

TRANSCRIPT

"BLACK NATCHEZ"

Produced by Edward Pincus and  
David Neuman

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Cambridgeport Film Corp  
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First Man: I want to tell you fellows -- let me say this-- I want to tell you fellows -- I have never belonged to anything as serious as this -- and I want to tell you all when I made this step I call it taking a giant step -- The things we do in the street that's in the street, but what we do here is something like a personal treasure locked up in a vault -- It's here to stay

Jackson: Now if we do something I mean don't look for glory man like going out and saying 'Man I did this last night' you know just for a big name -- We're not doing this for no glory, we're doing this for me, you, your children and race

Fitzgerald: Now first thing I want to say: Each person here bow down on both knees with your left hand placed on the Bible and the right hand up to God under oath -- Who want to be first man? -- Good, Mr. Jackson -- Hold your arm just like that -- Repeat after me -- I do solemnly swear -- that I will not -- reveal -- or invade -- any of these -- above -- secrets -- within -- .....

Jackson (commentary): John Fitzgerald was interested in organizing an organization for the protection of Negro people and uh he invited me to his first meeting and we had we met and took oaths and we solemnly swore that we would give our lives to the organization and nothing ever happened. He promised there would be more meetings the next week, the next two days, but never another another meeting. It was just a complete -- nothing was done.

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Papa George: He didn't hire you

First Man: All I want's my money -- I ain't working today or tomorrow either-- All I want's my money -- And I will be back tomorrow or this evening

Papa George: Now if you wants, me you and Ossian...

First Man: I used to work like a dog when all of you sitting down.-- I'm not going to

Papa George: Get off

Man: Listen I'm not talking to you -- You didn't hire me -- Listen lay off of me, hear? I'm not taking no shit -- I ain't taking no stuff this morning -- Don't argue with me, don't say nothing to me because you didn't hire me , you understand me? Now don't get me wrong....You didn't hire me

Papa George: Come here Mama, sit with Daddy

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Jessie: There are men in Natchez, there are women in Natchez and there are children in Natchez. If the children walk the line you can protect them -- I have one favor I want to ask of them -- I want every man in here to stand up -- Every man -- Sit down -- All I want to say is every man in here with idle time, if you can't walk the picket line from tomorrow on won't you come by sit on the side somewhere and see what's happening so that when..if some of those people come up to hurt some of your children your heart will be right -- I want to see every man who stood up and said he was a man be out on that picket line

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Jackson: The average cat would say, actually the average guy would say now, 'if I'm on that picket line and get shot dead' they would say in their mind they would go around talking 'if he hadn't been on that line he wouldn't of  
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gotten killed.' and that's a lie -- I could have been at home and I still would have got killed --

David: I'm like Bilbo -- Bilbo said there wasn't but one good nigger, that's a dead nigger -- there ain't but one good white man and that's a dead one, far as I'm concerned

Jackson: All of them isn't wrong -- You can't hate them, man -- A lot of white guys is afraid just like we are, you know? -- When I grab that sign and get on that picket line, I couldn't say that I'm not afraid, man, I'm not afraid but I still have fear, you know -- I'd stay right there and die before I turn around

David: *That's right!*

Jackson: I got sense enough to know, man, you don't die until your time comes

Edie: We need people down -- if you see people around here who could go down and picket down on Main Street

Jackson: O.K. I sure will

Edie: They just have these little kids around twelve and thirteen years old, they've been picketing all day and

Jackson: Everybody's gone, huh?

Edie: Yeah, and they're going to get a sunstroke if they keep on -- I'm going down canvassing

George: Are you tired?

Edie: Oh, the little kids?

George: Little kids?

Edie: Yeah, they're <sup>twelve</sup> and thirteen year olds

Jackson: Why don't you go up there and give them a hand, George? You ain't doing nothing

George: No I won't go up there like I am -- I blowed from last night, man

Old Men: She don't uderstand -- She don't understand

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Jackson (commentary): Ever since the two civil rights projects came to Natchez, Negroes would sit round and discuss how they want to fight for their freedom and how they were ready to die for it and soon as the man said 'O.K. man, come on, let's go up here and picket' then that's where everybody do all their dying right at this time. 'I sure wish I could come up there and help you out, man.' 'Hot dog, I didn't know there was going to be a picket today, I got to go to a funeral today.' Nobody never dies until there's going to be a march or a picket, you know. But it started me thinking that the Negro was just fooling himself that he was still ready to do nothing. Yeah, like man, I was just about ready to give it up, just about ready to turn around, when all of a sudden BOOM!

News Commentator (radio): Here is a repeat of an earlier news bulletin from WNAT. George Metcalf, president of the Natchez chapter of the NAACP was critically injured in Natchez this afternoon when dynamite hidden beneath the hood of his car exploded when he turned on the ignition. The injured Negro was rushed to Jefferson Davis Memorial Hospital where he was given emergency treatment. Officials at the hospital declined to comment on his condition.



Otis: This is the way I'd like to crush these doggone Southern die-hards -- just to snuff their lives out

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Jessie: You know I want to find out about -- Hey Ace, have you been in the hospital?

Ace: Yeah

Jessie: How are his eyes?

Ace: Closed

Jessie: His eyes are closed?

Ace: Yeah, both

Jessie: I mean they have something over them?

Ace: Well one of them was -- Let me see -- the right side was a big knot over this one, but the other one was swollen real bad and closed too

Jessie: Well, will he be able to see? I've heard that there's a possibility that he might not be able to see again

Ace: Well, it's according to what got in him -- You know that

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Evers: America thinks the Negroes in Natchez are afraid, as I've said many times -- We're here to let them know that we aren't afraid -- And this is CBS News and they're going to let the world know we aren't afraid any more -- It doesn't mean that we're going to turn Mississippi into a blood bath

Newsman: I'm going to talk to this man with a rifle a second. What's going to happen here?

Reverend Russell: I'll tell you -- Right now, from the way that practically all the Negroes feel, they feel that the thing that's about to happen what has happened in California -- Whatever that you call what happened in California -- A war or a race riot or whatever it is, that's what's about to happen here

Newsman: Who will start such a riot?

Reverend Russell: Anybody here will start it, right now, ready

Crowd: Right -- Right -- Right

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Jessie: Look, how is George looking? I don't want to see him, I don't want to because I might go back out and start shooting up the nurses \*\*\*I

Man: Nobody's going to disarm us either that's another thing

Jessie: I'll shoot up the nurses, let me tell you something

Man: Not a soul is going to stand and disarm nobody

Jessie: But you see now what is happening is that the people are arming themselves, true, but tonight people just want to serve notice on the city, that's all -- That's all they want to do is serve notice, and the protest is just that we just going to let these people know that we're tired and like Mr. Evers says 'Before we be a slave we'll be buried in our grave and go home to our Lord and be free.' That's all -- Look, I had this fellow go pick up me a dress, you know my <sup>white</sup> dress, you know that big green one, I had him go pick it up because I can't hardly make it in this little old tight thing -- We got to call the Mayor.....Hello -- Yes -- Oh well this meeting is tonight at six o'clock over here at the office and of course it's



somewhat of a protest meeting -- Well, Mr. Evers will be one person here, and of course I think the city of Natchez will be here, I'm just about sure the Negro community will be here, because you know, this is a bad time

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Irwin: The southern white man only understands violence -- Unless we meet their violence with violence, we're not going to move any more and the civil rights movement is going to take a hundred years

The quickest way to freedom is to make violence with violence

Easton: Violence! Black Moslem!

