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## Applying the Jigsaw Technique to the Mississippi Burning Murders: A Freedom Summer Lesson

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## Applying the Jigsaw Technique to the Mississippi Burning Murders:

### A Freedom Summer Lesson

Lindon Joey Ratliff

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#### Purpose Statement

The purpose of this article is to assist social studies teachers with integrating the Jigsaw technique to the Civil Rights movement. Designed in 1971, the Jigsaw Technique was created to combat racism and assist with encouraging cooperative learning. It is the sincere hope of this author that this sample lesson will ultimately assist educators in the creation of stronger units dealing with civil rights. An overview of the Jigsaw Technique, review of the Mississippi Burning Murders and teaching strategies are provided.

#### The Jigsaw Technique

The Jigsaw Technique was created in 1971 in Austin Texas during the era of integration. The Austin school districts had been historically segregated and the researchers felt a new instructional technique was necessary to avoid the racial tension present in the newly integrated schools. The Jigsaw technique requires students to work in small interracial groups and share parts of a solution to a common issue. Each member of the group is given pieces of the information. Only through sharing and relying on all of the others in the group could each member succeed.

#### Overview of the Murders for the Teacher

During the summer of 1964, The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) established a field office in Meridian, Mississippi, as well as in other cities across the state. The primary purpose of these offices was to encourage voter registration across the state of Mississippi, a movement which would later be labeled *Freedom Summer*. On February 1, 1964, Michael Schwerner, along with his wife Rita, formally headed-up the Meridian CORE office (Ball, 2004). While setting up residence in Mississippi, Schwerner met a Meridian resident and CORE member by the name of James Chaney. By all accounts, Schwerner and Chaney became very good friends and started working together in Meridian. In their attempts to establish a freedom school, where the black citizens of the area could learn to read and write well enough to register to vote, Schwerner and Chaney traveled to the Mount Zion Methodist Church located in Neshoba County to meet with the congregation. During their May 30 visit, the two men were allowed to speak with the congregation and many of the members expressed their willingness to allow the use of the church as a place to assist black voter registration (2004).



Unbeknownst to the Mississippi Freedom workers, it was at this same time that a new terror group had been established. On February 15, 1964, the founding meeting of the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan of Mississippi took place in Brookhaven, Mississippi. It was during that meeting that the proposed new leader, Sam Bowers, convinced roughly 200 current KKK members to defect from their original organization and create a new branch under his leadership, and giving him the title of *Grand Wizard*. The primary selling point that Grand Wizard Sam Bowers preached to the new members was that his new Mississippi Klan was to be less talk and more violent. The recruitment drive by the White Knights occurred at the same time Freedom Summer began. It was during this time period that many Mississippians feared their state was being invaded by northern agitators. As a result of that unfounded fear, the White Knights were able to attract not only a large number of uneducated high school dropouts (the Klan's usual recruitment base), but were able to also recruit a large number of law enforcement officers and preachers, as well as local businessmen (Mars, 1977).

Michael Schwerner and the fellow CORE members continued to work on registration and education of the disenfranchised black populous in Meridian as well as the surrounding counties. This included Neshoba County, located north of Meridian, which was well known and reputed to be a violent county controlled by corrupt law enforcement. Because Schwerner continued his efforts, Bowers started focusing his rage on the man he called, "Goat" (Schwerner wore his facial hair in what is commonly referred to as a goatee beard). Using Meridian organizer Edgar Ray Killen, Bowers encouraged the Lauderdale County White Knights to increase the violence (Cagin & Dray, 1988). During May of 1964, a group of local Klan members traveled to Bowers' hometown of Laurel, Mississippi, to discuss various issues. At that meeting, Bowers stated Schwerner had become, "A thorn in the side of everyone living, especially white people and that he should be taken care of" (Jordan, 1967).

During the first week of June 1964, local CORE members, including Schwerner and Chaney, traveled to Ohio to attend a training session for Freedom Summer participants. During the visit, Schwerner met an ambitious black haired fellow member named Andrew Goodman. After many conversations, Goodman decided that he would travel with Schwerner and Chaney when they decided to return to Meridian, Mississippi.

During the time the three Civil Rights workers were attending their training in Ohio, the Meridian and Neshoba Klan members had decided to meet in an old abandoned gym located on the outskirts of Philadelphia, Mississippi. That meeting was led by Edgar Ray Killian and was attended by close to 200 Klan members. During the meeting, a Klan member entered and announced that there was a meeting going on at that time at the Mount Zion church and there was a chance Goat would be at that meeting. The Klan, led by Killen, was quick to act and sprung into action. They raced over to the church where they assaulted many of the gathered church members and even demanded, "Where is the Jew?" After returning from the church, many of the Meridian Klan members were reported to have laughed at some of the Neshoba members for



having been too soft on the blacks. To prove their toughness later that night, some of the Neshoba Klan members returned to the church and burned it to the ground. The burning of the church would begin the FBI investigation which they would label MIBURN or Mississippi Burning.

