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July 6, 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR

**Mr. Nicholas Katzenbach
Assistant Attorney General
Department of Justice**

Attached are two documents supplied by some of the parents of those participating in the Mississippi project. They were sent to me by some of the group that were in Washington last week. I know nothing about the accuracy of the allegations about the Justice Department and FBI personnel, but it may be useful to make sure that all people who have something to do with the project be alerted to lose no time in the event of future incidents.

At any rate, I assumed you would want this material for your files. I contemplate no response or even any acknowledgement.

**Lee C. White
Associate Special Counsel
to the President**

Attachment

CHRONOLOGY OF CONTACTS WITH AGENTS OF THE FEDERAL GOV'T.

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SUNDAY, JUNE 21

10:00 PM: * H. F. Helgesen, Jackson FBI agent, was contacted by law student Sherwin Kaplan. Helgesen was informed that the party was missing and was given the three names. An investigation was asked for; Helgesen said something like, "Keep me informed of what happens."

10:30 PM: A Mr. Schwelb, a Justice Department lawyer, was called from the Meridian COFO office. Schwelb was in Meridian at the time. He was informed of the disappearance of the party.

11:00 PM: Jackson COFO called Schwelb at approximately 11:00, but he gave no indication of having taken any action.

12:00 PM: Robert Weil from Jackson COFO called Schwelb and gave him the license number of the missing car and further information on the addresses of the missing people. Weil requested an investigation. Schwelb stated that the FBI was not a police force and that he was not yet sure whether any federal offense had occurred; so he could not act. He was informed of the provision in the US code providing for FBI arrests; he still insisted that he did not have authority.

12:00 PM: Weil also called Helgesen at this time. Helgesen took the information curtly and did not allow a chance for further conversation. Weil also called the Mississippi Highway Patrol, with similar results.

MONDAY, JUNE 22

1:00 AM: Ron Carver of the Atlanta SNCC office called John Doar of (EDT, 2 hrs. the Justice Department in Washington, D.C., and informed ahead of Mississippi) ed him of the case. He said he was concerned, and asked to be kept informed. He said he would look into the case. He suggested that the Mississippi State Highway Patrol be alerted.

3-4:00 AM: John Doar was called again by Atlanta SNCC. He repeated (CST) that he would attempt to see what the Justice Department could do.

6:00 AM: On being called again, Doar replied that "I have invested the FBI with the power to look into this matter."

7:30 AM: Information concerning the arrest on traffic charges of the three which had been gathered from the Philadelphia jailer's wife was phoned in to the Jackson FBI office. The agent said he would give the information to FBI agent Helgesen, whom we had contacted the night before.

8:30 AM: New information from the jailer's wife, Mrs. Herring, to the effect that the three had been released at 6:00 PM, plus the results of phone calls to various neighboring jails were called in to Agent Helgesen. Helgesen said he could do nothing until called by the New Orleans FBI office.

9:00 AM: Robert Weil in Jackson called the Highway Patrol. Though they had been called at least four times during the night, they did not seem to know about the case.

*All times are Central Standard Time (CST), except where indicated.

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- 9:15 AM: Attorney Doar was called again at 9:15 from Atlanta and apprised of new developments.
- 11:00 AM: Helgesen was called and given new information reported by some white contacts in Philadelphia to the effect that the three were still in jail at 9:00 PM and appeared to have been beaten, though not seriously. Helgesen said he would "take the necessary action." He said that the alleged beating threw new light on the FBI's role in the case. He said he would call our source.
- 12:00 M: Helgesen was called again. He said that he had only called New Orleans and had not received instructions to investigate.
- 12:15 PM: Atlanta SNCC called Jackson and said they had spoken to Agent Mayner in New Orleans, who had said he had received no orders from Washington.
- 1:00 PM: Meridian informed the Jackson office that Marvin Rich, Public relations director of CORE, and James Farmer, executive director of CORE had contacted FBI Agent Delloch, second in command of the FBI, as well as Lee White, Presidential Assistant, and Burke Marshall, head of the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department. Rich and Farmer said that if they got no action from the FBI, they would call the President. Meridian also informed us that Farmer in Washington had called the FBI in New Orleans. Henry Wolf, attorney for the Goodman family, called to say that Robert Kennedy had been contacted.
- 1:40 PM: Meridian reported that attempts had been made to call local air force bases to institute an air search, but were unsuccessful. Atlanta SNCC called John Doar; he was speaking on another line. They left word for him to call back.
- 2:10 PM: Our source with the white contacts in Philadelphia reported that as of that hour the FBI had not yet called him, as Helgesen had promised he would two hours earlier. Meridian reported that Marvin Rich was calling the Defense Department to try to institute an air search. Stormy weather developed later in the afternoon in the Meridian-Philadelphia area, however.
- 2:45 PM: Atlanta informed us that calls were made to Burke Marshall and John Doar at 2:30 and 2:45 respectively. Word was left, as the two men could not be reached by phone.
- 2:55 PM: It was reported that reporters had been permitted to go through the Philadelphia jail and were satisfied that the three were not there.
- 3:30 PM: As of this time neither the Atlanta nor the Jackson offices had received any return phone calls from Doar or Marshall, nor did the FBI office in Jackson have any word from them.
- 5:20 PM: Doar called Atlanta. He informed them that the Mississippi Highway Patrol had put out an ALL POINTS ALERT bulletin and that both the sheriff of Neshoba County and the FBI were searching. The sheriff claimed that the three were seen heading South on Route 19 toward Meridian.

