

THE MURDER OF EMMETT TILL

1x60



International

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In August 1955, the inadvertent violation of a sacred code of the South cost 14-year-old Emmett Louis Till his life and ignited a movement.

The Murder of Emmett Till is the first comprehensive documentary to look at the horrific crime that helped ignite the civil rights movement. Witnesses, friends and family members—some of whom have never before spoken on camera about the incident—recount the tragic tale that continues to haunt the nation.

The life of 14-year-old Till was cut short in August of 1955 during a visit to relatives in Money, Mississippi. Accused of whistling at a white woman, the Chicago teenager was kidnapped, beaten, mutilated, and shot. His mangled remains were found in the Tallahatchie River several days later. After his body was returned to Chicago, his mother made a decision that would bring national attention to Till's slaying. In *The Murder of Emmett Till*, Mamie Till Mobley recalls telling the undertaker not to "touch up" the body, and to leave the casket open: "Let the people see what I've seen. Everybody needs to know what happened to Emmett Till."

Mamie's decision would make her son's death a touchstone for a generation. At a church on the South Side of Chicago, the boy's mutilated body would be on display for all to see. Photographs published in Jet magazine put the murder in the national spotlight.

Till's assailants—who later confessed to the crime in a published article—were acquitted by an all-white, all-male jury. The failure of the courts or government to respond to outrides for justice was an emotional spark for the civil rights movement. One hundred days after the discovery of Till's body, Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat to a white man, and the Montgomery bus boycott was born.

"The murder of Emmett Till is etched in the collective consciousness of generations of the Black community," remarked producer, Stanley Nelson. "His legacy speaks to the power of people to make change, of mass movements. At this moment in history, Emmett Till's was a story that cried out to be told."

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CREDITS

Executive Producer: Margaret Drain

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