

2.20.2018

Amy Weirich
Shelby County District Attorney General,
201 Poplar Avenue, Third Floor
Memphis, Tennessee 38103

District Attorney Weirich,

I am following up with your office with an open letter concerning a request for information I submitted to your office on January 11, 2018. The request was for any information related to the fatal hit-and-run death of George Clifton Sturghill on January 31, 1975. I received a response from Assistant District Attorney, Timothy Beacham on February 12, 2018 but I am unable to reconcile his response.

Mr. Beacham stated in his email to me (please see text below) that he was unable to locate any records related to this case but also states "*I have determined that this case was charged as city misdemeanors.*" I don't understand how he was able to determine that the "*...case was charged as a city misdemeanors*" if there were no records available for him to make this determination.

District Attorney Weirich when you examine the newspaper story by the *Commercial Appeal* published on February 4, 1975 titled "*Jury Indicts Freight Flyer In Bank Loan*" and the original accident report details which confirm that Fred Smith had been drinking alcohol on the evening that he did in fact strike and kill Mr. Sturghill at the intersection of Airways and Park Avenue and that he did in fact leave the scene of the crime and was later arrested at his home...is it not obvious to you and your office that this was a case of felony vehicular manslaughter that should have gone to trial?

I requested that Asst. District Attorney General Beacham inform me as to how this case can be re-opened by your office but have not yet received a response. Please accept this letter as an official request that the Shelby County District Attorneys Office re-open and re-examine Mr. Sturghill's death. If your office believes it is unable to re-open this case, I would ask that you provide both a definitive and clear written response as to why.

Respectfully,

Guy Cobb
Memphis, Tennessee

Mr. Cobb,

Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to your request. After a diligent search of the records of this Office, I have been unable to locate any record of an indictment in this case or any other records that fulfill your request. **I have determined that this case was charged as city misdemeanors.** Prior to Sept. 1, 1982, all misdemeanor adult arrests charged by Memphis Police Department personnel were prosecuted in Memphis City Courts. As an MPD patrolman during that time, I am aware of the procedure. The records you have requested may be in the custody of the Memphis City Court Clerk, 201 Poplar Ave. Rm. LL-80, Memphis 38103, 901-636-3400. Other records may have been maintained by the Memphis City Prosecutor's Office, 201 Poplar, Rm. LL-10, Memphis, 38103, 901-636-3475. You may check these agencies for further inquiry.

This Office is unable to comply with your request because we do not have the records sought.

Timothy A. Beacham
Assistant District Attorney General,
Public Records Counsel and Request Coordinator
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