Memorandum

Red Mesa · May 18, 1879 · File No. 17

The order is not to be changed.

These papers concern the death of Owen Rusk, lately of no fixed residence, on the afternoon of May 17 on the main street of Red Mesa. Rusk was struck down outside the establishment of Amos Bell and died there before he could be carried inside. All accounts named Elias Voss as the gunman: twenty-four years of age, residing with his father west of town.

Voss was not available for questioning. His father stated that he had not seen him since the incident. The revolver described by several of those questioned could not be secured.

I have placed the statements concerning Voss first, followed by the findings on the deceased and, last, the separate accounts of the incident in the street. This arrangement does not reflect the order in which the witnesses were questioned. It is intended to prevent one statement from being read as an answer to another. Each witness was heard alone. None was shown the wording of an earlier statement. I cannot give assurance that they had not spoken to one another before being questioned. They live here.

The questions were put and abridged by me. Repetitions have been struck out where they arose solely from the same question being asked again. Where a witness corrected an earlier statement, the correction is noted. I have left imprecise expressions as they stand. The word “about” is not permission to supply a number.

Nothing in the dead man’s clothing or equipment indicated the involvement of another person. A search for a second firing position yielded no result. This, too, is a finding concerning the search, not concerning what may have occurred.

sommer-yard.com | Explore the complete book

I was myself on the opposite side of the street during the incident. My account is therefore filed with the witness statements, not with the findings. When first writing it down, I considered this distinction unnecessary. I changed its placement after the second round of questioning.

The office clock had stopped that day. I had neglected to wind it. No inference is to be drawn from this circumstance.

Daniel Mercer, Deputy

sommer-yard.com | Explore the complete book