

Killer Suspect Charged

Byron de La Beckwith Held In Evers Murder Citizens Council Member To Face Grand Jury

Police have charged Byron de La Beckwith of Greenwood with the ambush slaying of Medgar Evers. FBI agents arrested the accused killer in Greenwood last Saturday evening and brought him to Jackson Sunday morning where local police prepared the murder charge.

An intensive search which began the night of the shooting, June 11, led police to Beckwith. A local officer found a 30-06 rifle in a vacant lot near Evers' home.

Concessions Relieve Tension; Efforts Expand In Jackson

Concessions from the Mayor of Jackson and intensified voter registration and selective buying campaigns highlighted a week of easing tensions.

Thursday afternoon, Mayor Allen Thompson swore in the first Negro policeman in the history of the city.

Mayor Thompson told Negro leaders that the policeman, Joe Lewis Land, a hefty former caddy, would be assigned to a Negro district in town, but that he would have full powers along with other members of the force.

Policeman Only A Start

However, at mass meetings during the week, Jackson leaders agreed that the Mayor's concessions were only a small beginning. "We are not going to settle for just policemen," Rev. Robert L. T. Smith, said. However, he said, "We couldn't get more concessions because we have negotiated from a condition of weakness—we didn't have enough votes to get what we wanted."

Jackson leaders therefore threw the force of the community behind a two pronged movement for equality through voter registration and selective buying.

"Buy Where Appreciated"

Discussing selective buying, leaders called upon the community to "buy where you are appreciated until these gates are opened to us." Several peo-

(Continued on Page 4)

Fingerprints

Police traced the gun's telescopic sight to a gun dealer in Grenada and then to Beckwith. The FBI matched a fingerprint on the sight with prints in Beckwith's Marine Corps record.

Henry On Beckwith: 'Court Won't Indict'

In an exclusive interview with the FREE PRESS about the recent capture of Byron de La Beckwith, State NAACP president Aaron Henry said he had "no real optimism for justice in view of justice in the past" in Mississippi.

Henry said, however, that he still hoped that race "does not affect just punishment, if Beckwith is guilty."

Henry, who calls himself "one of the best friends" of Evers, said, when asked if he thought Beckwith was the man, "It appears that the Attorney General feels he is, and I trust him."

Pessimistic

In response to what he thought would happen to Beckwith, Henry said, "What I think and what I hope are two different things. I don't think the Grand Jury will indict him. They probably will use the lunacy angle. At most he will

(Continued on Page 4)

Grand Jury

Beckwith appeared in a preliminary hearing before Municipal Judge James Spencer Tuesday afternoon where he pleaded not guilty to the charge of murder. However, the court decided there was enough evidence against him to send his case to a grand jury. Beckwith is being held without bond.

The grand jury will decide in a closed hearing Monday whether or not there is enough evidence against him for a criminal trial.

Others Involved

Although Beckwith is the sole defendant for the killing, the FBI said that other unknown persons were also involved. Witnesses near the Evers home

(Continued on Page 4)



Byron de La Beckwith charged with murder of Medgar Evers.

People Jailed As Campaigns Grow In Itta Bena, Greenwood

14 voter registration workers in Greenwood and 47 citizens of nearby Itta Bena were jailed this week as a result of stepped up registration activities in the two Delta communities.

According to Eleanor Holmes, a registration worker in Greenwood, 10 registration organizers were arrested there Tuesday morning and four were arrested that afternoon as 70 citizens of Greenwood went to the courthouse and found themselves caught in a game of nip and tuck with the county sheriff and local police.

According to Miss Holmes, the county sheriff told the Greenwood citizens to leave the courthouse steps, where they had been waiting, when the registration office closed for lunch.

Face Police

As the 70 people surged away from the courthouse and into the street, they were met by Greenwood police, who, fearing a demonstration, told them they would have to go back inside the courthouse. When the Sheriff shoed the group away from the courthouse a second time, they were met again by the local police, who arrested the ten leaders.

Four more were arrested during activities that afternoon.

14 Held

Miss Holmes noted that the 14 were being held without bond, and that registration workers there had sent a telegram explaining the situation to the U. S. Attorney General.

The telegram, she said, pointed out that demonstrations were inevitable in Greenwood if citizens were not registered there more promptly.

Bomb Leads To Arrest

Meanwhile, in Itta Bena, 47 citizens remained on the county Penal Farm after being arrested Monday when they walked downtown to report that a bomb had been hurled into the church where a voter registration meeting was in progress.

