencer. August 18, 2001. <https://www.seattlepi.com/seattlenews/article/suspect-in-killings-of-two-gay-men-in-florida-1063106.php>.

⁵⁴³ "Shooter, victim not connected, police say." Robert Sargent Jr. and Kelly Brewington. The Orlando Sentinel. Thu, Jan 11, 2001. Page 37. <https://www.newspapers.com/image-view/236083939/?fcfToken=eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiIsInR5cCI6IkpXVCJ9.eyJmcmVILXZpZXctaWQiOiJzNjA4MzkzOSwiaWF0IjoxNzY1MTAzODk5LCJleHAiOiE3NjUxOTAyOTI9.8tp6iduC4LoB72GR9EJ6RiMiq0TPhtL-gZW18TdUVeo>

⁵⁴⁴ "Inmate Found Guilty of Murdering Another Convict." 2025. Blogspot.com. 2025. <https://florida-issues.blogspot.com/2008/01/inmate-found-guilty-of-murdering.html>.

⁵⁴⁵ "The Blotter: Summer 2008." 2025. Southern Poverty Law Center. October 2, 2025. <https://www.splcenter.org/resources/reports/blotter-summer-2008/>.

beneath Broadus's arm and traveled into her chest. She collapsed in the street, with her purse and money scattered behind her, police said.⁵⁴⁶



15. RESHAЕ MCCAULEY – LARGO, FL (DECEMBER 7, 2003)

On December 7, 2003, in Largo, FL, Reshae McCauley, a 30-year-old transgender person, visited Z109, a local club. The following evening Reshae's body was discovered near her home where she had died of severe upper body trauma. According to police, the apparent motivation for the attack was her sexual orientation.⁵⁴⁷ William McHenry, 27 was sentenced to life imprisonment for her death.⁵⁴⁸



16. SIMMIE WILLIAMS JR. (AKA BEYONCE) – FORT LAUDERDALE, FL (FEBRUARY 22, 2008)

On February 22, 2008, Simmie Williams Jr., a 17-year-old Black gender-nonconforming youth, was shot and killed in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Williams, who was known to friends as “Beyonce” or “Chris,” was found fatally wounded near Sistrunk Boulevard, a corridor with a history of concentrated violence and under-resourced policing. Witness statements and media accounts indicate that Williams was wearing feminine clothing at the time of the shooting.⁵⁴⁹

According to initial police reports, Williams was walking with another individual when they were approached by unidentified assailants. An altercation or verbal exchange occurred, after which shots were fired. Williams was struck and pronounced dead at the scene. The second individual fled and was never publicly identified.

⁵⁴⁶ “Remembering Our Dead - Cinnamon Broadus (8 Jan 2003).” 2018. Remembering Our Dead. 2018. https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/reports/2003/01/08/cinnamon-broadus_ft-lauderdale-florida-usa_d1a1e453.

⁵⁴⁷ “CONGRESSIONAL RECORD -SENATE S11297.” 2005. <https://www.congress.gov/109/crec/2005/10/07/CREC-2005-10-07-pt1-PgS11297-3.pdf>; “PROCEEDINGS and DEBATES of the 109th Congress.” 2005. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CRECB-2005-pt17/pdf/CRECB-2005-pt17.pdf>.

⁵⁴⁸ Benjamin Cohen. 2006. “Russian Transgender’s Killer Sentenced to Life.” PinkNews | Latest Lesbian, Gay, Bi and Trans News | LGBTQ+ News. September 21, 2006. <https://www.thepinknews.com/2006/09/21/russian-transgenders-killer-sentenced-to-life/>.

⁵⁴⁹ “Murders of Transgender Women Beyonce Williams and Timothy Broadus.” 2008. Newspapers.com. February 23, 2008. <https://www.newspapers.com/article/the-miami-herald-murders-of-transgender/75599776/>; “Murder of Timothy Broadus.” 2008. Newspapers.com. March 9, 2008. <https://www.newspapers.com/article/south-florida-sun-sentinel-murder-of-tim/143687783/>.

Authorities recovered limited physical evidence and reported no surveillance footage capturing the incident.

Community members informed investigators and local reporters that Williams was openly gay and frequently expressed a feminine gender presentation, raising concerns that the killing may have been bias-motivated. Despite these indicators, the Fort Lauderdale Police Department did not classify the case as a hate crime, citing insufficient evidence to establish motive. No arrests were made, and the case remains unsolved. The absence of suspects, lack of witness cooperation, and limited forensic evidence have left significant gaps in the investigative record.

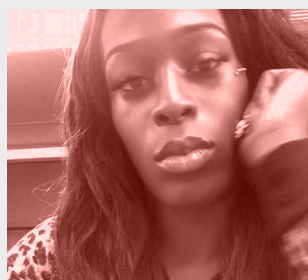


17. TYRELL JACKSON – RIVIERA BEACH, FL (MARCH 24, 2012)

On March 24, 2012, Tyrell Jackson was fatally shot in a drive-by shooting in Riviera Beach, Florida. Jackson and a friend were walking in the 500 block of West Fifth Street when gunfire came from a passing vehicle. Jackson was killed.⁵⁵⁰

Police later identified a suspect: Luis Rijo de los Santos was arrested and accused of targeting transgender or cross-dressing sex workers in a string of robberies and shootings – including the one that killed Jackson.⁵⁵¹ In 2016, de los Santos accepted a plea deal: he pleaded guilty to second-degree murder and attempted second-degree murder related to the shootings that night, receiving a 15-year prison sentence.⁵⁵²

Because of these developments, many monitoring organizations list Jackson among victims of anti-LGBTQ+ violence – especially in recognition of risk to transgender or gender-nonconforming individuals, as the attack was reportedly part of a larger pattern targeting people believed to be transgender or cross-dressing.⁵⁵³



18. SASHA GARDEN – ORLANDO, FL (JULY 19, 2018)

Sasha Garden, a 27-year-old Black transgender woman, was found dead in Orlando, Florida, on July 19, 2018. Her killing remains unsolved and is widely recognized as part of a broader pattern of fatal violence against Black trans women in the United States. Around 5:00 a.m., Orange County deputies responded to a call about a body found behind an apartment complex near Garden Lake

⁵⁵⁰ "Police ID Victims in Riviera Beach Double Shooting." 2012. WPBF. March 26, 2012. <https://www.wpbfl.com/article/police-id-victims-in-riviera-beach-double-shooting/1312493>.

