

NESHOBA COUNTY, MISS. June 21, 1964 from Jackson (Weil) and Meridian (Hermeij)

24, NYC, CORE staff Queens Co. 20 CORE staff, 21

Mickey Schwerner driving w Andy Goodman (NYC) & Jas. Cheney/(Negro, Meridian)
Left Meridian this am 9-10 am heading for Philadelphia in Neshoba Co to
investigate church burning. Expected back 4:00. Haven't been heard from
since. /(of June 16 at Mt Zion Meth Ch, 3 beaten)

Called all jails in area, no trace. Called FBI in Phila - i.e. people went
to see the FBI. Agent isn't sure fed violation so w on't investigate.
Jackson FBI won't do anything till morning after they call J D.

Schweib, FBI agent. 482-0991 Phila. Holiday II Inn Meridian. 483-5381

Meridian 482-6103 485-9286 Louise Hermeij: (Communications volunteer)

" Left after 900 am. Chas, Young de Meridian to Phila to see FBI, 2 others.
Went up to look around. Didn't go into city but checked around. Got in
touch with JD lawyer in and around Meridian: Schweib."

two cars circling; around Meridian office, tonight, as getting dark.

#51B 798 56 ford, two white men, 2 tone blue.

#518 718 54 ford, think 6 men.

told Meridian police, gave description of cars, about missing persons. Also
going by, i.e. police.

noticed another car black buick, 6 white men, shouted out at office.

[Seems to be interference with both Jackson COFO phones. Have been
unable to direct dial both numbers beginning about 6 pm. Robt. Weil
reported state WATS line cut off for awhile this afternoon.]

Goodman file: father Robt W Goodman, 161 W 86 NYC EN 2-7265 office
home: EN 2-7265. listed Ralph Engelman for bail: 62-36 86th St.
Elmhurst, N.Y. Monsonis interviewed him. Keating,
Javits, Fitts Ryan.

Mickey's car license number: H25503 Miss Hinds Co.
blue station wagon 63

I called parents 1:40 Atl time; called Oxford, w message for Rita.
Sitton in Jackson office, may file story with NYTimes. Parents want to be
called immediately as soon as any word, under any circumstances. Suggested the
call Fitts Ryan.

about 1:00 am.

Also called John Doar/ (Doar suggested call state highway patrol - Jackson
~~xxxxxxxixixdxoxkxmxkx~~ called.)

James Brown out on \$50 bond. No further word on Andrew Barnes.

June 22, 1964 (from reports on June 21 and followings: Mary King and Ron Carver)
Neshoba County (from Meridian: Louise Hervey and Jackson: Bob Weil and Bill Light)

Mickey Schwerner, 24, NYC, CORE staff; Andy Goodman, 20, Queens College, NYC; and James Chaney, 21, CORE staff, Meridian, Negro left Meridian between 9-10am yesterday going to Philadelphia to investigate the burning of Mt. Zion Methodist Church in Philadelphia and the beating of three ~~black~~ people. They were expected back at 4pm but have not been heard from since. All jails in the area were called but there was no trace of the three. Called ~~KRECKK~~ Schwelp, in Philadelphia (482-0991). He is an attorney in the civil rights division of the Justice Department. He is not sure if it is a federal violation, and therefore he won't investigate. Jackson FBI won't do anything until this morning after they call the Justice Department. Schwelp was staying in Meridian last night in the Holiday II Inn ~~in~~ (483-5381) (Louise Hervey-482-6103; 485-9286)

Last night two cars were circling around the Meridian office as it was getting dark.

#51B798 '56 Ford, 2 white men - 2-tone blue car

#518718 '54 Ford 6 men

Meridian police were called by the two summer volunteers who were in the office. They gave police the description of the two cars and told about the missing three staffers. They also noticed another car, a black Buick with 6 white men who shouted out as they went by office.

There seems to have been interference with both Jackson CCFO phones. Have been ~~black~~ ~~black~~ unable to direct dial both numbers beginning about 6pm. Robert Weil reported that the state WATS line was out off for a while ~~black~~ Sunday afternoon.

More information concerning the three that disappeared:

Andy Goodman: father-Robert W. Goodman--161 W. 86, New York City; home:EN2-7265
offices:JU6-1760

listed for bail: Ralph Engelman: 62-36 86th Street, Elmhurst, N.Y.
interviewed by Monson; congressman: Keating, Javits, Fitts Ryan

Mickey Schwerner's car license: H25503- Mississippi Hinds County; blue '63 Ford fairlane
station wagon am

Mary called Goodman's parents at about 1:40/At. time. called Oxford with message for Rita. Sittan in Jackson office, may file story with NYT. Parents want to be called immediately as soon as any word, under any circumstances. Suggested that they call Fitts Ryan. ~~black~~ Mary also called John Dear about 1am. Dear suggested that we call the state highway patrol. Jackson called them.

