

May 15, 1964

Chicago: Rob MacNamara

Two white ministers, Rev. Alexander Stuart and Rev. Ceddes Orman, were beaten in Camden, Alabama on Tuesday night. Rev. James Foster Reese witnessed the end of the assault- Reese is the clerk of the Union Presbytery in the Camden area.

Two white men broke into their hotel room (broke the door down). They had a pistol and a shot gun. They started shooting but didn't do too much damage because they were drunk. They then started beating the ministers and one received a broken arm, one a broken leg. They then went out and tore the ignition from the ministers' car so they had to hitch to Selma. They were treated in Selma by a Negro doctor, Dr. E.A. Maddox.

The men were in Camden on normal ecclesiastical business, but evidently at a meeting of whites that night, the belief was that they were part of a wave of clergy coming into the area to stir up trouble (possibly like the numbers of Northern churchmen who have come into Mississippi). According to Knoxville College information office the two assailants were members of the Citizens' Council.

The sheriff has said that he will not arrest the assailants unless a warrant is signed. Frank Hines, National Presbytery, NYC, says a warrant is coming.

Phone numbers for additional information:

Knoxville college: 546-0781

Reese's home: 524 - 1026

Reese's church: 525-2781

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Jackson: Hunter Morey

The following people were arrested in Belzoni last night on their way to Jackson from the COFO conference:

Jesse Harris

Jesse Davis

MacArthur Cotton

Larry Rubin, Philadelphia, volunteer worker

Doug Smith

A seventh person was with these listed, but we have no information as to his identity. The group was driving in the car that Larry and Doug had been arrested in at Oxford and Holly Springs a week ago. At that time they were arrested for carrying books calculated to incite people to overthrow the government.

Herman Gates, a high school student in Belzoni called the Jackson office with the information that the group had been arrested. Hunter Morey then called the jail in Belzoni to ask if they were being held and under what charge. The man who answered would only say that there had been a lot of robberies in the Belzoni area. He would not give the charges or the names of those arrested. He asked Hunter who he was and Hunter gave his name and said that he was Legal Coordinator. The man then asked if that was the NAACP and Hunter replied that it was COFO. Hunter asked the man's name and he hung up.

Hunter has called John Dear, but has requested that we call the CRC and the Belzoni jail.