⁵⁵¹ "Remembering Our Dead - Tyrell Jackson (24 Mar 2012)." 2018. Remembering Our Dead. 2018. https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/reports/2012/03/24/tyrell-jackson_riviera-beach-florida-usa_3a6d632f.

⁵⁵² Chuck Weber. 2016. "Man Pleads Guilty to Transgender Murder, Shootings, Gets 15 Years." WPEC. September 7, 2016. <https://cbs12.com/news/local/man-pleads-guilty-to-transgender-murder-shootings-gets-15-years>.

⁵⁵³ Remembering Our Dead, 2018.

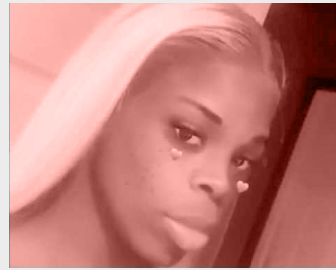
Circle off South Goldenrod Road. Sasha was found in a grassy area near the complex, partially clothed, and appeared to have signs of violent trauma. Investigators noted that her body showed indications of a struggle.

Detectives said Sasha may have been killed somewhere else and her body dumped at the location where she was found. The Orange County Sheriff's Office has not publicly announced any new developments since the initial investigation.



19. BREE BLACK – POMPANO BEACH, FL (JULY 3, 2020)

On July 3, 2020, Bree Black, a 27-year-old Black trans woman, was shot and killed in Pompano Beach, Florida. Despite community outcry and calls for justice, the case remains unsolved, with no known suspects or motive. Her death underscores the continued risk of lethal violence faced by Black trans women and the persistent gaps in investigative accountability and legal protections.



20. SKYLAR HEATH – MIAMI, FL (NOVEMBER 4, 2020)

Skylar Heath, a 20-year-old Black transgender woman, was shot and killed in Miami on November 4, 2020. Her death was officially investigated as a homicide, but no publicly identified suspect or motive has emerged, and no evidence indicates it has been treated as a hate crime. Her killing stands amid a wave of violence against transgender and gender-nonconforming people – especially Black trans women – that reached record levels in 2020. Skylar's death is a tragic reminder of the lethal dangers faced by transgender people, and the persistent failures of institutions to protect, remember, and deliver justice for them.

PATTERNS AND FINDINGS

In Florida, hate crimes and MDLs appear to repeatedly occur within carceral or quasi-carceral environments, such as the deaths of Martin Lee Anderson in a juvenile boot camp, Matthew Walker at Charlotte Correctional, Darren Rainey at Dade, and Latandra Ellington at Lowell. This reveals a horrifying pattern of these crimes not only being perpetrated by isolated bad actors, but the system as a whole. Disciplinary boot camps, rigid correctional routines, and limited oversight now routinely normalize coercive force and harm.

Furthermore, accountability consistently fails across these domains. In multiple in-custody deaths, strong evidence—video footage, eyewitness testimony, or pathology—pointed to wrongful killing yet produced no criminal sanction. Anderson’s abuse, captured on surveillance, ended in acquittals; Walker’s laryngeal-crushing death was undermined by a compromised inquiry; Rainey’s fatal scalding, corroborated by multiple witnesses, was ruled “accidental.” In extra-custodial cases, such as the deaths of Nevan Baker, Feraris Golden, and KeAndre Taylor, private autopsies and eyewitness accounts frequently contradicted rapid official conclusions. This recurring evidentiary paradox, clear indicators of foul play failing to yield prosecution, often results in internal reviews, civil settlements, or short-term suspensions instead of transparent criminal accountability.

Alongside this, there is a persistent pattern of extrajudicial killings disproportionately affecting Black trans women, including Bee Love Slater, Kiki Fantroy, Celine Walker, Antash’a English, and Cathalina Christina James, where the intersection of Blackness and transfemininity produces heightened vulnerability to both state and extra-state violence.

Digital platforms now provide an avenue for perpetrators to accelerate and cause more widespread harm. Slater received explicit threats before her killing; perpetrators like Ryan Palmeter and Phoenix Ikner carried extremist rhetoric from online spaces into real-world violence. The clustering of trans women’s murders around Jacksonville suggests contagion dynamics amplified by social media. These digital traces could serve as early warning systems and investigative leads, yet they are inconsistently collected and often recognized only after violence has occurred.

In summary, these patterns reflect a contemporary form of racialized and gendered social control, enforced through both community actors and state institutions, reinforced by digital networks, and shielded by procedural opacity and prosecutorial discretion.

Fannie Lou Hamer speaks to Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party sympathizers outside the Capitol in Washington, D.C. in September 1965. (William J. Smith/AP) ▶

RECOMMENDATIONS

You can pray until you faint, but if you don't get up and try to do something, God is not going to put it in your lap. And I believe tonight, that one day...if I have to die for this—we shall overcome.

— FANNIE LOU HAMER

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

On March 29, 2022, President Joe Biden signed The Emmett Till Anti-Lynching Act (Public Law 117-107) into law. The Till Act specifically designated lynching as a federal hate crime for the first time. The Act amends Section 249(a) of Title 18 of the U.S. Code to include conduct that qualifies as “lynching” when a person conspires or participates in a hate crime that results in death, serious bodily injury, kidnapping, or an attempt to kill or kidnap. The law also covers acts motivated by a victim’s race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. An individual convicted under the Act faces up to 30 years’ imprisonment, a fine, or both.⁵⁵⁴ The law also enables federal prosecution in circumstances where state or local authorities may not pursue charges (e.g., due to race bias or local complicity).⁵⁵⁵ Additionally, the Act allows for federal charges when a group conspires to commit a hate crime lynching even if not all participants inflicted the injury or death themselves. However, *mere planning* without subsequent injury or death is not sufficient under the Act; injury or death must result from the act.

The Act, however, does little to nothing to prevent MDLs or lead to their successful prosecution.

One issue with the law is that it does not touch the controversy of suicide versus lynching.

⁵⁵⁴ Bobby L. Rush. 2022. “H.R.55 - 117th Congress (2021-2022): Emmett till Antilynching Act.” [www.congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov/bills/117/congress/house-bills/55). March 29, 2022. <https://www.congress.gov/bills/117/congress/house-bills/55>.

⁵⁵⁵ “After More than a Century of Trying, Congress Passes an Anti-Lynching Bill.” WHYY. March 8, 2022. <https://whyy.org/articles/anti-lynching-bill-emmett-till-ac-congress>.