Ron:
2:30am he called to Meridian. Rita had called into Meridian. At her suggestion Rev. Porter had been contacted (local minister), and was on his way over to the office for moral support. Two men had gotten out of a circling Texas car. The police were notified. Bill White was called in Jackson who suggested that Marvin Rich, CORE, NYC be called, and Dave Dennis in Shreveport. (318-868-5230) ~~black~~ They attempted to call a Rev. Russell in Philadelphia from Oxford, but could not reach him (possibly he was moved out of the area after the Methodist conference.) They are not certain of Russell's sympathies.

~~black~~
3:45am: Ron called the Goodman's in NYC. They had called a man in DC who will contact the attorney general or his assistant (Kennedy may still be in Mass.) They were unable to get Fitts Ryan and will call Keating and Javits in the morning. Mrs. Goodman suggested that hospitals be checked and this was done. Schwelp was contacted again at 5:00am and said he was in contact with DC. State highway patrol was also contacted again. They had been told that the three were in a VW and that info. was corrected.

June 22, 1964 cont'd

The reaction of the state highway patrol was one of irritation. Their job is to patrol the highways, they said, and they don't know anything about the three. One of the Jackson phones (phone) had been out most of the night because of operator harrassment, tapes of Citizen's Council were being played over the phone (i.e. ~~phone~~ phone would ring and they'd hear the tape). This has cleared up however.

6am: Jackson office says that the story will break in NYC this morning (this was told them by Claude Sitton). The story will probably not be in NYT, but will be in radio, TV and other papers (note, story was carried on CBS world news roundup). In Oxford, Rita called Mickey's parents. Louise Herney in Meridian will have Rev. Porter talk with Mrs. Cheney. Jackson will call the state highway patrol for the third time.

Highway patrol said that they had called the Meridian office but they didn't want to call Philadelphia because they didn't want to wake anyone up.

UPI and CBS called Jackson for information.

Ron called John Dear at his home at about 6:30am. ~~John~~ Dear had the FBI call the state highway patrol during the evening.

7:15am: There is a possibility that someone will be sent from Meridian to Philadelphia. Jackson will call all of the police stations for the third time.

~~7:15am~~

7:55am- report from the Jackson office that the three were picked up late yesterday afternoon for speeding in Neshoba County and fined \$20. They were brought to the county jail in Philadelphia. After paying the fine they were released, leaving (presumably) for Meridian. This information was gotten from the jailer's wife though the jailer had earlier said he knew nothing about the three. jail phones: 656-~~3765~~ 3765

Ron then called John Dear with the information and he said "I have invested the FBI with the power to look into this." He said he would pass the new information on ~~to~~ to the Miss. FBI and that we should keep him informed of new developments.

W. Goodman and Rita have been informed of new information.

Bill Light called ~~the~~ sheriff Rainey in Philadelphia this morning ~~at 8:30am~~. His deputy sheriff saw the ~~three~~ three looking through the wreckage of the burnt church. They were ~~the~~ picked up for speeding when they got back into their car.

Bill Light checked with the highway patrol this morning and was told that they knew about the arrests, but assumed that the three were still in jail. Light asked them to make immediate investigation but they saw no need for such. He also spoke with FBI agent ~~Ed~~ Helgerson who said he'd had no word from John Dear, and that he had no authority to ask the state highway patrol to act, and that he gets his orders from New Orleans.

~~Mr.~~ Mr. Goodman flew to Washington this morning and spoke with Katzenbach and Dear of the J.D. concerning the case.

8:30 noon: UPI has carried a report that ~~the~~ officials in Philadelphia say they released the three last night around 10pm. Two white people from Neshoba county reported to Rev. Ed King that the three had been beaten and were still in jail at ~~8~~ 8 ypm.

Before noon ~~to~~ to Neshoba County, Newton County, Lauderdale County Philadelphia City, Meridian city ~~the~~ jails have been checked and all said that they haven't kept anyone over night.

June 22, 1964

Schwerner, Goodman and Cheney, con'td

At about 1:45pm and 2:45 pm I attempted to reach John Doar and let extensive messages concerning the inactivity of local officials. The second call I told his secretary that the COFO office was planning to have a press conference at 3pm (their time) and that they would discuss fully this inaction unless they received definite statement the the ~~the~~ FBI and JD were working on the case. I also attempted to reach Burke Marshall and left a similar message.

