

Box 1024
Albany, Ga.

June 22, 1963

Dear Ann,

As I promised, I am writing to advise you of the events that have taken place since I arrived in Albany. Things are happening very quickly here and I am very pressed for time, but will try to write as often as I can to fill you in on the work here. I would appreciate it if you would share this letter with Doug Hill and also send it on to Messers. Goodman and Crockett in Detroit:

We left Monday morning and arrived in Dallas on Wednesday in the afternoon, having slept out for two nights. Stayed with a friend in Dallas while Blicher visited relatives. Saturday morning we started driving across the rest of Texas, through Louisiana and into Mississippi, arriving in Jackson around 7:00 p.m. We tried to look up Mr Young but his number is unlisted. I spoke to an attorney named Hall who works with him but as there had been 35 arrests Friday and 27 more on Saturday he was much too busy to see us. I thought it might be a good idea to drive out to Tougaloo College which is just outside of Jackson and a really amazing school when you consider where it is located, as it has an integrated faculty and student body. We drove through the gates and parked, and I approached a group of girls and asked where the men's dorm was, hoping that we could get put up for the night. They pointed it out to us and on the way over we were stopped and asked extensive questions as to who we were. We explained ourselves and I produced my correspondence from C. B. King and some of the tension eased. The man who stopped us was Mr. Henry Briggs who is Director of Public Relations there. He told us that on many occasions the buildings were fired upon by the locals and that we had come damn close to getting shot, as two white boys driving up onto campus in the evening were highly suspect. But he was very nice, and arranged for us to stay in his room as the campus was filled with people who were in Jackson for Medgar Evers funeral. In his room was the biggest shotgun I have ever seen and the dresser was covered with shells. He explained that as the campus was very tense at this point it wouldn't be a good idea for us to walk around unless he came along, and then he took us to the lounge and introduced us to a lot of students. It was a really inspiring experience to talk to these kids who are risking their lives every day to make this nation a decent place to live. I spoke at great length with Memphis Norman (a young Negro student whose picture was front page in all the press when an ex-cop beat him up for having the "audacity" to sit at the Woolworth lunch counter). We also met Rev. Edwin King, a white minister who is chaplain and Dean of Students here. He, along with Prof. Salter had been arrested that day and on numerous other occasions, and the local press is practically advocating that violence be used against them as the leaders. He told how one of the kids was bashed in the head with a club, opening a hole the size of a cup in the back of his head, and how he lay there with flies crawling over his matted hair, and when Rev King attempted to

help him the cops wouldn't let him. This goes on, unreported in the papers, day after day. The next day we drove to Montgomery and found Mr. Conley. I slept in his office and caught the bus to Albany the next day arriving around 7 pm Monday. I had built up a picture of C. B. King in my mind as a very stuffy, conservative character, both from the formality of his letter and speaking with him on the phone. However, now I can see that this formality in his manner is very necessary in his position, but not at all an accurate reflection of his personality. He is a very warm and friendly man, and when we are alone he is very unreserved.

There is a very funny story about how he chose me for the position. When the Guild first wrote him they sent a list of names and resumes. He thought it might be safer to have a Negro clerking with him so went down the list until he found what he thought was probably a Negro name, and after reading my resume and discovering that I had been a bellhop, bussed dishes, and served in the merchant marines as a messman he was convinced, so getting my ~~pass~~ photograph was quite a surprise. But he feels that this isn't any real problem. The family where I am staying own a funeral parlor in Americus (about 60 miles away) and also have a residence there, so I have the house pretty much to myself most of the time.

First night in town I was taken to the Shiloh Baptist Church where a big meeting of the Albany Movement was underway. Parked out in front was Chief Laurie Pritchett (whom I was formally introduced to today). The meeting was led by Slater King (CB's brother) and Charles Sherrod (head of the SNCC people here). Sherrod made a great speech and introduced about 27 kids who are doing voter registration work in Southwest Georgia. Then CB King got up and made a speech on the legal aspect of the Movement and introduced me. I was called up to the platform to say a few words. This I found virtually impossible as the speeches made here have a great emotional appeal and a religiousness to them and at best I managed to stumble through a few sentences about how happy I was to be here. However, ~~XXXXXX~~ Mr King has promised to warn me prior to the next occasion when I am to be expected to make any remarks to an audience. One thing that King said in his speech that night, and it is a favorite expression of his, is, "they just don't know what time its getting to be" which well sums up the response of America to what is happening in the South today. If I have learned one thing in the week that I have been here, it is that this is a tremendously complex thing - I mean that it isn't just the good guys versus the bad guys, but the Movement itself is made up of many diverse and conflicting elements ranging from the reactionary ministers (not all of them) to the teen-age street gangs who are on the verge of giving up non-violence as a technique to achieve their ends.

At this time (Saturday night) over 120 people have been jailed since I got to town. The police seem to be concentrating their efforts on breaking the leadership. 20 of the 27 SNCC kids are in jail. Some of the arrests have been so ludicrous as to be beyond belief. For example Ralph Allen and two others were jailed for distributing handbills announcing a mass meeting at church, under a Statute which prohibits the distribution of advertising matter. Among the SNCC workers in jail is Joni Rabinowitz, charged with vagrancy and loitering which consisted of walking down the street in a Negro neighborhood. Three kids were arrested when they got out of a car and crossed the street

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on their way into the church for a meeting. They are all on hunger strikes and refuse bail. I have never met a more amazing, determined group of kids in my life. I got into the jail today and met them all for the first time. At first this was a problem as when I went to the jail with King the other day the desk officer wouldn't let me in: "Wait in the hall, boy". "Boy" is an expression generally reserved for Negroes in the South up until they reach old age when they are ~~via~~ called "uncle", so at least I am receiving equal treatment. However, today we went in to see Chief Pritchett who is very concerned about his press image and he very graciously allowed me to get into the cell area to interview clients. The conditions in his jail are inhuman. There were 14 males in a 4 man cell, they had been there for 2 days and the trial won't come up for another 5 days - it is impossible to sleep. Joni was in a cell with 6 other girls (also built for 4 people to be uncomfortable in). I also met Claude Sitton of the Times there, who had cut short his vacation because of the mounting arrests. When it didn't seem that I would be able to get into the cells I wrote Dean Newman asking if he could use his influence to get this courtesy extended to me, but it is no longer necessary, so I would appreciate it if you would phone him at the law school and explain that Chief Pritchett had now allowed this.