Evers: As I was saying we all are saddened tonight as we were saddened today about this brutal attack upon our own -- I know all of us are angry and no one's more angry than I am -- We all are tired of being mistreated and we know who's responsible for this

Crowd: That's right!

Evers: We know who's responsible for this and we must use the weapon that we are soon going to have to get rid of it -- Now that weapon -- let's have it quiet please -- the weapon, the most effective weapon, will be as you know, the vote -- We know that

Crowd: No!

That won't do no good!

Evers: That's all right.-- Leave him alone -- That's their intelligence showing -- Leave him alone now

Clarence: Keep them straight, man! We been keeping them straight too long! Keep them straight on their head, that's what I sayxxxx

Man: You're my boy!

Clarence: I'm your boy when you want to go out there and get them!

Second man: Let's hear what he's saying

Evers: The thing that we must do is stay together -- We've got to stick together -- We've got to listen and be obedient and do what you're told -- This is most important now -- We cannot go off on no wild goose chase, we can't be as ignorant as they have been

Crowd: Freedom! Freedom!

Evers: Now I was just told that Father Morrissey here has something to read

Father Morrissey: The Mayor and the Board of Aldermen have agreed at one o'clock tomorrow to have a meeting and to meet with representatives of the various elements of our community -- The purpose of this meeting is not merely to talk things over -- For the first time, according to their promise, the purpose of this meeting will be to actually form a permanent community bi-racial committee, and the purpose of that committee will be to hear grievances, to sit down and discuss grievances, to look into what is wrong with our community and the justifiable complaints of our Negro citizens

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Jackson (commentary): I guess the next day they selected the committee -- I really don't know too much about it, but I had heard that the Freedom Democratic Party Kids and Evers had had some kind of fight, and from the looks of the committee, Evers must have won

Irwin: People don't feel represented, don't you see that? -- The poor people -- Look at that @- NAACP people -- Nobody to represent Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party

Father Morrissey: Who said nobody's representing you? Does somebody have to be under eighteen to represent you?

Irwin: How do you suppose the movement got started?

Evers: We'll go on now

Irwin: I'm going to turn this table over now -- Oh yes I will -- Yes I will

Father Morrissey: Listen: That's frankly is the reason why they will not talk to younger people -- Because we don't like things but we're going to hold our temper

Easton: I think some ladies should be on [the committee] because they've been out in town picketing when the men were sitting down and haven't been doing anything

Voice: Yeah, where are the men?

Reverend Scott: Suppose we put men on this thing? Let's put men on this thing

Clarence: Could I say something?

Reverend Baldwin: When we go down there I can go out and tell that man I paid two hundred and sixteen dollars taxes and these people down here we are paying them to do a job and we're going to let them know we're paying them to do a job and we want it done

Dumas: These are local Natchez citizens, tax-paying voting citizens, and that gives the ting a little weight

Father Morrissey: And another thing I might add -- In my own mind anyway it just doesn't make sense in the space of twenty-four hours to try to recruit from the small group that we might have present today a permanent committee

Evers: Father, maybe I don't understand, I think this committee here that we get, we hope will be a permanent committee to represent people until some of them want to resign, somebody - you always can add to a committee -- but I think you have a cross-section of everybody here, you have a cross-section of all -- you have laymen, you have businessmen, you have ministers

Father Morrissey: But if we can make provisions for adding to our committee and we find out before we go down how many

Evers: Because too many people talking at one time just won't make much headway

Man: What's going on now doesn't make much sense.

Voices: That's right!

Man: It really doesn't. Because these men, all they're ~~going to be~~ doing, is they are going to be representing the different proposals that we are going to make up now. That's all they're going their for, regardless who they are. We are going to make our proposals here now.

Evers: Alright. What we are going to do. I think we should tell them what we want them to go down their and say. So let's now start giving--Let's not ask for too much. Let's ask for about eight or ten things that we know we can get. The things that are most pressing. Now you got to be reasonable. There is no point in being unreasonable. Let's ask for things that we want, and want some action on immediately.

Man: First thing if it's possible, to put on there [i.e., the list of demands] that the Mayor and the Board of Aldermen denounce all radical organizations, whether it's Ku Klux Klan or any other radical organization.

Voice: Negro police.

Evers: Let's get twelve [demands.]

Eaton: Police protection at all schools.

Evers: Police protection. We got that on it.

Woman: I think that one important area we are forgetting and that's the equal distribution of tax funds, in terms of public funds.

Evers: The improvement of Negro neighborhoods.

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Jessie: I don't think we even got a telegram-- Hello.

Telephone voice: This is United Press calling. Is this the NAACP office?

Jessie: Yes it is.

Telephone voice: Has the committee come back from the Mayor's office yet?

Jessie: Well, no it hasn't.

Telephone voice: I see.

Jessie: Oh, yes it has. I see they are coming in now.

Telephone voice: Well, do you have any word?

Fitzgerald: Hello.

Evers: Heh.

Jessie: You know. And we don't know what has been accepted or rejected or what their reaction was yet. So the chairman [of the committee] hasn't come up either.

West: The Father got on the committee just the same.

Evers: Who?

West: The priest.

Fitzgerald: Yeah. Couldn't stop him.

West: You couldn't stop him. He took it over. He didn't take it over, but we all lent our side.

Evers: He wasn't the spokesman though?

West: Well, he wasn't exactly, but mostly mostly.

Evers:

West: No, but I got to stay kind of clear of all that. But all of us were able to drive our points home, and on Wednesday night we have another meeting, and they say they are going to work on every one of the ~~proposals~~ questions on the list, and will give the complete answer, and all that kind of thing. And we had several close-ups with some of the Aldermen afterward, after the



meeting, and I'm an optimist anyway. But I am very enthused.

Fitzgerald: Yeah. Almost everybody treated you real good. Everybody. And the man come up to you and offer you-- Didn't feel bad about it.

West: I feel much better with the reception. I don't know what the outcome was, but there wasn't any hostile reception.

Jessie: Did they say, "Mister" [use courtesy titles] today?

West: We were going to point out, they going to do it so far as the Mayor and Board of Aldermen is concerned.

