



**Theris Rudolph Wood**  
**Birmingham, Alabama, 1948**

**Background**

On Friday, December 10, 1948, Birmingham police officers J.A. Hale, H.W. Brewer, and J.M. Lawson shot and killed Theris Rudolph Wood. Wood was nineteen years old and lived with his mother and stepfather.

Wood was allegedly spotted at the window of 510 North 87th Street, the home of Lt. Colonel Orville Lysaught. Lt. Colonel Lysaught and his wife were out for the night, and their 15-year-old daughter Beverly was babysitting her four-year-old brother. According to newspaper reports, at 11 PM, she heard a noise at her bedroom window and saw Wood. She walked away from the window, pretending not to have seen anything, and called the police. A patrol car arrived and Brewer, Hale, and Lawson got out. Wood reportedly fled when he saw the officers. The officers claimed they ordered him to halt, and that when he kept running, all three officers fired at him. A bullet struck Wood in the back of the head, killing him. He was pronounced dead at 11:20 PM.

Theris Rudolph Wood was the second of three victims of police homicide in Birmingham in December 1948.

**Legal Status**

The Jefferson County Coroner's office deemed Theris Rudolph Wood's death a "justifiable homicide." It could not be determined which officer fired the fatal shot.