

# Justice declines to reopen 1955 murder case

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efforts of the black press especially, the crime, not solved in the courts, raised the consciousness of Americans and triggered the Civil Rights Movement."

In February, Rush, the Chicago Democrat, filed a bill in Congress asking that body to formally request that Ashcroft launch a federal

## Kerry: Didn't do enough for civil rights

By George E. Curry  
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER  
PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

WASHINGTON — U.S. Senator John Kerry says that although he was supportive of civil rights during his college years, he regrets that he didn't take part in the March on Washington, the Selma to Montgomery March and other major protest events of the 1960s.



Kerry

The presumptive Democratic nominee made that observation

in a recent meeting at his campaign headquarters in Washington with five Black journalists.

When asked about his civil rights involvement while a student at Yale University, Kerry replied, "I took part in demonstrations in New Haven and we helped to fund and raise money for the Freedom Rides, the buses and [to] recruit people to go. And I went from a very difficult personal choice about going or not going. I was on one of the athletic teams at the time. I did not go."

Asked if he has any regrets about the choice he made, the junior Massachusetts senator said, "It would have been a great experience. I didn't, I made other choices at the time. Again, I was supportive and proud that I was conscious of it and aware of it and cared enough to be supportive of it. But I just made a different choice at that point in time."

When asked if he would make a different choice today, Kerry became pensive.

"I would have found a way to get there, I think, for part of it," he said, slowly. When another reporter attempted to ask Kerry a question, he continued in a reflective mood. "I think I missed something. Did I miss something in that regard? Yeah, I think I did. I am glad I was

Please see KERRY/7A

investigation into Till's brutal murder. However, a spokesperson for the Justice Department told the Chicago Tribune that "the statute...barred the department from investigating the case further."

In a letter to Ashcroft, Rush wrote, "After consulting with Legislative Counsel for the House of Representatives and with the Congressional Research Service, I respectfully disagree with this assessment, and I remain firm in my call upon the Justice Department to investigate the murder of Emmett Till."

Rush said, "18 U.S.C. 3282

states that 'an indictment for any offense punishable by death may be found at any time without limitation.' 18 U.S.C. 214 as established by the Civil Rights



Ashcroft

Act proclaims that the type of lynching and murder that took place with Emmett Till is punishable by death. As such, I fail to understand why the department finds the statute of limitations a bar to investigate the murder."

In addition, another federal statute 42 U.S.C. 1988 (a) "give the federal courts jurisdiction to entertain, as an original matter, civil or criminal actions under state law in any case affecting the deprivation of civil rights."

The Illinois congressman noted that the 1963 murder of civil rights leader Medgar Evers and the bombing of Sixteenth Street Baptist, even though the cases were more than 30 years old.

"In the case of the Sixteenth Street Church bombing, the U.S. Attorney's office actually prosecuted the case in state court under state law," Rush said. "The Justice Department did not

seem to think that statute of limitation issues barred its involvement in these cases, so I see no reason why the department would think differently with regard to Emmett Till."

In an interview with the NNPA News Service, Rush said: "The federal government has the resources, it has the authority and should have the will to re-open this case. Emmett Till cannot and will not rest in peace. Mamie Till Mobley [his deceased mother] cannot and will not rest in peace until there's justice. We cannot rest in peace."

The bludgeoned and disfigured face of Till was flashed

across the country in 1955. His mother shocked the nation when she insisted on an open casket funeral so that the world could see what had happened to her son.

"Most of us would have been ashamed and would not have done it," he said, referring to the decision to leave the casket open. "But this lady left that casket open and that's what created the whole thing."

Rush is also pushing for the awarding of a Congressional Medal of Honor to Till's mother "for her courage, but also for her commitment to young people across this country."

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