Upon hearing of the assaults and burning of the Mount Zion church, Schwerner, Chaney and their new associate, Andrew Goodman, left Ohio and drove to Meridian, Mississippi. After spending his first night in Mississippi, on June 21, 1964, Goodman accompanied Chaney and Schwerner in a blue station wagon on a daytime visit of the burned out church. Their plan was to visit the church and talk to some members and then to get back to Meridian by 4 p.m. that same day.

#### *The Ride to Philadelphia and Ultimately Murder*

After concluding their visit with the congregation and on their drive back to Meridian, the trio was spotted by Deputy Cecil Price. Before his death, Deputy Price later confessed that he first thought the car was being driven by another local Civil Rights Worker from Jackson named George Creel. It was at this point that Price decided to catch up with the blue station wagon. When he sighted the station wagon, Deputy Price noticed that the three Civil Rights workers had pulled over to the side of the road and were in the process of changing a flat tire. With the assistance of two Mississippi Highway Patrol officers, Price arrested Chaney for speeding (a crime the MHP officers would later admit they had not witnessed) and he detained Schwerner and Goodman for “investigation” (purportedly into the Mount Zion Church burning). In Price’s 1999 confession, he stated that after he brought the men to the jail, he then decided to call Edgar Ray Killen in Meridian, Mississippi, to help organize a group to “give the boys a good whipping.” (Price 1999, p2.)

Once Killen was notified of the trio’s arrest, he is alleged to have begun setting about organizing a murder squad. Using the Longhorn Drive Inn, located in Meridian, Mississippi, as his base of operations, Killen is reported to have called or personally visited approximately nineteen men. As the sun sat that day, Killen is reported to have instructed some of the gathered men to go by a local store and pick up rubber gloves. As multiple cars departed the location for the thirty minute drive to Philadelphia, Mississippi, the three Civil Rights Workers were sitting in their jail cells unaware that a lynch mob was rapidly approaching.

At approximately 10:30 p.m., Price instructed the jailer to allow Chaney to bail out on the speeding charge for \$20. Chaney is said to have borrowed the money from Schwerner. The three men got into their station wagon and headed back to Meridian, Mississippi. At that same time, Killen had organized multiple cars located throughout the town to begin the chase of the trio as soon as word came regarding the direction the trio was headed. Killen also ordered the men to drop him off at a local funeral home so he could visit a relative and apparently establish an alibi.



However, before he departed, Killen is reported to have told one of the carloads, “We have a place to bury them, and a man to run the dozer to cover them up” (Barnette, 1964).

After the car containing Schwerner, Chaney and Goodman departed south of Philadelphia, a wild chase ensued. History points to a complicated picture of the scene. Apparently, the plan called for the two Mississippi Highway Patrol officers to pull the station wagon over to the side of the road. However, for reasons unknown at this time, the two officers chose to back out and drive away before stopping the trio. One of the Klan chase cars, driven by a man named Posey, broke down and had to be serviced on the side of the road. Ultimately, Deputy Price pulled over the Civil Rights workers’ station wagon and with the assistance of a second car full of Klan members; Deputy Price kidnapped the three Civil Rights workers. The three workers were driven to Rock Cut Road located just north of where they had been stopped. Once they arrived at Rock Cut Road, one of the Klansmen, named Wayne Roberts, pulled Schwerner from the car, faced him and asked, “Are you that N--- Lover” to which Schwerner calmly replied, “Sir, I know just how you feel” (Barnette, 1964). At this point Roberts is reported to have shot Schwerner in the chest and then pulled Goodman out of the car and shot him as well. James Jordan then approached and yelled, “Save one for me” before shooting James Chaney three times.

Upon the completion of the murders, the group took the bodies to an earthen dam which was under construction. This dam site had been preselected by Killen. Waiting at the dam site was a bulldozer and a driver by the name of Tucker who buried the bodies under approximately fifteen feet of Mississippi soil. The car was then driven into a nearby swamp and burned.

### *The Long Road to Justice*

With the help of the FBI, the burned car was found two days later approximately thirteen miles northeast of Philadelphia, Mississippi. On August 4, six weeks after their abductions, the bodies of the three missing Civil Rights workers were found after an FBI informant revealed their location. It took the FBI until December to finalize their case against twenty-one suspects. Nineteen men were ultimately charged with conspiring to deprive the trio of their constitutional rights (the state of Mississippi refused to prosecute for murder). After more than two years of legal maneuvering, a federal court jury convicted seven of the twenty-one men and acquitted the remainder, including Edgar Ray Killen. It was later discovered a lone female juror had refused to convict Killen because he was a Baptist preacher. (Mitchell, 2007). The convicted served sentences ranging from three to ten years.

