

NIGHT LEAD ARRESTS

BY DON MCKEE

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PHILADELPHIA, MISS., DEC. 5 (AP)-SHERIFF LAWRENCE RAINEY CLAIMED TODAY FBI AGENTS TOLD HIM THEY HAD EYEWITNESSES TO THE MURDERS OF THREE CIVIL RIGHTS WORKERS AND OFFERED HIM MONEY FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE BRUTAL SLAYINGS.

THE FBI CALLED RAINEY'S CLAIM "RIDICULOUS."

THE SHERIFF WAS ONE OF 21 WHITE MEN ARRESTED YESTERDAY ON FEDERAL CONSPIRACY CHARGES IN LAST JUNE'S TRIPLE MURDER. THE ARRESTS CLIMAXED A GIGANTIC FIVE-MONTH INVESTIGATION.

FBI SOURCES SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S CASE WAS BUILT BY INFILTRATING THE KU KLUX KLAN AND INTERVIEWING MORE THAN 1,000 RESIDENTS OF MISSISSIPPI, INCLUDING 480 KLAN MEMBERS.

THERE WAS NO CONFIRMATION OF PUBLISHED REPORTS THAT THE FBI HAS A STATEMENT FROM AN EYEWITNESS OF THE KILLINGS AND WILL USE IT IN COURT.

FBI SOURCES SAID 153 AGENTS HAD WORKED ON THE CASE ALMOST WITHOUT LET-UP SINCE MICHAEL SCHWERNER, ANDREW GOODMAN AND JAMES CHANEY DISAPPEARED NEAR PHILADELPHIA LAST JUNE. THEIR BODIES WERE FOUND IN AN EARTH-FILL DAM AUG. 4.

SCHWERNER AND GOODMAN WERE WHITE NEW YORKERS. CHANEY, A NEGRO, LIVED AT NEARBY MERIDIAN.

THE NESHOPA COUNTY SHERIFF'S CHARGE CAME AS MISSISSIPPI AWAITED THE NEXT LEGAL STEP IN THE MASSIVE FBI ROUNDUP THAT INCLUDED THE HUSKY SHERIFF, HIS DEPUTY, CECIL PRICE, A RURAL PREACHER AND SEVERAL BUSINESSMEN.

INTENSE INTEREST CENTERED ON NEXT THURSDAY'S PRELIMINARY HEARING IN NEARBY MERIDIAN.

GOVERNMENT ATTORNEYS WILL HAVE TO SHOW ENOUGH OF THEIR HAND TO CONVINCING THE U.S. COMMISSIONER THE MEN SHOULD BE HELD FOR FEDERAL GRAND JURY ACTION.

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THE QUESTION OF WHETHER ANY OF THE 21 MEN WOULD BE CHARGED WITH MURDER IN THE SLAYINGS WAS STILL UNANSWERED. MURDER IS NOT A FEDERAL CRIME UNLESS IT IS COMMITTED ON FEDERAL PROPERTY.

HE AND DEPUTY PRICE BUCKLED ON THEIR GUNBELTS AGAIN TODAY AND RETURNED TO DUTY AFTER THEIR ARREST AND ARRAIGNMENT YESTERDAY.

THE SHERIFF SAID TWO FBI AGENTS WHO PICKED HIM UP AT HIS OFFICE URGED HIM TO GIVE THEM WHATEVER INFORMATION HE HAD ABOUT THE JUNE SLAYINGS IN HIS COUNTY.

"THEY STARTED TELLING ME I KNEW EVERYTHING ABOUT THE CRIME," RAINY SAID. "BUT I TOLD THEM NO. THEY SAID, 'WE'VE GOT THREE TO ~~FIVEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE~~

FIVE EYEWITNESSES AND WE ARE GOING TO TAKE CARE OF THEM..' "

HE QUOTED THE AGENTS AS SAYING: "IF YOU'LL COME ON AND TELL US WHAT YOU KNOW, WE WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU AND PAY ALL YOUR DEBTS AND YOU WILL LEAVE OUT OF HERE WITH MORE MONEY THAN YOU'LL EVER MAKE."

IN JACKSON, ROY K. MOORE, AGENT IN CHARGE OF THE MISSISSIPPI FBI OFFICE, TERMED THE SHERIFF'S CHARGE RIDICULOUS.

"HE CAN SAY WHATEVER HE WANTS," MOORE SAID. "I WOULDN'T DIGNIFY THAT BY A COMMENT. LET'S JUST SAY, (NO COMMENT' ON SUCH A STATEMENT AS THAT."

DEPUTY PRICE, IN GOOD SPIRITS, SAID THE AGENTS TRIED TO SCARE HIM BY TALKING ABOUT THE GAS CHAMBER. HE SAID THEY TOLD HIM HIS BOND WOULD BE \$25,000. BUT AT THE ARRAIGNMENT, MISS ESTHER CARTER, THE COMMISSIONER, SET BONDS OF \$5,000 FOR MOST OF THE DEFENDANTS, INCLUDING RAINY AND PRICE.