- 8:00 PM: Bill Light in Jackson called Agent Helgesen. He was asked five times if the FBI was investigating the case. Five times Helgesen answered, "all inquiries are to be directed to the Justice Department in Washington."
- 8:45 PM: Meridian reported that they called Doar in Washington. Doar was busy. A collect call was placed to Hohn Doar at his home in Washington, from Meridian. He would not accept the call.
- 9:30 PM: Reporters called from Philadelphia that four FBI agents from the New Orleans office were in Philadelphia. No men from the Justice Department were reported. The FBI agents reportedly were talking to people and were planning to launch a road search and investigation in the morning.
- 10:00 PM: UPI reported that Edwin Guthman of the Justice Department in Washington had announced that the FBI was ordered into the case to determine whether the trio were being held against their will or whether there was a violation of civil rights involved.

TEUSDAY, JUNE 23:

- 8:40 AM: Meridian called to say that Marvin Rich had informed them that the Air Force might come by. As of this time, nothing had been heard from them.
- 10:10 AM: Meridian informed us that John Proctor and Harry Saizan, FBI agents, were in the Meridian office. They were investigating, asking questions, and getting photographs of Schwerner. We were told that Nathan Schwerner (Mickey's father) has an appointment with Lee White, Presidential Ass't.
- 1:00 PM: Meridian called to tell us that Marvin Rich had made contact with the White House (with Lee White). He was told that the Naval Air Station near Meridian was available to the FBI for an air search. Rich asked for an FBI head agent out in the field. Rich said he was going to call New Orleans. Meridian informed us that some Meridian citizens with private planes were thinking of conducting their own air search, in case of further defaulting by the Defense Department. One of these people was Negro Charles Young. Newsman Burn Rotman said helicopters are flying around the Philadelphia area. Marvin Rich said that the President was to call back to CORE in New York.
- 2:10 PM: The Naval Air Station near Meridian was called. They said that as far as they knew, no search was being conducted. There were only student flights taking place in the area.
- 2:50 PM: Mr. Henry Wolf, attorney for the Goodmans, called. He said that the Goodmans and Mr. Schwerner, accompanied by Representative William Fitz Ryan of New York and others, had spent over an hour talking to Attorney General Robert Kennedy. Kennedy assured them that all authorities were working on the case and that Navy helicopters were searching the area. He told us that they had an appointment to see [redacted] soon afterward.

He also informed us that there was hope that President Johnson would make a statement to the nation.