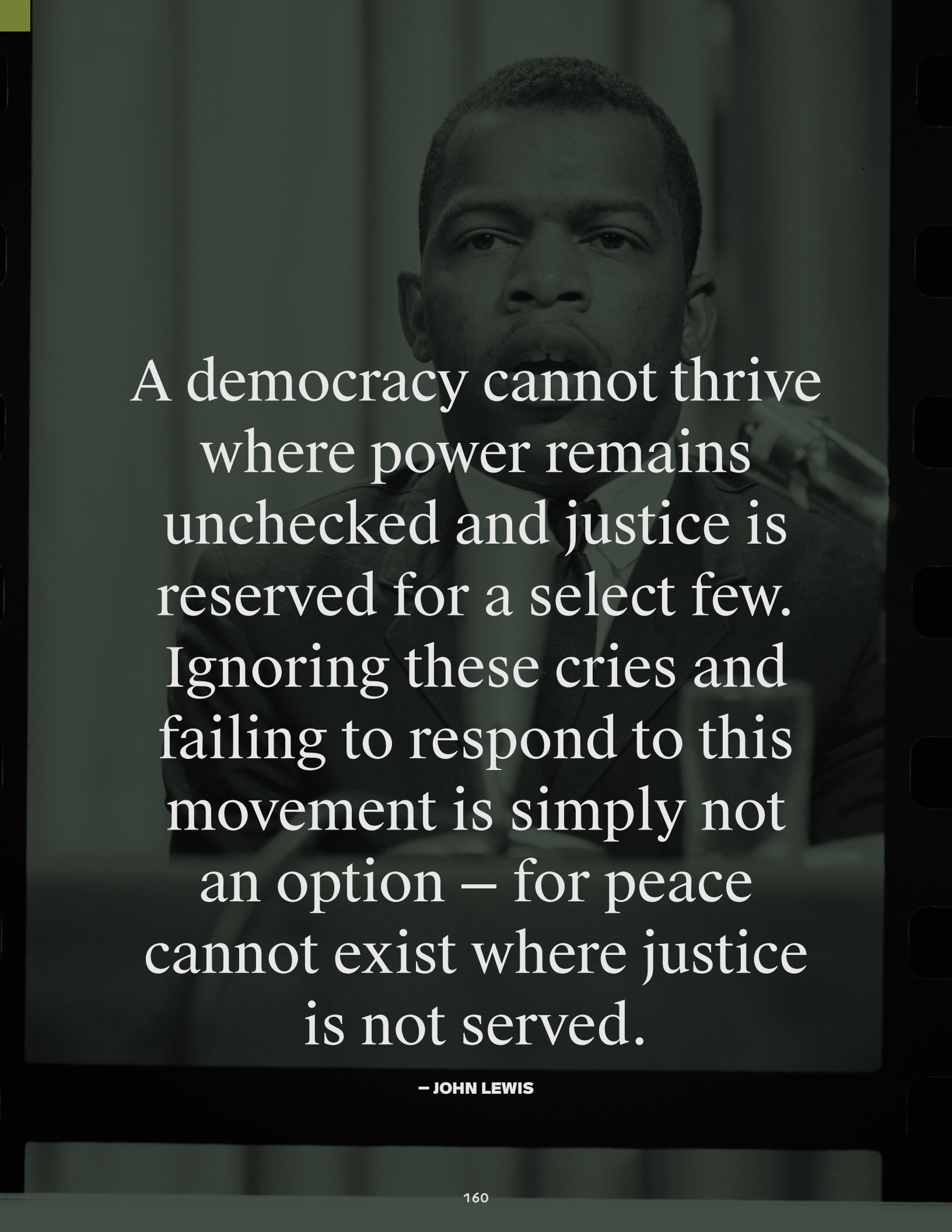
On the state level, there must first be a charge of homicide before there can be a hate crime upgrade, which means that authorities have to come to a finding of homicide in their investigation. In most of these cases, however, the investigation is not treated as a homicide, so there is no way to reach a homicide finding. Even though the law gives federal authorities the ability to prosecute lynchings, that power does not solve the problem of sub-par initial investigations that lead to foundational inaccuracies, which federal authorities tend to rely on in MDL cases.

In order to actually impact MDLs, Congress should amend the Till Act. A substantive law would:

- Make lynching a federal crime with a cause of action that is independent of the existing hate crimes act.
- Create a civil cause of action independent of 42 U.S.C. 1983 to create a pathway for civil rights attorneys to seek justice for victims' families when local authorities rule a death a suicide and evidence indicates otherwise because it is virtually impossible to prove "under color of law" in MDLs.
- Require an independent prosecutor by default in suspected MDLs.
- Sanction authorities, including district attorneys, who fail to adequately investigate or prosecute a lynching.
- Provide funding for a national independent hate crimes database that would incorporate states' self-reported hate crimes numbers but would also integrate data gleaned from civil rights attorneys and organizations.
- Require psychological autopsies and the use of psychologists in cases involving suspected suicide.
- If an MDL is possible, require the state medical examiner to have their autopsy attended by an independent pathologist chosen by the family – whether virtual or in person.
- Allow independent prosecutors to file criminal claims for lynching directly in federal court.
- Create funding that states and municipalities can apply for in the form of grants to implement these protocols and recommendations in their SOPs.

On the state level, state legislatures should increase the requirements for coroners.

The worldview that must change to make this policy possible is a realization that lynching is still an active threat in America.



A democracy cannot thrive
where power remains
unchecked and justice is
reserved for a select few.
Ignoring these cries and
failing to respond to this
movement is simply not
an option — for peace
cannot exist where justice
is not served.

— JOHN LEWIS

UNTIL CONGRESS PASSES SUBSTANTIVE LEGISLATION, THERE ARE STEPS THAT WE, AS CITIZENS AND PRACTITIONERS, CAN TAKE TO OVERCOME. FIRST, IN COMMUNITY FORUMS, PRACTITIONERS CAN TEACH COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO DOCUMENT WHAT THEY SEE AT A CRIME SCENE AND HOW A SCENE SHOULD BE PRESERVED BY POLICE. FOR EXAMPLE, PRACTITIONERS CAN INSTRUCT PRIVATE CITIZENS AT THE CRIME SCENE TO TYPE OR RECORD THEIR IMPRESSIONS ON THEIR PHONE WITHIN 15 MINUTES OF BEING AT THE SCENE. AS SOON AS THERE IS A RULING OF SUICIDE, FAMILIES SHOULD REQUEST THE INVESTIGATIVE FILE AND ANALYZE IT. IN THESE FILES AND RECORDS, INDIVIDUALS SHOULD LOOK AT THE DATES AND TIMES ON EVERY REPORT TO TRACE WHEN AND HOW CERTAIN DECISIONS WERE MADE. THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY SHOULD ALMOST ALWAYS BE INVOLVED IN THE INVESTIGATION UNLESS THEY ARE SUSPECTED TO HAVE TAKEN PART IN THE MDL.