Jessie: That's what I mean.

West: But they will not be able to direct people what to do privately.

Jessie: I know.

West: So far it's official from the Mayor and Board of Aldermen, they said that is one of the things they are going to work on.

Jessie: To work on!?

West: Well, I mean, you know.

Evers: Well, as long as they do it first, then other people follow.

Jessie: They ain't no good and I know it. See, 'cause you just smiling, 'cause he gave you a piece of bread. But you see you're just as happy as a lamb 'cause he been sweet to you today. No

Fitzgerald: Now look.

Jessie: He's just happy. He's just happy. Let me tell you something.

Fitzgerald: Now, these are things we could get right now. These are things we could get right now. We

Jessie: Why, why can't they just accept number one?

Fitzgerald: He wouldn't accept this here. We told him we want comments about all of them.

Jessie: He can't denounce the [Ku Klux] Klan!

Fitzgerald: Keep less off your brain as you possible can. The compression get you. Nerve pressure get you.

Jessie: You know, you know, I think that the men are going to have to some more, a little more, consideration.

Fitzgerald: We did too, we [will] bring a lady along <sup>with us</sup> for secretary when we come back. We told them that.

Jessie: See, because, you see, very honestly, and you know it John, it's these ladies, people like Mrs. Duncan, Mrs. MacNeilly, Mrs. ~~MURKIN~~ Muzeeck, Mrs. Jackson

Evers: Where were they?

Jessie: I don't know. They didn't know about the meeting, but they are the people who are really getting the job done around here.

Evers: Miss Bernard, you got the wrong idea. It's not who get the job done. It's the one who can represent you down there.

Jessie: But some of these ladies are intelligent enough.

Fitzgerald: We don't want them. We're going to be men like that. If we Negroes are not good enough men, then we

Jessie: Look, I think, if you're going to be a man, I think, you should be a man all the way. Now, okay, nobody was being arrested down on the picket line, and the ladies were the ones who fought off those dogs.

Fitzgerald: Let the men do the job.

Jessie: I don't know why you are so defensive about it.

++++ Not one, just name me one of them whose name is on the school desegregation thing. Not one of them walked out there on the picket line, and over half of them never came, and yet when it's time to go around to the City Hall, they can sit down there and make decisions. How can they make decisions when they really don't know what's going on?

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News commentator (radio): Here is a repeat of an earlier news bulletin from WNAT. The Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the city of Natchez, at a special meeting this afternoon, have taken strong action to preserve peace and order in Natchez by passing a resolution invoking a city-wide curfew effective at 10:00 P.M. each night until further notice. Beginning tonight, no persons will be allowed on any public highway, street or sidewalk within the city between ~~10:00 P.M. and 5:00 A.M.~~ 10:00 P.M. and 5:00 A.M. with the exceptions of persons going directly from home to work or directly from work to home. The only exceptions will be medical doctors, law-enforcement officials and transients. In other action, the Mayor and Board announced that the Chief of Police of Natchez and the Sheriff of Adams County have ordered all places selling whiskey to close down immediately until further notice.

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Jackson: So nobody is supposed to be on the street tonight except the [Ku Klux] Klan.

Otis: I'll bet. I'll be willing to bet, though, that the Klan is having a meeting tonight.

HJackson: Yeah. Let's go on back up to the meeting. See what's happening... The thing they should talk on tonight is what is we going to do if they doesn't give us anything.

Evers: As we said before, and I believed your applause O.K.ed, that we're going to give our committee a chance, we're going to give the city of Natchez a chance to prove to us by Wednesday that they mean business. Now if they're going to continue to give us the old run-around as they have a hundred years, then we're going to let them know Thursday morning.

Jackson (commentator): Ever since the bombing I had been worrying Fitzgerald about another meeting because its really needed now. And he hadn't called another meeting, so I figured that the best thing to do was to try to get something going. So I met this guy that was familiar with the Deacons for Defense in Louisiana, and he said that I should organize my own Deacons right here in Natchez.

Jackson: Local protection, police, Klansmen, and all that.

Man: That seems to be the general rule all over.

Jackson: This is the stronghold for the Klan, Natchez, Adams County. They got both Klans here, you know.

Man: The Grand Dragon [of the Ku Klux Klan] is in the

Jackson: Yeah. He lives here. MacDaniels. He work at Red Ball [Company]... But, we're not interested in, you know, in other words, all I want Simms [the head of the Deacons in Louisiana] to do is tell me, you know, give me the right position to take about here. We can organize our own Deacons here. All we want is the right steps to take, see.

Man: Well, that's the man, and I'll get you the address.

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Jackson: Yeah, he's the dick man. He's the man. And he also says this, man,

Otis: He'll help us, huh?

Jackson: Yeah. He says this, man, people all over everywhere is trying to-- he doesn't even have time to get around to the people that are calling him, man you know, trying to get to see him. People in Jackson [Mississippi], Alabama, even in New Orleans, man, the guys in New Orleans is forming a Deacons, man, and New Orleans is just like Los Angeles, just like California, man, there's no segregation nowhere.

Otis: Did you ask him how does he get away, you know, how does he get away from all this harassment, you know with the cops and things? I understand that when they're going someplace, they drive about eighty miles an hour.

Jackson: He got fear into the whole town, man, that's what I was telling you.

Otis: They know him but they don't know who's under him.

Jackson: They know him, but they don't know his men, they don't know who's a Deacon.

Otis: They don't carry anything but pistols in their cars, huh? Hey Jack, they say they got souped-up cars, man?

Jackson: Yeah, fast cars, man, fast cars.

Otis: What kind of cars they got, do you know?

Jackson: I didn't ask him. But he says they're fast, man. Shit, they got to be fast.

Otis: Fast for what? For catching a potential victim that they're going after? and then getting away, huh?

Jackson: Say for instance we're guarding this place, someplace, and some guy comes by and shoots. We got to catch him, man, and shoot him. That's just all there is to it. You don't have to shoot him to kill him. He says never shoot to kill at first, now. You can wound him, like in the leg or shoot his tires, stop him, ~~xxxxxx~~ burn him in the leg, take him right on down to the police station, man.

Otis: Do they let the police know first that they were going to take the law into their own hands in the Negro community?

Jackson: No. This is just for defense. If a car comes into the Negro community just watch him and that's it, man. You know you can't stop people from driving on the streets.

Otis: Did you ask him if he ever had to burn anybody, man? I don't mean to wound, I mean to really burn.

Jackson: Kill, man? No, I didn't talk on killing much. I didn't even talk with him about no killing, man, I just talked about getting set up.



I didn't talk about burning, cooking, man. No, he didn't say anything about killing, you know.

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Chairwoman: I think freedom deserves another round of applause!

Crowd (chanting): Freedom! Freedom! Freedom!

Jackson (commentary): Finally came the time when the Mayor was going to give us his answer, and I knew, one way or the other, we weren't going to have to wait any longer.

