

HARASSMENT BY PRIVATE PERSONS

*Freemill*

I. Phone Calls

A. To the COFO Office

6/24	5:00-7:00pm	continuous ringing; when we lifted the receiver there was no answer. The phone was dead between rings, though the receiver on our end was down.
6/25	7:30-9:00am	the same occurred. Phone company was notified, but said that there was nothing that they could do.
	4:30-6:30pm	during this interval, there were four or five calls when the party at the other end did not answer. The phone was not dead between calls.
6/26	This was the day after the office phone number had been published as part of a letter to the editor in the <u>Delta Democrat Times</u> . The letter had been written by a Negro citizen of Greenville who had urged others to support the COFO programs.	
	10:10am	two calls in succession, pause, then a third call; each time there was no response at the other end
	11:00am	one call, no answer at the other end
	11:50am	two calls in succession, no answers
	12:30pm	one call, no answer
	12:35pm	same
	2:15pm	three calls, no answers
	3:16pm	one call, no answer
	4:30pm	same
	5:45pm	one call; the other party hung up when the phone was answered after one ring
	6:05 pm	same
	6:25pm	one call, no answer
	7:30pm	same
	8:45pm	two calls in succession, no answers
	9:20pm	person who called asked for the Imperial Wizard of the Klu Klux Klan
	9:40pm	one call, no answer
	9:55pm	same
6/27	9:00-9:30am	continuous ringing, dead phone in between rings
	9:45-10:00am	same
	10:35am	one call, no answer
	12:00pm and afterwards	the phone rung several times, was dead in between calls, and then remained dead for sometime into the night. Phone company was notified; they said there was nothing they could do until business department opened on Monday.
7/4	11:30pm	phone went dead at about 11:30pm. After this occurred, I listened and could hear children's voices and a door slamming at the other end of the line. Called phone company, where both the operator and the service department said that they could do nothing. They told me to contact the business department on Monday. Business department was called and questioned; its reply was that they also could do nothing to determine who was keeping our phone dead.
7/8	7:35pm	long distance call for Benny Jackson from Biloxi; we knew of no such person and told operator so

Note: The calls which were received on June 26 did not keep the COFO phone dead between calls. They were all anonymous to the extent that nothing was said and there was no breathing at the other end.

7:45pm another call for Benny Jackson, long distance; also asked for a Benny Johnson, a John Thomas, or a John Watson. We told operator to refer the call to Jackson COFO.

7:52pm again a long distance call from Biloxi for Benny Jackson or John Watson. Told operator that neither were here and asked if the other party wished to talk to me (John Sawyer). She said that the other party would talk to me if I accepted the charge. I refused to do so.

7/9 10:30am no dial tone  
10:40am Norma Becker cut off on a call to the Jackson office; reconnected after about 45 seconds  
2:05pm one phone call, no answer  
2:08pm same  
2:20pm same  
2:21 pm same  
2:25pm same  
2:45pm Earl Harris called from Hollandale; very poor connection (much excess noise, like loud hammering, in the background). It sounded as if the line was purposely being jammed.

7/10 2:30pm phone rang three times, no answer each time  
7/11 10:30am a call asking if the office was the headquarters of the KKK  
10:42am one call, party at the other end hung up without saying anything  
11:55am a call for the Grand Wizard of Klu Klux Klan  
12:30pm three calls where the other party hung up without saying anything  
12:40pm woman at other end yelled into the phone, then hung up  
7/14 8:40am phone dead  
9:30am phone call from Jackson was cut off  
9:00pm phone dead  
7/17 6:25pm no answer, party at other end hung up  
6:32pm same  
6:40pm same  
6:44pm same  
7/19 11:00pm am the phone was dead. Charles Cobb talked to business manager on another line. He said he would send a man out the next day (and told Cobb not to be insolent). Said repair man never came.