THE ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL AUTOPSIES IN MDL INVESTIGATIONS

A psychological autopsy is a structured, post-mortem investigation designed to reconstruct a decedent's thoughts, behaviors, relationships, and circumstances before death. It is essential in cases where the manner of death is contested or unclear – especially in MDL investigations, where suspicious deaths are routinely mislabeled as suicides.

Traditionally, psychological autopsies focused on interviews with family and friends, medical and psychiatric history, and the victim's recent stressors. But in the twenty-first century, a person's inner world also unfolds online. For this reason, psychological autopsies now require a deep examination of the decedent's digital footprint – including social media, messaging apps, dating platforms, email, online communities, and search history. In many MDL cases, critical evidence is found not in physical diaries or phone calls, but in deleted messages, anonymous threats, temporary phone numbers, or last-minute online interactions with strangers or hostile actors.

A complete psychological autopsy combines traditional behavioral evidence with digital forensics. Investigators interview relatives and close contacts separately to capture honest and uninfluenced accounts of the decedent's emotional state. They review medical records, past trauma, and any previous suicidal ideation – while remaining alert to inconsistencies that contradict a suicide ruling.

At the same time, investigators catalog every identified online account, reconstruct recent communications, and analyze search histories for signs of fear, coercion, or danger. Dating apps, in particular, have become a critical area of inquiry, as many victims of bias-motivated violence meet perpetrators through anonymous or temporary profiles. The digital portion of the autopsy can reveal threats the victim never shared aloud, patterns of harassment, or interactions with individuals who should be considered suspects or persons of interest.

Ultimately, the goal of a psychological autopsy is not to prove suicide or homicide in isolation, but to **evaluate all available evidence without bias**. It exposes faulty assumptions, challenges premature law enforcement conclusions, and restores investigative rigor to deaths too often dismissed. When conducted properly, it becomes a vital safeguard – ensuring that no MDL is quietly buried beneath the words *“no foul play suspected.”*

What follows is an outline and template for a psychological autopsy in cases where MDL is a possibility.

PSYCHOLOGICAL AUTOPSY PROTOCOL

For Use in Suspected Suicides, Misclassified Homicides, and Modern-Day Lynchings

I. PURPOSE

To reconstruct the decedent's cognitive, emotional, social, and environmental state leading up to the death; evaluate suicide risk; identify evidence contradicting suicide; and examine possible coercion, threats, or external motives—including those emerging from online interactions, harassment, or digital footprints.

II. CORE COMPONENTS

A. Background Information

1. Identity information

- Full name, DOB, address
- Race/ethnicity, gender identity, sexuality (if relevant)

2. Family and social network overview

3. Employment, school, or military status

4. Medical and psychiatric history

B. Circumstances Surrounding the Death

1. When and where was the decedent last seen alive?
2. What was their emotional state in the hours/days prior?
3. Who discovered the body?
4. Are the physical circumstances consistent with suicide?
5. Are there inconsistencies (e.g. injuries contradictory to self-harm)?

C. Interviews with Family, Friends, and Associates

Ask these questions separately to avoid influence between interviewees.

1. Mental and Emotional State

- Had the decedent exhibited signs of depression, anxiety, fear, or trauma?
- Did they express suicidal thoughts previously?
- Did they display sudden behavioral changes?
- Any recent stressors: eviction, divorce, job loss, breakup, bullying, harassment?

2. Lifestyle & Routines

- Daily habits, sleep patterns, appetite changes
- Substance use
- Social withdrawal or isolation
- Any new behaviors or abandonment of regular activities

3. Relationships & Conflict

- Romantic relationships
- Family tensions
- Workplace or community conflicts
- New friends or acquaintances
- Any person the decedent was afraid of or warned others about

4. Prior Trauma

- Criminal victimization
- Hate-based harassment
- Domestic violence
- Police encounters
- Prior suicide attempts or self-harm history

III. DIGITAL & ONLINE LIFE ASSESSMENT

Investigators should obtain search warrants where appropriate and seek family consent when possible.

A. Digital Footprint Inventory

- Email accounts
- Social media profiles (Facebook, Twitter/X, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Reddit)
- Dating apps (Grindr, Tinder, Bumble, Jack'd, etc.)
- Messaging platforms (WhatsApp, Messenger, Signal, Telegram, Discord)
- Gaming platforms (Xbox Live, Steam, PlayStation Network)
- Online forums or group affiliations
- Cash apps / digital financial tools

B. Recent Online Communications

Key Questions:

- Who were the decedent's most recent contacts?
- Were there threatening, hateful, manipulative, or coercive messages?
- Did the decedent express fear to anyone online?
- Did they engage with strangers or anonymous accounts recently?
- Any evidence of cyberbullying, doxxing, extortion ("sextortion"), or harassment?
- Did they receive unsolicited contact from unknown individuals or suspicious accounts?

C. Search History & Digital Behavior

- What were their last searches within 72 hours?
- Did they research suicide methods?
- Did they search for directions, meet-up locations, weapons, or current danger?
- Any searches indicating fear, such as "someone following me," "threats," etc.?

D. Online Identity and Expression

Consider:

- Was the decedent active in online communities based on **race, gender identity, or sexuality**?
- Did they advocate for or belong to marginalized groups?
- Were they targeted by hate groups or individuals?
- Was there conflict within online activist spaces?

E. Online Dating & Meet-Up Activity

Especially important in MDL and hate-motivated crimes.

Ask:

- Were they meeting new people from dating apps prior to their death?
- Were there suspicious or temporary phone numbers involved?
- Did they express excitement, anxiety, or secrecy about meeting someone?
- Did the person they planned to meet use fake photos, incomplete profiles, or vanish afterward?
- Has this location been linked to other suspicious deaths or attacks?