- 3:55 PM: Meridian heard that local radio station WMOX broadcasted that the FBI had found the car, charred and burned and cold. There was no trace of the missing persons.
- 5:15 PM: Attorney Wolf informed us that Mr. and Mrs. Goodman, Mr. Schwerner, and two congressmen saw President Johnson for about 21 minutes this afternoon. While they were there, they received the news that the car had been found. Johnson assured them that the Federal Government was doing everything it could.
- 5:25 PM: Attorney Larry Warren heard a confirming report on local radio that a Navy Helicopter was being used in the search. The sexton of the Methodist Church which had been burned June 16 in Philadelphia informed us that the FBI had been working on the burning case since Friday, June 19.
- 6:00 PM: WRBC news report on Gov. Johnson's afternoon press conference; Johnson had sent two plainclothesmen into the area to assist the FBI in the search. Gov. Johnson had not called President Johnson or the Justice Department, but he was working with the FBI.
- 7:30 PM: Martin Popper, who is Att'y. Wolf's partner for the Goodmans, called to describe the trip to Washington. On the trip were Mr. and Mrs. Goodman, Mr. Schwerner, Congressmen Ryan and Reed, and Popper. They first went to see Kennedy. Katzenbach, Marshall and others were with him. This visit was apparently the first think on Mr. Kennedy's agenda after his arrival from Massachusetts. Mr. Kennedy told the group that the Department of Justice was doing everything possible, and that he was using the maximum resources available to him, including personal resources. He told them the President also expressed concern. The FBI, according to Mr. Kennedy, was acting on the assumption that this was a kidnapping; it was on this assumption that they are assuming jurisdiction on the case. The parents' group made it clear that the Federal Government must make every effort to: (1) find the boys, and (2) protect the rest of the workers in the state. They made a special point that what was needed was not just investigation, but protection. Kennedy said that the government was making a statement to Mississippians, urging them to come forward if they had any information. He assured them that they would be protected by the Federal Governemnt. Kennedy said he personally would report to the President on new developments. The group then went to the White House. They met the Presidential assistants Lee White and Myer Feldman. The parents were told there was a possibility that military personell might be used in the search; that Navy helicopters were already being used; that the President had ~~to~~ advise J. Edgar Hoover that military personnel to Hoover.

Then the President himself saw them and said he was using every available force, including the Justice Department and the Defense Department for this case.

8:00 PM: The President called Goodman at his home in New York. He told him that there was no evidence that bodies had been found, but that tracks had been found leading away from the car. He said he had ordered more FBI and Defense Department personnel to "comb the countryside." Goodman's attorney, Popper, informed us that he had heard that 60% of the FBI on this case are special personnel from the North.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24

7:00 AM: Radio report: Allen Dulles, ex-chief of the CIA, is being sent to Mississippi as President Johnson's personal investigator.

8:30 AM: Dulles arrived.

1:00 PM: Meridian informed us that a young boy from Meridian who is often around the office, had seen Mickey and Andy before they had left and remembered what they were wearing. Mickey was wearing a blue shirt, blue jeans and sneakers. Andy was wearing a red shirt. This information was phoned to the FBI in Jackson, as the FBI in Meridian could not be reached.

THURSDAY, JUNE 25.

3:00 PM: Allen Dulles and Tom Finney, representatives of the President, met with leaders of the groups working in Mississippi. Dulles stated his mission was a fact-finding one. The leaders expressed the sense of frustration and isolation felt by Negroes because of police and civilian brutality of the state and the seeming unwillingness of the Federal Government to do anything about it. Dulles said he had been under the impression that the situation was improving in Mississippi, especially in the area of Education. The leaders told him all visitors were given that sort of brainwashing. They related to Dulles and Finney examples of incidents where police were involved with local citizens in committing atrocities.

Mr. Dulles was also told of the dangerous situations in various parts of the state, and was told what the leaders were demanding of the Federal Government: A. The president should meet with local leaders, as he has already been requested several times to do. B. That the Civil Rights Commission should immediately hold full hearings in the state of Mississippi. C. That the President should see to it that new Federal Judgeships were filled by men of integrity and fairness. D. Government officials should not publically state that they cannot protect people. E. There should be Marshalls and FBI Mobilized in all potentially dangerous areas.

1:15 PM: After waiting 45 minutes, Mrs. Mickey Schwerner was finally able to confer with Dulles, who said he had another meeting to attend. He expressed his sympathy. Mrs. Schwerner said, "I don't want your sympathy. I want much, much more."

TO: PARENTS OF ALL MISSISSIPPI SUMMER VOLUNTEERS

FROM: COFO, 1017 LYNCH STREET, JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

Immediate action is needed by all those concerned with the safety of the Mississippi Summer Volunteers. Unless the President and the Attorney General can be convinced of the need for Federal protection of civil rights workers in Mississippi, the events of Philadelphia are almost certain to be repeated over and over again in the next two months.

We are asking all parents to use their influence in the coming week to pressure President Johnson and Attorney General Kennedy into a commitment to protect workers before violence occurs, instead of waiting until the worst has happened before they offer their help. To help you understand what can be done, it is necessary to stress the following points:

The mood of Mississippi today is one of mounting tension. Acts of violence or near violence are increasing. We have enclosed a two-page report on incidents from one twenty-four hour period. The 16 incidents in the report show that violence is not limited to any section of the state and that intimidation takes an unlimited variety of forms.

