

POST MORTEM EXAMINATION REPORT OF  
THE BODY OF JAMES CHANEY

Report on inspection of autopsied body of James Chaney on August 7, 1964 at 2:30 P.M. at the University of Mississippi Medical School Hospital autopsy room and witnessed by University of Mississippi Medical School pathologists.

The body was in a partially decomposed state and opened from the neck to the pubis anteriorly, as a result of the recently performed autopsy. The top of the calvarium had been sawed and was independent of the base of the skull. The organs had been removed and portions of skin apparently corresponding to the entrance bullet wounds were missing. The terminal phalanges of all fingers had been removed (apparently for identification and finger printing purposes). The decomposed and partially putrified skin was peeling and the body was covered with a clay-like dirt. A circular depressed fracture - approximately 3 centimeters in diameter was present over the left fronto-parietal region. A complete through and through comminuted fracture was present in the center of the mandible. The left shoulder joint involving the upper end of the humerus was completely shattered into many fragments. The right ulnar and radius were fractured in at least two points completely across. There was no evidence of a bullet wound at this site. In addition to the fracture of the skull previously described, there was an extensive fracture extending through the base and across the occipital area. On the left of the sternum the ribs were shattered as were the ribs directly posteriorly just next to the vertebral bodies. Aside from the above, there were no other obvious injuries to the body. The state of the body at this time precluded any further meaningful examination. In lay terminology - the jaw was shattered, the left shoulder and upper arm were reduced to a pulp; the right forearm was broken completely across at several points, and the skull bones were broken and pushed in towards the brain.

Under the circumstances, these injuries could only be the result of an extremely severe beating with either a blunt instrument or chain. The other fractures of the skull and ribs were the result of bullet wounds. It is impossible to determine whether the deceased died from the beating before the bullet wounds were inflicted.

In my extensive experience of 25 years as a Pathologist and as a Medical Examiner, I have never witnessed bones so severely shattered, except in tremendously high speed accidents such as aeroplane crashes.

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⇒ what about Schwerner & Goodman's bodies →