

WATS report taken by Betty June 8 12 midnight

re: beating in Summit, Mississippi

Louis Aschoff, Andre Martinsons; Rene Robert Jonas

Coming from New Orleans; stopped in McComb about 2 pm; stopped because they were thinking of doing a free lance article on Mississippi and the South; As soon as they entered the town (car with Mass. plates); police car saw car and radioed chief of police; within 3 minutes police chief appeared where car was parked; stopped to get a drink at drive-in. Detained by chief of police for about 4-5 minutes and asked what they were doing in McComb; were they planning to stay there and if not, why they had stopped in McComb; they replied that they were writing magazine article (Andre) and would like to speak to some officials of the town; police chief directed them to town hall where they spoke to mayor McComb for about 2 hours; talked to police chief again who told them that McComb was ready for the summer and prepared to meet the Northern agitators who might come down; Then asked if they were leaving McComb and they answered they would visit a few more people in town before going on to Jackson. Left city hall and visited several Negroes in town;

While talking to police chief he was extremely proud of "efficient" police force and they said if it was so good we assumed that their rights would be well protected in McComb also. Upon leaving (about 8 pm) McComb ~~as~~ they were escorted to city line by a police car behind which was another unmarked car; at the city line the police car turned off and the unmarked car continued behind them. Beyond Summit, Miss. ...8 miles out of McComb -- unmarked car passed them, another car pulled up behind them; unmarked car slowed to a stop; a car (a third one) pulled out from a side road and forced them over to the side of the road. Nine men jumped out of the three cars at least three armed with rifles and one with a revolver which he placed at Louis' (the drivers) head and forced him out of VW and said you boys are going to get blown sky high. Meanwhile the other men with brass knuckles on beat the other two in the car. One in front seat (Jones) has broken nose and broken jaw. Martinsons has cut on head (was in back seat). Beat them for about 7 minutes. Man with gun to Louis' head aid this was only a taste of what outsiders would get in McComb, that they were sick and tired of having Northern agitators; asked Louis what Negroes they had seen in McComb and he answered he knew as well as Louis since police chief had followed them all day. All drove away; several cars had passed by; afraid they would be caught;

Mayor was past president of NCC...name is Burt; chief of police has Bible beside his gun on desk. Police chief Guy.