

AT 44-857

The following is a signed statement furnished by CHARLIE JOHNSON on January 2, 1958:

"Columbus, Ga.

January 2, 1958

"I, CHARLIE JOHNSON, make the following free and voluntary statement to HENRY L. BURGETT and MAURICE L. FOSHEE who have identified themselves to me as special agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. No threats or promises have been made to get me to make a statement. I have been told I do not have to make a statement and that any statement I make may be used in a court of law.

"On the Saturday before Christmas day, 1957 I was in the city jail, Columbus, Georgia as a prisoner. I, with about six other prisoners, was in the 'Run a round' which is located directly across the hall from the tank. The tank is about 8 or 9 feet from the run a round. The door leading from the run a round to the hall has a glass in it which is about 5 feet or 5½ feet from the floor. The door to the tank is made of bars.

"At about 20 minutes before we were fed our supper on the Saturday before Christmas, 1957 a man who I later learned was the 'Preacher' was brought into the jail by the police and he, the Preacher was put in the tank.

"Shortly after the Preacher was locked in the tank he started cursing in a loud voice and wanting out of jail.

"A policeman with two trustees brought us our food on trays about 20 minutes after the Preacher was brought in and locked up. While the Policeman was there with the two trustees, the Preacher continued to curse. The Preacher said to the Policeman, 'You big son of a bitch come open this door and let me out. I've got the money to pay out.' The policeman, at that time, was standing near where the trustees were passing trays of food into us. The policeman said, 'I've got to quieten him down.' The policeman then walked to the tank door, took his key, and unlocked the door and walked into the tank. The Preacher was standing in the tank and near the bars when the policeman walked in.

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The policeman grabed the preacher and shoved him up against the wall and started hitting him with both his fist. The policeman hit the preacher with his fist around the head and stomach. The policeman beat the preacher with his fist until the preacher started falling to the floor. The Policeer man took his black jack and started hitting the preacher around the head and neck while he, the preacher was on the floor. The policeman also kicked the preacher several times with his right foot. During the time the policeman was kicking the preacher in the side and stomach, the preacher was lying on the floor. The policeman looked like he was kicking the preacher as hard as he could kick. During the time the policeman was hitting and kicking the preacher, the policeman called the preacher a son of a bitch. After he had stopped beating the preacher, the policeman said, 'Now you bastard you'll be quiet.' Before the policeman unlocked the tank door to go in and beat the preacher, he told the preacher 'I don't care if you don't get anything to eat.'

"After the policeman beat the preacher, I did not hear the preacher say anything else until the following morning. On Sunday morning, the morning after the preacher was beaten, the police brought him from the tank to the run-around where I was confined. When the preacher came into the run around he was holding one of his hands to his side, walking bent over, walking slow and holding on to the bars with one hand. He was groaning as he walked as if he was in bad pain.

"The preacher walked back to number 7 bunk and sat down on the side of that bunk. He kept saying that his side was hurting so bad.

"Sometime on the Sunday just before Christmas, 1957, the preacher was released from the run around. At the time he was released he was still groaning and seemed to be in great pain. I have not seen the preacher since he was released from the run around.

"I had been in jail five or six days prior to the Saturday the policeman beat the preacher.

"Some days after the policeman beat the preacher, he, the policeman, came to the run around where I was confined and passed out cigarettes to us. The policeman said, 'You know what happened to the preacher? You know he died.' I told him



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'Yes sir.'

"I do not know the name of the policeman that beat the preacher but I'll know him if I see him. He is a white man, stout, heavy build and he has black hair. He has one upper tooth missing on the left side. He looks to be about 30 years old. He has been working the 3PM to 11PM shift at the Columbus, Georgia City jail.

"During the time the policeman was beating the preacher on the Saturday just before Christmas, 1957, I and several other men watched through the glass in the door of the run around and saw the policeman hit and kick the preacher.

"This statement has been read to me since I can not read nor write, except to sign my name. This statement is true and correct in every way.

/s/ CHARLIE JOHNSON

"Witnessed by: MAURICE L. FOSHEE, Special Agent, FBI, Atlanta, Ga., 1/2/58.

"HENRY L. BURGETT, Special Agent, FBI, Atlanta, Ga., 1/2/58."