

## Muhammad (Cassius Clay) Ali Assails Police Investigation

registered a .32 automatic in 1961. No other data exists.

What happened to the \$1,100 Sam Cooke supposedly carried with him that night, as one popular story goes? Police say Barbara Cooke told them her husband, to her knowledge, carried approximately \$150 with him on that evening. Police found \$108 in a money clip in Cooke's pocket after he died. He had been to a restaurant, a night club and rented a motel room.

Was Sam Cooke influenced by alcohol or a drug? A senior deputy medical examiner, Dr. Harold Kade, testified at the inquest into the singer's death that a medical examination showed a content of drinking alcohol measuring 0.14 present in his body. "It might affect his judgment at that level," Dr. Kade declared.

The coroner's jury ruled Sam Cooke's death was justifiable homicide.

All of the pieces still don't fit? A prominent Beverly Hills private investigator, working in behalf of Sam Cooke's family, says he has failed to turn up any evidence contrary to that already presented, and that after 36 years of homicide investigation, "I've never seen one yet where all the pieces fit."

And unfortunately, the one voice that could shed further light on the mysterious tragedy—the golden voice of Sam Cooke—is stilled forever.

Meanwhile, while the detective was trying to put the pieces together, police reported that approximately 120,000 persons viewed Cooke's body reposed in a \$4,000 glass-topped copper casket. Observers said the scene was reminiscent of the death of Rudolph Valentino, the movie idol who died in the early 1920's. Heavyweight Champion Muhammad (Cassius Clay) Ali angrily told a radio audience: "I don't like the way he was shot. I don't like the way it was investigated. If Cooke had been Frank Sinatra, the Beatles or Ricky Nelson, the FBI would be investigating yet and that woman (Mrs. Franklin) would have been sent to prison." Cooke's widow, Barbara, was nervously quiet in the funeral home, looking beautifully elegant in black.



Whispered conference takes place between Mrs. Barbara Cooke and Cassius (Muhammad Ali) Clay as S. R. Crain hovers in rear.

**TRAGEDY-FILLED LIFE OF SINGER SAM COOKE**

**DEATH SHOCKS SINGER'S FANS;**

By LOUIE ROBINSON

Sam Cooke was born lucky. He had a golden voice and a million dollar career and thousands of people who adored him. And yet, sometimes it seemed that if it were not for bad luck, he would have no luck at all.

Tragedy stalked him like the hound dogs after Little Eliza. Death always seemed to be hanging around his stage door, and last week the two finally met.

For Sam it was a 22-caliber bullet through the heart.

It was not the kind of end one would expect Sam Cooke to come to.

Born 33 years ago in Clarksdale, Miss., as one of eight children of a Baptist minister, Cooke grew up in Chicago, singing in his migrant father's church choir as early as the age of six. He later joined a group of teen age singers and at 17, S. R. Crain, who had a gospel group known as the Soul Stirrers, heard Sam and hired him.



*A warm personality, Sam Cooke is caught in one of his more thoughtful moods. His star was still rising at death.*

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**DETAILS BARED WITH DISBELIEF**



*Mahalia Jackson's organist, Edward Robinson, console's Sam's brother, David; Mrs. Barbara Cooke with brother-in-law Charles.*

In 1953, the same year he married a Los Angeles dancer and singer named Dolores Mohawk, he was advised by musical talent scout Robert (Bumps) Blackwell to switch from gospel to pop music. Cooke made the change, recorded a song written by his brother, L. C. Cook (the family name is Cook, but Sam added the "e") titled *You Send Me*. And from then on he was a household word. Sam Cooke became a night club sensation, and during his lifetime sold 10 million records.

That was the lucky side of his life.

But almost simultaneously with fame came problems. In Philadelphia in 1958, a slender, 26-year-old Navy yard secretary accused the singer of fathering her son. Cooke paid her an estimated \$5,000 out-of-court settlement. His attorney at the time declared that the payment "does not necessarily mean that he is admitting his guilt in the

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## Cooke Nearly Lost Life In Death Car Crash

case. He is paying her because he cannot afford to lose valuable time away from his work . . ."

