

How long can the
Other be abused
and silenced?



Emmett Till: The Ugly Face of Racism



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Disclaimer: This zine contains explicit images depicting the reality of African Americans during the 1950s in their fight against racism.

The KID:

Just 14 Years Old



In the summer of 1955, 14 year old Emmett Till left his home in Chicago to visit his Uncle (Moses Wright) and cousins down in Mississippi. Being a young African American from the North, he was youthfully ignorant of the racism that plagued the Southern states. He would go on to become a martyr in the African American struggle for equality.

Ripped from his Family



Stolen in the Middle of the Night

On the night of August 28th, Emmett Till was kidnapped from the home of his Uncle by two men. Both grown men were Caucasian and fearing any further repercussion for defending themselves, Emmett's family was left helpless to protect him. He was abducted after he reportedly whistled at the white woman at the cashiers in the local store, an act not taken lightly in the South. The husband of the cashier, Roy Bryant, returned with his brother-in-law, J.W. Milam, to teach the young boy a lesson.

The Incident



Viciously tortured and heartlessly drowned, a childhood is stolen. After hours of torture and abuse, Emmett's body was eventually drowned by a 70 pound cotton gin tied with barbed wire.

The "Trial"



The media representation of the killers was almost one of relief as white America had once again successfully "defeated" the Other, who found themselves defenseless. Pictured is the jury made up of entirely white southern men.

Fighting the Uphill Battle



Systemic Racism and the Ideologies Used to *Cheat* Justice



Moses Wright testifies that Roy Bryant and J.W. Milam were indeed the two men guilty of abducting his nephew from his home.

Trouble from the Start



They couldn't possibly
get away with it...could
they?

A Failed System



After barely an hour of deliberation, the jury decided the two men were not guilty of the crime.

WARNING



The following pages contain graphic images that may be disturbing to some viewers. Viewer discretion is advised. Continue to page 12 if not comfortable viewing images.

The Face of Racism

NATION HORRIFIED BY MURDER OF KIDNAPED CHICAGO YOUTH

Armed by America's first lynching in four years — the kidnaping and murder by three Mississippi white men of chubby, 14-year-old Chicagoan Ernest Louis (Babe) Till because he sat next to a white woman — leaders of both white and Negro groups demanded "wide and immediate" action against the "barbarians."

NACP executive secretary Roy Wilkins urged Mississippi Governor Hugh White: "We cannot believe that responsible officials of a state will condone the murdering of children on any provocation." Swamped with hundreds of similar protesting telegrams, Gov. White answered: "Mississippi does not condone such conduct." Calling the Mississippi white people "horrified by the act," while Greenwood newspaper editor Tom Shipman denoted the killing as "immolation" and "war, way beyond the bounds of human decency."

The kidnaping episode came to a stark and shocking end when the youth's mangled body, weighted with a 500-pound iron gin mill fan, was discovered by a fisherman in the shallow waters of the Tallahatchie River. The fan was wired across his neck.

Recovering the body, law officers found a "bullet hole one inch above his right ear. The left side of his face was crushed to the bone."

Meanwhile, Leflore County police continued to hold

two white men, Denver Ray Bryant and his half-brother, J. W. Milan; and pushed a search for the other members of the "lunch party," Mrs. Ray Bryant, who was whisked at, and another unidentified man. FBI officials said in Washington that they cannot pinpoint on her that she could not enter

Greenwood Sheriff John Cochran noted that they cannot pinpoint on her that she could not enter

the case because it was a local murder.

Recovering the boy's kidnapping from the hands of his grandmother, 60-year-old Mrs. Moses Wright, a 17-year-old Wheeler Parker, one of the three Chicagoans credited with the kidnapping, was visiting in Mississippi, but



Boys Never Told Grandfather About 'Incident'

who escaped after the crime, told JET:

"When the men came, covering and all, Grandma tried to awaken Babe and hide him outside but the men started in and told her to get back in bed and shut up before they beat hell out of her."

"Grandma knew about the 'incident' because we'd told her and not Grandpa, who would have gotten angry at us. We'd gone into town Wednesday and were watching some boys playing checkers in front of the store. Somebody said there was a pretty lady in the store and Babe said he was going inside to buy some bubble gum."

"After a while, we went in and got Babe but he stopped in the doorway and whined at the lady. She got angry and followed us out, then ran toward a car. Some one hit her, 'Who's getting a girl' and we ran."




Close-up of body, which bears visible evidence of horrible beating, Chicago undertaker J. A. Sawyer said youth had not been restrained as was rumored. Mistaken fear of suitors was not substantiated by verification of mother's request. She said she wanted 'all the world' to witness the atrocity.

A Mother's Tears



"I want everyone to see what they did to my son."

-Mamie Till

In a phenomenal act of agency, Mamie allowed for her son to be placed in the public sphere in order to bring America face to face with its own horrific racism.

The Efforts of Mamie



Mamie Till used her voice as a *human being, and grieving mother to speak out to her fellow Americans in an effort to connect to the family values instilled within the communities across the nation.*

*"I cry everyday. But I
cry as I move."
-Mamie Till*

*"When people saw what had
happened to my son, men
stood up who had never stood
up before."
-Mamie Till*

Respond

How can the framing of narratives regarding those with little or no agency, such as those about Emmett Till, contradict core American values such as family?



Emmett's "New" Image

After viewing (or gaining a better understanding the incident), how does this image whitewash the murder of Emmett Till and in what way does this play into the white racial frame?

