

Implacable enemy
Even inside U.S.-run
detention camps,
Iraqi insurgents find
ingenious ways to
keep fighting | C3



Haunted by murder

After 50 years, tiny Money, Miss., still struggles with the case of EMMETT TILL



An undated family photo shows Emmett Till with his mother, Mamie Till Mobley.

By Sherri Williams
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

MONEY, Miss. — Humming cicadas and buzzing flies are the only signs of life in what once was Bryant's Grocery & Meat Market.

But the roar coming out of this crossroads hamlet 50 years ago, as if the great Mississippi was reversing course, was heard all through the North, in Chicago, even Columbus.

"That's the only time in my life I had ever been incensed enough to do some violence," said Clifford Tyree, 79, who directed the Columbus Community Relations Commission from 1967 to 1972.

"All of the community was incensed by the Emmett Till murder. It got people mobilized by the civil-rights movement. The whole country, black and white, was incensed by it."

Everyone in Money has heard the story — one version or another.

Emmett Till was a black 14-year-old from Chicago, sent to the South by his mother, Mamie Till Mobley, to visit his great-uncle Moses Wright.

After a long day of chores, Emmett went to Bryant's for ice cream and candy with his relatives. Some said they heard he whistled at Carolyn Bryant, the wife of the store's white owner, Roy. Some say his stutter was mistaken for a whistle. Still others said he grabbed Mrs. Bryant's waist and aggressively pursued her.

They all agreed he was killed for the fatal mistake of whistling at a white woman in the segregated South.

Plenty of other blacks had



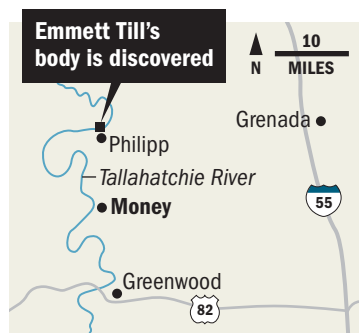
SHARI LEWIS | DISPATCH PHOTOS



ABOVE: Mississippi state Sen. David Jordan, of Greenwood, worked to have part of Rt. 49 named to honor Emmett Till.

LEFT: At Greenwood Middle School, eighth-graders vote on student-council officers under the guidance of U.S. history teacher Clara Blanchard.

BELOW: In Money, Miss., people en route to Riverside Baptist Church pass the remains of Bryant's Grocery.



THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

THE INSIDE STORY

In rare cases, sources must be anonymous

They stood before microphones and cameras Monday. One was the mother of a son in Iraq, the other the mother of a son in basic training and likely headed there.

Both appeared on local TV news programs. Only one was quoted in

The Dispatch on Tuesday. That might have left you wondering why.

The woman we left out wouldn't allow her name to be used.

She asked for anonymity because she didn't want grief from neighbors, friends and strangers who

support the war. While her feelings were genuine, her reason for requesting anonymity was insufficient to merit it in our newspaper.

We know the use of unnamed sources rubs many readers the wrong way. No matter how much information we provide about the source to establish the person's credentials, the lack of a name can create doubt and erode trust.

A recent national survey found that 44 percent of readers said anonymous sources harmed a story's credibility. And 42 percent of the 1,611 readers said it made no difference. One in 10 said it made a story more believable.

But readers also told the Associated Press Managing Editors organization for the survey that they are willing to accept anonymous sources if they are vital to telling an important story. And they want editors to weigh the risk of using unnamed sources with the benefit of holding public officials accountable. At *The Dispatch*, we are careful in our use of anonymous sources. And we believe our track record proves we can be trusted.

A few weeks ago, for example, we quoted two anonymous sources who said Gov. Bob Taft would report "between 50 and 60" golf outings and other events when he filed an amended ethics-disclosure report. He reported 52.

On March 4, we reported that Gene Smith was going to leave Arizona and become athletic director at Ohio State University. It was announced March 5.

Those are just two high-profile cases in which unnamed sources were critical to our stories.

Our policy requires that senior editors know the identity of all unnamed sources and the reason anonymity is being sought.

On occasion, we tell the reporter or a front-line editor that the source isn't good enough or can't be used — such as the unidentified mother of the guardsman.

When we've asked reporters for additional sources, the reporters often can get them. It's happened a few times recently with the state coin-investment scandal and the governor's ethics charges. Many times, though, the sources with first-hand knowledge — those we seek for information — are likely to face repercussions for talking to reporters, and we grant anonymity.

The best scenario is when a reporter hears something from a source and, through persistence and hard work, obtains the same information from a public source — a document or someone else on the record.

Despite how much we believe in our system regarding unnamed sources, we are taking a closer look.

Alan Miller, our managing editor/news, held two meetings recently with the staff to talk about sourcing. The discussions have been thoughtful and serious and will lead to a clearer definition of when and how we will quote anonymous sources.

We've also convened a team of editors to review our Code of Conduct to determine how to improve it, giving specific attention to the passage on sourcing.

Some newspapers (typically small publications) have banned unnamed sources.

We don't believe that banning anonymous sources serves the public. The best sources sometimes can't be named. They have too much at stake to be identified, and being identified just once would force them to stop helping reporters inform the public.

But we can't be cavalier in our use of unnamed sources, because we understand that our credibility quickly can be squandered.

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