

From Wendy Samstein
Jackson, Miss. Sun. Feb. 16
To: Dinky

[1964]

Re: Natchez

Feb. 16, 2pm, William Ware. Last night there was a KKK meeting. Archie Curtis, local undertaker received a call about 1:45 am that Henry Gooding's wife was suffering from a heart attack. He was given vague directions which said that when he got out to Palestine Road he would be met by someone with a lantern to direct him to the house. When he got there he and his companion (unknown) were ordered out of the ambulance by 5 hooded men, each of which had a pistol. One was standing guard with a rifle. He was hit across the head by one of the men with a pistol and was then taken to another place, Duck Pond Road near an oil field and asked to show his NAACP card. Then he was told that he was an NAACP higger. They asked him to show the names of all NAACP members in Natchez. (Had neither). He was stripped and beaten with a strap. Also his companion was beaten in the same way. All this time they had been blindfolded. They were driven away and then left out of the car.

Natchez is now very tense. Negroes have guns. 3 people have been beaten in the past week, in addition to these two. One of the three was beaten in Amite County. He was stripped and soaked in motor oil and whipped with an 8 strip whip. He works in the Armstrong Fire Company in Natchez. Don't have name yet.

Rough draft of telegram from Bob Heger to Robert Kennedy:
Reign of lawlessness terrorizing Negro citizens of Southern Mississippi. Last night Archie Curtis, funeral director of Natchez, blindfolded, stripped and whipped by hooded men. Third beating in Natchez this week. Follows cross burnings and murder of Ayles. The year is 1964. We demand immediate action by the Federal government to protect Negro citizens.

We should send a copy of this or similar telegram to Johnson.

Re Hunter Merrey from Charlie Cobb. Hunter should be in Greenville on the 24th of Feb. for a trial.

Call Tim Jenkins to inquire what he can arrange about bonds for this summer. Surety bonds. Does he know anything about possible ways to insure summer workers (students at Freedom Schools and Community Centers, especially those on residential basis) for medical care if needed.

George Greene needs personal money (McGarther Cotton, Jessie Harris) to get to Natchez as soon as possible, like tomorrow morning. \$50.