

# The history and importance of the case of Emmett Till

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In 1955, a 14-year-old African American boy named Emmett Till was tortured and murdered in Money, Mississippi, for allegedly flirting with a white woman in a store. His killers, also white, were acquitted and eventually defended by the local newspapers despite a developing national outcry for justice. His tragic death has since gone down in history as sparking the next wave of the growing Civil Rights Movement throughout America.

In early July of this year, Till's case was reopened, due to "new information," according to a US Justice De-

partment report. It is speculated that the information comes from Timothy Tyson's 2017 book, *The Blood of Emmett Till*, where it is indicated that a key witness in the case lied. The news resulted in a push for a new investigation of Till's death. "I think it's very important that an investigation occurs," said Elizabeth Barger, a US History teacher at Madison Central. "His death was never resolved. People from that time, and people who knew him or were involved in the Civil Rights Movement, deserve some kind of closure."

Other recent news about Till's death is centered around his memory. A memorial to Till was created at the

site of his death just outside Glendora, Mississippi. It was the third memorial sign within the last twenty years. The first memorial was put up in 2007 and went missing in 2008. The second, placed in 2015, was found defaced by bullets in 2016. This year's sign was put up in late July and, a little over a month after its installation, was vandalized and riddled with bullet holes. "I think it shows how insensitive the south is when you can vandalize a memorial of someone who's been through so much," said Thaddeus Flagge (11). The sign will be replaced once again, but this time it will be bulletproof and protected by cameras. Despite these pre-

cautions, the new sign will be open to the public to call attention to both Till's death and the marker's unfortunate history of vandalism.

It is exceedingly clear that despite the fact that Till's death occurred over half a century ago, the impacts continue into the modern day, in the form of politics and social interactions. This is not the only case of an unjust death due to racial tension. The Mississippi Civil Rights museum has an entire wall dedicated to victims of lynching. Till's tragic fame comes due to the fact that his death was one of the tipping points of the Civil Rights Movement. This fact, coupled with the resumed investigation of his case and

the trouble surrounding his memorial, point to how important the events surrounding Emmett Till's death were to history, both then and now. "I think that we must remember Emmett Till, and everything that happened to him then and now," said Chastity Kent, a teacher and sponsor of the Minority Student Union club at MC. "If we remember this history, we can help avoid it in the future."

***Below: An exhibit at the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum recounts the events of Emmett Till's tragic death.***

Photo by Jillian Russell  
*Uproar*

