

By Jerry DeMuth

As soon as Neshoba County Sheriff Lawrence Rainey and Deputy Sheriff Cecile Price got back to Philadelphia, after being indicted by a Federal Grand Jury for beating Negroes in jail, they resumed harassing civil rights workers. That first night back they continually patrolled past the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) office and once stopped in front of the community center, cut their lights and sat and stared at rights worker Alan Schiffman. "If looks could kill I'd be dead right now," Schiffman commented later.

In a county grand jury Circuit Judge O. H. Barnett (cousin of former Governor Ross Barnett) called Rainey "the most courageous sheriff in all America" and said that Rainey would assist in the investigation.

Normally a county grand jury waits until results are in from a federal grand jury, but Barnett's jury did not. Before it convened on Monday, September 28, Judge Barnett criticized the "irresponsible press and news media" and "irresponsible organizations" including "both the Democratic and Republican Parties." Three days later Judge Barnett dismissed the jury saying: "You have not tried to whitewash or cover this thing up—but have done your best to uncover the facts."

Needless to say, nothing came of this grand jury hearing.

Judge Barnett, in mid-September, signed an order that the county voter registration office be closed for two weeks because circuit court was to be in session. This closing coincided with the first Negro vote drive in Neshoba County's history. The order stated that "there is no deputy clerk" but a woman who identified herself as deputy clerk was at the courthouse. She pointed out though that she was not the deputy clerk for purposes of registration.

Mississippi statutes require that the clerk or his deputy must be in the office at all times from 8 till 5 except Mondays when he is required to go out into the circuit and register people.

In Batesville, Sam Echols, a local Negro active in the vote drive, was picked up by police on September 29. When he filled out a voter registration form he had written in "No" when asked if he had ever committed a crime. He had once been picked up on a liquor charge. As the form is "A Sworn Application" he was charged with perjury, tried *immediately*, and sentenced to five years. The sentence was later reduced to three years and then to 18 months.

The Freedom Democratic Party held a rally on picnic grounds in Canton on the afternoon of October 3. After it ended and people began driving home, state police set up road blocks on routes 43 and 16 leading from Canton to Jackson. All cars were stopped and licenses checked.

Where does the FBI stand is an often asked question in the South. When violence is threatened and the FBI is called, they reply that they cannot protect persons. But when Martin Luther King toured Mississippi this past summer carloads of agents kept close watch over him. When a racist has violated a federal law and workers ask for an arrest, the FBI replies that it cannot make arrests. But many criminals in penitentiaries know the FBI can make arrests, and the FBI arrested three whites in Itta Bena early in the summer for denying vote workers rights guaranteed them under U.S. laws.

What is the FBI then? An investigatory agency, it explains. But sometimes even this purpose is not lived up to.

Late in September, four SNCC workers and a local Negro were arrested in McComb as they were returning to their office after attending a vote registration rally. They were taken to the police station, fingerprinted, photographed and then questioned.

The first to be questioned was Ursula Junk who is from Germany. "I have a right to call my embassy and have them provide a lawyer for me," she explained.

The plainclothesman replied, "When you enter Mississippi you ain't got no more rights. Didn't you know that." Then he asked her, "Do you date niggers?"

She said she went out with people.

He pointed to two of the arrested workers. "What about those two niggers?"

"They're my friends, don't call them that."

"What friends. They're niggers."

The police went on to imply that she

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was a communist and a prostitute—and would need a medical check-up. Finally she was taken to the mayor's office where she was questioned by FBI agent Murphy. When he ascertained that she was a Catholic, he said, "But you didn't go to church last Sunday."

She said she went with one of the Negro workers.

"But you were late," he pointed out.

She said yes.

"You offended the whole community," he said.

"Did anyone in the church inform you because I noticed as we left the church a group of men were taking pictures of us."

"Yes, they had to do this for self-protection because they felt that a disturbance could have started and they need to take pictures of you both to know who was there. And you still wonder what the reasons for the bombings were? The reason was that you offended the community."

A student from England, Bill Powell, was also questioned. When he talked with agent Murphy of complaining to his embassy the FBI agent said he should not complain to the British embassy but give him his complaints.

The four were finally released, but were followed home.

After a trip to McComb, Rev. John B. Morris, executive director of the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity, commented, "The FBI agents I met seemed singularly disinterested in anything more than a *pro forma* display of investigation, and at least one agent's conduct in his interrogation of a voter registration worker is reprehensible and indistinguishable from the attitude of local police who attribute the guilt for the crisis to such workers."

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In Crenshaw, an insurance company has begun cancelling policies on many Negro homes as of October 27. The agency called one woman who had registered in August and told her that it could no longer insure small dwellings.

* * *

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By J

I'm back in New York this permanent Miami resident. I tried

Everytime I switched on my TV at this friendly fellow was saying, "Come down, come on down to Miami." His unctuous sales talk was accompanied by montage of scenes that whirled me on pleasant memory train journey to marinas, beaches, fishing piers, palm tree vistas and hotel facades I knew from past visits. The ineluctable allure of nostalgia captured me.