At ~~3:05pm~~ 3:05pm Moses had a call from Meridian and was told that ~~the~~ a highway patrolman had told them that the sheriff had released the three last night and that he had an unofficial report that they had headed south on ~~the~~ highway 19 (toward Meridian) and that there is a generalized alert out for them from the highway patrol and an FBI alert.

At 5:20pm our time John Doar called here and said that he had information that the guys had been in jail from 4-10pm last night and then had been released. He said that he had been informed that the state highway patrol had an all points alert out for the three and that the Sheriff of Neshoba county and the adjoining counties were looking for them. He said that the FBI had been instructed earlier to interview the three when they found them. He did not make a specific statement about whether the FBI was looking or investigating.

Between 3:15 and 4:15pm a press conference was held in the COFO office announcing the official opening of the program. A chronology of attempts at contacting JD and FBI was handed out and the inaction of both groups noted. It was mentioned that ~~the~~ a mailing would be sent out this evening explaining the situation to the parents of summer people and asking them to pressure the federal government. It was stated that we do not understand how people ~~could~~ could be lost for over 24 hours and more than 50 calls made concerning their whereabouts.

Several press people went to the jail in Philadelphia (Sitton, Fleming, etc.) and were allowed to look through the jail. They said there was no trace of them, and they believed that they had been released as stated previously.

At 4:55pm Bill Light called the highway patrol in Jackson and found the patrolman very hostile. The patrolman said that the highway patrol would not go into a case unless called in by the sheriff ~~or~~ or there was evidence of foul play, they wouldn't ~~make~~ make a search before 72 hours. They said they were about to issue a missing persons alert, however because of the pressure from press, etc. (note, ~~at~~ about 3/4 hr. earlier John Doar told me that they had already issued such an alert). Light also asked the Meridian FBI man whether he had started an investigation and he said no, and that he had received no orders to do so from the JD.

Sam (about): Spoke with Rita Schwerner. She spoke with James Farmer earlier in the day who said he'd ~~talked~~ talked with Keating and attempted to speak with ~~the~~ Pres. Johnson. Rita also spoke with Keating at 4pm. Rita is planning on calling John Doar and telling him that unless she gets definite information about specific JD action or other specific attempts to investigate she will leave Oxford ~~tonite~~ tonite and head first to Meridian and then to Neshoba County tomorrow. She will also call several prominent people and ask ~~the~~ them to accompany her or at least give their supports: Mike Harrington, Harold Stassen, Alan Cranston (defeated by Salinger in Cal.), Charles Porter, Oregon; William Fitts Ryan, NYC; William Myer, Frank Kowalski, and Mark DeWolfe Howe, Harvard U. Law School.

June 22, 1964 cont'd

Schwerner, et.al., cont'd

8:00
*
during the morning Rev. Ed King, Tougaloo recieved calls from white friends in Philadelphia who told him that they had reason to believe that the guys had been beaten while in jail last night though not beaten badly. They also said that they thought they were still in jail after 10pm when the sheriff says he released them and they might have been there today as well. The investigation by Sitton, etc. suggests that they were not still in jail by afternoon. These sources also mentioned to King that Sheriff Rainey, of Philadelphia was a member of the Klan there.

Selma, Alabama: Benny Tucker: 10pm

they are holding a mass meeting at the First Baptist - about 350 people attending. Mrs. Dungee, Montgomery is slated to speak. A little before 10 a group of about five men in a car with a Montgomery license carried a cross up to Brown Chapel CME which they burnt. Brown Chapel is a few blocks down from First Baptist. Rev. Lewis is pastor of Brown Chapel. At the time of Tucker's call about 15 or 20 cars of whites were surrounding the First Baptist. Police officers and FBI men are there and say that they will send the white ~~kkkkkk~~ away and that the Negroes should stay inside at the meeting. Chief Deputy Crocket took the cross from the Chapel and said he would give it to the FBI for evidence in an investigation. The people will stay in the mass meeting until it's conclusion and see them if the officers have gotten riden of the cars.

Monsonis, Washington: 9:45

The group of summer project volunteers from Southwest, Miss., are in DC now to see Congressmen, etc. and try to exert pressure in the Southwest Area and the state in general. They are now discussing what tack they should take tomorrow and whether they should plan pickets, civil disobedience, etc. in connection with the Philadelphia situation. They figure they will focus on the FBI if they do anything tomorrow. They are trying to contact Moses now to ask his ~~kkkk~~ advice. Monsonis seems to feel that the JD are apprehensive about a bunch of people coming to their office tomorrow to protest.