



Florida Department of Law Enforcement

OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE INVESTIGATIONS

Alleged "Clubbing Death" at Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys

INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

INVESTIGATIVE PREDICATE

On March 30, 2015, Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), Office of Executive Investigations (OEI) Inspectors met with Dr. Erin Kimmerle from the University of South Florida, Department of Anthropology regarding her research into the student deaths and burials at the former Florida Industrial School for Boys (Dozier) in Marianna, Florida.

During the meeting, Dr. Kimmerle alleged that in 1969, information was presented to United States Senator Thomas Dodd and his Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency pertaining to an incident where a student at Dozier was "clubbed to death" by staff members, and the student's death was ruled a suicide. Dr. Kimmerle advised that the identity of the student had not been determined and requested the FDLE review the matter and determine if a student was in fact "clubbed to death."

SEARCH AND REVIEW OF INFORMATION

Dr. Kimmerle provided OEI with information which appeared to have been obtained from the website <http://thewhitehouseboysonline.com>. The "White House Boys" is an organization composed of former Dozier students who alleged to have been physically and/or sexually abused while at the school. The information provided by Dr. Kimmerle included an excerpt from a newspaper article believed to have been dated December 24, 1969. The excerpt was purportedly from an article that was printed in the Jackson County Floridian; however, according to University of West Florida, University Librarian (Professor)/University Archivist Dean Debolt, the article was not from the Jackson County Floridian.

According to the newspaper article excerpt, Senator Dodd was investigating "prison atrocities in Florida" and a reference was made to an alleged clubbing death, but the location of the alleged incident was not mentioned. A reference to the Marianna Reformatory School (Dozier) was made in the article; however, the reference was made regarding the reported physical abuse of students.

The information provided by Dr. Kimmerle also included excerpts from the March 28, 1969 testimony given before the Senate from the Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency. The excerpts from the Senate Hearing did not contain any reference to a student death at Dozier.

In its search for additional articles referencing the alleged clubbing incident, OEI located an article in the St. Petersburg Times newspaper archives dated December 24, 1969, titled, "State Questions Atrocity Probe." The article quoted the director of the State Division of Adult Corrections (Louie Wainwright) as stating that no such incident (clubbing) had been verified with him or his staff. The article reported that Senator Thomas Dodd was asked details of an alleged clubbing death of a young inmate at a Florida prison; however, Dr. James Bax, Secretary of Health and Rehabilitation in Florida, was quoted as stating that state prison authorities had "no knowledge" of any such death but had learned of the allegation from a news column, "Merry - Go - Round", in the Connecticut Democrat.

The OEI reviewed "Merry - Go - Round" news columns, to include the column which referenced an alleged clubbing death. There was no mention of Dozier in any of the columns reviewed by OEI.

The OEI reviewed a report titled, "Hearings before the Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency of the Committee on the Judiciary United States Senate, Ninety-First Congress, First Session, Part 20." The Marianna reform school was referenced in the report; however, there was no mention of a death by clubbing or any other death at the school. The OEI reviewed additional "Subcommittee to Investigative Juvenile Delinquency Reports", dated around the time period of 1969, with negative results regarding information referencing any death at Dozier.

The OEI reviewed Dozier student ledgers which showed no record of a student death in 1969. Prior to 1969, the most recent student death was in 1966, when a student purportedly drowned in the school swimming pool. There were a total of five student deaths recorded in the student ledgers in the 1960s; however, their death certificates do not list their causes of death as suicide. Based on information contained in the Dozier student ledgers, and from available death certificates, there was no record of a "clubbing death" or suicide at Dozier.

FINDINGS

The information presented to Senator Thomas Dodd and his Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency appeared to have pertained to an incident that allegedly occurred at a Florida prison, not at Dozier.

The OEI was unable to locate a record indicating that a student was "clubbed to death" at Dozier. Further, there were no records showing that a student's death at Dozier was ever ruled as a suicide.

STATE ATTORNEY REVIEW

On April 22, 2016, Second Judicial Circuit, State Attorney Glenn Hess was provided with this Executive Summary for review and any action deemed appropriate.