Shortly after that, Dolores Mohawk Cooke took Sam, from whom she had been separated for several years, to court on charges that he had secured a default divorce without her knowledge. The outcome of this legal imbroglio was that the two were divorced.

One November night that same year, Cooke and a group of fellow performers were speeding through the night en route from St. Louis to Greenville, Miss. "We had just gone around this curve and had the straight-away," Cooke explained later, "when this big truck pulled out in front of us and left Eddie (chauffeur Edward Cunningham) no place to go." Cunningham went to his death and Cooke, guitarist Cliff White and singer Lou Rawls went to hospitals. The driver's side of the late model Cadillac had hit the truck-trailer with such force the huge vehicle was bent.

Sam recovered from that accident, which had taken the life of a close associate, only to face the consequences of another. In that year, 1958, he had said of Dolores: "We just couldn't make it and we decided to call it quits. We're still good friends."

On the night of March 26, 1959, ex-wife and good friend Dolores Mohawk Cooke was driving alone from her job at a night club in her hometown of Fresno, California. It is not clear, precisely what happened—one theory is she perhaps suffered a heart attack—but her automobile rammed a house and post. Sam got the word in Miami that Dolores was dead. He canceled his engagement to attend her last rites. "Sam paid for the funeral," a friend later revealed.

In a happier moment that year, Cooke married a childhood sweetheart, Barbara Campbell, in Chicago. His father performed the ceremony.

The Cookes made their home in Los Angeles, and as his career continued to climb and their family grew to five in number, they moved into a swank home, estimated



Rev. Cooke, father (l) and mother, Mrs. Cooke with son (l) Willie, daughters, Agnes (c), Hattie (l) and other relatives.

to be worth \$150,000, complete with swimming pool.

It was at the swimming pool that tragedy struck next. Their youngest child, 18-month-old Vincent, was playing near there one summer day in 1963 and slipped into the water. It was several minutes before the accident was discovered, and Barbara dove into the pool and brought him out . . . too late.

But the Cookes, a popular and attractive couple who often toured Los Angeles night spots together, bounced back.

Then came the night of Dec. 10, 1964. Barbara Cooke, as she later told police, last saw her husband at dinner. He turned up later that evening at a plush Hollywood restaurant known as Martoni's. It was a favorite spot for Sam. During the course of the evening, he was introduced to several people. One of them was a 22-year-old girl of Chinese-English descent named Elisa Boyer, who prefers to drop the "E" from her first name.

Miss Boyer, in statements later to both police and a

## Freed Of Killing, Woman Had Only Seen Sam On TV

coroner's jury, said when she was ready to leave the restaurant, Cooke offered her a ride home. It was 1:30 in the morning of Dec. 11th.

"I don't believe he was drunk, no. I'd say he had had one or two, but I'm sure he was not drunk," Lisa Boyer testified. "He said he wanted to talk to me for a little bit."

Miss Boyer explained that she lived at a motel and preferred not to go there, but said she would not mind going to a nearby night club.

At the club, on Hollywood's Sunset Blvd., an incident took place, according to Miss Boyer. She and Cooke took a seat near the entrance and the singer became engaged in conversation with some other persons. Soon, a man came over, sat beside her and began talking, Miss Boyer testified. "Mr. Cooke became angry when this gentleman sat next to me and started talking to me. He wanted to hit the man. That's why we left."

According to Miss Boyer, she thought they were then headed home, but instead they took a fast ride out a Los Angeles freeway. "I told him I wanted to go home. I was very frightened because he was driving so fast . . . After we got past downtown I asked him again to take me home. He kept talking to me, saying how he thought I was such a lovely person and I had such long pretty hair. I said, 'please, Mr. Cooke, take me home.'"

Sam Cooke drove to Los Angeles' South Side and a modest three-dollar-and-up-a-night motel, The Hacienda. There he registered his name—Sam Cooke—with the motel's manager of three-years' duration, Mrs. Bertha Lee Franklin, a short, stockily-built woman of 55 years.

"He just wrote his name down, then I saw her (Lisa Boyer) coming and I told him, 'you have to put Mr. and Mrs.' " Mrs. Franklin testified later.

