

# TESTIMONY HE GAVE AT TRIAL WAS TRUE, DECLARES M'KNIGHT

Negro Witness for Prosecution Now Repudiates Affidavit He Gave to Leo M. Frank's Attorneys.

## PRISONER AT STATION ON HIS OWN REQUEST

Detective Burns Has Not Yet Returned to Atlanta. Report Is Not Expected Before Tuesday.

Albert McKnight, state witness in the Frank case, now repudiates his repudiation. He says that his testimony on the stand is true, and that his denial of it was false.

He declares he signed his repudiation affidavit in order to "get rid of" C. W. Burke, a private detective attached to the office of Luther Z. Rosser, senior member of the Leo Frank case.

McKnight is in police headquarters, occupying an entire corridor of cells, and has a special cot. His principal occupation is eating, sleeping and awaiting developments. Last Wednesday he appeared at headquarters and asked Chief Beavers if the chief wouldn't put him in a cell so that he could enjoy the peace and tranquility that naturally accompany imprisonment.

### Says He Was Pestered.

He told the chief that he had been "pestered unmercifully" since having signed the repudiating document, and that he was so tired of it all that he was perfectly willing to go to jail and stay indefinitely. Last night he talked to reporters.

"I signed that affidavit that Mr. Burke brought me just because I wanted to get rid of him," the negro told a Constitution reporter. "He had been coming around to my house time after time, and I finally put my name to the paper. I didn't think it meant as much as it really did. I'm sorry now, and I say it ain't true. What I said on the stand was the truth."

McKnight also admitted that the statements in the affidavit which pertain to alleged unfair methods on the part of Roy Craven and C. C. Pickett, the Beck & Gregg employees who brought McKnight into the case as a witness, were inserted in the affidavit after he had signed his name to it.

"I didn't think it would matter much," he explained. "I had done gone on and said a lot, and I didn't think that whatever else I said would make any more difference."

He was asked why he had asked protection from the police.

"Folks were pestering me," he answered. "Mr. Burke commenced coming around again and I just got tired of it. I wanted to get away from it all, and the only safe place I knew of was police station. Just as long as they'll feed me and protect me, I'll stay with 'em."

### Wife's Conflicting Stories.

McKnight also stated that Minola McKnight, his wife, a former cook in

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# M'KNIGHT STICKS TO TRIAL EVIDENCE

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employ of the Frank household, had told him after the trial that the affidavit she had signed against Frank at police headquarters long before the trial—which she denounced on the stand—was true. She never explained, he stated, however, why she had told conflicting stories.

The negro witness declared to newspaper men that he had not been coerced into making the repudiating document and that he was not offered money nor given any for it. He declared that no offer whatever was made him.

"But I felt pretty sure, though," he supplemented, "that I'd get a better job after I had signed the thing. I didn't, though."

He likewise said that he had not disappeared when the last affidavit was made public. He declared that he had been in the vicinity of Atlanta all the while, and that he was working with a man who travelled for a patent medicine concern.

McKnight is the negro witness who testified for the prosecution that he was in the kitchen of the Frank home, on East Georgia avenue, at noon on the day of the Mary Phagan murder, and that he had seen Frank come home at lunch time, go into the dining room and to the sideboard and presumably take a drink.

He testified that Frank had not eaten lunch at home, as was stated by Frank and various members of his family, but had remained only a short while in the house, after which he departed, going to Washington street, where he caught a Washington street trolley car for town.

## **Given Burke Affidavit.**

In February, of this year, he made an affidavit to C. W. Burke, which repudiated his testimony, and which branded it false. The affidavit also accused Pickett and Craven of having framed the story which the negro told on the witness stand.

Chief Beavers stated to a Constitution reporter last night that McKnight could remain at police headquarters just as long as the negro felt that he needed protection. Early last night, George Gordon, attorney for McKnight's wife, Minola, came to headquarters and asked for McKnight. This was the first that newspaper men knew of the witness' imprisonment.

Gordon interviewed the negro and asked him if he cared to leave police station. McKnight answered that he was comfortably situated, and that he was satisfied with the life and protection of prison.

## **Will Fight Retrial Motion.**

Solicitor General Hugh M. Dorsey is preparing to vigorously combat the fight of Leo Frank's defense to gain a new trial which will be waged before Judge Ben Hill next Wednesday morning at 10 o'clock.

Wide speculation has been caused by rumors of evidence to contradict a number of the grounds of Frank's counsel, which is said to have been supplied the solicitor general by detectives from police headquarters, who have been at work on the case since the defense began its retrial battle.

Mr. Dorsey will not commit himself on the subject one way or the other. He will neither deny nor affirm the rumors of such evidence. Starnes and Campbell, two of Chief Lanford's star men, who were named as prosecutors of the convicted man, have been in charge of the investigation promoted by police headquarters.

Dan Lehon, lieutenant of the William J. Burns forces, stated last night that Burns would not return before Monday or Tuesday. His report will probably be submitted Tuesday night or early Wednesday morning.

Mystery still surrounds his journey. Officials of his service have stated that his reason for not divulging the destination of his present trip is to avoid publicity and to prevent complications arising in the important angle on which he is working while out of the city.

Burns men denied, too, the report that he would not return to Atlanta. They declared positively that he would be back in time for the hearing before Judge Ben Hill Wednesday, and that his report would be submitted by that time—if not before.