SEPT. 21

The first bombing comes at 10:30. Most of the Negroes of Co. Comb are in bed—but only some are sleeping. These days most Negro adults in Co. Comb don’t fall asleep until the two hours of the morning. Then the blast. That staggering, anguish-giving sound twelve or ten—you cannot possibly lose the sound that Negroes in Co. Comb have come to know so well. Everyone in Co. Comb hears the sound of the blast—a Co. Comb is a small town and very, very close. At night the sound of the blast can be heard for miles and so tonight the blast is heard for the 15th time—and shortly later for the 14th time. Tonight the sound is more anguish-giving—for the fires grow worse with each bombing. Every Negro in Co. Comb instantly knows what that sound means, and then the moments of terror that follow—whose house, who is dead? It’s not mine. Then what? My neighbor, my friend, my mother, my brother, my son, or maybe COFO again? And one’s stomach aches with pain and the sin seems us into the chest and the hand and comes out of every cell. Is someone dead? The fear and the surmise grow—and anguish becomes unbearable. One is glad whatever clothing they can run out into the streets.

The main increases with each bombing. The 15th takes four at 10:50. The bombers show no restraint—they don’t even wait until the Negro community is all in bed. It doesn’t matter to them that the cafes are still open and there are Negroes in the street. They go anyway—the police are their friends and they certainly need not fear apprehension. This is the last bombing, not to speak of 4 church burnings, and no one arrested, and this is in a town of 15,000 where everyone knows everyone’s business.

So the quickly learns the news—the man’s voice’s hour. It couldn’t be worse. Everyone knows the man’s voice. She owns a popular cafe. She is kind and good to everyone. She more that she is a towering figure of strength. She can’t be intimidated. Three years ago she was one of the first to welcome masses and lend them and the Negro workers her support. Her cafe has always been open—despite the threats. And this summer, again she lends the community. She serves black and white, night after night, and the resources increase. Triste. The police raid her house twice—the first time they plant a bottle of whiskey and it costs her 40
can’t meet the demands of the Citizens League, a newly formed group of Negro business leaders, headed together, working closely to lend aid and on to the COFO effort. They met tried a few to lend buying aid for a community center.

She’s a man­vant to offer the land she has in the back of her house—and the dem­ite the increased hazards that could be brought into her life. Finally, they succumbed in making her a man­close her cafe—she gets the final warning. She would rather close than be forced to stop serving the COFO as he.

... and so it was a man— and it couldn’t be worse. It came at 10:50.

And two little children are hurt. Oh my god, they could have easily been killed—if they had not been in the rear of the house. The house is all out demolished. They weren’t out to frighten tonight. man’s voice is to be filled.

How much can a man being taken and here come the police. They know who did it—they might have blamed it themselves. They have been after a man for a long time. Her white landlord, when he told her she must close down if she didn’t stop serving the COFO cafe, called them and chose to close down:

"Good, now I can go tell the Sheriff and police Chief you no couldn’t be bothered."

Here come the police. The same police who have beaten our fathers and raised our daughters—and put our children in jail. Right now the little boys sit behind bars in the county jail, sentenced to a year for "threatening and obscene phone calls to a white woman." And the same rings in the Negro community night and day with threats not to associate with those COFO workers. God save the police themselves. And no, the police strike into the Negro community. They threaten recalls, carry clubs and shotguns. They will pretend to investigate. Actually they come to intimidate the victims and throw up whatever evidence lies around before the MO can act to it. They come to arrest the people whose houses have been bombed. They’ve done it before. The pattern repeats itself. A house is bombed, the victim is thrown in jail. ... Dillon is in jail—to his house was bombed an August 29th. The white mayor told Dillon’s wife that she had better stop cooperating with COFO or the next time the dynamite will be dropped in the middle of her house. The Sheriff makes a similar threat. Now the police are coming. They will probably arrest a man’s voice. (Actually they arrested her daughter, a teacher in the Freedom School this summer, and the baby sitter.)

How much can a man being taken? And in the midst of the main and anguish, comes the second thud. It’s on the other side of town. The now by mother, father sister, brother. God damn, how much blood do they want? They got the church—Society Hill—the movement church. It’s doors were closed this summer, but it has always been the center of the movement in South CoCo. All the Freedom School kids belong to Society Hill,
It's Bryant's church. The NAACP holds its meetings there. I spoke there this summer. COFO workers were there this past Sunday and the Sunday before. Next door lives Alma Jackson, the mother of eight children, who lived in Anita-county and who, three months ago, was dragged out of her home by 10 armed men and taken to a field where she was beaten and cut up and left for half dead. Her children don't like McComb—they wish they were back home where their friends are. But mother has told them they can't go back. Mother lies in bed awake at night. She lives next door to the church. It was the only place she could find that she could afford. But she knows that one night they are going to bomb her place. Her life is never-ending fear. Is this America?

The Church is demolished. It was a terrible blast. The police are here, certain again to see that all clues are removed and destroyed.

And where is the federal government? But no, the local police must handle the situation; they are the holders of the law. The federal government has no authority. And so the police stride in. The Negroes crowd in the street, brooding, anguishing. To the police this is a mob. So they tell the press: 3,000 Negroes gather in the streets. Yet the entire Negro population of McComb is just over 3,000. This doesn't matter. Cover up the real story. Paint a picture of rioting Negroes. Play on Northern fears. This is what the press will pick up. And so Mike Wallace clinics and objectively explains to morning national T.V. viewers that last night the Negroes of McComb reacted with violence—the rest—to two bombings follows, but is not heard. And so the story of the murder of a community goes untold.

By SNCC field secretary who worked in McComb this summer.

With the departure of most of the summer civil rights volunteers, 12 of the 16 FBI agents in the area have been withdrawn. No action has been taken on a letter from Jesse Harris, SNCC Project Director in McComb, pleading for more federal support. Civil rights workers in Mississippi desperately need the presence and protection of federal agents.

You can help by putting pressure on the federal government.

WRITE TO: your senators

President Johnson

Burke Marshall
Civil Rights Division
Justice Department
Washington, D.C.