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For immediate release:  
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MISSING MISSISSIPPI SUMMER PROJECT WORKERS:  
Chronology of Contacts with the Federal Government

SUNDAY, JUNE 21, 1964

- 9-10:00 AM: Mickey Scwerner, 24, of New York City, James Cheney, 22, Negro, of Meridian, both staff for the Congress of Racial Equality, and Andy Goodman, 20, of New York City, summer volunteer for the Mississippi Summer Project, left the Meridian office at 9-10 a.m., June 21. They were going into the Philadelphia area in Neshoba County to investigate the burning of a Negro church which occurred June 16. They were expected back at 4:00 p.m.
- 10:00 PM: H. F. Helgesen, Jackson FBI agent, was contacted by law student Sherwin Kaplan. Helgesen was informed that the party was missing and was given the three names. An investigation was asked for. Helgesen said something like, "Keep me informed of what happens."
- 10:30 PM: A Mr. Schwelb, a Justice Department lawyer, was called from the Meridian COFO office. Schwelb was in Meridian at the time. He was informed of the disappearance of the party.
- 11:00 PM: Jackson COFO called Schwelb at approximately 11:00 but he had not left his room.
- 12:00 PM: Robert Weil from Jackson COFO called Schwelb and gave him the license number of the missing car and further information on the addresses of the missing people. Weil requested an investigation. Schwelb stated that the FBI was not a police force and that he was not yet sure whether any federal offense had occurred--so he could not act. He was informed of the provision in the US Code providing for FBI arrests. Schwelb still insisted that he did not have authority.
- 12:00 PM: Weil also called Helgesen at this time. Helgesen took in the information curtly and did not allow a chance for further conversation. Weil also called the Mississippi Highway Patrol, with similar results.

MONDAY, JUNE 22

- 1:00 AM: Mary King of the Atlanta SNCC office called John Doar (Atlanta is on EST, 1 hour ahead of Miss.) of the Justice Department in Washington, D.C., and informed him of the case. He said he was concerned and asked to be kept informed. He said he would look into the case. He suggested that the Mississippi State



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Highway Patrol be alerted.

- 3-4:00 AM: John Doar was called again by Atlanta SNCC. He repeated (CST) that he would attempt to see what the Justice Department could do.
- 6:00 AM: On being called again, Doar replied that "I have invested the FBI with the power to look into this matter."
- 7:30 AM: Information concerning the arrest on traffic charges of the three which had been gathered from the Philadelphia jailer's wife was phoned in to the Jackson FBI office. The agent said he would give the information to FBI Agent Helgesen, who had been contacted the night before.
- 8:30 AM: New information from the jailer's wife, Mrs. Herring, to the effect that the three had been released at 6 pm, plus the results of phone calls to various neighbouring jails were called in to Agent Helgesen. Helgesen said he could do nothing until called by the New Orleans FBI office.
- 9:00 AM: Robert Weil in Jackson called the Highway Patrol. Though they had been called at least four times during the night, they did not seem to know about the case.
- 9:15 AM: Attorney Doar was called again at 9:15 from Atlanta and apprised of new developments.
- 11:00 AM: Helgesen was called and given new information reported by some white contacts in Philadelphia to the effect that the three were still in jail at 9:00 pm and appeared to have been beaten, though not seriously. Helgesen said he would "take the necessary action." He said that the alleged beating threw new light on the FBI's role in the state. He said he would call our source.
- 12:00 Noon: Helgesen was called again. He said that he had only called New Orleans and had not received instructions to investigate. UPI reported that officials in Philadelphia had released the three Sunday night at 10:00 pm.
- Rev. Ed King received a report from two whites in Philadelphia that the three were still in jail Sunday night and were beaten while in jail.
- 12:15 PM: Atlanta SNCC informed Jackson they had spoken to Agent Mayner in New Orleans, who had said he had received no orders from Washington.
- 1:00 PM: Meridian informed the Jackson office that Marvin Rich, public relations director of CORE, and James Farmer, executive director of CORE, had contacted FBI Agent Delloch, second in command of the FBI, as well as Lee White and Burke Marshall, head of the Civil Rights Division of the



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Justice Department. Rich and Farmer said that if they got no action from the FBI, they would call the President.

Meridian also stated that Farmer in Washington had called New Orleans.