F. Financial Transactions

- Cash App / Venmo / PayPal / Zelle transfers
- Purchases of rope, weapons, or unusual items
- Transfers to unknown individuals
- Sudden account draining or fraud

G. Digital Evidence of Ideation or Coercion

- Notes in phone
- Draft emails
- AI chat logs
- Deleted messages (recoverable)
- Cloud backups

IV. RISK FACTOR ASSESSMENT

Determine whether the decedent had:

- Diagnosed mental illness
- Documented suicidal ideation
- Substance dependency
- Chronic pain or illness
- Recent major loss
- History of impulsive behavior

AND whether the scene, circumstances, or online interactions contradict these factors.

V. EXTERNAL THREAT ASSESSMENT

Evaluate:

- Recent threats from individuals or groups
- Racist, homophobic, or transphobic harassment online or offline
- History of conflict with law enforcement
- Hate group activity in the area
- Victim's fears or warnings documented digitally
- Similar suspicious deaths in region
- Coercion or intimidation of family or witnesses

VI. RECONSTRUCTION OF FINAL DAYS

Create a **timeline** integrating:

- Interviews
- Digital evidence
- Phone pings/GPS
- Surveillance footage
- Financial transactions
- Behavioral changes
- Known encounters

VII. FINAL ANALYSIS

The psychological autopsy concludes with:

1. **Summary of findings**
2. **Level of certainty:**
 - Suicide
 - Homicide
 - Accidental death
 - Undetermined
3. **Factors supporting each possibility**
4. **Recommendations for further investigation**

OFFICIAL FORM TEMPLATE: PSYCHOLOGICAL AUTOPSY

For Use in Suspected Suicides, Misclassified Homicides, and Modern-Day Lynchings
(All sections should be completed. Attach supplemental pages as needed.)

A. CASE INFORMATION

Case Number:

Date of Death:

Location of Death:

Investigating Agency:

Lead Investigator:

B. DECEDENT INFORMATION

Full Name:

DOB / Age:

Gender Identity:

Race/Ethnicity:

Occupation/School Status:

Address:

C. CIRCUMSTANCES OF DEATH

Date & Time Last Seen Alive:

Discovered By:

Scene Description:

Injuries Noted:

Consistency of Scene With Suicide:

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Inconsistent ☐ Unknown

Summary of Initial Law Enforcement Conclusion:

D. MEDICAL & PSYCHIATRIC HISTORY

Medical Diagnoses:

Psychiatric Diagnoses:

Medications:

Prior Suicide Attempts: ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, list dates:

Substance Use History:

E. INTERVIEWS WITH FAMILY, FRIENDS & ASSOCIATES

(Attach transcripts where applicable.)

1. Interviewee Name & Relationship:

• Behavioral changes observed:

• Statements about emotional state:

• Conflicts, threats, or fears disclosed:

2. Interviewee Name & Relationship:

• Behavioral changes observed:

• Statements about emotional state:

• Conflicts, threats, or fears disclosed:

(Add additional interview fields as needed.)

F. DIGITAL & ONLINE LIFE ASSESSMENT

(Search warrants or consent should be documented.)

1. Accounts Identified

- Email(s):

- Social Media Profiles:

- Messaging Apps:

- Dating Apps Used:

- Gaming/Forum Accounts:

2. Recent Digital Communications

- Most Recent Contacts:

- Threatening or Harassing Messages: ☐ Yes ☐ No
Details:

- Anonymous or suspicious accounts identified:

3. Online Behavior

- Search History (last 72 hrs):

- Evidence of researching self-harm: ☐ Yes ☐ No

- Evidence of fear, threats,
or escape attempts:

4. Online Identity & Risk

- Involvement in online communities
(race, gender, sexuality, activism):

- Any online conflicts, stalking, or
doxxing:

5. Digital Financial Activity

- Recent money transfers:

- Unusual purchases:

- Fraudulent activity:

G. ENVIRONMENTAL & EXTERNAL THREATS

- Recent threats (verbal, written, online):

- Hate group activity in region:

- Law enforcement interactions:

- Witness intimidation or family harassment:

H. TIMELINE RECONSTRUCTION

(Describe final week, final 72 hours, final day.)

I. SUICIDE RISK INDICATORS

- Evidence present:

- Evidence absent or contradictory:

J. HOMICIDE OR COERCION INDICATORS

- Injuries inconsistent with suicide:

- Signs of staging:

- Online threats or deceptive meet-ups:

- Conflicts with specific individuals or groups:

K. FINAL ANALYSIS

1. Most Supported Manner of Death:

- ☐ Suicide
- ☐ Homicide
- ☐ Accident
- ☐ Undetermined

2. Summary of Supporting Evidence:

3. Contradictory Evidence or Unresolved Questions:

4. Recommendations for Further Investigation:



An investigation is
like taking a bad
photograph. If you start
off bad, you can't fix it.

- ANONYMOUS FBI AGENT

OVERALL PROTOCOL FOR INVESTIGATING POTENTIAL MODERN-DAY LYNCHINGS (MDLS)

The protocol that follows will help investigators to determine if a hanging or other type of death is a suicide or an MDL.

A. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. **Presume complexity.** Every suspected lynching must be treated as a potential homicide until conclusive evidence proves otherwise.
2. **Preserve impartiality.** Avoid assumptions—neither suicide nor hate crime can be presumed without comprehensive investigation.
3. **Center the victim and family.** The victim's family, social networks, and community often hold critical context and evidence.
4. **Coordinate early.** Engage federal and state agencies (FBI, DOJ, State Bureau of Investigation) promptly when bias, interstate activity, or organized hate-group involvement is possible.
5. **Document meticulously.** Every statement, photograph, or recovered item may be central to later prosecution or federal review.

B. IMMEDIATE SCENE RESPONSE

1. Secure and Preserve

- Treat all suspected MDL scenes as active crime scenes.
- **Close off the area** immediately; prevent entry by unauthorized persons.
- Photograph the **entire scene** before anything is moved:
 - The victim's body as found, including position, ligature, knot, and anchoring object (tree, beam, etc.) from multiple angles.
 - The ground beneath and around the victim—look for **footprints, drag marks, or disturbed soil**.
- In hanging cases, measure the height and structure of the anchoring object to evaluate plausibility of self-suspension.
- If possible, **preserve digital and environmental evidence** (weather conditions, lighting, surveillance devices).

2. Forensic Recovery

- Collect **DNA, fingerprints, and trace materials** from the scene and ligature.
- Ensure chain-of-custody documentation for every item collected.
- The body must be **transported intact** to the coroner or medical examiner; no alterations should occur at the scene. Handle the body carefully to avoid damaging any evidence.