It is hard to form any clear picture of C.B. King as he is a very complex person. I think he is one of the finest people I have ever had the pleasure of associating with. He is certainly someone with great personal integrity. It is obvious that he could be making a lot of money here as a "Negro lawyer" if he weren't so dedicated to the Movement, but his role of leadership deprives him of many things. As for the work I am doing, besides going to the jail to interview arrestees (which is a very long process because of the amount of people jailed) I have just finished a memo on getting certiorari from Records court to Superior Ct. All of these vagrancy, disorderly conduct, etc. cases are tried at Records level and of course they loose there. He has a tremendous backlog of cases from last year on which ~~was~~ cert was granted, but doesn't have the time to try them at the Superior Ct level. He had hoped that we could accomplish this during the summer but with the new rash of arrests it doesn't seem likely. On Tuesday we are going to Federal Court in Montgomery for the Anderson v City of Albany series (injunctive proceedings mentioned in the docket) I will try and get the information you went off to you the first free moment I get, but please believe me, I am working myself to death here. We start at 8 am, go until 8 pm, and after supper, mass meetings into the night. He also has a case of police brutality and another where they beat a Negro to death in a nearby county. Also suits to desegregate voting places, parks and pools, etc.

The day that I arrived in Albany a 17 yr old Negro girl died. She had been kidnapped by a white man and repeatedly raped. This took place in a farming area outside of Albany, in Sumpter Co. As yet nothing has been in the papers as the sheriff told the mother of the girl that she is a "damn liar" and no arrests have been made. Things are very tense here because of this and a never ending series of indignancies that these people are made to suffer. Thursday 22 Negroes were arreste

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killed today, and the experience has sobered me considerably. After we walked out of the cell and were waiting to see two other juveniles the jailer, who is an enormous hulk of a man, walked up to me and said: "You're lower than a god damn dog". I didn't understand what he had said, and said "Excuse me?" He said: "Boy, you're lower than a god damn dog associating with C. B. here". At this point I asked him "is that statement for the record?". He grew completely incensed and said "Come outside and I'll tear your ass loose" (and he sure could have done it). Like a big fool I suggested to him that "violence seems a poor solution to any problem" and walked away. We spoke to the two other juveniles and C.B. started walking down the stair, I walked behind him, and the jailer followed me, ~~gr~~ glowering. I suddenly realized that he could easily push me down the concrete steps, so I looked back over my shoulder. At the bottom of the steps he said to King: "make sure this god damn white boy understands what I said". Then he said to me "I'm damn sure to see you again"; "next time I see you I'll kill you". I replied that "I certainly hoped that I would have the pleasure of seeing him again" at which point C.B., who was standing next to me, elbowed me in the ribs. When we got outside King told me that it was in Mitchell Co, outside Cavilla jail that Slater's wife was kicked and beaten causing her to have a miscarriage, and that this jailer was one of the very worst. It became very obvious to me that I had better learn to keep my mouth shut. It would seem that the very presence of a white "traitor" with a Negro is enough to set these imbecills into a terrible rage and only extreme luck kept him from beating me up. Jo Ann, by the way, has been on a hunger strike for four days now, and at one point the Albany police, Judge 43, threatened to kill her. Chief Pritchett who prides himself on his non-violent approach to this problem, personally yanked her around the jail by her ~~shix~~ hair.

Monday June 24: In the morning we again went out the Lee Co jail in Leesburg, Ga. We had been out in the rain Sunday, and no guard was there to let us in. 6 white males were out there, and just before we left Blechner and Stech were brought in from the City jail. The guys at Lee are in remarkably good spirits considering that they have been fasting for 5 days and went off water today. The sheriff out there seems a little more human than the jailer at Mitchell Co tho C.B. told me that he had been unsuccessfully prosecuted by the Justice Dept for entering a church with his gun drawn and intimidating people at a voter registration meeting there. A real old guy, maybe the sheriff's father, came in and remarked about us all in general: "I see they sent the god damn scum of New York down here". Later we went back to the Albany city jail and visited the girls a while. Miriam is having alot of trouble facing her commitment, and Joni is ~~gurg~~ gurg weaker and having alot of trouble controlling the ~~xxx~~ others. Luckilly, in Lee Ralph Allen keeps everyone going strong. The father of Felicia Oldfather, who is a law professor at the Univ of Kansas, hired a local white attorney to defend her - this attorney is one of the arch-segregationists in Albany and C.B. is really pissed off. It seems that the Negro kids were taken from the city jail and put into Dougherty Co jail. C.B. thought it better that I didn't go in there so that's where the sheriff split his head open and he didn't want to risk further violence. While in the City jail little Miriam saw my sweatsox and asked so plaintively that I left the jail without them. I must have presented a rather ludicrous sight to the Chief, walking out of jail in a suit, shoes, but no sox. Tonight there was a very successful mass meeting at Shiloh. Dr. C. T. Vivien of Nashville, Tenn