Reverend Russell: I want freedom! I want to sit down in my vineyard under my fig tree like others have done for a hundred years! -- It is a fact, brethren, God wants a man -- And the Negro needs a leader -- We thank God for Mr. Charles Evers, we thank him much. -- I want you to know tonight and I want the devil in hell to know I'm not afraid no more.

Chairwoman: At this time I bring to you Reverend Shea Baldwin.

Reverend Baldwin: We do not have any good news for you on the report. I talked with one of the aldermen this afternoon and he said they are still working on the proposals which we taken down Saturday. And on tomorrow morning at ten o'clock, the committee will go back and meet with the Mayor and Board of Aldermen.

Chairwoman: Last week when we were ready to despair, when we were ready to take up arms, this man had a way of bringing peace to a chaotic town, this man had a way of changing fear to the feeling of freedom, the freedom that we're going to have with the help of all of you and with our leader here in Mississippi, the field secretary of the NAACP, Mr. Charles Evers.

Evers: Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. I am just as sad and disturbed as you are, although I'm not disappointed, cause I never thought they were going to do right. We waited, we met, and we've sang, we've done everything we know to do; we've prayed and we're going to keep on praying, we've sang and we're going to keep on singing, but we ain't marched yet. -- I'll admit we've waited too long, but there's nothing we can do tonight but wait till tomorrow morning. We hadn't planned to do anything till tomorrow morning anyway. So all we're saying is this: We'll win. Let's keep the pressure on. Let's keep pushing forward. Let's march like soldiers, with our chests out and our ~~shoulders~~ shoulders up and our looking straight ahead, and let nobody turn us around...Let nobody turn us around

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News commentator (television):..As the 650 National Guardsmen stood by in the city. The National Guard Units arrived in Natchez at 6:30 this morning following last night's executive order issued by Governor Johnson [of Mississippi]. The Governor in his proclamation said there was imminent danger of a riot, mobs, unlawful assembly and a breach of the peace. The Guard Commander, Adjutant-General Walter Johnson, told newsmen at the National Guard Armory in Natchez this morning that the troops ordered into service last night by Governor Johnson were not in the city to supersede civil authorities, but to insure law and order.

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Jackson (commentary): When I got on the scene that morning, the Freedom Democratic Party kids were trying to get the people away from Evers, and were trying to march to the Court House right then and there.

Bill Ware: I'm going to read everything on here, and I'm not going to say anything else but what's on here which was submitted by the people of Natchez

one week ago. Okay. It says: "Declaration of the Negro citizens of Natchez, Mississippi. The United States..."

Dori: The mayor rejected all of the demands.

Ware: I have an announcement to make right now. The announcement is that the City Council, I've just been told by Miss Dori Ladner, has rejected every one of these, uh, uh (stutters) demands. Rejected every one. See? every one that you have submitted, they have been rejected. They say, "No, you don't count." That's what they say. They say, "You can demand and demand and demand, but nothing is going to happen, because we're going to reject them. We are going to keep the Ku Klux Klan with their headquarters right there, and we are going to bomb Metcalfe again, and any other person who puts his mouth up." Now, the question is, do you think that these demands should be resubmitted today by way of a march to the City Council? O.K. Regardless of who tell you to wait until tomorrow and the next day and the next day, I am willing to go with you today down to the city council to present this.

First Man: We don't want no violence. The man says we're going to demonstrate...

Ware: I don't know who's going to lead this march.

First Man: Listen, people, listen. Mr. Evers is on his way now. That is why he is on the car trying to get you stirred up. Just be patient a little longer and wait on Mr. Evers. If you want to do something, get down and wait!

Evers: Number one, all I want you to do is just wait. The committee just came in, we don't know what the committee has said. Now I understand that we have some eager beavers here who want to lead people off down the street without an understanding. Now we're not in this just to go out and raise a whole lot of hell. We're in this to be sane and sensible. And those persons who will mislead you here will mislead you anyplace else. Now all we ask you to do and I'll make this crystal clear, that this is an NAACP project along with the community of Natchez, and we not going to let none of the rest of you come here and take over our project. You understand that? Let's make that clear. -- I want to make that clear. Now if there are any of you people who come in here just to stir up trouble, hit the street now, you so bad and want to do so much, go ahead on! Go ahead on! Now go ahead! Go ahead! -- Now you people in the back, don't let them get you in a lot of trouble. We'll ask you to wait patient here so we can go upstairs and meet with the committee and we'll come back down and tell you what we are going to do. Thank you very much.

Bert: They [The NAACP] are discussing or contemplating marching to the White House Café.

White Reporter: Not to the Court House?

Bert: To the White House Café. I imagine that the Chief of Police told them that they could block off Pine Street and march to the White House, but that's all.

Dori: Going to the White House?!

Barbara Rose: What's you going to the White House for? The White House is a lounge and a café-- We not going to the White House in Washington D.C., honey, they were talking about going to the one on East Woodlawn [Street]. We're not going there. If we're going anywhere, we're going to the Court House.

Dori: That's right.

Barbara Rose: We'll go where Mayor Noesser is having his meeting.

Irwin: The movement is to create some kind of thing where people learn to use their own mind, make their own judgements, say what they think about things.

Clarence: And now they are going to start letting people higher than they are make decisions: people up in society make decisions instead of the people make decisions. And that's what just what's happen here, you know, Mr. Evers has made the decision again.

Irwin: Just like the white man doing.

Second man: There's nobody out there making up your mind.

Irwin: Yeah. Well, if Charlie Evers, if Charlie Eversxxx say...

Second Man: He's not out there though.

Irwin: When he come. He's coming. When he say, if he say, "Let's go to the White House." Regardless of what whether going to the White House is going to mean anything. They going to the White House because Charlie Evers say so. They're not making up their own mind.

Second man: Does it mean anything to go to the Court House?

Irwin: It means something. I mean, to me it do...

Edie: ...That's right the majority decides.

Bert: I don't approve of anybody from Jackson or anyplace else coming down here and mapping out the plans. He [Evers] has organized and mapped out every single meeting. The people haven't had a chance to say, "Boo," if they wanted to.

Ware: I predict that you do not march. And further, further, I predict that there won't be a march today. I'll be on the front line if there is a march.

Voice: And I'll be with you!

Ware: As a matter of fact, as a matter of fact, if there are people who want to march and present this to the Mayor, I'll go down with you.

Jessie: Charles Evers has not made a statement yet. We are organized. We know what we are going to do, but we have to wait for a time to do it. And they [Freedom Democratic Party workers] are down there telling them, "Y'all come on. Let's go to the Court House, 'cause the NAACP, you know Charles Evers, is going to the White House..."

Jackson: What's happening?-- What's the fuss about?

Reverend Russell: Let them go down there and march. The jail will be filled up when we get there. They won't have anywhere to put us.

