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Ruby McCollum film may be shot in Suwannee

Stephenie Livingston
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A 1950s Live Oak murder and the scandal that ensued is the subject of a feature film to be shot next spring, according to producers.

"The Ruby McCollum Story" will recount the Aug. 3, 1952 shooting death of Dr. C. Leroy Adams, a local physician who had just been elected to the Florida Senate.

Adams was shot to death in his office by Ruby McCollum, an African-American woman rumored to be his lover. According to the book on which the film is to be based, "Ruby McCollum: Woman in Suwannee County Jail," by William Bradford Huie, Adams was also in league with Adams' husband, Sam, in running a local gambling operation.

The film will largely be shot in Newberry and downtown Gainesville.

However, after speaking with two Live Oak business leaders Monday, the film's co-producer said that may change.

"We certainly would like to explore our options about the possibility of filming at least part of the film in Suwannee County," Jude Hagin of Gainesville-based Springtree Studios told the Democrat by email Tuesday.

Ruby McCollum was sentenced to death in an electric chair by an all-white jury, but she was later judged criminally insane and confined until her later years to an institution.

Hagin said producers and director Bill Duke (director of "Sister Act 2: Back in Habit" and star of "Predator") scoured surrounding areas for nearly a week in search of buildings and locations authentic to the period.

"It's important that you get that 40s and 50s look," Hagin said.

The Springtree Studios film, budgeted at \$12 million, will star Burt Reynolds and Matt Lanter ("Vampires Suck" and "Sorority Row").

Hagin would not hint at who else will be appearing in the film, except to say "it's going to be a ensemble cause of talented actors."

The filmmakers will simultaneously be shooting a documentary, featuring interviews with descendants of those involved in the events depicted.

"It's an incredible story," Hagin said.