"Why live your life in New York City with its over-crowded subways, its filthy streets, the snow and slush of winter, the gripes and tensions of the Big City," I asked myself.

So, to Miami I went.

Miami, Miami Beach, North Miami Beach, Bal Harbour, Bay Harbor Islands, Coral Gables, Surfside and many other communities in Dade County form the Greater Miami complex with a population of over a million people. It is an ambivalent area of posh homes and estates landscaped with Royal palms and bougainvillea, hideous Negro slums, hedonistic posturing, agonizing unemployment for many Miami citizens, highly publicized sport and beauty contest spectacles, a mediocre symphony orchestra, splendidous, air-conditioned, wired music cafeterias where waiters carry a complete 89 cents dinner tray to your table (and the food is great), a semi-tropical canton that boasts that its hotels and motels are heated during the winter months.

Greater Miami has been invaded by a Cuban contingent of an estimated 140,000 people with disastrous results for its working class, especially the Negro community. Wage busting, caused by this mass influx has been widespread. Men and women who worked and lived in Miami for many years, with children going to school and homes heavily mortgaged—suddenly found their jobs non-existent. The Cuban take-over, especially in hotels, super-markets, gas stations and department stores is a fink's dream, what with long hours, microscopic wages and the Florida right-to-work laws.

Before the Cuban miasma, Greater Miami's salaries were woefully low, compared with the weekly pay envelopes of New York, Detroit, Chicago or San Francisco.

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A white girl working with SNCC was having trouble with her car and asked a local Negro about a garage. He recommended Big Red. She took it there and he put in some new parts.

The next night, Big Red had callers. A police car came by and the officers gave him a word of warning: It was official policy to ignore civil rights workers; whites shouldn't have any contact with them.

The girl returned to the garage for a check-up and Big Red, still the conscientious mechanic, serviced the car. The next day Red got a phone call. For four months he had had a lease on a garage on the other side of town. Now he was told that he had lost the lease. The area had been rezoned.

He continued to service the girl's car and began to talk to her. He told her he had been told SNCC workers were paid \$10 a day plus expenses. When she told him it was \$10 a week he became embarrassed and bought her \$5 worth of groceries. He also dropped by the office one night for a talk, and brought a case of beer with him. But he didn't want to become involved with civil rights, he only wanted to talk. He knew that he was only a small man and that the big men in town could crush him. He wanted to remain neutral.

Then on October 5, the girl was arrested by state highway patrolmen and her car was impounded and towed to a garage in town. The girl asked Red if he could tow it out for her, explaining what he might be getting into if he did. He agreed anyway and went and got the car. Five highway patrolmen watched him get it.

On the night of October 6, Big Red got another phone call. It was the garage owner inviting him over for a drink. Red of course knew him, but not real well. He went and upon arrival saw that the owner had other guests—three highway patrolmen in uniform.

Big Red had a drink, but he was careful not to drink too much. Suddenly one of the officers jumped him. Red fought back but then the second cop joined the fracas. "They really beat my ass," Red later explained. The third officer finally called the two off and all three left.

Red kept quiet about his beating. But

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Ex-Senator Pepper, now Congressman Pepper of Dade County, has spoken out about the job lay-offs and the salary slashes resulting from the large reservoir of Cuban help. Jack Kofoed, columnist of the *Miami Herald*, has also written about the miserable pay scale now prevalent in Dade County. But most of the politicians who rule the destinies of Greater Miami have been taciturn and indifferent.

Miami today is a bilingual city. Stores on Flagler Street advertise their sales in Spanish and English. Radio stations grind out round-the-clock Spanish speaking programs and newscasts. No matter how bizarre, a Cuban exile press release will find its way into a Miami newspaper. One such article, with accompanying panic headlines, was a report that ten to fifteen thousand Chinese communist troops, armed with the very latest weapons, were bivouacked throughout Cuba. Sensational communiques "from reliable underground sources," luridly tell newspaper readers Castro is now a blubbering alcoholic. Castro has an incurable disease, Castro, sensing the collapse of the revolution, is fleeing Cuba within the week.

Negroes have been hard hit by unemployment. Any day, one can drive past a plaza near Jimmy's Hurricane restaurant in South Miami and see the depressing sight of groups of Negro men, standing around, waiting for that beckoning finger that will give them a day's work, any sort of a job, just as long as it will give them a few dollars.

A few miles away, people are lounging

finally, two days after it occurred, he invited three of the SNCC workers over to have dinner with him. He talked freely about the incident with them.

The brutality and totalitarianism of Mississippi racism was driving another white into the work for equality and democracy.

The depravity of Mississippi racists was shown in Marks on October 20. Frank Morse, a white civil rights volunteer who had recently arrived from Stanford University, was stopped by four white men in a pickup truck. They forced him to drive down the road where they beat him. As their final act, three of the men held him as the fourth man urinated on him.