

The schedule of the bus 117 calls for an eight-minute stop at May and Amity at 10:57 every night. Driver Russell Sing Jr. of Hernando, MS is required to call the dispatcher on his two-way radio at 11:05 and let him know he is pulling out. Wednesday night, October 30, the call didn't come.

Police called to the scene by neighbors, found four bullet wounds in the driver's back, one in his right shoulder and one in his right arm.

This afternoon, (Friday, November 1) all Memphis Transit Authority buses will be stopped when the body of Mr. Sing leaves Memphis Funeral Home. All drivers will stand by their buses for a few moments. The lights will be burning on the buses all day in memory of Mr. Sing.

This is only one side of the story. Mr. Sing was robbed and brutally slain by a person who took \$50 from his change bag, according to an MTA audit. His acquaintances mourn the loss of a friend; his family mourns the loss of much more.

The other side is more complex. It involves the repercussions of a senseless murder. It began when shooting was reported.

Four suspects were picked up yesterday as 20 officers combed the area around the intersection of May and Amity. Chief of Detectives W.P. Huston said his men are working around the clock on the case making a "house to house and inch by inch" search for any type of physical evidence. He said he would increase the number of investigators if needed.

Residents of the area told officers they heard shots and saw a man run from the bus south on Maywood toward Chelsea. He was described as 5 feet 6 inches tall and weighing 160 pounds. He wore a light colored beret on the right side of his head, a white coat, shirt and pants.

A chrome plated pistol which was identified as belonging to Mr. Sing was found next to his body. Police said the gun had not been fired.

Meanwhile, MTA put into effect a new policy restricting drivers from carrying money to make change. The new system was begun at noon. In the past, each driver had been issued \$75 to make change. Passengers who do not have correct change are now given a coupon which can be redeemed at MTA offices.

The city's bus drivers, some obviously shaken, reported to work talking about necessary safety measures. "I heard some talking about quitting today when I came in," said Robert L. Waldron of Southaven, MS. I knew Mr. Sing pretty well. He lived near me down in Mississippi."

Mr. Waldron said he thinks the no-change policy will "probably make conditions safer, but if this town doesn't straighten up, then we're still going to have some trouble on the buses."

This was the 5th unsolved murder this year. Mr. Sing's death makes a total of 68 murders in Memphis this year as compared with 74 for the entire year of 1967.

Mike Tate, president of Memphis Transit Operating Company said the no change policy had been considered for some time, but the robbery/murder broke the camel's back.

"I've been here for 30 years and we've never had a killing before" said Mr. Tate. "I intend to do everything in my power to see that it never happens again,"

During the afternoon, MTA was having trouble supplying drivers with the new coupons. They were being delivered to drivers as quickly as they arrived from the printers, but some drivers left without them. Drivers were told to let people ride free if they didn't have change and there were no coupons aboard.

Residents of the neighborhood in which the bus driver was killed sat on their porches and talked of the shock of being awakened by the sound of a rapid firing pistol.

"We've lived here since 1934 and there hasn't been anything like this on this block," said Mrs. Andrew Bailey of 2026 Amity. "People around here go to bed early. I guess we heard two of the shots. I thought it was that bus back firing or something. That bus comes by about every hour."

"When we looked out we saw the law's cars parked all the way up and down the street. A neighbor told me what happened. It's a shame. I've been watching those buses go by for years and never rode one. I kept thinking one day I'd just get on it and ride to the end of the line. Don't guess I will now. "

There were no passengers on the bus when Mr. Sing was shot. "You don't hardly ever see anybody on that bus out there at night" said Mrs. Jim Williams of 2011 Amity, "A lot of people ride it during the day, but it's empty when it gets here at night."

Russell Sing was used to this. He'd been driving Bus 117 since Sept. 1. He'd been driving buses for 16 years. He left his new home on Belmont Rd. near Hernando, MS at 2:15 p.m. Wednesday and reported for work at 2:52.

His bus is one of the crosstown shuttle lines. It operates from a point south of the Fairgrounds and travels East Parkway to Hollywood north of Chelsea. He turns around in the residential section that includes May and Amity.

At 10:57 he stopped at May and Amity. His schedule required 8 minutes at this point. At 11:05 he was to call the dispatcher on his two-way radio and let him know he was pulling out.

After the 11:05 call to the dispatcher, there would be one more trip around, the eighth for the day, and then he would drive the 28.4 miles home to the house he and his wife built two years ago.

"He bought 10 acres of land down there some years ago," said the slain man's father, Russell Sing. "Two years ago he built a brick home worth about \$25,000 - with three bedrooms. He and his wife had done it. In five years he could have retired and enjoyed life."

Mr. Sing would have been 40 on November 18. Born in Hernando, he was graduated from Eudora, MS High School in 1948. His four brothers and three sisters gathered in the front yard of Mrs. Sing's father-in-law, John W. Jones of 4776 Verne. They watched the children trick or treating up the street.

"He loved his work but was getting scared," said Mr. Sing's father. "Before and during the riots he told me he was afraid of the run. I said "Why don't you quit?" and he said "Daddy, I can retire in five years."

"He never would talk about the chances of being shot, but he was afraid of a knife or an ice pick."

"They (the drivers) were all afraid," said one of the brothers.

Asked if the gun found near to the body belonged to Mr. Sing, a sister, Mrs. Sonia Carolyn Goode, said "I don't think we should answer that. Nobody knows." Other members of the family agreed.

It was the only job Mr. Sing ever had, his father said. When he came out of high school he played baseball for a Paducah, KY team and later with a Clarksdale, MS team. He went in the Army in 1950 and served in Germany. When he was discharged in 1952, he went to work for the MTA.

"It's tough to raise a boy and then have him taken away like this. He was a wonderful boy, a religious boy." He was a member of Hernando Baptist Church.

Mr. Sing leaves his wife, Mrs. Nina Joyce Sing; a daughter, Theresa Renee Sing, 13; four brothers, Eddie Ray Sing of Grenada, MS, and Eugene Sing, Danny Joe Sing, and Dennis Mitchell Sing, all of Hernando; three sisters, Mrs. Peggy Scruggs of Hernando, Mrs. Goode of Huntsville, AL and Mrs. Genice Verble of 3027 Camden, and his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Russell Sing of Hernando.

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