Jessie: ~~He's~~ [Bill Ware] down there telling them that Charles Evers is going to the White House; and that they should go on and march to the Court House; and that is dividing the community; and it's wrong; and he's [Bill Ware] not here for any good; and we could do without people like him.

Reverend Russell: We don't want anybody agitating. We for strictly business now. No agitating. And we don't want no crackerheads following them down to make trouble.

Jessie: And we don't need nobody with a long beard looking like Castro going around without a penny to pay going around here telling the kids



to get put in jail. If he wants to lead somebody [he should] lead all these drop-outs back into school along with him and he'll be doing something.

Jackson: Where he at now? Where is he now?

Jessie: He's out there talking about that stuff and he'd better keep Charles Evers out of his mouth anyway.

Jackson: I want to talk to you, man.

Ware: What do you want to talk about, man?

Jackson: I want to talk to you, man. I don't want it published, you know?

Ware: Huh?

Jackson: I don't want it published.

Ware: Well, well let's wait a little while. -- n

I know that down that jail in Natchez you got about ten people who are black for every white person you have down there, and they haven't committed any crime. So they send you to jail whether you commit crimes or not.

Jackson: Some cat come up with the wrong stuff, you know, and lead anybody anywhere. So if you get up and preach the wrong thing there'll be a riot right here, man.

Ware: Now I'm not going to say this. I want you to say it though, you see, whatever you want to say.

Jackson: ...Wait here.

Ware: Wait here!?

Jackson: I hear you're supposed to be fitting to go, you know..

Ware: No, you heard wrong. Wait here. I ain't going nowhere no people want to go.

Irvin: Our leaders are nothing but Toms. They go down and they scratch their heads and they come back and say that we didn't get anything just like they going to say when they come out here. Watch and see.

Reverend Baldwin: At this time, we come to give you assembled the report which, at this time, we cannot spell out to you all of the details. We feel that we will have to, the committee will have to study this report and then tell you at a later date what we are planning to do about it.

Crowd: Same old thing! Same old thing!  
We've waited too long!  
Time waits for no one!

Reverend Baldwin: We bring to you our Field-Secretary, Mr. Charles Evers.

Evers: Thank you very much. I guess you can look around you and see that we not outnumbered on the ground, we're outnumbered in the air too.

Voice: If you wait they're going to kill us anyhow!

Evers: The committee and the local leadership here, along with myself, and I'll make this clear, feel that maybe the tension is too high and too much chance of the risk of bloodshed to ask you to march down the streets of Natchez. Now I'm only going to give it to you like we feel...

Crowd: We'll march! We'll march!

March! March! March!

We're ready!

Moses led us out of Egypt, you lead us out of Natchez!!!!

Evers: We feel that maybe the tension is too high...

Voice: The tension been up since they've been bombing and shooting us!

Evers: But I'm only speaking in behalf of the local leadership of this city. Now I am here to do whatever the local people want done with the local people. As we said before, and I'll make this crystal clear, this is an NAACP project, we're not going to let no other organization come in and take over. We gonna do it the way we want it done, and any ofn those don't like the way we do it hit the streets now, you're on your own. Now if anyone here who don't like the way we conduct our business, and I've heard it's been said that we don't conduct ~~xxxxxx~~ it the way they want it done, I want you to let you know that you have my permission to go ahead on. Nobody's going to stop you. Now since if we going to pay the bail bond and we going to furnish the lawyers, then we going to tell you when to march and how to march. -- I had hoped we could have marched to the Court House. But I understand that the Court House is closed. The local leadership has said that they don't want us to march; and we're a little different; we do what the people want done in the community. I don't come here to tell you come on because Charles Evers want it done. Whatever you want done, we're going to do that. I still said that we didn't get what we wanted. We didn't get anything.

Dori: Amen!

Evers: But we haven't lost the faith. The Mayor said that he would meet with groups after the thing cooled off. But we got the group ready to know that things ain't never going to cool off, until they get something done downtown.

Old man: Well, we didn't get what we've been after. But, we all do keep praying. The Lord is able, and IM I'm trusting in him.

Woman: And I am too.

Old Man: And he'll make the way for us.

Woman: That's right.

Old Mah: All we do is stay in our place, and be right, and we're not out there for no violence.

Woman: You say the right thing.

Old man: And just look to the Lord, and we pray for this right now: Lord, you take it in charge, and fix it for our poor people down here.

Barbara Rose: They're not going to get anywhere arguing among themselves and fighting among themselves.

Edie: Did you see what happened there? Bill Ware got up and had something to say. Now he wasn't telling anyone to hit the streets now. All he was saying was 'Do you want to march?' and he was putting it to you...

Barbara Rose: Well he knowed that they want to march. That's the reason they were here, they thought they were going to march, that's why they were here.

Edie: Do you think it was right for that other guy to get up and interrupt him like that? Did you think that was right?

Barbara Rose: Yes, it was right, because a lot of them was ready to go and didn't know what the hell they was going for.

Edie: Now you just contradicted yourself.

Dori: They came to march. They came to march.

Barbara Rose: Yeah they came to march, but like I said it was a lot of kids, they didn't know what they was going to march for, its just like being in a

parade ~~for~~<sup>to</sup> them.

Edie: You just contradicted yourself.

Barbara Rose: Yeah I want freedom, I want freedom just as bad as anybody else, you know.

Edie: But you didn't want to march today?

Barbara Rose: Huh?

Edie: Did you want to march or didn't you?

Barbara Rose: Yeah I wanted to march and when everybody else march I'm going to march too, but I'll be damned if I'm going down there by myself.

Old Man: Like she say though, you got to wait, you got to wait, you got to wait, you got to wait/ on your leader.

Barbara Rose: You didn't go by yourself. She didn't go by herself. He didn't go by himself; now, ~~IM~~ I'm not going by myself. When it be done, we're going to do it together.

Old man: You've got to wait on God. Wait on Him. Wait on God. Just wait on the Lord. He'll bring us out.

Dori: I'm going to stay on my knees and pray till I get free.

Old man: No. That's up to you, but I'm going to wait on Him. I'm going to wait.

Girl: They ain't got them here for to help the white folks. They ain't got them here for us.

Old man: You pray, and He'll fix it for you.

Dori: But, see, if they start jumping on you, the President of the United States can federalize them like he did in Alabama.

Old man: Well, maybe we'll get that.

Dori: Well how're you going to get it?

Old man: Ain't we got somebody who is the leader. They got field men, don't they? [i.e., the NAACP has Charles Evers] <sup>Me</sup> and you ain't no field men. If that man hadn't a been here we wouldn't have <sup>had</sup> no singing up here.

Girl: Who?

Old Man: There would have been none of us out.

Girl2: Who? Who?

Old man: You got nobody to lead you.