7/20 10:25pm phone dead  
10:45pm phone ringing continuously. Line was dead between rings.  
7/21 10:30pm repeated ringing, no answers, dead line during the intervals  
7/22 10:10pm Louis Grant made a call to Jackson COFO and expected the call to be returned. After his call, there was a series of calls where the other party did not answer and our line was dead in between calls. Jackson office could not reach Grant until about 11:00pm.  
11:30pm we placed another call to Jackson COFO. Repeated ringing began again. Line was dead for five minutes.  
7/24 9:10pm anonymous caller wished to know my name, home, and what I was working for. I (John Sawyer) answered only my name and that I was working with COFO for Freedom.

Admittedly, this chronicle of phone calls is incomplete. It, however, indicates the pattern and type of phone harassment which we have received at the Greenville COFO office. There have been no verbal threats and, in the great majority of instances, the other party has said nothing. Since the middle of July, the number of calls per day has decreased to an average of two a day, in the middle of August. It is no longer a common occurrence to find the phone dead at night. The phone was dead two times on July 29 after calls which might have been interpreted as being emergencies.

**B. To other individuals connected with the Movement**      white

- 1.) the last week of July, Nancy Jay Schieffelin, a/summer volunteer from Short Hills (New Jersey), received a number of anonymous calls at the house where she was staying (a Negro family by the name of Reed at 1009 Holmes St.). The caller kept repeating the phrase "blood is the life". Miss. Schieffelin subsequently moved to another house.
- 2.) the family of Dan Harris, 737 Carver Circle, Greenville, has received a number of phone calls. Two white summer volunteers are staying at the house. The phone calls increased in number the week of August 9-August 15. In most instances, there was no answer at the other end. Once, on August 13, a white woman asked if the Harrises took boarders.

**II. Talk on the Streets**

**A. To COFO workers**

Whites have, on occasion, encountered COFO workers and asked them what they were doing and why. There have been no serious threats in Greenville. In the rest of Washington County, white volunteers have been told to get off various plantations and that they were trespassing. They have done so.

**B. To inhabitants of community**

In Bookertown, in the southern part of Greenville, whites (who are mostly women in their 50's) have approached Negroes and told them not to become involved in the movement. The whites have not been serious in terms of action and Horton Thomas, a white volunteer who worked in that area of town, knew of no threats.

**III. Beatings**

- A.** Russ Allan, a white summer volunteer, was slapped on August 13 at about 11:00am by a man reported to be one Daisy Dodd. Allan was, at the time, canvassing an area one mile outside of Dunleith, Washington County.

**IV. Threats**

- A.** Earl Harris, a SNCC staff worker in Hillandale, was threatened with a razor blade by barber Farrell Stokes. This happened after Earl had entered a white barbershop (Earl is a Negro) and had been hit on the neck by a white patron.

## ARRESTS

### 1.) traffic violations

Fred Anderson, SNCC staff, arrested for driving without a license. Paid a \$21 fine.

Mrs. J. L. Moreton, inhabitant of Greenville who was housing two freedom school teachers, arrested for driving without a license shortly after she had lost hers. She paid fine. Had trouble getting a new license.

Larry Lockshin, a COFO volunteer, in Mattiesburg for making an illegal U-turn. Paid 17 dollar fine.

Sam Applewhite, a Negro citizen of Greenville, a driver for COFO, and a Washington County delegate for the Freedom Democratic Party, on two trumped-up charges. One of forcing another person off the road outside Leland was dropped. The other, one of reckless driving, was also dropped.

### 2.) forgery

Willie Rollins, a Greenville teenager who was passing out leaflets in Leland on July 28. He was approached by police and asked if he had been at the Leland bank the day before. He answered that he had not. He was then arrested on having written or cashed a forged check. He was questioned for approximately 40 minutes and then released without any charge.

### 3.) littering

Louis Grant and Bob Wright, both SNCC staff members, were arrested on August 11 at about 5:30pm in Anguilla, Sharkey County. They were leafleting for a Freedom Day to be held August 12 in Rolling Fork. The original charge was leafleting without a permit. When bond was set the following morning at \$200 apiece, the charge was changed to littering. The trial is set for August 26.