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E(250) WITH PHILADELPHIA ARRESTS (A17NU)

WASHINGTON, DEC. 5 (AP)-THE FBI BUILT ITS CASE AGAINST 21 MEN ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH THE DEATHS OF THREE CIVIL RIGHTS WORKERS BY INTERVIEWING MORE THAN 1,000 RESIDENTS OF MISSISSIPPI, INCLUDING 480 MEMBERS OF THE KU KLUX KLAN.

FBI SOURCES, MAKING THIS KNOWN TODAY, POINTED OUT 153 AGENTS HAD WORKED ON THE CASE ALMOST WITHOUT LET-UP SINCE MICHAEL SCHWERNER, ANDREW GOODMAN AND JAMES CHANEY DISAPPEARED NEAR PHILADELPHIA, MISS. LAST JUNE.

"HUNDREDS AND HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE WERE INTERVIEWED," ONE SOURCE SAID. HE CALLED AN ESTIMATED TOTAL OF 1,000 INTERVIEWS CONSERVATIVE.

ALSO OF HELP IN DEVELOPING EVIDENCE LEADING TO THE 21 ARRESTS AT PHILADELPHIA YESTERDAY WAS THE FACT THAT THE FBI HAS INFILTRATED THE KLAN AND KNOWS ITS INTERNAL WORKINGS.

HOOVER DISCLOSED THIS IN AN INTERVIEW WITH NEGRO LEADER MARTIN LUTHER KING LAST TUESDAY AND COMPARED IT TO THE SUCCESSFUL FBI INFILTRATION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OVER THE YEARS.

THE SOURCES SAID THAT HOOVER, IN AN INTERVIEW WITH WOMEN REPORTERS ON NOV. 18, REPORTED THAT 480 KLANSMEN IN MISSISSIPPI WERE INVOLVED IN THOSE QUESTIONED IN TRYING TO SOLVE THE CASE OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS WORKERS.

SCHWERNER AND GOODMAN, WHITE NEW YORKERS, AND CHANEY, A MERIDIAN, MISS. NEGRO, DISAPPEARED JUNE 21. THEIR BURNED STATION WAGON WAS FOUND JUNE 23 AND THEIR BODIES FOUND AUG. 4.

THE FBI SOURCES WOULD NOT COMMENT ON REPORTS THE FBI STILL DOES NOT HAVE THE MORE THAN ONE GUN ALLEGEDLY USED IN THE SLAYINGS. NOR WOULD THEY SAY WHETHER SOME OF THE 21 ARRESTED MEN WERE SOME OF THOSE WHO GAVE INFORMATION IN THE INTERVIEWS THAT LED TO THE ARRESTS.

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OF THE DEFENDANTS, 19 ARE CHARGED WITH VIOLATING THE CIVIL RIGHTS OF THE WORKERS AND THE OTHER TWO WERE ACCUSED OF BEING ACCESSORIES.

THE CRIMES -- BOTH FEDERAL -- INVOLVE MAXIMUM PENALTIES OF 10 YEARS IMPRISONMENT AND \$5,000 FINE, AND THREE YEARS IMPRISONMENT PLUS A \$500 FINE.

THERE WAS NO CONFIRMATION HERE OF PUBLISHED REPORTS THAT THE FBI HAS A STATEMENT FROM AN EYE WITNESS OF THE KILLINGS AND WILL USE IT IN