The Federal Government did not act quickly enough in the Philadelphia case. We are enclosing a chronology of the attempts of COFO to obtain an FBI investigation or other Federal aid in the Philadelphia incident. This report shows that it took 24 hours - undoubtedly the critical 24 hours - to get the Federal Government to act. FBI agents in Mississippi are always white, generally Southern, and usually from Mississippi itself. Like local law enforcement officers, these agents often serve to obstruct, rather than aid, the administration of justice in civil rights cases. The enclosed chronology deals only with Federal contacts; local police changed their story continually and were useless in the attempt to locate the missing persons.

The Federal Government does have the ability to act quickly and effectively in support of civil rights. The third enclosure lists some provisions for Federal action in civil rights cases. It shows that the FBI does in fact have the necessary authority to provide protection for civil rights workers. Moreover, the President could act on executive authority to provide further protection, for instance through the appointment of Federal Marshalls.

On the reverse side of this sheet, an incident in Itta Bena is described. In this case, the FBI did help protect Summer Volunteers, and actually arrested three white men who had threatened Summer Project workers. The Itta Bena incident shows that the proper Federal agencies can act effectively when they choose to do so. The difference in the role played by the Federal Government in the Philadelphia and Itta Bena incidents was due not to differences in Federal authority, but resulted from the pressure of private citizens on the Government in the last few days.

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It is difficult to stress sufficiently the urgency of our request. Without immediate action, the lives of civil rights workers will be further and senselessly endangered; and we will have failed in one of our primary goals: to offer some semblance of protection to the Negroes of Mississippi, who have suffered for decades from the kind of incident which occurred in Philadelphia.

For instance, there have been five 'unsolved' murders of Negroes in the southwest part of the state since the beginning of the year. These murders received no national publicity until the beginning of the Mississippi Summer Project. Only our presence in Mississippi ensures the continued concern of the nation for the Negroes of that state, and the chance that the Federal Government will move effectively to provide protection for their lives and civil rights.

For this reason, in spite of the danger involved, we are fully committed to continuing the Mississippi Summer Project. This does not mean that we will attempt to provoke the state. Our program remains what it has been from its first inception: an attempt to bring educational and political opportunity to Mississippi's Negroes, where they have never had these things before.

Our workers will participate in voter registration projects and will teach in Freedom Schools and Community Centers. We are specifically avoiding any demonstrations for integrated facilities, as we do not feel the state is ready to permit such activity at this time. All workers, staff and Summer Volunteers alike, are pledged to non-violence in all situations.

As a further precaution, we are limiting work to a small area around each project center. All Summer Volunteers have gone through an intensive training session on conditions in Mississippi and the responses and actions they should take to allow them to work most safely in the state. A large legal staff is being maintained in the state to help those who get in trouble.

We are asking that movement at night be kept to a minimum. We are continuing a check-in system which allowed us to know almost immediately that the Philadelphia party was missing. However, though all precautions will be taken, we are determined to continue our work; and we need your help. We request that you do the following things:

1. Contact local papers and radio and TV stations and make certain that the full story about Mississippi is being carried in your community. Use the enclosed documents and the and the experiences of your own children in Mississippi to indicate the goals of the Summer Project and the continued resistance it is certain to meet. Stress in particular the need for Federal protection.
2. Contact the President, and Attorney General, and your own state and national representatives and demand immediate Federal protection for all people in Mississippi. Organize friends and relatives to make the same demand.

We are asking the following three things from the Federal Government:

1. That Federal Marshalls be stationed throughout the state. These Marshalls should be present in all cases where violence is likely. They should be clearly empowered to make all necessary arrests, including the arrest of law enforcement officers. They should be on call at any hour of the day when civil rights workers feel they are endangered.
2. That the FBI and Justice Department officials be instructed to provide full and immediate help in all incidents where danger is involved. FBI agents should use their power of arrest. Even more important, they should investigate immediately when so requested.
3. That President Johnson confer immediately with COFO leaders. This meeting has been requested several times in the last two months. The President declined to meet with COFO representatives, though they predicted that violence would occur early in the summer if Federal aid were not forthcoming.

The choice before Americans this summer seems very clear. They can either accept at face value the statements of the Attorney General that the Federal Government does not have sufficient power to protect the citizens of the country within its own borders - in which case the consequences will fall on those of us who live and work in Mississippi. Or they can use the influence and power they have over their own government to ensure that the events of Philadelphia are not repeated within the coming hours and days in Mississippi.

Robert Moses

Director
Mississippi Summer Project