

Memorandum to Friends of SNCC and campus contacts -- OCTOBER 28, 1964

From: Betty Garman, Atlanta SNCC office

IMPORTANT.....FOLLOW-UP ON McComb

All 18 people -- voter registration workers and prospective applicants -- were released today -- CHARGES DROPPED.
No reason for the release was given by Pike County officials.

Five of those jailed reported some kind of physical abuse while in jail. Mrs. Aylene Quinn reported being bruised when an electrical jail door was slammed on her. Mrs. Spinks had her arm twisted very badly. Rev. Malcolm Campbell, Douglas Jenkins and Marshall Ganz (Campbell from Canada, Jenkins from McComb and Ganz from California and SNCC staff) reported having been kicked, knocked around or arms twisted in some painful way.

Mendy Samstein, white SNCC worker from NY, actually saw Mrs. Spinks being pushed around and having her arm twisted by a man who later turned out to be a state investigator. Then, after Mendy talked with the other four who had been physically hurt, it turned out that the same man had done the work in each case. This is the same man who told Ursula Junk, when she was arrested in September, that she "ain't got no rights in Mississippi."

As they were released from jail and taken outside of the jail, Mendy noticed the man standing around. He went over to him and asked his name but the man would not give it out. Mendy then walked over to the FBI agents standing there, explained to him that this state investigator had been harrassing people in jail, and asked them to come with him so he could identify the man to them. They then (the FBIs and Mendy) started walking toward the door into which the state investigator disappeared and just at the entrance a large group of state troopers surrounded them and blocked the doorway. At that point the FBIs began to move away as if to indicate that they were not with Mendy. Mendy went after them and said that he wanted to identify the man to them and they said something to the effect of "don't tell us how to run our investigations". Mendy then said that he had a right to tell them how to run investigations since he had seen the man twist Mrs. Spinks arm. They then mumbled something about come down to the office when the state investigator walked out of the building. Mendy then pointed him out to the agents. They walked away with no comment.

Later, John Beecher, a volunteer in McComb, reported that the state investigator had come, just a few days earlier- to the Freedom House with the FBI agents and that they seemed to be quite friendly.

CLEARLY, THE FBI SITUATION IN McCOMB -- from reports today and from earlier reports -- can be the basis for clear protest to the Justice Department.

Even though people are out of jail in McComb, there is a need to have some form of protest campaigns in your community. This is particularly important since the federal government "looks like" it is acting and concerned about the situation in McComb where as all evidence in McComb points to the contrary. Because we are on the eve of an election -- and because of the way in which American politics are conducted -- we have an opportunity to press the issue further than in normal times when candidates are not worried about votes. We urge that all of you do **WHATEVER IS NECESSARY** in your community to get this information before the public and to keep it before the public until, at least, election day. The same demands that we outlined in the memo you received yesterday can be used -- plus demands that the FBI personnel in McComb be totally changed so as to ensure better enforcement of what little the government is willing to do. **WE MUST CONTINUALLY REMIND THE AMERICAN PUBLIC THAT BOMBERS AND ARSONISTS GO FREE WHILE NEGROES TRYING TO REGISTER AND TO RUN VOTER REGISTRATION CAMPAIGNS ARE JAILED, BEATEN AND INTIMIDATED.**