



## **Harrison Lee**

**Birmingham, Alabama, 1946**

### **Background**

On Monday, August 5, 1946, Officers F.R. Brockman and J.A. Hale shot and killed Harrison Lee outside Lee's barbershop in Birmingham, Alabama. Lee was thirty-nine years old and ran his own barbershop at 212 North 26th Street.

Around 8:15 PM on the night of August 5, the officers were surveying the area around North 26th Street in their patrol car. Birmingham City Detectives who investigated the case reported that Hale and Brockman were stopped by Robert Green, an African American man who lived down the street from Lee's barbershop. Green told the officers that he had gotten into a fight with Lee at the barbershop, and that Lee had shot him in the leg. Hale entered the barbershop, and Lee reportedly told him that the barber had left the shop and gone down the street. Brockman went to get Green to identify Lee.

According to the detectives, Brockman heard gunshots, and Hale yelled that Lee had a gun and had shot him. Lee was reportedly armed with a German P-38 automatic revolver. Brockman and Hale shot back at Lee, and according to *The Birmingham News*, "more than a dozen shots were exchanged." The officers shot Lee in the abdomen and chest, and he fell.

Lee was taken to Hillman Hospital and pronounced dead at 9:05 PM. Green was also taken to Hillman Hospital, where he was treated for a flesh wound to the leg. Hale was taken to the West End Baptist Hospital, where he was treated for a compound fracture of his left arm and a flesh wound on his left leg.

### **Legal Status**

The Jefferson County Coroner's office deemed Harrison Lee's death a "justifiable homicide." Coroner Joe Hilderbrand investigated the incident along with detectives Jamie Moore and CF Batchelder. Moore later became the longest-serving Police Chief in Birmingham's history, serving from 1956 to 1972.