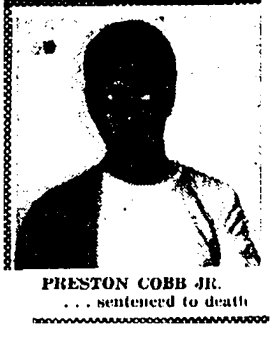


MUST THIS BOY DIE?



PRESTON COBB JR.
 ... sentenced to death

DIE?

By TREZZVANT W. ANDERSON
(Courier Roving Reporter)
 (Second in a Series of Articles)

MONTICELLO, Ga.—There are now some very grave doubts in this reporter's mind—and those of quiet a few others—that young Preston Cobb Jr., 15, actually DID kill Frank Coleman Dumas, 70-year-old white farmer last June 1, as Cobb has reportedly said he did. These doubts have arisen because this bizarre case is a crazy crossword puzzle of illogical inconsistencies.

Even while Ocmulgee Superior Court Judge George S. Carpenter is studying briefs already submitted and awaiting others to come, young Cobb is in the fine maximum security jail at Milledgeville—the fifth jail he has been in during the mad whirl that saw him get the death sentence last Aug. 15 here. Georgia

Gov. Ernest Vandiver has promised that he would order a stay of execution to give the Georgia legislature a chance to change the law which allows persons 14 years old and up to be executed.

BUT MEANWHILE, even the counsel for Cobb—Attys. Donald L. Hollowell and Horace T. Ward of Atlanta—are among those who cannot see any consistency in Cobb's reported admission. Too many things don't make sense. Primarily, there is the question of motive, and a mere argument about some fish doesn't make enough cause for a murder.

There was considerable speculation that there may have been some relationship between the dead man and young Cobb's mother, attractive Mrs. Lethia Cobb. Mrs. Cobb dispelled that possibility in answering a pointed question put to her by The Courier:

"Had Mr. Dumas ever been

fresh with you or tried to make passes at you, Mrs. Cobb?"

HER ANSWER was clear and concise: "No sir. He never was fresh with me and he had always stayed in his place. He cursed a good bit, but that was his way and everybody knew that."

Mrs. Cobb said she had only been living on the Dumas place for four years, although she was born and reared in Jasper County. She described her son, one of nine children, as "a quiet boy." She said he had never given her any trouble, other than once when he had thrown away some of the smaller children's things.

The mother, who is now in an all-out fight to save her son's life, said the youth made good grades in school, where he went as far as the ninth grade before stopping in February, 1960. She said Professor Payne, principal of the school, the Jasper County Training School, had never had any trouble with Preston Jr. If

young Cobb told him in the jail at Jackson, Ga., where he had put the body of the dead man in a ditch alongside a road. The sheriff said he dispatched two deputies to the spot and they failed to locate the body. The body was found by the dead man's son, Frank Coleman Dumas Jr., who found the spot on the first try, even though there was no testimony that young Cobb had told him where the body was.

Too, what accounts for the irrevoked against a Macon television news cameraman and commentator who was taking pictures at the Cobb shack on the Dumas' farm? Ex-Marine Corps Lieut. John Robinson, white, of WMAZ-TV, Macon, told The Courier, Mrs. Dumas had attacked him with a broomstick, cursed at him and had broken his camera when she came to the Cobb place, where he was taking pictures. He is not the white photographer



MRS. LETHIA COBB
 ... doomed boy's mother

only time Preston had ever stayed away from home all night.

It is a crazy mixed up pattern of events, hard to piece together and hard to understand, because



COBB'S "HOME" — In this shack lived young Preston Cobb Jr., one of nine children of Mrs. Lethia Cobb, who went to Atlanta to enlist help from the NAACP for her son.



COBB'S SISTER, Willie Mae, who lives in Atlanta, is shown after the new trial hearing for doomed Preston Cobb Jr., at Milledgeville, Ga.—Anderson Photo



COBB'S MOTHER — Mrs. Lethia Cobb is now in an all out fight to save her son from death, even as grave doubts of his actual guilt invade the minds of some observers.—Anderson Photo



MRS. COBB AND FRIENDS— Preston Cobb's mother, Mrs. Lethia Cobb (center), chats with two Dutch friends who came from Holland to intercode for Cobb. They are Mrs. S. T. Diemer-Lindeboom and Dr. B. W. Van Houten.



HEARING SITE— This stately columned court house in Milledgeville, Ga., was the scene of the new trial hearing for Preston Cobb Jr., doomed Monticello, Ga., boy.—Anderson Photo



COBB'S KIN — This is one of Preston Cobb's sisters, and his youngest brother, on the porch of their "home," on the Dumas place in Hillsboro, Ga.

he had, he had never told her about it, she said.

COBB JR. is reported to have written a letter to a relative, according to a member of the family, and in that letter he reportedly wrote: "I'm going to tell the whole story."

What is "the whole story?" Not too many believe his admission of guilt, for several reasons. First of all, he reportedly told deputy sheriffs he shot Mr. Dumas with a rifle and then lifted the man's body into the rear of the Dumas station-wagon, where he laid it on top of a spare tire.

Try to reconcile that with the fact that Cobb weighs only 132 pounds at the most, and the dead man was a 200-pounder! How could he have lifted him alone without help? It doesn't add up.

Furthermore, at his trial young Cobb in his own unsworn statement said he shot Mr. Dumas with a pistol. A deputy sheriff said he told him he shot him with a rifle. Where is the pistol? Cobb said he borrowed his brother's pistol. What happened to it.

mentioned in The Courier last week.

IF YOUNG COBB is "taking the rap" for somebody else, then he certainly seems to have been well covered with pressure from somewhere. Young Marshall Eugene Tinsley, a Negro friend of Cobb who was with him during the night he drove aimlessly around an area of some 50 miles, or more, testified that he and Cobb rode by the place where the body was found "three times" during that night and young Cobb never mentioned to him he had killed anybody, or had had any trouble. That was strange conduct.

Mrs. Cobb said that was the

there are some unreasonable things in the pattern. Is Preston Cobb Jr. shielding someone, even at the risk of his life? If so, why? And who?

THE BOY has been in five jails since his arrest. He has been jailed at Monticello, Gray, Jackson, Reidsville, and now is in Milledgeville. His lawyer, Attorney Hollowell, told Judge Carpenter that the boy was a not-too-bright kid who had never had any dealings with the law and knew nothing about such things, and who had been in such a whirl that he was bound to be a confused kid.

Judge Carpenter held the hearing in open court, and received the legal arguments in a frank and open manner. After the hearing he talked for several minutes with two citizens of Holland, who had come to America to inter-vene for Cobb. They were Dr. B. W. Van Houten, judge of Children's Court at Arnheim, and Mrs. S. T. Diemer-Lindeboom, a member of the Rotterdam board of supervisors. They also talked with the boy's mother.

ACCORDING TO the testimony of the Jasper County sheriff

(Continued Next Week)