Girl: Charles Evers wasn't here when we started...

Old man: I said, if he hadn't of been here, we would have had nobody to lead. There would have been no colored meeting here at this place, if he hadn't of come. But the way things happen, well, quite naturally, we just have to wait on time. We've got to wait on time now. We've got to wait.

Dori: A change is going to come.

Old man: Oh, yeah! All we got to do...

Girl: But not in the midnight hour.

Old man: ~~in~~ ...is have faith. Have faith!

+++++



Jackson: I'm sick man. I'm tired. That's why I went on and just hustled up the money, and say, I'm just going to do something, man, you know what I mean? I'm tired of niggers, I'm going to say niggers, man

Otis: That's what they are.

Jackson: Lying, meeting, you know, gonna do this, man, you know what I'm talking about? And never does nothing. Just planning. Negroes is the planningest people I've ever seen, boy. We plan to damn much man, and never do nothing. So I'm not planning no more. So I'm just going to go and do it on my own. Man, I done been to 135 meetings, and that's all they ever did was meet. Man, did nothing else, you know? Say, for instance, the NAACP meeting: They meet; they talk the same thing all the time. You know, it's probably good. But I don't understand. I don't see why people should meet all the time, and do nothing. Okay, I got down on my bended knees, man; took an oath, you know; we met that night, two months done past, and there haven't been another meeting.

Otis: John Fitzgerald would have done more, if it hadn't been for Charles [Evers]. But he went and talked to Charles, I think now, and I think Charles told him to cool his heels, you know. I don't go for that.

Jackson: We're not going to be cooling no heels.

+++++

Jackson (commentary): The next day we got five guys together, that I thought I could trust, and we had our first meeting.

Jackson: I believe just like Martin Luther King and everybody else, I believe in non-violence. I really do, man. I think that non-violence is the only way to solve the problem, you know. On the other hand, I believe, that our people should stop getting killed. Man, like you know, people driving by killing them. Like a lot of people would be in the Movement, man, like business people, if they had some protection. We don't have protection from the police. Say, now, I've been in one, two, three, four things like this Otis and I. First it was "The Black Brothers", they didn't do nothing. Next thing was...

Otis: Yeah, we did something. I mean, we did it ourselves.

Jackson: Yeah, you and I. Next things was the Deacons that we was just in it with some other guys. They didn't do nothing, and a few more things that were supposed to do something, you know. So, there's no need, man, like I was saying, man, there's no need in starting this here, going through this here, if we're not going to do something.

Man: Can I say something? Now, I have heard about those other things that supposed to have been going on, and all this. There's no use in trying to start something, if we're not going to do anything, and not serious about it. And I think we should. It's time for us to do something, right now.

Jackson: Yeah, and if there is anybody in this room, right at this moment, that isn't serious, now is the time to say it man. There's no need to wait, you know. Man, I was on my knees like this, man, about three weeks ago, taking an oath that I wouldn't do this and wouldn't do that, you know, and that was the end of that, man, and I ain't seen it no more.

Otis: Look. I know all you guys. We've grown up together like brothers. This is one thing I want to say: In a way, while the other organizations didn't get half-way off their feet, some of them, that is, is because we had guys who'd take these oaths, and they were doing it just for the hell

of it, just to be in something, but they didn't mean it, you know. We're not going to take oaths. We don't need to do that. We just going to have an understanding, a good understanding, you know. I like you. I like you. Him and him, and I like myself. And I figure that silence, you know, you know, your tongue is the worst weapon against you, any man. And I want to say this, and I mean it from my heart, that I, I swear before God, may he kill me now if I don't mean it, for something as important as this, I'd burn my brother. I'd blow his damn brains out. And I'd do the same to you, to him, to him, and to him, you know? Before I'd let <sup>the</sup> one guy mess up a lot of guys, it's small enough, you know, you see it in a number of us. I'm not directing anything to any one individual you understand, because I would want everybody in here to feel the same way about me. And I feel that if we all feel that way then we're going to, you know, we going to respect each other, we going to learn to love each other, to live together, to drink together, and above all, fight hard together, push, man, push, you know, all of us pushing in the same direction.

Jackson: Let me say this, Otis. Do you think, I'm as afraid as the next man, you know, I'd be a damn liar to sit here and say that, man, I'm not scared of nothing, you know? I'm scared, you know? I'd be nuts if I weren't. But if they get me to the police station and put a gun on my head and cock it and say "Nigger I'm going to blow your brains out if you don't tell me so on and so on and so forth," I got sense enough to know that they going to blow my brains out if I tell them, you know? So if <sup>he</sup> ~~man~~ puts this gun beside my head and say "I'm going to blow your damn brains out" well, shit, chances are still as well if I don't even tell him nothing. So don't tell him a damn thing, just let him blow it out 'cause you going to get it blowed out one way or the other.

Otis: Yeah, that goes back to ~~whatixxxxxxxx~~ saying like I said in the beginning. If they don't blow it out, and you get out, one of us will. And I want you to do the same thing to me. This is what I mean. Your brother will do it, it will be more like a mercy killing, you know?

+++++

Panola: I wish you'd quit running into me, you make me miss it.

+++++

Jackson (commentary): I guess the Freedom Democratic Party people still thought they could do something because they called a meeting at the Bright Star church, and all their big leaders and things came down from all over the state and they tried to get the people to get up and march that night.

+++++

Ware: The Freedom Democratic Party is committed to do what you want to do. We feel that you've been disgraced here. After getting the whole world to believe that the black people in Mississippi and in Natchez were going to move, on Thursday nothing happened.

Woman: I don't want to march on this accord: I'm not afraid to march. And I've never marched. But if a man or woman really, and I am a woman, and if a man or woman hits me, I'm going to hit him back. And so I don't want to get in there since it's non-violent, I don't want to get in there and upset your plans that you have before you. Listen, that's the reason, I'm not afraid to march, but if he hold my hand, if he stand in front of me, I'll spit on him. I'm not afraid of them.

Lawrence Guyot: You blame you. You might be the next one. You, or you, and the pitiful thing is its not up to you to decide. So if you want to -- ~~you~~

see, Bill left out one form of demonstration. He talked about picketing, he talked about staying here after ten o'clock, he talked about marching, he talked about sitting in, and he talked about the kind of demonstration that you have been doing for years. That's the kind of demonstration by being quiet and doing nothing. You're demonstrating. You're demonstrating like other -- you're demonstrating in the opposite fashion from the rest of Africa, and the rest of the people who are moving. But you're demonstrating. You're being heard. You're being understood by simply being quiet and sitting back and staying in your places. The most cowardly thing I have ever heard is for someone to say "I would go with you all but I ain't non-violent."