Henry Wolff, attorney for the Goodman family called to say that Robert Kennedy had been contacted.

1:40 PM: Meridian reported that attempts had been made to call local Air Force bases to institute an air search, but were unsuccessful.

Atlanta SNCC called John Doar; he was speaking on another line. They left word for him to call back.

2:10 PM: Our source with the white contacts in Philadelphia reported that as of that hour the FBI had not yet called him, as Helgesen had promised he would two hours earlier.

Meridian reported that Marvin Rich was calling the Defense Department to try to institute an air search. Stormy weather developed later in the afternoon in the Meridian-Philadelphia area however.

2:45 PM: Atlanta SNCC informed the Jackson office that calls were made to Burke Marshall and John Doar at 2:30 and 2:45 respectively. Messages were left of plans for a 3:00 press conference as the two men could not be reached by phone.

2:55 PM: It was reported that reporters had been permitted to go through the Philadelphia jail and were satisfied that the three workers were not there.

3:05 PM: It was reported to Robert Moses in Oxford, Ohio by the Meridian office that a highway patrolman informed the office the sheriff released the three last night and had an unofficial report they headed south on Route 19 (toward Meridian).

3:30 PM: As of this time neither the Atlanta nor the Jackson offices had received any return phone calls from Doar or Marshall, nor did the FBI office in Jackson have any word from them.

5:20 PM: Doar called Atlanta SNCC and said he had information that the three had been in jail from 4-10:00 PM and had been released at that time. He said he had been informed that the state highway patrol had an All Points Alert out for the missing, and that the sheriffs of Neshoba and adjoining counties were looking for them. He said the FBI had been instructed earlier to interview the three when they were found. He did not make a specific statement about whether the FBI was investigating.



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- 8:00 PM: Helgesen called Jackson. He was asked 5 times if the FBI was investigating the case. 5 times he answered that "all inquiries are to be directed to the Justice Department in Washington."
- 8:45 PM: Meridian reported that they called Doar in Washington. Doar was busy. A collect call was placed to John Doar at his home in Washington, from Meridian. He would not accept the call.
- 9:30 PM: Reporters called from Philadelphia that four FBI agents from the New Orleans office were in Philadelphia. No men from the Justice Department were reported. The FBI agents reportedly were talking to people and were planning to launch a road search and investigation in the morning.
- 10:00 PM: UPI reported that Edwin Guthman of the Justice Department in Washington had announced that the FBI was ordered into the case to determine whether the trio were being held against their will or whether there was a violation of civil rights involved.

TUESDAY, JUNE 23:

- 8:40 AM: Meridian reported that Marvin Rich had informed them the Air Force might come by. As of this time, nothing had been heard from them.
- 10:10 AM: Meridian informed Jackson that John Proctor and Harry Saisan, FBI agents, were in the Meridian office. They were investigating, asking questions, and getting photographs of Schwerner.
- Nathan Schwerner (father) has an appointment with Presidential Assistant Lee White.
- 1:00 PM: Meridian called Jackson to say that Marvin Rich had made contact with the White House (with Lee White, Special Assistant to the President). He was told that the Naval Air Station near Meridian was available to the FBI for an air search. Rich asked for an FBI head agent out in the field. Rich said he was going to call New Orleans.
- Meridian informed Jackson that some Meridian citizens with private planes were thinking of conducting their own air search in case of further defaulting by the Defense Department. One of these people is Negro Charles Young.
- Rotman of New Orleans says helicopters are flying around the Philadelphia area.
- Marvin Rich said President Johnson was to call back to CORE in New York.