In December of 1998, Clarion Ledger reporter Jerry Mitchell revealed that in 1983, Imperial Wizard Sam Bowers taped an interview with the Mississippi State Archives in which he stated he was glad to serve the time because he knew the “main instigator of the entire affair walk out of the courtroom a free man.” (Bowers died in Mississippi State Prison in 2006 while serving a life sentence for another Civil Rights murder). Because of this statement, the state of Mississippi



reopened the investigation into the murders of Schwerner, Chaney and Goodman and ultimately brought charges against Edgar Ray Killen. In 2005, Killen was convicted of three counts of manslaughter and sentenced to three, twenty year terms, which were to be served consecutively. Currently, Killen has exhausted all appeals and is incarcerated in the state prison located in Pearl, Mississippi.

### The Jigsaw Process with Mississippi Burning

**Objective #1:** The students will analyze four narratives of co-conspirators in the Mississippi Burning murders in order to determine the most logical chain of events that occurred on June 24, 1964.

**Objective #2:** The students will analyze the Wilmer Faye Jones incident in order to view the perception of the victim.

#### *Objective #1 Material*

#### *Narratives from the Co-Conspirators*

Over the years, individual participants of the killings have emerged and, due to various reasons, have given their confessions concerning events of that fateful June night in 1964. The FBI's initial investigation in the days following the disappearances was focused on Deputy Cecil Price (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1964). However, as the investigation expanded it was quickly revealed a murder posse had been put together. The following chart is designed to assist the teacher with understanding the similarities and differences in the four narratives:

Confessor	Role in the Murders	Date of Confession	Reason for Confession
James E. Jordan (1964) <i>Handout #1</i>	He rode from Meridian to Philadelphia with the murder posse. He assisted in the pursuit of the three workers and also shot James Chaney.	November 5, 1964	James Jordan was pressured by the FBI investigators. He finally confessed when lead FBI agent John Proctor revealed that he even knew his Klan membership number.
Horace Doyle Barnette (1964) <i>Handout 2</i>	Was present at the murder scene and assisted with the disposal of the bodies	November 20, 1964	Confessed to the FBI after multiple interviews.
Billy Wayne	He contacted Edgar Ray	June 29, 2000	Pressure from the State



Posey (2000) <i>Handout #3</i>	Killen and told him about the arrests of the Civil Rights Workers. He also admitted to being at the murder scene and assisting with hiding the bodies.		Of Mississippi Attorney General's office. Posey agreed to confess under an agreement his confession could not be used in court. (Mitchell, 2007b)
Deputy Cecil Price (1999) <i>Handout #4</i>	Arrested the civil rights workers, assaulted James Chaney with a blackjack and was present during the murders.	November 1999 (his confessions took place over two separate interviews)	Legal pressure from the state of Mississippi's Attorney General's office.

*Differences in the Confessions*

Each of the four confessions details the same chain of events. However, each narrative must be taken in context. For example, Barnette's confession does not state he had a weapon, however, James Jordan stated that he saw Barnette with a 30-30 rifle. Also, Price's confession states he did not know that the Civil Rights workers were going to be killed. However, Barnette stated that he realized it was going to be murder when Edgar Ray Killen stated, "We have a place to bury them" (Barnette, 1964). Another glaring omission is the manner in which Jordan ignores his involvement in the murder of Chaney. In fact, he stated that he was on guard duty and when he got to the scene all three of the Civil Rights workers were already dead. Posey, Price and Barnette all state Jordan shot Chaney. Also, Jordan does not mention he was in the car with Price and the three civil rights workers in the moments before the three were killed. These differences should be identified by the groups during the jigsaw process.

**Objective #2 Material**  
**The Perspective of the Victims**

The use of the confessions in the Jigsaw Process will only show the crime based on the perspectives of the killers. To have a complete understanding of what happened the night of June 21, 1964 the teacher can introduce the perspective of the victims. Of course a direct narrative from Chaney, Schwerner and Goodman cannot be obtained. However, history has revealed the killer's modus operandi had been established weeks prior to the murders in an eerily similar circumstance.

Wilmer Faye Jones was an African American originally from Philadelphia, MS. His mother had sent him to Pascagoula, Mississippi to attend high school. Upon graduating he returned to



his hometown to live with his mother. Within days of his homecoming he had been accused by a local white girl of flirting with him. He was arrested and held in jail until dark. In a situation that was eerily similar to the murders weeks later he was released into the hands of the KKK and taken to a spot to be murdered. However, due to what a klan member would cite as a disagreement in who would commit the murder he was allowed to live.

Through his statement alone the students can achieve a perspective of what it was like to be arrested and handed over to the klan just like the three civil rights workers were on June 21.

