Honorable Ralph Davis
Executive Secretary
State of Florida
Tallahassee, Florida

Re: Death of Cellos Harrison
Jackson County

Dear Sir:

Wednesday morning June 16, 1943 at 1:30 A.M. Central War Time, I received a call from Patrolman E. E. Jordan of Marianna, Florida, to the effect that four men entered the jail around 12:20 AM, taking with them Cellos Harrison, (colored male).

Upon receipt of this information, Mr. Gilliam was notified immediately, along with Mr. Shipp of your office due to your absence. Three Patrolmen were called into Marianna and I met with them at 3:30 AM and we began the search for the colored man. At exactly 4:20 AM we were successful in locating the body, which was six miles south of Marianna on State Road #64 approximately six feet from the pavement.

Upon finding the body, the Chief Deputy Sheriff of Jackson County was notified and in turn he contacted the County Judge and a Coroner Jury was selected, and was sent out to view the body. We stood guard over the body until it was released and taken away by the undertaker, however, we stood by for the rest of that day and the following night to safe guard against further disturbance.

These men were reported by the assistant jailer, Tom Belcher, to have stopped at the front gate of the jail and announced, "Uncle Tom we have a drunk for you, open up," upon hearing this command he immediately unlocked the front gate. After opening the gate he reports that a gun was placed in his side and ordered to head on in the jail and produce the keys. As they entered the front
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Door, the keys rattled, as they were hanging on the door knob. They immediately took possession of the keys and went up stairs to get the colored man. They were unable to work the keys and ordered the jailer to unlock it, this he did along with opening the second door and the colored man was carried away.

The regular jailer, Lewis Rogers reports that he did not hear the confusion until the last few seconds and only saw the car as it was driving away.

Sheriff W. D. Gouse was out of town at the time attending a Sheriff's convention in Ocala returning Thursday afternoon.

Cellos Harrison was convicted in Jackson County court for the murder of Johnnie Mayo (white male) June of 1941, sentenced to the chair, but was reversed by the Supreme Court. He was tried the second time in June 1942 and sentenced to the chair and again reversed by the Supreme Court. In the spring term of Circuit Court of 1943, the case was nol-prossed, however, the Grand Jury on other information billed him again.

He was taken into custody the last time in Orlando, Florida, and returned to Marianna around May 23, 1943. He was held in the Jackson County jail until June 16, 1943, at such time he was carried away and killed with a hatchet by parties unknown.

Hoping this is the information desired, I am

Very truly yours,

[Signature]

Lieutenant Reid Clifton
Florida Highway Patrol
Chipley, Florida

RC:ct

CC: Mr. Gilliam