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Who Murdered Robert Robertson?

by Michael Moore

The voice over the CB crackled, "We're gonna shoot us some black bucks."

A short while later, Robert Spencer Robertson, a black man from Flint, was dead, a bullet shot between his eyes.

One year later, the murderer is still free and the authorities seem to have little interest or hope in ever apprehending him.

The tragic incident of Robert Robertson's death unfolded last November 14 when Robertson and his brother James, and their friends Fred Kennedy and James Lockett, made their annual trek to Clare County for the dear hunting season. It was their seventh such outing in a wooded area seven miles from Harrison. They had never received anything but friendship and good feelings from the white hunters around them.

On their third day at the campsite, November 17, Lockett decided to catch a nap at about 5:30 in the afternoon. Robert, his brother James, and Fred were sitting around a huge campfire roasting a squirrel. They noticed a red and white Chevy pickup drive wildly past them on the trail. In the truck were three white men.

A few minutes later they heard a series of shots up the trail as if some hunters were target practicing.

"Seems kind of late in the day for shootin'," Robert commented.

"Probably they've had a little too much to drink," replied James.

About 30 minutes later, Robertson decided to cook the rest of the squirrel. He needed a longer stick so he got up from the campfire to look for one.

After walking just a few feet from the blazing fire, a single, precise shot rang out and struck him slightly right to dead center between his eyes. He fell to the ground, probably dead at that instant.

James and Fred were stunned. Their first reaction was that Robert was faking it, a practical joke, they thought.

As they got up from the fire and approached Robert, a volley of shots

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"What the hell do you expect us to do with all of these people coming up here and bringing their guns, their booze, and their bigotry?"

— Clare County Prosecutor Richard Allen