Story Segment	Summary of the Information	Key Points
Part 1 <i>Handout #5</i>	Wilmer Jones introduces himself and discusses his arrest	Sheriff took him to the drug store for the clerk to identify him. Gives insight into the arrest
Part 2 <i>Handout #6</i>	Discusses his jail time and his release into the hands of the KKK	Describes his time in jail and how everything was quiet until midnight. Describes the men that abducted him
Part 3 <i>Handout #7</i>	Details the abduction and the threat of murder	Describes the handguns and the men involved. Creates a sense of powerless
Part 4 <i>Handout #8</i>	Discusses how he was finally released from his captors	He was given seven dollars to get on a bus. Was led to his house to get his clothes
Teacher Reference <i>Handout #9</i>	Confession by one of the Klan members of what happened	Story reinforces Jones statement. Also gives the perspective of the klan members and why they chose not to kill the innocent Jones.

### Alignment with Standards

The importance of teaching the Mississippi Burning murders can be found in the national standards outlined by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS). The following table expresses how some of the standards align with the content.

NCSS Standard	Content Connection
Culture	The murders and events surrounding them demonstrate a sense of beliefs, values and traditions which were possessed by both the Civil Rights Workers as well as their





	killers.
Time, Community and Change	Students as well as human beings should seek to understand their historical roots as well as to locate themselves in time. The basic understanding of “What happened in the past” is paramount in the understanding of the events which unfolded in June 1964.
People, Places and Events	The Mississippi Burning murders allows for the investigation of people and their interactions within various groups. With the understanding of the racism contained in the Neshoba area, a student can have a better viewpoint of the difficulties which the CORE members had to face.
Individual Development and Identity	With the teacher bringing the content to life, the students are able to imagine the events which transpired on Rock Cut road. This will lead the students to understand why people choose to act the way they do. While their actions may be due to peer pressure or even racist murderous rage, the students will grasp a stronger understanding of the social norms and how they are sometimes shattered.
Individuals, Groups and Institutions	The murders paint a strong picture of how people act in groups. It is estimated 19 persons were involved in the brutal executions. Also, the teacher can demonstrate how three victims stuck together and worked as a group, even up to the time of their deaths.
Power, Authority and Governance	The discussion of the Klan’s influence into the government of Mississippi will allow the students to view the past in a different perspective. Not only will they question the authorities and governmental officials of the 1960’s but they will also see how the execution was put into place by very law enforcement officials sworn to protect the citizens.
Civic Ideas and Practices	The very basic goal of civil rights which was advocated by the CORE movement demonstrates the need for civic ideas. Furthermore, the three civil rights workers were attempting to practice their democratic rights and assist blacks in registering to vote.



### Jigsaw Procedures:

(From Aronson's Website)

1. Divide students into 5-person jigsaw groups. The groups should be diverse in terms of gender, ethnicity, race, and ability.
2. Appoint one student from each group as the leader. Initially, this person should be the most mature student in the group.
3. Distribute one narrative to the remaining four students
4. Assign each student to learn one segment, making sure students have direct access only to their own segment.
5. Give students time to read over their segment at least twice and become familiar with it. There is no need for them to memorize it.
6. Form temporary "expert groups" by having one student from each jigsaw group join other students assigned to the same segment. Give students in these expert groups time to discuss the main points of their segment and to rehearse the presentations they will make to their jigsaw group.
7. Bring the students back into their jigsaw groups.
8. Ask each student to present her or his segment to the group. Encourage others in the group to ask questions for clarification.
9. Float from group to group, observing the process. If any group is having trouble (e.g., a member is dominating or disruptive), make an appropriate intervention. Eventually, it's best for the group leader to handle this task. Leaders can be trained by whispering an instruction on how to intervene, until the leader gets the hang of it.
10. At the end of the session, give a quiz on the material so that students quickly come to realize that these sessions are not just fun and games but really count. (2011)

Optional Teaching Activities

Reinforcement of Writing

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1. Share with the students the last letter sent by Andrew Goodman to his parents upon his arrival in Meridian.

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Dear mom and Dad

I have arrived safely in Meridian Mississippi. This is a wonderful town and the weather is fine. I wish you were here. The people in this city are wonderful and our reception was very good.

All my love  
Andy

Ask the students to write one of the following:

- A. A letter of condolence to the Goodman family.
  - B. Have the students write an essay describing how Goodman's efforts led to voting rights for African Americans in Mississippi.
  - C. After completing both Jigsaw activities, have the students discuss the emotions which much have been going on during the night of the murders.
2. Have the students listen to a selection of the 1983 audio recordings of Sam Bowers, the Grand Wizard of the WKKKK (Located at [http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital\\_archives/bowers/](http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital_archives/bowers/)) Have the students analyze the section in which Sam Bowers makes his notorious statement (page 45). The passage states:



“I was quite delighted to be convicted and have the main instigator of the entire affair walk out of the courtroom a free man, which everybody including the trial judge and the prosecutors and everybody else knows that that happened (sic).”

