Editors Note: In the long history of man's inhumanity to man, racial conflict has produced some of the most horrible examples of brutality. The recent slaying of Emmett Till in Mississippi is a case in point. The editors of Look are convinced that they are presenting here, for the first time, the real story of that killing — the story no jury heard and no newspaper reader saw.

Disclosed here is the true account of the slaying in Mississippi of a Negro youth named Emmett Till. Last September in Sumner, Miss., a petit jury found the youth's admitted abductors not guilty of murder. In November, in Greenwood, a grand jury declined to indict them for kidnapping.

Of the murder trial, the Memphis Commercial Appeal said: "Evidence necessary for convicting on a murder charge was lacking." But with truth absent, hypocrisy and myth have flourished. Now, hypocrisy can be exposed; myth dispelled. Here are the facts.

Carolyn Holloway Bryant is 21, five feet tall, weighs 103 pounds. An Irish girl, with black hair and black eyes, she is a small farmer's daughter who, at 17, quit high school at Indianola, Miss., to marry a soldier, Roy Bryant, then 20, now 24. The couple have two boys, three and two; and they operate a store at a dusty crossroads called Money: post office, filling station and three stores clustered around a school and a gin, and set in the vast, lonely cotton patch that is the Mississippi Delta.

Carolyn and Roy Bryant are poor: no car, no TV. They live in the back of the store which Roy's brothers helped set up when he got out of the 82nd Airborne in 1953. They sell "snuff-and-fatback" to Negro field hands on credit; and they earn little because, for one reason, the government has been giving the Negroes food they formerly bought.

On Wednesday evening, August 24, 1955, Roy was in Texas, on a brother's truck. He had carted shrimp from New Orleans to San Antonio, proceeded to Brownsville. Carolyn was alone in the store. But back in the living quarters was her sister-in-law Juanita Milam', 27, with her two small sons and Carolyn's two. The store was kept open till 9 on week nights, 11 on Saturday.

When her husband was away, Carolyn Bryant never slept in the store, never stayed there alone after dark. Moreover, in the Delta, no white woman ever travels country roads after dark unattended by a man. This meant that during Roy's absences — particularly since he had no car — there was family inconvenience. Each afternoon, a sister-in-law arrived to stay with Carolyn until closing time. Then, the two women, with their children, waited for a brother-in-law to convoy them to his home. Next morning, the sister-in-law drove Carolyn back.

Juanita Milam had driven from her home in Glendora. She had parked in front of the store to the left; and under the front seat of this car was Roy Bryant's pistol, a .38 Colt automatic. Carolyn knew it was there. After 9, Juanita's husband, J. W. Milam, would arrive in his pickup to shepherd them to his home for the night.

About 7:30 pm, eight young Negroes — seven boys and a girl — in a '46 Ford had stopped outside. They included sons, grandsons and a nephew of Moses (Preacher) Wright, 64, a 'cropper. They were between 13 and 19 years old. Four were natives of the Delta and others, including the nephew, Emmett (Bobo) Till, were visiting from the Chicago area.

Bobo Till was 14 years old: born on July 25, 1941. He was stocky, muscular, weighing about 160, five feet four or five. Preacher later testified: "He looked like a man." Bobo's party joined a dozen other young Negroes, including two other girls, in front of the store. Bryant had built checkerboards there. Some were playing checkers, others were wrestling and "kiddin' about girls."

Bobo bragged about his white girl [back in Chicago]. He showed the boys a picture of a white girl in his wallet; and to their jeers of disbelief, he boasted of success with her.

"There's a pretty little white woman in the store. Since you know how to handle white girls, let's see you go in and get a date with her?"

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To Kill a Mockingbird Literature Guide