According to Itta Bena registration worker Sam Block, at that time about 5,000 citizens

(Continued on Page 4)

Shotgun Blast Strikes Youths Near Canton Voter Meeting

A shotgun blast from an unknown source wounded five Canton residents Monday night as they walked near the sight of a voter registration meeting. Canton has seen an intensive voter registration campaign in the past few weeks.

The round of bird shot struck three men and two women as they passed by the railroad tracks which divide the white and Negro sections of Canton.

Saw White Man

One of the women said she turned to see "a white man standing in the door of a filling station with a shotgun in his

hand."

She said they had not attended the mass meeting and were returning home from a walk when the shooting occurred.

The group was not seriously hurt by the blast, and after brief treatment all were released from the hospital Tuesday morning.

Police have not determined who fired the blast but have begun an investigation along with the FBI. While police said they believed the shooting was not racially motivated, George

(Continued on Page 4)

Ministers Support Carpenters Union

At a mass meeting in Jackson last Friday Rev. Alan Johnson declared, "The ministers strongly endorse the formation of a union at the Storkline plant."

Results of the Storkline election, held Wednesday, will appear in the Free Press next week.



Claude Ramsay, President of the Mississippi Labor Council, represented Mississippi Unionists at a meeting with Pres. Kennedy 2 weeks ago. Some 300 presidents of International unions and State and Central labor bodies from all parts of the nation attended the conference which was called to discuss employment discrimination against Negroes.

Ramsay said, "The big problem is a mass of unemployed, uneducated and therefore unemployable workers who have been displaced from farms and moved into the industrial centers. They can only do manual labor, and unless they are given training, they will remain unemployable."

He also said that the tragedy of Medgar Evers' death pointed out the need for increased action in civil rights to all the labor leaders present.

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Editorial Page

If You Don't Vote . . . You Don't Count

Last week, the Federal Bureau of Investigation arrested a man in connection with the murder of Medgar Evers. It is the first time that we recall seeing an arrest resulting from the many investigations the FBI has made in regard to the abuses of the rights of people in Mississippi.

There have been many other shootings in the state that can be clearly and directly connected with the attempts of Negroes to seek their right to vote. In most instances, the FBI has made some investigation, but we do not recall any previous arrests. It seems that someone very important has to be killed in order to have Federal men do more than take some affidavits.

We vividly recall the vicious shotgunning of two girls in their home in Ruleville last summer and the nine homes that were targets in Leake County last fall. In those cases, several people reported seeing men in cars leaving the scene. There were clues but we do not recall hearing any arrests resulting from the FBI investigations.

By their rapid, and apparently thus far fruitful investigation, (Beckwith is only a suspect and has not been proven guilty) the Federal investigators have demonstrated how effectively they can operate. Why is it that they do not operate so effectively in many similar, but less publicized cases?

The fact is that any government agency, federal, state, or local is bound to act according to the pressure that is put on it. The FBI, since it is an agency of the Federal government, seems to operate effectively only when pressure is exerted in the proportion that followed the Evers murder. When someone the rest of the nation does not know is a Mississippi shotgun target, there is little chance that the FBI is going to come up with a suspect.

It was not because the people of Mississippi were aroused by the killing of Medgar Evers that a suspect was found. It was because the people outside of Mississippi demanded justice. Most of the Negroes of Mississippi can not exert pressure on the FBI to act for the same reason it cannot put pressure on other parts of the government and expect much action—because they are not voters.

The only sure way to have any government agency work for you is to be registered. Then when you squawk about something, that agency is going to do something (for fear you will use your voting power to see that someone takes their jobs.)

Federal assistance in finding the killers of Medgar Evers is assured because the voting people of the nation are demanding it. But when something happens that the rest of the nation does not hear or does not care about, it is going to be up to you to put on the pressure. And if you are not registered, your pressure will not amount to much.

We are glad that the rest of the nation did respond to the brutal murder, and the FBI is to be commended for its work thus far, but at the same time, we must constantly remind ourselves that he is dead. This is afterwards.

We must organize by registering ourselves so that we can put pressure in the right places and prevent there being more tragedies, including one like those in Ruleville, Harmony and Canton that do not arouse the rest of the nation.

You Can Call The Shots

As most Mississippians know, nearly all state officials including the governor are being elected this August. The best way to keep from getting the man that you think is bad is to go out and vote against him and, at the same time, vote for the man that you think is better.

The deadline for registering in time to vote in this election is July 5. If you have paid your poll tax you can still vote if you register by July 5.