GOVERNMENT ATTORNEYS HAD ASKED FOR \$20,000 BONDS.

CHANEY, GOODMAN AND SCHWERNER DISAPPEARED AFTER BEING ARRESTED JUNE 21 BY PRICE FOR SPEEDING WHILE THEY WERE NEAR PHILADELPHIA INVESTIGATING THE BURNING OF A NEGRO CHURCH. THE THREE WERE PART OF A CIVIL RIGHTS EFFORT WORKING OUT OF MERIDIAN, 39 MILES SOUTH OF PHILADELPHIA.

FOUR HUNDRED SAILORS FROM THE MERIDIAN NAVAL AIR STATION, AND AN ARMY OF FBI MEN AND STATE TROOPERS SEARCHED FOR THE BODIES. THE ARRESTS FRIDAY CLIMAXED A FIVE-MONTH INVESTIGATION BY THE FBI.

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EIGHTEEN OF THE MEN, INCLUDING RAINY AND PRICE, WERE ARRAIGNED AT THE NAVAL BASE. THREE OTHERS WERE ARRESTED IN MERIDIAN, GULFPORT, AND SHREVEPORT, LA.

ONLY TWO OF THE 21 HAD NOT POSTED BOND TODAY. HORACE DOYLE

THE FBI SAID IN ITS COMPLAINT FILED WITH THE COMMISSIONER AT THE ARRAIGNMENT THAT 10 OF THE MEN, INCLUDING PRICE, PLOTTED THE INTERCEPTION OF THE WORKERS NEAR PHILADELPHIA AND THAT IT WAS PART OF THE CONSPIRACY THAT THEY "WOULD THREATEN, ASSAULT, SHOOT AND KILL THEM."

THE STATE DISTRICT ATTORNEY FOR THIS ROLLING RED HILL REGION, WILLIAM H. JOHNSON JR., SAID HE WAS STUDYING THE FBI COMPLAINT BUT HE WOULD NOT SAY WHETHER STATE MURDER CHARGES WOULD BE FILED.

REPORTS ON HOW THE INVESTIGATION WAS CONDUCTED WERE NUMEROUS AND, USUALLY, UNCONFIRMED. ONE REPORT SAID SOMEONE IN PHILADELPHIA WAS PAID BY FBI AGENTS FOR INFORMATION.

FBI MAN MOORE SAID HE COULD NOT DISCLOSE ANY DETAILS OF THE INVESTIGATION.

THE NINE PERSONS IDENTIFIED WITH PRICE BY THE FBI COMPLAINT AS PLOTTERS WERE JIMMY ARLEDGE, 27, MERIDIAN; HORACE BARNETTE, FORMER MERIDIAN SALESMAN; TRAVIS M. BARNETTE, 36, MERIDIAN; ALTON WAYNE ROBERTS, 26, MERIDIAN; JIMMY SNOWDEN, 31, MERIDIAN; JORDAN, GULFPORT, FORMERLY OF MERIDIAN; BILLY WAYNE POSEY, 28, PHILADELPHIA; JERRY MCGRAW SHARPE, 21, PHILADELPHIA, AND JIMMY LEE TOWNSEND, 17, PHILADELPHIA.

DEPUTY PRICE SAID TODAY THAT THE 18 MEN WHO WERE QUESTIONED AT THE NAVAL BASE WERE KEPT IN SEPARATE ROOMS AND THE AGENTS TOLD HIM: "ALL THE OTHERS ARE EYEWITNESSES, AND THEY ARE TRYING TO PUT IT ON YOU."

A48NU

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"I SAID NO," RAINEY SAID. HE SAID HE DISTRUSTED THE DEVICES.

RAINEY IS AMONG NINE CHARGED WITH VIOLATING THE WORKERS' CIVIL RIGHTS BUT NOT IDENTIFIED BY THE FBI AS HAVING BEEN PLOTTERS.

THE OTHERS ARE BERNARD L. AKIN, 50, MERIDIAN; OTHA NEAL BURKES, 71, PHILADELPHIA; JAMES T. HARRIS, 30; MERIDIAN; OLEN L. BURRAGE, 34, PHILADELPHIA; FRANK J. HERNDON, 46, MERIDIAN; THE REV. EDGAR KILLEN, 39, A FREE WILL BAPTIST MINISTER; HERMAN TUCKER, 36, PHILADELPHIA, AND OLIVER R. WARRINER JR., 54, MERIDIAN.

CHARGED AS ASSESSORIES WERE TOMMY A. HORNE, 38, MERIDIAN, AND EARL B. AKIN, 32, MERIDIAN.

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