

RETRACTS EVIDENCE THAT DOOMED FRANK

Negro Witness Swears Craven, State's Agent, Induced Him to Testify Falsely.

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ATLANTA, Ga., Feb. 22.—A sensational development in the case of Leo M. Frank, under sentence of death for the murder of 14-year-old Mary Phagan, came to-day when Albert McKnight, a negro who gave damaging evidence against Frank at the trial, made affidavit that his evidence was false and that he had been used in a "plot to hang Frank."

Albert McKnight is the husband of Mineola McKnight, who cooked for the Frank family. His testimony regarding Frank's conduct on the night following the murder told heavily against the defendant.

McKnight on the stand said that he saw Frank the day of the murder—that Frank came home from the factory about 1:30 P. M., and returned without eating anything. He testified also that Mineola, his wife, who was a servant at the Selig home, where Frank lived, told of Frank's coming home intoxicated the night of the crime, and of his telling Mrs. Frank that he was in trouble and "didn't know why he should murder a girl," and that one of the family remarked that Frank had been caught with a girl in the factory.

The negro in his affidavit says he was induced to swear falsely by R. L. Craven, employed by Solicitor General Dorsey to get evidence against Frank. McKnight says in his affidavit:

"Deponent says that he did not see Mr. Frank at all on April 26, and that his evidence at the trial of Mr. Frank was the result of a plan perfected by R. L. Craven and others to collect the reward offered for the arrest and conviction of the murderer of Mary Phagan

"Deponent says that he told R. L. Craven that he did not want to tell any lies on Mr. Frank, but Mr. Craven would tell him to go right ahead and do what he told him to do, and that he would get the reward, and he was weak enough to do as Mr. Craven told him to do.

"Deponent says that he is sorry for all the wrong he has done to Mr. Frank and that he wants this true statement of facts placed in the hands of Mr. L. Z. Rosser, to be used by him with the hope that the same can in some way undo the great wrong he was led to do by the white people he was working with at the store of Beck & Gregg.

"Deponent again says that he did not see Leo M. Frank at any time or place on Saturday, April 26, 1913, and that he will so testify when called upon at any time."

McKnight furnished the affidavit to Capt. C. W. Burke, employed by Messrs. Arnold and Rosser, the attorneys defending Frank. Capt. Burke says the negro came to him voluntarily and confessed that he perjured himself at the trial of Frank.

"Mr. Craven tried to make me think I would get part of the reward," McKnight said. "I didn't really believe that I would get any money, but I thought that Mr. Craven would be good to me if I said what he wanted me to say."

"The negro is just a common liar," said Craven. "He volunteered his original evidence and, I think, told the truth. He has been seen by Frank's attorneys, who are stopping at nothing to save the neck of their client."

Craven, who is accused by McKnight of plotting "to hang Frank," is a reputable citizen and employe of the Beck-Gregg Hardware Company. McKnight worked for the same company, and through this connection Craven learned that the negro's wife cooked for the Frank family.

Solicitor General Dorsey attaches little importance to the McKnight affidavit. He does not care to be quoted, but makes it clear that, in his opinion, the affidavit was concocted to help Frank's case.

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