◀ Group of African-Americans, marching near the Capitol building in Washington, D.C., to protest the lynching of four African-Americans in Georgia

3. Autopsy Protocol

- Require that the autopsy be **attended virtually or in person by an independent pathologist**, especially if a lynching or bias crime is suspected.
- Conduct toxicology and full-body photography.
- Compare medical findings against scene evidence for inconsistencies.
- If suicide is suspected, order a **psychological autopsy** before closing the case.

C. EVIDENCE DEVELOPMENT

1. Documentary Records

Gather all relevant official documentation early:

- Law enforcement and jail records (via Public Records Requests or FOIA).
- Court records, civil filings, liens, and prior arrests.
- Hospital, detention, or military medical archives.
- Employment and school records where relevant.
- Social-media and open-source materials, including group affiliations or threats.

2. PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL EVIDENCE

- Retrieve nearby **surveillance footage immediately** (most systems overwrite within 30 days).
- Secure **cell-phone records**: calls, texts, location data, recurring numbers, or last known activity.
- Examine **credit, license-plate reader, and GPS data** for movement patterns.
- Review victim's and suspect's social-media activity for bias indicators or communications preceding death.

D. WITNESS AND COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS

1. Family and Associates

- Interview **family members separately** to avoid influence or suppression of information.
- Include **in-laws, cousins, and ex-partners**; they often hold distinct insights or motives.
- Document **prior threats, harassment, or suicidal behavior**, if any.
- Build rapport before probing specifics; empathy strengthens cooperation.

2. Witnesses

- Identify and interview all witnesses within **48 hours** whenever possible, before memories fade or narratives shift.
- Record every interview (audio/video). Compare early and later statements for discrepancies.
- If you are operating independently of the police, **interview those not yet spoken to by police**; fresh sources may correct bias in official accounts.
- Conduct **neighborhood canvasses** to locate additional witnesses and community sentiment.

3. Broader Community Canvass

- Appeal publicly for information; consider **reward offers**.
- Note **rumors, fear, or silence** in the community—these may indicate intimidation or social pressure.
- Track local **hate-group activity** or extremist recruitment in the area.

E. VICTIMOLOGY AND SUSPECT PROFILING

1. Victim Biography

- Develop a complete profile: background, education, relationships, occupation, affiliations, health, and mental state.
- Identify advocacy, activism, or community roles that may have increased visibility or vulnerability.
- Examine recent events, conflicts, or symbolic dates connected to the victim's identity.

2. Suspect Biography

- Compile full criminal and social histories of any suspects.
- Analyze financial, legal, or interpersonal motives.
- Recognize that **having friends or relatives of another race or orientation does not preclude bias**.
- Seek early, voluntary contact with potential suspects to prevent coordinated stories.

F. BIAS AND HATE CRIME INDICATORS

Investigators should actively assess for bias motivation from the outset rather than waiting for prosecutors to add enhancements.

Indicators include:

- Use of **slurs or hate speech** before, during, or after the incident (quote the exact words).
- **Symbols or property damage** tied to racial, gender, or religious hostility.
- The incident occurring near **dates of cultural or historical significance** to targeted groups.
- **Victim-suspect differences** in race, ethnicity, gender identity, religion, or perceived status.
- Evidence of **organized hate-group presence or propaganda** in the area.
- **Absence of alternate motives** such as robbery or financial dispute.

Document these findings on a **Hate Crime Report**, with supporting evidence and direct quotes.

G. COORDINATION AND PROSECUTION SUPPORT

- Establish early collaboration with **prosecutors** to align investigative work with potential grand-jury or search-warrant needs.
- When bias is suspected, consult **federal authorities** immediately to evaluate eligibility for federal hate crime prosecution.
- Maintain **detailed case timelines**, including when evidence was collected, analyzed, and shared.
- Ensure every investigative finding supports the dual elements of a hate crime prosecution:
 1. The underlying criminal act; and
 2. The **motivating bias**, both proven beyond a reasonable doubt.

H. QUALITY CONTROL AND OVERSIGHT

1. **Cross-verify** findings between police and medical examiners to prevent flawed assumptions from contaminating conclusions.
2. Maintain a complete **chain-of-custody log** and index of all physical and digital evidence.
3. **Document every investigative action**—who conducted it, when, and what was found.
4. Archive all materials for potential federal review or civil litigation.

I. COMMUNITY & MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

- Communicate transparently with the victim's family; provide status updates and explain investigative steps.
- Share verified facts with the media to prevent misinformation while protecting the integrity of the investigation.
- Respect cultural sensitivity and avoid language that stigmatizes the victim or their community.

J. ETHICAL IMPERATIVES

- Investigators **must maintain objectivity, professionalism, and cultural competence.**
- Avoid personal opinions in documentation.
- Recognize the deep historical trauma associated with racialized violence and treat every case with dignity and urgency.



U.S. President Joe Biden, embraces Rep. Bobby Rush of Illinois, during the signing ceremony for H.R. 55, the Emmett Till Anti-lynching Act, in the Rose Garden of the White House, March 29, 2022 in Washington, D.C. ►



A vision is not just a
picture of what could
be; it is an appeal to our
better selves, a call to
become something more.

— ROSABETH MOSS KANTER

IMPLEMENTING THE JULIAN PROTOCOL

A. ESTABLISH ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK

1. Create an MDL Investigative Unit (or Task Force)

Purpose: Ensure that all suspicious deaths with possible racial or bias motivation receive standardized, thorough, and impartial investigation.

Actions:

- Form a dedicated unit within the Criminal Investigations Division or Civil Rights Bureau.
- Staff it with a multidisciplinary team:
 - Lead investigator (homicide background)
 - Crime scene technician
 - Civil rights or hate crime specialist
 - Digital forensics analyst
 - Liaison officer (for family and community engagement)
 - Legal advisor/prosecutor representative
- Designate a command-level coordinator responsible for protocol compliance and liaison with external agencies (FBI, DOJ Civil Rights Division, state bureaus).

*If you work at a small agency with limited funding, train existing personnel to assume these roles when necessary.

2. Draft Departmental Policy

- Adopt the MDL protocol as a formal standard operating procedure (SOP), referencing:
 - Scene management
 - Evidence preservation
 - Bias-motivation assessment
 - Interagency reporting
- Integrate it into existing homicide and death-investigation manuals, ensuring no conflict with current evidence procedures.