Unita Blackwell: It's downright pitiful. The man is in critical condition and people have walked out. Everybody's in a big hurry to go home, and you know I was sitting there thinking about my child's at home, he burned his leg, I need to be there too. See that's the way we can all go back and think of things that we need to be doing, you know? But I am concerned, people. I'm really concerned. And that's the reason I'm here tonight. I'm from Issaquena County, the smallest county, I think, in the state. But people, I came here with such... you know...folks done got... National Guards out everywhere, police running round everywhere. And people sitting up just look like they ain't concerned. It's..it's pitiful. And I'm just full, you know. 'Cause right now this church need to be packed, we should move. When ten o'clock come, people should be talking about anything they want to talk about. You know, people not here not even interested in what I'm talking about. But I still want to do it. Because I am concerned ~~xxxx~~ about what has happened to us black people. Now we sit up and holler "Yes ma'am" and "No ma'am." I don't know about you all but I'm tired of it. And I'm tired of people telling me that this here is curfew and I don't know nothing about it. Somebody else the Mayor. Now we can't even draw up a piece of paper and take it up there to him and they tell you "Go home niggers and shut up!" And I gets madder and madder. And I don't understand it. You're right. You ain't qualified to go up there because you ain't mad enough. Do you know folks, there ain't no telling what I might do? Well there ain't. And there ain't no telling what all of us might do. But at least get up, people, and try.



## DOCUMENTARY FILM

*Natchez, Lovely Natchez*

I recently saw a film that is a valuable historical document. In one hour, years of argument and rhetoric are neatly and quietly compressed, but also brought to life. The film is *Black Natchez*, and it was done by Edward Pincus, a graduate student in philosophy, and David Neuman, recently out of college. I suppose they would be called "amateurs" by those who

*Black Natchez* (Pincus & Neuman)

like to know exactly who is who and why. On their own, with meagre money and rented equipment they went to Mississippi in 1965, determined to stay for many months, not to "do" a movie, but to live and learn, to find out whether their presence could eventually become irrelevant enough to enable the kind of film footage they wanted.

They chose Natchez, "lovely Natchez" we used to call it in the 50's and early 60's when I lived in the state. We had no civil rights problem then, only "peace and tranquility," as our distinguished governor, Ross Barnett, used to remind us when "violence" broke out elsewhere. The city is in the southwestern part of the state and stands on bluffs more than 200 feet above the Mississippi River. During steamboat days its port was busy, not only with cotton but people, slaves being transported or fine families stopping off for food, rest and gambling, which flourished there. The *Natchez Free Trader* kept its readers up to date on river news, and just before the Civil War Frederick Olmstead was able to say that the city had "the best hedges and screens of evergreen shrubs . . . in America." To this day thousands go there every year to see handsome antebellum homes, about two scores of them as I recall, enough to keep the serious visitor several days.

In 1963, George Greene moved to Natchez, and because he was a SNCC field secretary he found it inconvenient to visit those homes. He even found

it inconvenient to do the kind of work most civil rights workers do in the South, because along with those homes Natchez can claim many Klansmen. The terror in Natchez and adjoining Adams County in a sense turned even Greene and one or two others into social scientists; for a year they did nothing but document incidents of violence reported to them by a few Negroes bold enough to do so.

I well remember what historic, scenic Natchez did to the mind and spirit of George Greene in one year. I also recall the hours of debate when the Mississippi Summer Project of 1964 was being planned. How could anyone do anything in that fortress of racial "stability"?

By 1965 no part of Mississippi was safe from "agitation." Negro children, some of them 12 or 13 years old, had the nerve to picket stores, demanding better jobs for their parents. They wanted other things, too, like access to the town's library or auditorium, not to mention its voting booths and the "other" school system. In retaliation George Metcalfe, president of the Natchez NAACP, was critically hurt by a bomb attached to his car. The town was upset. The *Natchez Democrat* reported the mayor's words: "Natchez is a peaceful, law-abiding community whose citizens deeply resent violence in any form." A reward was offered to help capture the would-be murderer — and Negroes were arrested by the carload for picketing, then shipped in chartered Trailways buses to the infamous Parchman State Penitentiary. Eventually the National Guard took over the city, in the face of continuing marches and protests by an aroused Negro community. In the end (after stalled negotiations, resumed talks and new federal laws) an almost standard Southern solution occurred: a few Negro police were hired, a few Negro faces appeared here and there in the white world. It is safe to say that the following (1960) statistics for Natchez

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*For the Independent Minded*

This was our June cover.  
You should have seen October's.



By Jerome Agel

While reviewers are praising for the umpteenth time the diary of a Swiss private and the history of glass design, we're reporting what's happening, what's really happening, baby. Like "The Boys of Boise," Idaho's homosexual scandals; For Hotch the Belle Tolls; The real message of "MacBird": "Don't jump on the RFK bandwagon"; Pamela Tiffin's College of One; New Journalists Replacing Old Novelists; LSD and the turned-on grandmother; "Ho Chi Minh's Daughter"; Capote pays up his Tynan bet. Our name is BOOKS, the lively monthly for the very lively reader. Every issue is an unpredictable experience. Says Newsweek: "BOOKS has a talent for first-rate scoops." Broadway-London playwright: "Every issue is like a great night in the theater." Captain of Industry: "Gives me ideas." Princeton prof: "BOOKS is fantastically imaginative, entertaining. Put me down for two more gift subscriptions." Manhattan femme fatale: "Reading BOOKS is like living with someone you love. You're beautiful." Our widely quoted, exclusive Cocktail Party column makes news: Jeane Dixon, the seer, told us: "Governor Wallace would make a good President." Marshall McLuhan said: "Art is anything you can get away with." News, seminal ideas, layouts available nowhere else. Plus plus plus. Scoop scoop scoop. There is something new under the fun sun: US—BOOKS. See for yourself.

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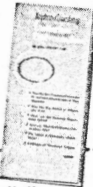
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and the rest of Adams County still hold: The population is half and half, but the median family income for whites is \$5,600, and for Negroes, \$1,994; school expenditures per pupil for whites come to \$162.81, and for Negroes, \$99.05; the number of whites making under \$2,000 per year is 369, and the number of Negroes, 1,944; the number of whites making over \$9,000 per year is 996, and Negroes, 24. Over a quarter of a century ago that situation was described in a matter-of-fact way by the authors of *Deep South*: they used the words "white power."

The two young men who made *Black Natchez* came there well before the NAACP official was hurt, before the city faced a major crisis. They did not arrive on scene because "news" was being made, nor did they try to make news, or a "story" by arranging and rearranging people or situations. They lived in the town, the black side of the town, and over the months became familiar with it, and known to its people. They knew how to keep their equipment under wraps, how to live and observe. They were no "camera crew," nor did they have any deadline—or cause to fight. When they started filming they did so around the clock, to learn.

