

Alford Free On \$5000 Bond; To Face Jury on Murder Count

+ Alford

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"He had apprehensions of severe bodily harm or death. That constitutes self defense."

In view of possible public reaction the defense stated it had no complaints at the setting of a reasonable bond.

Judge Pearson stated the "court has no jurisdiction to pass final judgment in this case." He set bond at \$5000 pending action of the grand jury "whose decision will be to indict or exonerate."

Excitement was generated in the crowded courtroom when Alford was called to the stand. Courtroom observers remarked on the rarity of a defendant going to the stand at a preliminary hearing.

Others testifying were Sheriff J. W. (Bill) Owen, Lee and Lher Mitchell of Richardson.

Sheriff Owen who led the investigation reported on the circumstances discovered in the probe. Mitchell was across the street from the pair at the time of the shooting but could not hear the parties.

Lee told officers he was walking toward the bus station when Mr. and Mrs. Alford and their small son came from Bill's cafe across Tate st. from the bus station.

Mrs. Alford and the boy went toward Canal st. while Alford walked toward the bus station. Lee said he joined Alford in a conversation in front of the bus station by the mail box.

He said they had been talking some little time when McClure came out of his barber shop and leaned against the north window of the bus station. McClure stared steadily at Alford.

"I'm here and I'm not running" said McClure and Alford spoke in words of the same nature.

Lee said McClure ran at Alford and struck him in the neck. Officers reported Alford had a scratch on his neck and a pulled muscle.

Lee pushed McClure back in an effort to stop the altercation.

McClure was alleged to have cursed Alford and threatened "I'm gonna get him." When the barber apparently started another advance, Alford drew the gun from under his shirt reached around Lec and fired.

Lee implored McClure to go back to his shop according to testimony. "I'm friends of both of you" he said in trying to halt the argument.

Alford said he too asked McClure to return to his shop adding "I don't want any trouble with you."

Captain Lott who was called to the scene by patrol car radio said he found McClure slumped by the mailbox between the bus station door and the street.

Alford fired three times and two bullets completely pierced the body

Under cross examination by Smith Alford contended he never threatened or cursed McClure. He said he put the gun on when leaving the house Tuesday morning.

"Why did you go to the bus station?" Smith asked.

"I was going in after some cigarettes or something like that."

The county attorney stated the purpose of a preliminary hearing was to determine if the state has sufficient evidence "that this man over to the grand jury. "We believe we have presented sufficient evidence."

Alford had entered a plea of innocent to a warrant charging murder. The next session of the grand jury convenes the first Monday in April.

Stockstill maintained there was sufficient evidence "that this man was shot in self defense."

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The Picayune Item
Picayune, Mississippi
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Elmer Alford 58-year-old Nicholson carpenter was released late Tuesday night on \$5000 bond to await action of the Pearl River county grand jury in connection with the shooting of Picayune barber Clyde McClure.

The action was taken at a preliminary hearing in the beat four court of Justice of the Peace Robert A. Pearson sr. Alford was represented by J. E. Stockstill and the state was represented by County Attorney David Smith of Poplarville.

McClure who would have been 55 on March 18 died of gunshot wounds about 9 a. m. in front of the Picayune bus station in downtown Picayune on U. S. Highway 11. He died within 40 feet of his barbering parlor.

Alford said he shot McClure because he "was in fear of bodily threat or injury" in testimony at the hearing. "He had hold of me when I shot him."

McClure was shot three times at close range with a U. S. Army Colt .45 automatic pistol the first sing hitting his chest and exiting through his back. The first shot caused the victim to spin and two more bullets struck his shoulder and his neck.

Luther Lee tourist home owner was attempting to calm the two men at the time of the shooting and accompanied Alford to the Canal st. intersection. Alford was on the way to surrender to Deputy Sheriff W. E. Guy when Picayune Police Captain Weston Lott reached him at the northwest corner.

Deputy Guy reported being called to Alford's home in Nicholson Sunday morning where McClure was allegedly digging a ditch on Alford property. Charges were placed against both men McClure for disturbing the peace and trespassing Alford for disturbing the peace.

This incident was to have been heard at 10 a. m. Tuesday in the court of Justice of the Peace W. B. Johnston. Alford told the Picayune ITEM he was on the way to court when McClure accosted him.

In further testimony Alford avowed McClure "came down to my daughter's (Mrs. Bernadine Schackles) and started digging a ditch on my property." "I told him I didn't want any ditch and I didn't want it dug any deeper."

He contended McClure "paraded up and down the highway" and threatened "The first time you go to the bus station I'm going to kill you."

Under cross examination by Smith Alford contended he never threatened or cursed McClure. He

and one remained. Police recovered one smashed slug.

FUNERAL SERVICE

Funeral services for McClure were held at 2 p. m. Wednesday from the chapel of McDonald funeral home with Rev. Rudolph Allen officiating. Pallbearers were Willie Downes, Bryant Dill, Tate Campbell, Ed Sones, Junior Sones, and J. W. Sones. Funeral arrangements were by McDonald funeral home of Picayune.

McClure was born March 18, 1906 at Carriere. He was a member of the Corinth Baptist church and had served in the U. S. Merchant Marine.

He is survived by his mother, Mrs. Missouri Lee McClure, and a sister, Mrs. Julius Ellerman, both of Carriere.