

BY MIKE SMITH

ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

PHILADELPHIA, MISS., DEC. 2 (AP)-NESHOPA COUNTY ATTORNEY RAYFORD JONES SAID TODAY THE FBI HAS KEPT HIM IN THE DARK ABOUT ITS INVESTIGATION OF THE THREE MURDERED CIVIL RIGHTS WORKERS.

JONES SAID LOCAL OFFICIALS, WHO WOULD PROSECUTE MURDER CHARGES IN THE CASE, HAD "GIVEN THE FEDERAL PEOPLE A FREE REIN, AND EXPECT TO HEAR FROM THEM WHEN THE CASE IS READY."

"BUT WE HAVE NO IDEA WHAT IT WILL BE OR WHEN," HE SAID.

A FEDERAL GRAND JURY IN SEPTEMBER TOOK NO ACTION IN THE TRIPLE SLAYING, BUT INDICTED FIVE PERSONS, INCLUDING SHERIFF LAWRENCE RAINEY AND DEPUTY CECIL PRICE, ON CHARGES OF VIOLATING RIGHTS OF NEGROES TWO YEARS AGO.

ARRESTS COULD BE MADE ON MURDER CHARGES ONLY FOR PRESENTATION TO A COUNTY GRAND JURY. A FEDERAL GRAND JURY WOULD BE EMPOWERED ONLY TO CONSIDER CASES INVOLVING VIOLATIONS OF CIVIL OR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS.

A COUNTY GRAND JURY TRIED TO INVESTIGATE THE SLAYINGS IN SEPTEMBER, BUT THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT REFUSED TO PERMIT FBI AGENTS TO TESTIFY. A FEDERAL SPOKESMAN SAID AT THE TIME THE CASE WAS NOT READY FOR PRESENTATION.

JONES SAID LOCAL AUTHORITIES HAD RECEIVED "ABSOLUTELY NOTHING" FROM THE FBI. "THEY HAVEN'T EVEN TOLD US WHAT SIZE BULLETS THEY TOOK FROM THE BODIES."

IF ARRESTS WERE MADE FOR MURDER, THOSE CHARGED WOULD BE ARRAIGNED BEFORE A JUSTICE OF THE PEACE IN NESHOPA COUNTY.

DEPUTY PRICE, THE LAST KNOWN PERSON TO SEE MICKEY SCHWERNER, ANDREW GOODMAN AND JAMES CHANEY BEFORE THEY DISAPPEARED NEAR PHILADELPHIA JUNE 20, WAS BACK ON DUTY TODAY AFTER A DEER-HUNTING TRIP.

"I'M GLAD THEY WAITED UNTIL I GOT BACK TO DO ANYTHING," IF THEY'RE GOING TO DO IT," HE SAID.

PS857PES