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Senator Stennis Civil Rights Correspondence B03F25L05

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United States Senate

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September 7, 1955

Honorable Herbert Brownell, Jr.
Attorney General of the United States
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Brownell:

The subject of this letter is the vicious attack made with deadly weapons on three young boys from Mississippi by two colored men here in the city in the neighborhood of 6th and K Streets, N. W., on June 4, 1955, which has already been reported to you by Senator Eastland and myself with the request that the FBI make a special investigation to determine who the assailants were and bring them to justice. I have also talked several times with Honorable Samuel Spencer, Commissioner of the District of Columbia, and Honorable Robert V. Murray, Chief of Police, on this matter. The substance of their last report to me was that they had been unable to develop any testimony or get any legal proof on the matter at all.

Over three months have passed since the incident, and no results have been obtained. Even though I know there are difficulties that go with such cases, I believe that with continued, proper attention there would be a good chance to get legal proof, and I am renewing my urgent request that you bring into operation the fine investigative powers of the FBI in an effort to identify and bring to justice those who committed this most serious assault.

The young men might well have been killed by the wounds inflicted had those wounds been in a slightly different location, or at least two of them could have been killed. I think this fact itself demands the utmost on the part of the federal law enforcement agencies to solve the crime. I know from my experience as District Attorney in Mississippi that after a lapse of some time following incidences of this type the participants or those who might know the facts become careless in what they say in reference to such matters thus opening up possibilities of obtaining evidence. I urge that every resource be exhausted in an attempt to solve these crimes.

I will appreciate a written report on the activities of the FBI up to date in this matter and what you plan to do in the future. For your information, I am continuing my efforts with the District of Columbia authorities in connection with this crime, but I am renewing my special request for the active help of the FBI.

Thanking you, and with best wishes, I am,

Sincerely yours,

John Stennis
United States Senator

JS:mwg

P. S. The young men are Wayne Ashby, Lyons, Mississippi, Frank Hudson, Jonestown, Mississippi, and Morris Anderson, Lula, Mississippi.