- a. Have the students write a paper discussing who Sam Bowers might have been hinting to
- b. Have the students write a newspaper article discussing Bowers’ statement and how his confession implicates other members

### Conclusion

The murders of the three civil rights workers in Philadelphia demonstrated the evil that was emerging from newly formed White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan based in Mississippi. The murders and the subsequent trial demonstrated the problems which arose with attempting to convict in a segregated and racist society. Of course individual confessions have to be taken with a grain of salt. By using the jigsaw technique, which was designed to combat racism, the teacher can help the students work together and understand the horrific events surrounding the Mississippi Burning murders. This understanding will help modern-day students see how far the Civil Rights Movement has come. Of course the Jigsaw technique used in the first example is limited by an omission of the narratives from the victims. This limitation is corrected by introducing the second project and thus giving a victim perspective. In addition, the later convictions of Bowers and Killen, as well as the recent election of an African-American mayor in Philadelphia, Mississippi, should demonstrate to the student the massive steps the state of Mississippi has made to address a history of racism and violence.



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### Handout 1

#### James Jordan's Confession

"At about 6:30 PM on June 21, 1964, I was at the Longhorn Drive-In, Meridian, Mississippi. 'Preacher' Edgar Ray Killen from Philadelphia came to the Longhorn along with Jerry Sharp and a second individual believed to be Jimmy Lee Townsend. They were traveling in a 1959 Chevrolet, gray and white in color. Killen called Frank Herndon out to the porch of the Longhorn and talked to him for several minutes. Frank then called me over and asked me if I could make a trip. I said 'yes'. Killen then said that they had three civil rights workers in jail in Philadelphia and that they needed 'tore up'. Killen said that it had to be done in a hurry since they were being held on a minor charge. Herndon went to the telephone and started making several calls. Arrangements were made to meet behind B.L. Akin's trailer at Akin's Mobile Homes. Sharp and I went to the home of Wayne Roberts to see if Roberts could go. I went to the front door of Robert's residence and asked him if he could go on a trip, Roberts answered 'yes' and came out and got into the car. We then proceeded to Akin's Mobile Homes where we met Travis Barnett, Doyle Barnett, Jim snowed, Jim Aldridge, B.L. Akin, 'Preacher' Killen, and Pete Harris. B.L. Akin filled Doyle Barnett's car with gas. Akin said, 'I can't go, wish I could.' Pete Harris advised he was unable to go since officers of the Klan are not allowed to go on jobs of any kind.

"'Preacher' Killen asked if anyone knew where rubber surgical gloves could be obtained and none were available. Someone suggest that gloves could be obtained from Dick Warner's grocery store located on Grand Avenue, Meridian, since Warner was a member of the Klan. Roberts, Sharp and I went in Sharp's car to Dick Warner's store to see if he had any gloves. Roberts got out of the car and obtained six pairs of brown cloth gloves from Warner.

"Upon arriving at Akin's Mobile Homes, all of the above-mentioned persons were still there. Doyle Barnett, Travis Barnett, Jim Snowden, Jim Aldridge and I got into Doyle Barnett's automobile. Prior to them getting into the car, 'Preacher' Killen said that Wayne Roberts, Sharp, Townsend and himself would go in Sharp's 1959 Chevrolet on to Philadelphia to see if everything was okay. Killen stated that Deputy Sheriff Cecil Price, Neshoba County Sheriff's Office, had arrested the three civil rights workers on a traffic charge and that they could not be held too long. Killen also

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stated that when the civil rights workers were released, officers of the Mississippi Highway Safety Patrol would stop them when they left Philadelphia. After they were stopped, then the group mentioned above would take over. 'Preacher' Killen asked if everyone had their guns and everyone present said that they did. Killen advised the second car that they would meet him on the west side of the courthouse in Philadelphia, Mississippi.

"The above group with Doyle Barnett driving proceeded to Philadelphia and parked on the west side of the Neshoba County Courthouse alongside a pickup truck, black in color, which contained E.G. 'Hop' Barnett and another man. Barnett greeted this group and about this time another car came around the square and 'Preacher' Killen got out and said that he had been by the jail and that the civil rights workers were still in jail. 'Preacher' Killen got into the car and said that he would show the group where they could go so they could park and watch for the workers when they were released from jail. E.G. 'Hop' Barnett and the other man in the pickup truck left and drove away. 'Preacher' Killen took the group and showed them the jail where an old woman was sitting in front and also showed them where they could park and see the civil rights workers if they left town by proceeding north. 'Preacher' Killen said that when he got word which way the civil rights workers were going out of town the group was to go out on the road and the Mississippi Highway Safety Patrol would stop them. The group dropped Killen off at the funeral home located about two blocks from the Neshoba County Courthouse and went and parked at the above-mentioned location. They did not wait long until a policeman, white male, elderly and heavy set, drove up and said that the civil rights workers were leaving on highway 19. The group left their parking place and headed south on Highway 19 out of Philadelphia. When they were on the outskirts of town, Sharp, Billy, Posey, Wayne Roberts and the young man believed to be Townsend drove up alongside the group in a 1955 or 1956 red and white Chevrolet and said to follow them. This happened just before the group reached the Neshoba County Hospital on Highway 19 south of Philadelphia. The group followed them and there could be seen a patrol car ahead. There were two officers in uniform in this car. The patrol car proceeded out of Philadelphia a short distance and pulled off to the left in front of a Standard Service Station where it stopped.