Of course, it is important who is selected governor because of the influence he exerts on the rest of the state. But the supervisors and sheriffs and justices of the peace and county clerks are all running for election this summer, too. And you well know how much they have to do with making your daily life pleasant or very unpleasant.

Are you the kind that likes to complain about getting kicked around or are you going to see to it that the best man gets elected and the other fellows stay off your back? Complaining will not do much for the situation, but voting does.

Underpaid Sue For Back Wages

If you think you are, and if you are covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act, then why don't you do what Thomas J. Buffington, who worked in Braxton, Miss., did: Have the Department of Labor go to court for you.

If Buffington wins his case, he will collect \$2,251.20 in back wages and damages.

Drives Out Of State

According to court records, Buffington was a truck driver who worked for Charles Savell of Braxton, Miss. Since his job entailed delivering US mail, commercial freight and other goods to points both inside and outside Mississippi, he was involved in interstate commerce and according to the Department of Labor, he was entitled to the minimum wage under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

For some workers, the minimum wage today is \$1.15 per

hour for regular hours and \$1.57 per hour for overtime, while for others, it is \$1 per hour for regular hours and \$1.50 per hour for overtime.

There are many exemptions to the Fair Labor Act, but there are also many Mississippi workers who are covered.

Worked 72 Hours

For example, three men employed as fish dressers and truck drivers for the Capitol Live Fish Co. in Jackson are suing for their legal wages under the Act. They worked 72 hours per week and were paid a weekly sum of from \$36 to \$40.

This means that often they were earning only fifty cents an hour, less than half the minimum wage. If they win their case, they may gain \$34,388.80 in back wages.

In another case, two night-

watchmen for the Harbert Construction Corp. are suing for back wages and overtime pay for work on a damsite project in Madison, Miss.

According to court records, they claim they worked 84 hours per week and only received a weekly sum of \$80.77 on payday. They were earning about 96 cents per hour.

May Get \$5,000

If they win the suit they will collect approximately \$5,000 a piece.

In a third case, a Canton, Miss. woman, will collect \$1,000 if she wins her suit against Fred's Dollar Store, a general merchandise store where she was employed as a clerk in the shoe department.

If you think you are being underpaid, it may be worth your while to check with the Wage and Hours division of the US Department of Labor, Federal Building, Jackson, Miss., or contact The Free Press.

If you are protected by the Fair Labor Standards Act, and if you are underpaid, the Department of Labor may be able to get your legal wages for you.

Voter Registration Form

(By reason of the provisions of Section 244 of the Constitution of Mississippi and House Bill No. 95, approved March 24, 1955, the applicant for registration, if not physically disabled, is required to fill in this form in his own handwriting in the presence of the registrar and without assistance or suggestion of any other person or memorandum.)

1. Write the date of this application: _____
2. What is your full name? _____
3. State your age and date of birth: _____
4. What is your occupation? _____
5. Where is your business carried on? _____
6. By whom are you employed? _____
7. Are you a citizen of the United States and an inhabitant of Mississippi? _____
8. For how long have you resided in Mississippi? _____
9. Where is your place of residence in the district? _____
10. Specify the date when such residence began: _____
11. State your prior place of residence, if any: _____
12. Check which oath you desire to take: (1) General _____
(2) Minister's _____ (3) Minister's Wife _____ (4) if under 21 years at present, but 21 years by date of general election _____
13. If there is more than one person of your same name in the precinct, by what name do you wish to be called? _____
14. Have you ever been convicted of any of the following crimes: bribery, theft, arson, obtaining money or goods under false pretenses, perjury, forgery, embezzlement, or bigamy? _____
15. If your answer to Question 14 is "Yes," name the crime or crimes of which you have been convicted, and the date and place of such conviction or convictions: _____
16. Are you a minister of the gospel in charge of an organized church, or the wife of such a minister? _____
17. If you answer to Question 16 is "Yes," state the length of your residence in the election district: _____
18. Write and copy in the space below, Section _____ of the Constitution of Mississippi: (Instruction to Registrar: You will designate the section of the Constitution and point out same to applicant.) _____
19. Write in the space below a reasonable interpretation (the meaning) of the section of the Constitution of Mississippi which you have just copied: _____
20. Write in the space below a statement setting forth your understanding of the duties and obligations of citizenship under a constitutional form of government. _____
21. Sign and attach hereto the oath or affirmation named in Question 12. _____

Clarksdale Protests Bring 36 Arrests Within Past Week

The daily protest marches which began in Clarksdale June 16 had resulted in the arrest of 36 people by this week. All the arrested picketers were freed on \$201 bail each—a total of \$7236.

