

Dear Phil:

Under separate cover I am enclosing a copy of the report Don Harris and John Lewis wrote about their trip to Africa. In this letter I am sending a front page from the Weekly Inquirer, a paper which has started up in Albany as competition to the Southeast Georgian. The two stories that are checked I wrote. I have no more news on whether Julian Bond did anything about what was suggested, but I do have excellent news for you, along a similar view, which shall be enclosed in the newsletter part of this letter.

Dear Friends:

The week started off nicely with the judge signing acquittals for 4 defendants on assorted charges. These were a series of traffic charges (bad muffler, brakes, etc) against Ricks and Battle of SNCC, a concealed weapon charge against Rev. Wells (ludicrous) and a moonshine charge against a Mrs. Wallace, who says she found the stuff in a field near her house and sold a couple of bottles as she didn't have money to make her rant. I can't remember if I explained Wells' concealed weapon charge before, but what happened was that Rev. and about 6 young guys went out to the Victory Club at the end of the summer to test the Civil Rights Act. Rev. ~~was~~ searched everyone to see that they would not be holding anything and took the knife away from one of the guys and put it in his pocket. They went into the club and were served. When they came out and drove away the cops; (County) pulled them over, told them they were under arrest for tax unpaid liquor, a pulled a bottle out from under the back seat. Wells had left his car unlocked in the Club lot when they went in to test it. After they arrested him for the moonshine they searched him and found the knife - so they dropped the charge of moonshine which must have struck even them a bit ludicrous (Rev. is a very devout man and has never had a drop of liquor in his life) and charged him with the knife. But on Monday we filed a motion to ~~ad~~ acquit based on previous demands for trial for two terms, and the judge granted the motion. I also wrote a letter to Congressman O'Neal (who represents our district) for the Committee on Political Action of the 2nd Cong District. O'Neal asked for and got COPS's endorsement in return for promises of representation of all the citizens of the area. When he appointed his 214 men to the Demo Committee from the area, all of them, of course, were white. So we gave him hell and reminded him that his margin of victory was solely through the Negro vote (copy to Demo National Committee). No response as yet. A funny thing happened with a client today. A woman, ~~xxxxx~~ from Lee County, middle-aged & farmer's wife, came in today to see about a divorce. They got around to discussing costs and CB told her he would need a retainer. She said ok and asked him where the bathroom was, went in, and came about about 10 seconds later with a little wad of money all scrunched up - God only knows where she took it from.

The other day Mrs. Christian came up to the office. She has a problem with a racket correspondence school. Mrs. C is the woman who Wendy lived with when she was working in Albany. She is an amazing person who has been working with the Movement and going to jail, from the beginning. She has four daughters, the oldest of whom is now a senior in the white high school, and the next oldest will be going next year. She has very little education and has worked as a domestic, laundress, or done menial factory labor, but she is very aware of herself, extremely proud, and will never let the Crackers push her around. Like when she goes into a store and they call her Dessie Mae, she will correct them and remind them that her name is Mrs. Christian, and if they don't change this, then she walks out. Several weeks ago she was ~~and~~ wondering how her daughter Jo Ann was doing at the white high school, so she just walked up to the school and went into the principal's office. The principal was a little bit shook up by her appearance and asked her if she had been invited. She told him she didn't think she needed an invitation to find out how her child was doing in school, and it finally reached a point where he brought her to JoAnn's classroom, introduced her to the teacher as Mrs. C, and she sat in on the class.

The reason she came into the f office was because she was very worried about a letter she received xfrom a local white lawyer. A collection letter threatenin suit. It seems that a card ~~xxx~~ was put in her mailbox telling of a wonderful opportunity to learn to be a postal clerk for the U.S. Govt. She called the numb and a white guy came over her house. It was fairly easy to convince her to "take advantage of this wonderful opportunity" as she and her husband are separat and she has to support all her children on her pitifully small salary. The promise of Federal employment at high wages sounded wonderful. In his sales pitch the man GUARANTEED her employment with the Govt after completing the course and intimated that he worked for the Fed Govt. She signed the contract without reading. The contract is unbelievable. Not only does she obligate herself to pay \$200 for this "course" but they spell out that they do not guarantee anything at all in regards to employment. She also waives all exemptions that the law guarantees ie. homestead and clothing are generally secure from attachment, but she has waived this right. It is the rankest kind of fraud and it is perpetrated and on thousands of ppor illiterate people down here. The "course" consists of weekly mailings of a couple of mimeo pages with information taken from ~~ghik~~ high school geography, history, civiis, and math books. i.e. a list of the capitals and principal cities of each state; a copy of the constitution of the US and also a few questions which you answer and return with your weekly payment. The whole thing isnt worth 50 cents, and they get \$200. for it. We wrote a letter to their local lawyer telling him that we feel that the contract is without consideration and therefore unenforceable, and also suggest that there is a possible violation of Federal mail fraud statutes involved. We are waiting for his answer. I really hope they go through with the suit as I would love to see this thing litigated in Federal Court, and put pressure on the postal authorities to invastigate. I want to write an article for the local paper (Negro) warning people about this and similar outfits who prey on the Negro community.

Yesterday I got a letter (or rather a carbon) from Steve Antler of the Law Students group in NY to Mamie Nell Ford. She is one of the 6 or 7 Negro kids who are senions in the white w highschool and she wanted scholarship info which is extremely difficult for her to get in her present position. So I asked Antler to ~~kn~~ look into it for her, which he did. The reason I mention this is because it is so typical of the kind of service which CB's office is called on to perform. What we really need here is a community center with a fulltime staff person who will do nothing but provide these kinds of services to the Negro community, ie. look up scholarship info, write letters for people, etc.

We spent New Years Eve at home. Don Harris and Randy Battle came over for dinner, and a whole lot of drinking afterwards. Randy brought two young ladies with him (neither of whom was his wife) and somehow managed to give them both his undivided attention during the evening. Harris was at his best. The last few days he seems to have picked up steam again; he is ~~xx~~ spending alot of time working on the trip from here to Washington for the congressional challenge. He did an absolutely brilliant thing the other day, and this is probably what is making him work this hard on the project. He and Rev Wells were thinking about how the people would probably be kept out of Congress entirely, or at best, shoved around and sent from one office to another, and f would find the whole experience very frustrating. So he telephoned to the Embassies of ~~kh~~ some of the countries in Africa which he had visited a few months ago. He explained the problem and the response ranged from setting up interviews with the various Ambassadors, to full scale receptions for the people, and offers of all sorts of help. You can imagine the effect this will have. After being shoved around by the white mans government, these people will be treated as honored guests of various black mens governments. I just hope that news coverage on this is adequate.

Today I came into the office, tho I really didnt feel like working. But we have two cases in Sumter County ~~xxxx~~ monday morning. Willie Ricks is chrged with contributing to the delinquency of a minor (sending a 14 year old out on a picket line) and Zev Aelony is charged with having improper license plates. Zevs case was the one in which he went up to ask them how long he could drive on

Minnesota plates, and the State Trooper told him to drive his car around the side of the building and when he did, arrested him for driving with improper tags. In jail the crackers beat the hell out of him. So I drew up demands for trial (wait two terms and get an acquittal) and also motions to challenge the jury composition (a sure reversal because of the jury composition in Sumter County). Our pleadings are getting longer and more far reaching. In the original motions to quash the jury because of discriminatory selection it took under 4 pages and dealt only with that; now they run 6 pages and go on to allege the entire system of segregation in the courthouse, etc. Each time we write one of these we improve it a little bit more.

Dennis