"Billy Posey, who was driving, pulled up alongside of this car and the group in the 1959 Ford pulled in back of Posey's car. Posey talked to the officers in the Mississippi Highway Safety Patrol car and at this point, Deputy Sheriff Cecil Price drove up in his 1956 Blue Chevrolet alone and parked next to Posey's car. The Mississippi Highway Safety Patrol car turned around and headed back toward Philadelphia. Posey got out of his car and talked with Price and shortly thereafter Price took off down Highway 19 in a southerly direction. Posey walked over to the other car and said that Price would catch them and that the group was to follow him.





“Posey drove south on Highway 19 and the group followed. Near House, Mississippi and within sight of Posey’s Store located on the right side of Highway 19, Billy Posey’s car pulled over to the right side of the road and Posey said he was having carburetor trouble and to proceed after Price’s car. Price turned west on the road to Union, Mississippi and the group followed. They traveled some distance to a point in the road where the road went down a hill and had pasture land on each side and just prior to crossing a small bridge. Price had the red light on his car on and the station wagon had stopped just before crossing the bridge. Price go out of his car and walked up to the station wagon on the driver’s side and talked to the occupants of the station wagon. The group pulled up behind Price’s car and parked. All three civil rights workers got out of the station wagon and got in the rear of Price’s car. Price said for one of the group to drive the station wagon and to follow him. Price further stated he was taking these boys in.

“Jim Aldridge got into the station wagon and Jim Snowden got into the front seat of Price’s car with Price and all vehicles turned around and drove to Highway 19 and proceeded to where Posey’s red and white Chevrolet was parked. The occupants of this car were working on this automobile.

“Price proceeded very slowly north on Highway 19. Wayne Roberts, Jerry Sharp, and Billy Posey got into the 1959 Ford and the man believed to be Jimmy Lee Townsend was left to work on the Chevrolet. Townsend indicated that he would get the car running and catch up with the others later.

“Price proceeded north on Highway 19 to a gravel road where he turned west. At this point there is a wooden frame house on the left side of this gravel road and there is a red brick house on the east side of Highway 19 where Price turned off.

“Price’s car, the civil rights workers’ station wagon and the 1959 Ford all tuned off onto this road.

“A short distance down this gravel road Posey suggested that someone get out and stop the person believed to be Townsend who was working on his 1955 or 1956 Chevrolet and show him where the others went. I got out of the 1959 Ford and walked back to Highway 19 and waited for Posey’s car.

“During the 15 or 20 minute period I waited at this intersection, I heard the cars stop, the motors stop running and car doors shut. I could not hear any conversation but could make out muffled voices. I then proceeded toward the cars. Approximately 200 or 300 yards from the vehicles, a



volley of shots, approximately six or seven in number, were heard followed by two separate shots. At this time, I called out, 'Is everything all right?'

"As I appeared around the right bend of the road, the Ford headlights were on. Someone said, 'Yes, help us get these empty shells.' Someone, sounding like the same individual, said, 'I've already got mine.'

"All vehicles were parked on the right side of the road except the civil rights workers' station wagon which was on the left side of the road and two car lengths in front of Price's car which was followed by Doyle Barnett's car. Price was standing just to the front of his car holding a rifle, make unknown, Doyle had a .38 caliber of English origin similar to the Police Special but more nearly like the English Commando weapon, and I had a .22 caliber German revolver. Posey had a pistol, make and model unknown, and Aldridge had a long-barreled pistol similar to the type referred to as 'Old Horse Pistol.' This weapon had a ring in the butt and the barrel is either hexagon or octagon shaped giving it an appearance similar to the old army-type weapon. Snowden had a sawed-off shotgun, gauge unknown. From the volley of shots, it did not sound like the shotgun was fired. These men were milling around and not remaining in one position.

"The Negro was lying in the ditch on the left side of the road face down, headed west and body more or less parallel to the road and about a car length behind the station wagon and a car length in front of Price's car. Goodman was believed to be lying face down in a crumpled position, Schwerner was lying face down in a position similar to Chaney. The two white boys were in the ditch on the left side of the road in a position between Price and Barnett's car. The description of where this incident took place as near as recalled is as follows:

"The gravel road leads from Highway 19 in a westerly direction bending slightly to the left and then curving to the right in a gradual upgrade. Just prior to the crest of this hill, there is a band along the south side of the road approximately 5 and ½ feet in height which consists of rock and clay and has a deep ditch running along the edge of the road. On the north side of the road is a shallow ditch, no bank and the trees grow near the edge of the road.

"About this time Posey said, 'Let's load these guys in their wagon and take them to the spot.'

"At about this time we heard a noise similar to a tractor and assumed it was one of the two bulldozers which we had previously seen near the dam. The tractor ran approximately 15 minutes then stopped.