One demonstrator was tried and convicted of parading without a license and has appealed the decision. The rest have been charged with the same offense, and their trial dates set for the next few weeks.

The goal of the protests is the end of discrimination and the establishment of a bi-racial committee. In this connection, the Coahoma County Branch of the NAACP has called for a boycott of downtown stores until conditions improve.

Protest Discrimination

The demonstrators objected to prejudice against Negroes attempting to register to vote and segregation in the city's public library. Negroes also attacked bias in hiring at Southern Bell Telephone's Clarksdale office and the U. S. Post Office there.

In an action which resulted in 10 arrests Saturday, pickets marched in front of the Clarksdale Woolworth's to protest discourteous treatment of Negro customers.

Arrested Man, 96

In the course of the week several were taken into custody under somewhat strange circumstances. Thursday police arrested a 96 year old Negro for parading in front of the library. The man said a passerby had asked him if he would like to join a parade, but had said nothing about the parade turning into a demonstration. The man was released without charges.

Saturday three were arrested for parading without a license as they posed for a professional photographer before the headquarters of the Clarksdale NAACP.

Aaron Henry said demonstrations had been stopped this week to provide a peaceful atmosphere for bi-racial negotiations now in process. However, if talks break down, protest will begin again, he said.

MISSISSIPPI FREE PRESS

Published every Saturday by the HiCo Publishing Company, Inc., 538½ North Farish Street, Jackson, Mississippi, Phone FL 5-7345.

Published weekly in Jackson, Mississippi. Entered as second-class matter at the Post office at Jackson, Mississippi.

Subscription price: \$1.00 per year for Mississippians, \$4.00 for Non-Mississippians. Ten Cents per copy.

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Free Press \$5 Quiz

This is a new feature for Mississippi subscribers only—the Free Press \$5 Quiz. Here's how it works: Every week questions will appear in this space, based on recent news items and editorials in the Free Press. All you do is check the correct answers and send them in to the Free Press. All the entries marked with the right answers will be dropped in a hat, and the winner will be drawn out. Entries for this week's quiz must be received at the Free Press by Saturday, July 6. The winner, along with the answers to this week's quiz, will be announced in the Free Press July 13. Here's your chance to do some brain-work and win \$5.

If you are not already a subscriber to the Free Press, you can become one very simply by filling out the form on the back of the quiz and enclosing \$1 with your entry.

1. Demonstration leaders have asked everyone to stop buying Hart's Bread because

- (a) it costs too much.
- (b) it is rumored that a Hart's breadman gave free bread to policemen who were arresting demonstrators in Jackson.
- (c) it doesn't taste good.
- (d) Hart's bakery doesn't hire Negroes.

2. James Meredith in a recent speech stated the well known fact that

- (a) lack of education is keeping the Negroes from getting ahead.
- (b) It is usually hot in the summertime in Mississippi.
- (c) Ole Miss is integrated.
- (d) Ross Barnett has a gold plated bathroom.

3. If workers at the Storkline plant lose their jobs because they form a union, it is a violation of

- (a) federal law.
- (b) Storkline rules governing their workers.
- (c) City laws.
- (d) County ordinances.

4. Medgar Evers was buried in

- (a) Jackson, Miss.
- (b) Arlington National Cemetery.
- (c) Decatur, Miss., his home town.
- (d) New York City.

Clip out the quiz and write your name and address here:

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President's Civil Rights Bill Asks End To Job, School Discrimination

The crisis over civil rights which has been spreading through many parts of the nation reached President Kennedy's office last week. The President responded with a broad plan for legislation to speed desegregation in private businesses, schools, and jobs.

If his bill passes, the force of the federal government will back the right of all citizens to work, swim, or eat where they want.

Opponents of the civil rights provisions will probably line up most firmly against the section which attacks discrimination in private facilities, such as hotels, restaurants, gas stations, and swimming pools.

Would Bar Service Denial

Under Mr. Kennedy's bill it would be illegal for a restaurant to refuse a customer service because he was a Negro. This would shift the protection of the law from the proprietor of a restaurant to Negroes participating in a sit-in.

If the sit-in demonstrators were denied service and were unable to pay for court costs, they could ask the Justice Department to provide lawyers and fees for them.

Would Deny Aid

The President's bill also strikes at segregated schools by denying them federal aid. In addition, the Attorney General would be given the authority to file suit against such schools.

This would benefit parents who wanted their children to at-

tend a previously segregated school but could not pay for the legal proceedings often necessary for desegregation.