Did Lisa Boyer say anything at the time Cooke was registering them into the motel, Mrs. Franklin was asked.

"No, she didn't say anything. She didn't say a word," Mrs. Franklin answered.

Had she, Mrs. Franklin, ever seen Lisa Boyer before?

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Mrs. Bertha Lee Franklin looks pensive following the slaying of Sam Cooke, while a policeman palms gun she used.

"No."

Had she ever seen Sam Cooke before in her life?

"No, no more than on TV."

(Police said Mrs. Franklin told them she did not recognize Cooke as the famed entertainer when he came to the motel.)

Lisa Boyer maintained that she got out of the car and followed Cooke, begging him to take her home.

"He dragged me to that room," she testified. "I started talking very loudly: 'Please take me home.' He turned the night latch and pushed me on the bed. He pinned me there."

Miss Boyer says Cooke promised her "we're just going to talk," but that he later pulled my sweater off and ripped my dress . . . I knew he was going to rape me."

Miss Boyer testified she then asked Cooke to permit her to use the bathroom. Once inside, she said, "I tried the window, but it was painted down and wouldn't unlock."

When she re-entered the bedroom, Lisa Boyer said, Sam

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## Both Women Cleared By Lie Detector Tests

Cooke had undressed, and he then went inside the bathroom. At that point, she testified, clad in her slip and bra, she grabbed up her other clothing (and some of Cooke's too, it was later revealed) and ran out."

Evidence indicated Lisa Boyer ran first to the motel manager's apartment, knocked on the door, but then ran away, slipped into her clothing in the darkness, then entered a phone booth a block away and telephoned police to say she had been kidnapped and did not know where she was. "I hadn't any idea that someone had shot Mr. Cooke," she told a coroner's jury.

Sam Cooke had indeed, by that time, been shot, after he had twice appeared at the manager's apartment demanding to know, according to Mrs. Franklin, where Lisa Boyer was.

"He just kept saying where was the girl," Mrs. Franklin testified. She said the singer demanded to be let in, and she advised him she would admit no one but the police, and told him to call them if he wanted her place searched.

"Damn the police," Mrs. Franklin quoted Cooke as saying.

Bertha Lee Franklin, then told the following story:

"He started working on the door with his shoulder . . . It wasn't long before he was in. When he came in he went straight to the kitchen, then he looked in the bathroom. He grabbed both my arms and started twisting. I'm sore all over now. I'm taking therapy every day. We got into a tussle . . . He fell to the floor. He fell on top of me. I started kicking . . . I was scratching, kicking, biting, everything. I got up . . . He came to me. I pushed him back again, then I grabbed the pistol and started shooting . . . He wasn't too far, very close range.

"He said, 'lady, you shot me!' He ran into me again. I started fighting again. I grabbed the stick . . . The first time I hit him, it broke."

Sam Cooke, clad only in a short sports jacket and one shoe, collapsed on the floor and died. One of three bullets fired from a .22-caliber pistol Mrs. Franklin kept on the

nearby TV set entered his left chest, traveled diagonally across to the right side, puncturing the heart and both lungs.

The time was approximately 3:10 a.m.

In the days that have followed this last and final tragedy in the life of Sam Cooke, rumors have swept the country from Los Angeles to New York. Close associates, too numerous to mention, have declared that Sam Cooke was not the sort of man to kidnap a girl, force her into sex against her will, or attack a middle-age woman.

And there are rumors—as to Lisa Boyer's activities, and whether or not she knew, before the night of December 10th, either Sam Cooke or Bertha Lee Franklin, and if so, what that relationship was.

Were Miss Boyer and Mrs. Franklin telling the truth? A polygraph—lie detector—test, voluntarily submitted to by both women, cleared them completely of any false statements. There was no evidence submitted to show that either woman ever saw each other before 2:32 a.m. on the morning of Dec. 11.

Does either woman have a police record? The Los Angeles police report that Lisa Boyer applied for a work permit in Las Vegas in 1960 or 1961. Mrs. Bertha Franklin



At a Los Angeles Coroner's inquest, Miss Boyer testifies as a court reporter (foreground) takes notes of proceedings.