“Posey then came up to Snowden and I and said, ‘We will wait on Doyle to come around this way for us.’ I asked if it was over already and Posey said, ‘Yes, he can finish it in the morning since he will be returning to work in a few hours and will be able to complete the job before anyone else comes to work. Posey said ‘They will be under 20 feet of dirt before it is all over.’ Snowden asked if the station wagon was buried and Posey replied, ‘No, Herman will take it to Alabama where it will be burned.’”



## Handout 2

### Cecil Price's Confession

The following information was compiled from two (2) interviews of Cecil Ray Price by investigators of the Attorney General's Office. These interviews deal with the June 21, 1964 murders of Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman and James Chaney in Philadelphia, Mississippi.

Price advised he remembered that June 21, 1964 was A Sunday and he was on his way to Legion Lake to watch the boat races. According to Price, he passed a blue Ford station wagon traveling west on Highway 16. Price stated the vehicle was speeding and was driven by a black male with 2 white male passengers. Price advised at that time he recognized the vehicle as one he had observed during a demonstration in Canton, Mississippi. Price stated as he was traveling east on Highway 16 prior to observing the Ford he saw Mississippi Highway Patrol Officers Harry Wiggs and Earl Robert Poe. Price advised he requested the MHP officers run the tag number of the Ford. Price stated he turned around and pulled the station wagon over in Philadelphia assisted by Poe and Wiggs. Price stated he arrested the 3 boys and with the help of Poe and Wiggs transported them to the Neshoba County Jail. According to price, Poe transported Schwerner and Goodman to jail in the MHP vehicle and Chaney rode in the station wagon with officer Wiggs driving.

After leaving the jail, Price stated he observed Poe, Wiggs, and MHP Inspector Maynard King parked on the city square by the old city hall. Price stated while talking to them about the 3 boys King stated they needed to get a group together and give the boys a good whipping. Price stated Edgar Ray Killen's name came up at this time as an individual that could get some men together to whip the 3 boys.

Price stated after leaving the MHP officers, he traveled to Billy Wayne Posey's gas station. According to Price, he advised Posey of the arrest of the 3 boys and his desire to contact Killen to get the boys beat up. Posey advised Price he could get in touch with Killen and have him contact Price. Price stated Killen called him at the police station later that day and after being briefed on the arrest of the boys Killen asked who the boys were. Price stated he advised Killen he arrested Schwerner, Goodman, and Chaney to which Killen responded, "Oh good we have been looking for Schwerner." Killen then requested Price keep them locked up until he could get a group together and he would take care of it from there. Price stated Killen called later that day advising

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Price that it was taking him longer than he thought to get a group together. Killen also advised Price during this call not to release the boys. Price advised Killen that he could not hold them much longer. Price stated he received the call from Killen after dark. Price advised Killen requested Price come to Jolly's car lot in Philadelphia and meet them.

Price stated he left the car lot, returned to the jail and released the 3 boys advising them to get out of town. Price advised after releasing the boys he followed them down Holland Avenue to Highway 19. According to Price, he observed Wiggs and Poe in the MHP vehicle followed by Hop Barnett and Grady Eakes, in Barnett's truck traveling north on Highway 19 into Philadelphia. About this time Price stated he was flagged down by the Meridian car and asked who was going to stop the station wagon since the MHP drove off. Price stated he advised the occupants of the Meridian vehicle that he would stop the boys' vehicle. Price advised that one of the vehicles chasing the boys, possibly Posey's broke down on Highway 19. Price stated he traveled several miles south on Highway 19 before catching and pulling the boys over at a wide section of Highway 19 around the road to the House community. The 3 boys were placed in the back seat of Price's county vehicle. Price stated James Jordan got into the front seat of his county car and they traveled north on Highway 19. Price admitted to hitting Chaney as he, Chaney got into the county vehicle. Price advised there were several vehicles in the area at this time but he was not sure who the occupants were. Price also stated he did not remember who drove the boys' station wagon from this location.

Upon leaving the scene of the boys abduction the group traveled north on Highway 19 to a gravel road. Price stated this location was not prearranged; he was just looking for a secluded area. After stopping on the gravel road Price stated Wayne Roberts ran up and pulled Schwerner from the back seat of the patrol car and shot him once. According to Price, Roberts then removed Goodman from the backseat of Price's vehicle and shot once. James Jordan then pulled Chaney from the backseat of the patrol car and shot him 2 or 3 times. Price advised he could not remember if anyone else at the scene also shot Chaney. Price stated he was standing beside Roberts when he shot Schwerner and Goodman. Price advised he was scared, thinking he may also be killed. Price listed the following individuals as being present at the murder scene: Price, Wayne Roberts, James Jordan, Billy Wayne Posey, Jimmy Arledge, Jimmy Snowden and Doyle Barnette. Price stated the group gathered around and loaded the bodies into the station wagon. According to Price, he left the murder scene at this time and drove back to Philadelphia. When asked, Price advised he did not see Posey do anything at the scene. Price also stated that he believes most of the individuals at the murder scene were armed with pistols.