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- 2:10 PM: The Naval Air Station near Meridian was called. They said that as far as they knew, no search was being conducted. There were only student flights taking place in the area.
- 2:50 PM: Mr. Henry Wolff, attorney for the Goodmans, called. He said that the Goodmans and Mr. Schwerner, accompanied by Representative Fitts Ryan of New York and others, had spent over an hour talking to Attorney General Robert Kennedy. Kennedy assured them that all authorities were working on the case and that Navy helicopters were searching the area. He told us that they had an appointment to see Presidential Assistant Lee White soon afterward.
- He also stated that there was hope that President Johnson would make a statement to the nation.
- 3:55 PM: UPI moved a story that the FBI had found the car, charred and burned and cold in Bogue Chitto Creek, 12 miles north-east of Philadelphia. No trace of the missing persons.
- 5:15 PM: Attorney Wolff informed Jackson that Mr. and Mrs. Goodman, Mr. Schwerner, and 2 Congressmen saw President Johnson for about 21 minutes this afternoon. While they were there they received the news that the car had been found. Johnson assured them that the Federal Government was doing everything it could.
- 5:25 PM: Attorney Larry Warren heard a confirming report on local radio that a Navy helicopter was being used in the search.
- The sexton of the Mt. Zion Church which had been burned June 16 in Philadelphia informed Jackson that the FBI had been working on the burning case since Friday, June 19.
- 6:00 PM: WRBC News Report on Governor Johnson's afternoon press conference; Johnson had sent 2 plainclothesmen into the area to assist the FBI in the search. Governor Johnson had not called President Johnson or the Justice Department, but he was working with the FBI.
- 7:40 PM: Martin Popper, who is Attorney Wolff's partner for the Goodman family, called to describe the trip to Washington. On the trip were the Goodman's (Mr. and Mrs.), Mr. Schwerner, Congressman William Fitts Ryan, Goodman's Congressman, Congressman Ogden Reid, Schwerner's Congressman, and himself, Martin Popper.

First, they went to see Robert Kennedy. Katzenbach, Marshall and others were with him. This visit was apparently the first thing on Kennedy's agenda after his arrival from Massachusetts. Kennedy told the group that the Department of Justice was doing everything possible, and that he was using the maximum resources available to him, including personal resources. He told them the President also expressed his concern. The FBI, according to Kennedy, was



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acting on the assumption that this was a kidnapping; it is on the basis of this assumption that they are assuming jurisdiction in the case, he said.

The parents' group made it clear that the Federal Government must make every effort to (1) find the boys, and (2) protect the rest of the workers in the state. They made a special point that what was needed was not just investigation, but protection.

Kennedy said that the government was making a statement to Mississippians, urging them to come forward if they have any information. He assured them that they would be protected by the Federal Government. Kennedy said he personally would report to the President on new developments.

The Group then went to the White House. They met the Presidential Assistants Lee White and Myer Feldman. The parents were told there was a possibility that Army personnel might be used in the search; that Navy helicopters were already being used; that the President had told U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara to advise FBI Chief J. Edgar Hoover that Army personnel were available to Hoover.

Then the President himself saw them and said he was using every available force, including the Justice Department and the Defense Department for this case.

8:00 PM: The President called Goodman at his home in New York. He told him that there was no evidence that bodies had been found, but that tracks had been found leading away from the car. He said he had ordered more FBI and Defense Department personnel to "comb the countryside."

Goodman's attorney, Popper, informed Jackson that 60% of the FBI on this case are special personnel from the North.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24

7:00 AM: Radio report: Allen Dulles, ex-chief of the CIA, was being sent to Mississippi as President Johnson's personal investigator.

8:30 AM: Dulles arrived.

1:00 PM: Meridian informed Jackson that a young boy from Meridian who is often around the office, named Larry Martin, had seen Mickey and Andy before they left and remembered what they were wearing. Mickey was wearing blue shirt and blue jeans and sneakers. Andy was wearing a red shirt. This information was phoned to the FBI in Jackson, as the FBI in Meridian could not be reached.



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11:15 PM: Rita Schwerner informed the Atlanta SNCC office she had tried twice to see Mississippi Governor Paul B. Johnson. Accompanied by the Rev. Ed. King, chaplain at Tougaloo College, and SNCC worker Robert Zellner, she tried first at the state capitol and then at the Governor's Mansion. At the mansion, Zellner overheard Gov. Johnson answer a query about the missing men in the following words: "Governor Wallace and I are the only two people who know where they are and we're not telling." Governor Johnson slammed and locked the door when he realized who Mrs. Schwerner was.

At the federal building, Mrs. Schwerner, Zellner and King met with Allen Dulles.

11:30 PM: Freddy Lee Watson in the Meridian office told Atlanta SNCC: "We went into the country (Neshoba) today. We didn't see any police cars or FBI and we went over lots of portions of the county. The only thing we saw was a Marine helicopter flying above us. The people said the sheriff was coming through the area every day before the fire (church burning June 16), and then Tuesday there was the fire and the men beaten. But we didn't see any FBI."