The third section of the bill is aimed at raising job opportunities for Negroes. The President said, "There is little value in a Negro's obtaining the right to be admitted to hotels and restaurants if he has no cash in his pocket and no job."

Job Training

To meet this problem he proposed expanded state and fed-

eral programs to train unskilled workers for more stable and higher-paying jobs. He included proposals to train and employ young people who can not find work.

The President indicated he hoped local communities would work out their own problems peacefully through bi-racial committees. However, he proposed a federal Community Relations Service which would act as a mediator if opposing community groups could not settle their problems alone.

71 Try To Desegregate Beach, Get Arrested By Biloxi Police

Biloxi police arrested 68 Negroes and three whites as they attempted to integrate a section of Gulf beach near the city's downtown area. The demonstrators were booked on charges of trespassing and taken to jail in Gulfport.

Police also arrested a 50 year old white man when he headed toward the crowd with a snub-nosed .38 revolver in his hand.

The demonstrators contended that the beach on which they staged the "wade-in" was public property. The federal government also claims the area is public because it spent \$1,133,000 restoring the beaches

after they were destroyed by a hurricane in 1948.

Title Disputed

Local property owners have also claimed title to the beach, which lies across a highway from a group of homes. They claim they bought the rights to the beachfront when they bought the land across the road from the beach.

A crowd of 2000 watched the demonstrators who swam, played baseball, or lounged on the beach. After 40 minutes a 40-man police detail went into action when a real estate dealer filed charges of trespassing.

Set Fire To Car

The demonstrators were taken to jail in a moving van packed so tightly that police officers were unable to close its doors. Soon after, whites who remained at the beach overturned one of the cars which

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Henry On Beckwith . . . Killer . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

get a small sentence and a fine, with both suspended.

"If the Justice Department leads us to believe that he is guilty and he gets off easy, a very tense reaction can be expected. The Negro community will not incite violence, but demonstrations which would tie up the state transportation could be expected. Probably large demonstrations all over the country would break out in response to such an abuse of justice."

Doesn't Deserve To Live

When asked what penalty he believed should be administered if the suspect is guilty, Henry stated, "Any man guilty of the cowardly act of waiting for a man to get out of his car to shoot him in the back doesn't deserve to live."

At the close of the interview, Henry said, "I still find myself in a state of shock sometimes. But I look at it this way, when Medgar fell, he fell his full 6

(Continued from Page 1)

said they saw three people running from a vacant lot shortly after the shot was fired.

Charles Evers said in a prepared statement that he was gratified that "the prime suspect" in the shooting of his brother has been caught. As the case develops he said he would be "watching to see if there is vigorous prosecution by the officers of the city of Jackson."

Greenwood residents described Beckwith, a fertilizer equipment salesman, as an arch-segregationist. Descending from an old Delta family, he was an active conservative with membership in the local White Citizen Council and the Sons of the American Revolution.

feet 2 inches forward. We will never have to retrace those 6 feet 2 inches. We are at least that much closer to our Freedom and we should never forget it."

Concessions . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

ple reported that white merchants have been telephoning and visiting Negroes to ask them to begin buying again.

"Citizenship Sunday"

Rev. G. R. Haughton declared Sunday "Citizenship Sunday" and arranged for ministers and young people to discuss voter registration in local churches.

According to vote worker W. C. Patton, Citizenship Sunday was a success. "The ministers were very cooperative," he said, "we think it will pay off."

Patton noted further that the voter registration campaign was doing well, with from 75 to 100 Negroes filing through the Circuit Clerks office each day.

The Rev. S. Leon Whitney returned from meetings in Washington last week. He reported to a mass meeting that the President told over 200 ministers they were morally obligated to seek peaceful integration.

People Jailed . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

had applied as voters, but only about 25 had been accepted.

Does Not Stop Action

Miss Holmes declared that registration activities in Itta Bena had not been quelled by the arrests. She stated that people in Itta Bena were "still coming in by the hundreds" to register. "The response is overwhelming," she said.

Miss Holmes held little hope for the jailed citizens, however, she said, there is little chance of raising enough money to bail them out.

Twenty-nine of the men arrested were fined \$500 each and sentenced to six months on the LeFlore County Penal Farm.

Shotgun . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

Raymond, a registration worker in Canton, said he felt a racial issue was involved.

Voter Registration

The shooting follows a two week voter registration campaign which has met with repeated harassment. Nineteen Negroes have registered despite discouragement by vandals and police.

The voter registration headquarters was ransacked last Sunday night and police on several occasions have intimidated people attending mass meetings. One officer slapped a 15 yr. old girl and tore a CORE button from her clothes.

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