3. Legal and Administrative Setup

- Review the protocol with legal counsel and risk management to confirm adherence to state/federal law.
- Develop internal reporting templates and checklists (for scene actions, hate crime indicators, witness interviews).
- Assign a record-keeping officer to manage document control and FOIA/PRR requests.

B. BUILD CAPACITY THROUGH TRAINING

1. Foundational Training

Target: All sworn officers, detectives, and evidence technicians.

Content:

- Overview of racial-bias and hate crime indicators.
- History of lynching and modern hate violence to build contextual awareness.
- Review of the MDL protocol's key steps: scene preservation, autopsy requirements, family engagement, and federal coordination.
- Cultural competency and trauma-informed interviewing practices.

Delivery: Partner with DOJ, FBI Civil Rights Unit, or regional police academies.

2. Specialized Training for MDL Unit

Modules:

- Advanced homicide and equivocal-death investigations (e.g., differentiating suicide vs. staged homicide).
- Forensic pathology collaboration and autopsy oversight.
- Open-source intelligence and digital forensics.
- Interviewing families and communities in racially charged environments.
- Legal standards for hate crime prosecution.
- Public information management and media ethics.

3. Cross-Agency Simulation Exercises

Conduct annual mock investigations replicating a suspected MDL case:

- Include crime-scene response, evidence processing, coordination with the coroner, and media interaction.
- Evaluate team performance and revise procedures accordingly.

C. STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS AND COORDINATION

1. Interagency Relationships

- Sign memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with:
 - FBI (for federal hate crime assistance)
 - State Bureau of Investigation
 - U.S. Attorney's Office (for civil rights review)
 - County Coroner/Medical Examiner (for independent autopsy participation)
- Create a direct reporting line for escalation of cases showing bias indicators.

2. Community and Civil Rights Partnerships

- Establish a Community Advisory Board with representatives from civil rights organizations, clergy, and local universities to:
 - Review anonymized case summaries.
 - Provide feedback on community trust and outreach.
 - Help shape messaging and victim-support services.

3. Media and Transparency Protocol

- Designate a Public Information Officer trained to communicate factual, culturally sensitive updates.
- Publish quarterly summaries (no identifying details) showing:
 - Number of suspicious-death investigations reviewed for bias motives.
 - Status updates on open MDL cases.

D. INTEGRATE THE PROTOCOL INTO DAILY OPERATIONS

1. Intake and Case Screening

- Any death that appears self-inflicted, racially or discriminatorily charged, or suspicious triggers an **MDL Case Review Form**.
- Supervisors must evaluate within **24 hours** whether to activate the MDL investigative protocol.
- Establish a “presume homicide until proven otherwise” approach in all suspected hangings or bias-related deaths.

2. Scene Response

- Ensure all first responders receive a **Scene Checklist** including:
 - Securing area perimeter.
 - Photographing ligature, body position, and surrounding environment.
 - Preserving trace and DNA evidence.
 - Documenting initial witness statements.
- MDL Unit assumes command of the scene once homicide suspicion is confirmed.

3. Evidence and Documentation

- Use centralized digital case management for all MDL files (scans of notes, video, photos, audio transcripts).
- Require dual verification for entry and removal of evidence from storage.
- Implement automated reminders for time-sensitive actions (e.g., retrieval of surveillance footage before overwrite).

4. Family Liaison

- Assign a trained Family Liaison Officer (FLO) to maintain communication.
- Provide written summaries of investigation stages, expected timelines, and points of contact.
- Offer referrals to victim-support or civil rights resources.

E. QUALITY CONTROL AND OVERSIGHT

1. Internal Review Board

- Create an **MDL Oversight Committee** (senior investigators, legal counsel, external civil rights observer).
- Review all closed cases quarterly to ensure adherence to protocol.
- Flag any procedural lapses or premature suicide rulings.

2. Independent Case Audits

- Partner with state or federal oversight entities for annual external audits of MDL-related investigations.
- Audit metrics:
 - Compliance with evidence and autopsy protocols.
 - Timeliness of family notifications.
 - Documentation of hate crime indicators.
 - Chain-of-custody integrity.

3. Continuous Improvement

- Conduct after-action debriefs after every MDL case, identifying best practices and procedural weaknesses.
- Update the protocol annually based on lessons learned, new forensic technology, or legislative changes.

F. RESOURCES AND BUDGET PLANNING

1. Funding Needs

- Personnel salaries (dedicated investigators, analysts, liaison officers).
- Training and certification costs.
- Technology: digital evidence platform, forensic kits, scene-photography equipment, portable lighting.
- Travel funds for coordination with state/federal partners.
- Contingency for independent autopsy fees and laboratory testing.

2. Grant Opportunities

- Apply for DOJ Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Byrne grants, Hate Crime Prosecution grants, and Civil Rights Division capacity-building funds.
- Partner with universities for joint research grants on hate crime detection and forensic bias analysis.

G. PUBLIC TRUST AND ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Transparency Measures

- Release annual **MDL Investigation Report**, detailing number of cases reviewed, outcomes, and systemic findings (with redactions for privacy).
- Host public forums or town halls explaining the investigative process and rights of families.

2. Cultural Change

- Emphasize that detecting bias-motivated deaths is part of public-safety integrity, not political optics.
- Incorporate this protocol into recruiting and continuing-education programs to normalize equity and diligence in death investigations.

H. TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

PHASE	MILESTONES	TIMEFRAME
PHASE 1: PREPARATION	Leadership approval, legal review, appoint coordinator	1-2 months
PHASE 2: INFRASTRUCTURE	Form MDL Unit, draft SOP, acquire equipment	3-4 months
PHASE 3: TRAINING	Conduct baseline and specialized training	4-6 months
PHASE 4: PILOT IMPLEMENTATION	Apply protocol to 1-3 selected cases, refine process	6-9 months
PHASE 5: FULL DEPLOYMENT	Protocol institutionalized department-wide	9-12 months
PHASE 6: EVALUATION	Independent audit, community review	12-18 months

I. OUTCOME GOALS

- Every suspicious or racially sensitive death is investigated according to uniform forensic and ethical standards.
- Increased community trust and cooperation.
- Reduction in misclassified deaths (e.g., suicides later determined homicides).
- Enhanced collaboration between local, state, and federal agencies on hate crime detection.
- Establishment of a national model for bias-aware death investigations.

IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK CHART

PHASE	KEY ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE UNITS	DURATION	MILESTONES / DELIVERABLES
PHASE 1 – PREPARATION & LEADERSHIP BUY-IN	- Present protocol to agency leadership and city/county officials. - Secure legal review and command-level approval.- Appoint an MDL Coordinator. - Identify initial funding and grant opportunities.	Chief's Office, Legal Counsel, Finance Dept.	Month 1-2	Formal adoption resolution Appointed coordinator Initial resource plan
PHASE 2 – INFRASTRUCTURE & UNIT FORMATION	- Create dedicated MDL Investigation Unit. - Assign multidisciplinary staff (investigator, analyst, forensic tech, liaison). - Draft SOP integrating MDL protocol. - Procure evidence kits, digital platforms, body cams, etc.	Criminal Investigations Division, HR, Procurement	Month 3-4	Unit operational Equipment and workspace set up Approved SOP
PHASE 3 – TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING	- Deliver foundational training to all officers. - Provide advanced training to MDL unit (bias indicators, forensics, trauma-informed interviewing). - Run tabletop and field exercises.	Training Division, FBI Liaison, DOJ Partners	Month 4-6	All sworn personnel trained MDL unit certified Simulation exercise report
PHASE 4 – INTERAGENCY & COMMUNITY COORDINATION	- Sign MOUs with FBI, U.S. Attorney, Coroner, State Bureau. - Establish Community Advisory Board. - Launch public information and trust campaigns.	Command Staff, External Affairs, Community Relations	Month 5-7	Executed MOUs Advisory Board seated Public briefing held
PHASE 5 – PILOT IMPLEMENTATION	- Apply protocol to 1-3 active or recent suspicious-death cases. - Conduct after-action reviews. - Refine documentation and response timelines.	MDL Unit, Forensics Lab, Prosecutor Liaison	Month 7-9	Pilot case reports Performance metrics collected
PHASE 6 – FULL DEPLOYMENT	- Roll out department-wide SOP integration. - Establish automatic MDL case-screening form for every suspicious death. - Begin quarterly reporting.	Command Staff, Records Division, IT	Month 9-12	Protocol active agency-wide First quarterly report issued
PHASE 7 – EVALUATION & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	- Convene MDL Oversight Committee. - Conduct independent audit. - Publish public accountability report. - Adjust protocol annually based on findings.	Oversight Committee, Inspector General, Community Advisory Board	Month 12-18	Audit report published Protocol updates implemented

TIMELINE OVERVIEW (SIMPLIFIED GANTT REPRESENTATION)

MONTHS →	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
PHASE 1																		
PHASE 2																		
PHASE 3																		
PHASE 4																		
PHASE 5																		
PHASE 6																		
PHASE 7																		

SUCCESS INDICATORS

- 100 % of suspicious-death scenes are handled under the standardized checklist.
- All officers are trained in bias-crime recognition within 6 months.
- The community advisory board meets quarterly.
- Annual public report and external audit completed.
- Documented reduction in misclassified or prematurely closed cases.

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American Senator and presidential hopeful Barack Obama at the Presidential Health Forum in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA. ▶

A photograph of Barack Obama, the 44th President of the United States, speaking. He is wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, and a striped tie. His hands are raised in a gesture of emphasis, with fingers spread. The image has a green tint and a dark green overlay at the top right.

Change will not come if
we wait for some other
person or some other time.

We are the ones we've
been waiting for. We are
the change that we seek.

– PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

CONCLUSION

Lynchings are not relics of the past – they are increasing, evolving, and hiding in plain sight. This report captures only the tip of the iceberg. For every case investigated, dozens more go unrecorded, buried beneath official narratives of suicide or accident. Each time JULIAN uncovers the truth behind one suspicious death, we find a trail leading to others, revealing a pattern of violence as deliberate as it is denied.

History warns us of what happens when justice waits. It took decades to bring Edgar Ray Killen and Byron De La Beckwith to trial for the murders of the Freedom Summer workers and Medgar Evers, long after their victims' names had faded from headlines. We cannot afford another generation of delay.

The methods of lynching have changed, but the mentality that protects the perpetrators endures – a system that excuses racial violence, shields official misconduct, and tolerates indifference

where outrage is due. This is state-sanctioned neglect, a quiet complicity that continues to cost lives.

Our work is to interrupt that cycle – to expose the truth, demand accountability, and ensure that no death is dismissed without scrutiny. Justice delayed is violence repeated.

We hope this report will do more than document; we hope it will teach, inform, and transform. The South—and the nation—must confront the ghosts it still lives with. Reckoning is the only path to redemption.

As the writer and activist Cornel West reminds us, *“Justice is what love looks like in public.”* It is time for the South to rise not through denial or nostalgia, but through that kind of love – the kind that demands truth, accountability, and the full measure of human dignity for every life taken too soon.

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IN EVERYTHING WE DO, WE BELIEVE
IN CREATING FREEDOM. WE BELIEVE IN
FEELING-LIVING-BLISS, NO MATTER WHAT
YOU LOOK LIKE, WHERE YOU'RE FROM, WHAT
YOU BELIEVE, OR WHOM YOU LOVE. THE WAY
WE CREATE FREEDOM IS BY INNOVATING
LITIGATION, POLICY, AND ORGANIZING
TO ERASE FEAR ON A MASS SCALE WHILE
DESIGNING POWER.

ABOUT JULIAN

Founded in 2020 and developed in Harvard's Innovation Lab, JULIAN's mission is to end caste systems in America. JULIAN does this through legal advocacy, organizing, policy, and innovation in order to exact justice, foster equality, and advance the doctrines of civil and human rights law. We do this to protect and uplift the voices of those on the bottom rungs of the American caste system. Our intention is to revive the spirit, effectiveness, strategies, and impact of the civil rights movement—updated for the realities of today and the urgency of tomorrow.

JULIAN works to tear down six of the eight pillars of caste. Additionally we use innovation and community organizing to advance community-identified and directed policy initiatives that build democracy and power. We work in small towns and rural communities, and our work impacts Black, brown, indigenous, LGBTQIA+, and individuals with disabilities. JULIAN is the first and only organization of its kind that centers innovation and creativity while investigating, litigating, and mounting civil rights campaigns to end lynchings and tear apart systems of caste, attacking not only “discrimination” but discrimination's roots.

JULIAN is not a response to the future of civil and human rights.

JULIAN is the future.



JULIAN