

Dick Gregory, 2

receiving calls from local people who wanted us to come out and report what was happening. They didn't trust the local papers that didn't show "nigger trouble." Now, we are selling 1000 copies every week at 10¢ each.

August 29, 1965
Mr. Dick Gregory
1451 E. 55th St.
Chicago, Ill.

Dear Mr. Gregory,

Thank you for your most welcome offer to try to help us out of our trouble. In the midst of our financial emergency, it was encouraging to find you so responsive.

We think that if we can raise another \$10,000 altogether, we will be able to operate permanently on our own steam. The \$38,000 we raised last spring paid for equipment and kept the paper running for the first three months; but seven weekly issues isn't really long enough to make a paper self-supporting, especially when there are so many obstacles. Now, finally, advertising revenues are starting to come in; also, circulation jumps higher every week and is starting to bring in significant amounts of money. In a few weeks, the COURIER should be self-supporting. So, your own volunteering of emergency help-- by calling Drew Pearson and by seeing if it is possible to schedule a Chicago house party and possibly one in the East-- may be enough to keep us going until we can operate on our own revenues.

We are asking around to find the best house party situations. I would like to call you on Tuesday to discuss dates and places, if that is convenient.

I thought it would be helpful for me to tell you more about the COURIER (I have enclosed copies of some issues):

The COURIER began this summer to print a weekly newspaper of accurate civil rights news in Alabama. The full-time staff is composed of ^{mostly} volunteer college and professional newspaper people, working for subsistence wages. The staff also includes about thirty-five local reporters and distributors.

Reporters are stationed in Selma, Montgomery, Birmingham, Tuskegee and Mobile. We also have a "wild car" that travels to the news, be it in Alabama, Louisiana or Mississippi.

We have acquired a "fleet" of half a dozen cars, and office and typesetting equipment.

I am sure you are familiar with local Alabama journalism, particularly small town Black Belt weeklies, and understand why we felt there was a need for this paper. Negroes in Alabama quickly proved how much they wanted a paper that didn't treat them as outsiders looking in on society. In June, before our first issue came out, we were

Dick Gregory, 2

receiving calls from local people who wanted us to come out and report what was happening. They didn't trust the few local papers that didn't ignore "nigger trouble." Now, we are selling 15,000 copies every week at 10¢ each.

But what the COURIER has been able to begin doing is not just measured by circulation figures. For the first time, the opinions of Negro sharecroppers and laborers count and are quoted. Our physical presence has been important, too. Sheriffs all over Alabama are finding out that we won't go away. They have to confront us again and again when we probe to find out what is going on. Publicity makes it harder for them to get away with what they are used to doing.

The only reporters in Fort Deposit when Rev. Daniels was arrested were COURIER reporters and LIFE reporters reporting on the COURIER. That day, a mob smashed the windows of the car in which our staff members were sitting. We have been denounced in the state Senate, threatened, followed and harrassed and have had cameras smashed. We have been fortunate not to have had anyone beaten yet. The problems we run into are one indication that we are doing what we should be doing, for they show that we are threatening to The Man.

Your help will make it possible for the COURIER to become a permanent institution.

Sincerely,

Marshall Bloom
c/o 2 Felder Ave.
Montgomery, Ala.

Phone: 205-- 269-4134

Atlanta
Phone: 404-- 523-2223