Eventually Natchez settled down, and eventually the two filmmakers retired to do their work, edit over 90,000 feet of synchronous sound film. (The result will be shown on National Educational Television this spring.) What have they produced? *Cinema verité* (direct cinema) it is called; everything "from life," with no "reconstructions," no "interviews." Yet, a movie is more than the technique its makers used—though today that may be an old-fashioned assumption. In this case the city of Natchez provided the two observers a bonus they never dreamed possible, a drama with rising and falling action. A situation of "ordinary," stagnant injustice suddenly exploded into a noisy, stirring emergency, with its aftermath of bitter fatigue and resignation.

The film is done without interpretive narration. It opens with some Negroes talking about forming an organization like the Deacons to defend themselves. They are ordinary men, not leaders

and not civil rights workers. They are afraid—afraid of whites, afraid of their own weakness, their own useless, necessarily subdued anger. Above all they are afraid to do anything, even to arm themselves, because they have no conviction that anything they try will make the slightest difference in their everyday lives. The camera moves from face to face, then moves outside, to the town, to black Natchez, whose houses command no tourists, whose people are lucky to eat, sleep and love unmolested by white intrusions of one sort or another.

From the sight of Natchez as a representative Southern town, we slowly move to the experience of a particular moment of political conflict. Children are picketing and trying to get more for their parents, for themselves as future parents; and a white organizer tries to inspire Negroes to follow suit, out of shame if not pride. "She don't understand," though. We see exactly what she doesn't understand—how they feel, what they see, and what a request from her of all people means. Ironically, once again the white man reduces the Negro to fear, to excuses and to the further calculated display of apathy.

Then the bombing, the almost successful assassination takes place, and Natchez is a different city. A thousand psychological and sociological truths are shattered, turned into splinters by the fact that violence can sometimes generate a new relationship between victim and oppressor. Crowds of Negroes assemble, full of anger and determination. The press arrives and television cameras, so that one camera can show other cameras at work, influencing by their very presence the people whose actions are making news. That vague abstraction "the community" suddenly becomes tangible, visible. Charles Evers is on hand to exhort people, to give them direction. Others are there, too—young men and women from the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. The battle is joined, between ministers, businessmen and teachers on the one hand, and young "activists" on the other. A committee that is to bargain with the mayor has no members that had been picketing, none that are poor, or young or wom-



en. The struggle is by now a familiar one, but the experience of seeing it unfold at close quarters in a movie-house is altogether new.

Events conspired to furnish additional drama for the film. A curfew was called followed by the entrance of the National Guard, with its helicopters, jeeps and drawn guns, showing once and for all the force and power that keep voteless, impoverished people respectful indeed of what sounds so right and good to the rest of us when it is urged—"law and order." There were night meetings, and day meetings, with increasing tension and increasing despair. The committee of Negroes was rebuffed by the mayor, and of course had to save face with the crowd, temporize, strive to keep pressure on white Natchez and the momentum for change alive in black Natchez. All this the film captures unforgettably: the leader's eyes, both wary and confident; the mixed faces before him, impassive, tentatively hopeful, disbelieving, full of zeal, ready to die, unwilling for a moment to lift a finger; and the guile, bluff and make-believe that all sides practice, part of what politics is, I suppose. The moderates of Black Natchez show their corrupt, pompous side, but more than a touch of arrogance and cruel insensitivity appears among the radical youth—including one scene that finds a white, northern civil rights worker trying to sell Ivy League logic ("You've just contradicted yourself") and Robert's *Rules of Order* ("That's right, the majority decides") to legitimately confused and agitated people.

The end comes swiftly and is true-to-life. Fervor subsides; weariness and a sense of futility return; the decisions will be made by negotiators, who will determine what those who have must give to keep those who have not more or less "quiet." People scold one another, or scratch their heads in bewilderment. How did it happen, so fast? What made a promising moment die? How is it that people can change overnight, abandon their lethargy, become willful, then put back on their old masks? Who speaks for Black Natchez, for Harlem or Watts?

I know of nothing in print that can match what *Black Natchez* offers: a di-



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rect look at a community, and one seized by a crisis, as well as an honest look at all sorts of things that social scientists study and study and study. If I were applying for one of those "research grants" to "evaluate" *Black Natchez*, I would say the film deals with real big things—like crowd behavior, social change, ideology in action, the ethnic politician, the generational gap, Negro nationalism, black power, class structure as it determines individual behavior, and all the rest of it, the deadening phrases and lifeless terms that are guaranteed to make the eyelids become heavy.

In any event, for an hour I could look and not read, and see people I have known all along in other cities brought to life. I am told that films like this are rare, and not encouraged. There is no money for them. They are a "risk" and not very "useful," though millions are available today for every kind of incomprehensible and absurd venture by the most incredible assortment of "investigators." I suppose there is a reason why. Pounds of wordy reports can help us dally forever over nothing.

A film that records what is actually happening leaves us only one clear-cut alternative, to remember or to forget very, very hard. Things being the way they are, we perhaps find it cheaper emotionally to forego an inexpensive *Black Natchez* and invest in costly, evasive language.

ROBERT COLES

## Correspondence

### Sorry 'Bout That

Sirs:

Although I cannot supply the statistical information you request in your January 7 note ("Sorry 'Bout That") I can, as a member of one of the medical teams in Vietnam supported by AID, report a few personal observations which, cast into numbers and multiplied by the entire country, would provide the raw material for such information.

Civilians injured by Allied troops (mostly in automobile accidents) are seen occasionally at our hospital. They

are greatly outnumbered by patients such as these:

1) Villagers (mostly women and children) wounded by mortar shells deliberately fired into their hamlet by the Viet Cong, because the people refused to favor the communist side. (The number of these patients may have been reduced by the Viet Cong threat to kill all the injured who sought help from the government.)

2) Children burned by a phosphorus grenade thrown by a communist terrorist who wanted to dissuade their parents from voting in the national elections.

3) Members of the Popular Forces shot by the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese, because the Popular Forces are able to recognize an invasion of their homes by foreign troops and persist in defending them.

Also relevant to the question of civilian casualties are the facts that refugees fleeing Allied troops are nonexistent, refugees fleeing battle zones are not common, but refugees from communist control are numerous. People whose families have been killed accidentally by Allied arms are difficult to find; those whose families have been killed deliberately by the Viet Cong work with us every day.

Regarding the degree of concern for the lives of civilians of the various contestants in Vietnam, it is noteworthy that the communists have killed 100,000 of their countrymen since coming to power. This figure will undoubtedly be improved upon if they seize control of the entire country, since six percent of the population of South Vietnam fled there expressly to avoid living under red rule, and all the overt anti-communists in Vietnam are in the South.

If you are truly concerned about the welfare of the Viet people, let me suggest that you will do more good by

### NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Roger Hazelton, Abbot Professor of Christian Theology at Andover Newton Theological School, is the author of several books about religion. Don Carlos Buell lives in Cambridge, Mass., and is working on a novel.