

May 25, 1962

Committee of Inquiry
38 Park Row, New York 38, New York
Cortlandt 7-6270

Att: Marvin Rich

James Peck (white) 47, of New York City. Editor of CORE bulletin, the CORElator; author of Freedom Ride.

On May 13, Mother's Day, 1961, our bus arrived at Anniston, Alabama. When we got out we heard ambulances and learned of the burning of the previous bus. Other passengers left our bus. We got back on; 8 whites climbed aboard. From the bus I saw no police. The driver announced he would not drive on until the 4 Negroes of our party went to the back of the bus. They refused. The whites then went to work on the 4 Negroes. Walter Bergman, also white, and I, went forward to talk to the attackers. They slugged Walter Bergman on the head and dragged him to the back of the bus; I was similarly slugged and dragged. The Negroes were dragged to the rear also. We maintained non-violence. I saw no police near the bus. The bus then left for Birmingham.

Walter Bergman's injuries have since resulted in a stroke; still very incapacitated, he is the most serious Freedom Ride casualty. At the Birmingham station a mob awaited us, their pipes then wrapped in paper. No police were in sight. In an alley away from spectators, I was beaten unconscious. Police Chief Bull Connor of Birmingham explained later that we had no protection because his men were off for Mother's Day.