

# Autopsies on Six Slain Negroes Ordered by Augusta Officials

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AUGUSTA, Ga., May 14 — Autopsies were ordered today on the bodies of six Negroes killed here in rioting Monday and Tuesday.

The Richmond County Commission overruled the decision of the coroner, Nathan F. Widener, who had declined to conduct the post-mortem examinations because of their cost.

"We work on a budget system, the 74-year-old coroner said. "An autopsy costs \$100 and, besides, we've already had two this week."

But the commissioners, noting that Mr. Widener's preliminary report had concluded that the victims had been shot in the back, voted to call for the autopsies.

[In Washington, the Justice Department ordered an

investigation to determine whether the victims' civil rights had been violated, The Associated Press reported.]

The County Commissioners' action was taken after another day and night of tense quiet in this riot-scarred city. Twelve hundred National Guard troops remained on duty, a curfew was imposed for the fourth consec-

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utive night, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation began an inquiry into the six deaths.

A confidential police report indicates that at least five of the victims were killed by the police, reliable sources reported.

An eyewitness to one of the deaths said he had watched a Negro policeman and his white partner fire nine shots into the back of a man suspected of looting. They did not fire warning shots or ask him to stop running, said Charles A. Reid, a 40-year-old businessman.

"It was murder, just plain murder," said Mr. Reid, a Negro, who had been in the area to check on a liquor store he owns. "I saw cold-blooded murder, that's all."

The victim was apparently John Stokes, a 19-year-old Negro who was pronounced dead at University Hospital early Tuesday morning.

Although the hospital's emergency room records said his death had been caused by chest wounds, an examination by Dr. Irvine Phinizy, the 72-year-old county medical examiner, determined that the youth had been shot nine times in the back.

### Differences in Reports

Three of the other victims were also shot several times, Dr. Phinizy said in a deposition to the coroner, on which the report was based. Two of those who died had suffered single gunshot wounds in the back, the doctor said.

Discrepancies between the report and the hospital diagnosis were clarified this afternoon when two physicians who were on duty in the emergency rooms Monday night said they had examined the bodies only

superficially and had disputed the coroner's report on the basis of "our impressions."

Dr. William H. Moretz, 55, and Dr. Carl Jelenko, 38, conceded that they were not experts and concluded that they were not certain at all of their view that wounds in the chests of some of the victims were entrance wounds rather than exit wounds, as Dr. Phinizy's report described them.

### Shooting Is Described

Three of the men were dead on arrival at University Hospital. At Talmadge Memorial Hospital, another was pronounced dead when he was removed from a car, while another lived for approximately half an hour. The sixth victim was taken directly from streets to a funeral home.

According to Mr. Reid's account, the young man he saw killed had leaped through the empty window fame in a liquor store in the Negro shopping district, where arson and looting caused extensive damage to white-owned businesses and stores operated by Chinese.

"A police car had just pulled up and the cops got out and the kid began to run away," Mr. Reid said. "The black cop shot him twice with his pistol and then a white cop shot him seven more times as he went fired from about 15 feet away, Mr. Reid said, and both policemen used handguns although both were armed with shotguns, weapons frequently used in some cities for control of civil disorder. Neither policeman fired into the air and neither shouted to the fleeing suspect, he said.

### Rights Inquiry Ordered

WASHINGTON, May 14 (AP) — The Justice Department has ordered a preliminary investi-

gation into the deaths of the six Negroes in Augusta to determine whether the men's civil rights had been violated.

The investigation was ordered after two Government civil rights lawyers made an assessment of the Augusta disorders.

"As a result of their assessment of the situation, the Civil Rights Division has opened a

preliminary investigation into the deaths of the six men to determine if there have been violations of Federal law," the department said.

The disorders were touched off by the death of a Negro boy in the Richmond County jail in Augusta. The Civil Rights Division is also investigating the youth's death, the department said.