Late that night Price stated he stopped and talked to the occupants of the Meridian vehicle as they traveled through Philadelphia. Price stated one of the occupants advised him someone was going to take the station wagon out of state and get rid of it. Price stated he did not know where the individuals went after they left the murder scene and he did not see the Ford station wagon after he left the gravel road. Price stated he did not know what happened to the guns used to kill the 3 boys but he heard that they were melted down by someone in Meridian.

Price advised investigators that Killen gave the order to release the boys, organized the group and set up the car lot meeting. Price also stated that he remembered Killen stating that he was going to the funeral home to establish his alibi. According to Price, after the murders and before the bodies were found he remembers Killen visiting the Sheriff's Department and stating, "hope they (FBI) don't look in any pond dam." Price stated he took this to mean Killen was aware of where the bodies were buried.

When questioned about his Klan membership Price stated he did not join the Klan until after the murders. Price stated he was recruited into the Klan by Hop Barnett and sworn in by Killen one day at the Neshoba County Courthouse.



### Handout 3

#### Billy Wayne Posey's Confession

Posey stated he owned a gas station in Philadelphia in June 1964. On June 21, 1964 Neshoba County Deputy Sheriff Cecil Ray Price stopped by his business and requested that Posey contact Preacher Killen and advise him to contact Price. Posey advised he did contact Killen on this date and did as Price requested advising Killen to call Price. Posey advised Price did not tell him why he wanted to talk to Killen.

Posey stated he went home after work and was contacted later that night by someone, he does not remember who it was or if they came by his residence or phoned him. Posey stated he was told to go to Old Jolly's Car Lot and wait until the boys were released from jail. Posey stated he traveled to the car lot approximately 2030 or 2100 hours. Posey stated he waited at the car lot with Pete Jordan, Hop Barnett, Grady Eakes and Jerry Sharpe. Posey advised he cannot remember for sure but thinks John Risher may also have been present. Posey stated that he did not remember seeing Killen or Price at this car lot meeting. Posey stated the group remained at the car lot until they were advised the 3 boys were released from the Neshoba County Jail. Posey could not remember if they received a phone call or if someone drove by to advise them of the boy's release. After being advised that the boys were on their way back to Meridian Posey stated he and Sharpe traveled in Posey's vehicle from the car lot south on Highway 19 to Pilgrims Store. Posey stated as he and Sharpe approached the store he observed a marked Mississippi Highway Patrol (MHP) car parked at Pilgrims store. Posey advised he stopped and the 2 MHP officers advised Posey he was late and the boys had already driven by. As he was leaving the store Posey stated the meridian vehicle pulled up and he signaled them to continue south on Highway 19 until Posey's vehicle broke down approximately 2-3 miles down the road.

Posey stated he and Sharpe sat with his vehicle for an unspecified period of time until Price's county vehicle pulled up to their location traveling north on Highway 19. Price's vehicle pulled over at their location occupied by Price, James Jordan, Schwerner, Goodman and Chaney. Price's vehicle was followed by the Meridian vehicle which was followed by the boys Ford station wagon. Posey advised he and Sharpe got into the station wagon with an unidentified Meridian man driving. Posey stated from the location where his vehicle became disabled the 3 vehicles north



to a gravel road. (Rock Cut Road, County Road 270) The 3 vehicles turned left, (west) onto the gravel road and traveled approximately 300 to 400 yards before parking. Posey stated Price's vehicle stopped, the Meridian vehicle parked behind Price and the station wagon parked 4 to 5 car lengths in front of Price's vehicle. Posey advised before he could exit the station wagon and get back to Price's vehicle all 3 victims were shot. According to Posey, James Jordan stated something to the effect of, "killed me a nigger." Posey stated he only remembered Price, James Jordan, and Wayne Roberts having guns. Posey identified the following as being present during the shooting of the 3 victims: Price, James Jordan, Wayne Roberts, Doyle Barnett, Travis Barnett and Jerry Sharpe. Posey stated he did not remember Jimmy Arledge or Jimmy Snowden being at the murder scene.

After the victims were loaded in the back of the station wagon, Posey stated he heard Jordan state that they had a dozier and to go to Burrage's pond. Posey stated Price left the scene at this time as he and Jordan got into the station wagon with Sharpe driving. The station wagon led the way to Burrage's property with the Meridian vehicle following. Upon arrival, a gate was opened for access to the dam area of Burrage's property. The station wagon was driven to the dam and the 3 bodies were unloaded. The Meridian vehicle, occupied by several men, left the dam area at this time to try and locate the dozier operator. Posey stated he and Sharpe drove up the highway a short time later and on their return they observed Jordan walking up from the pond. Posey stated they picked up Jordan and took the station wagon to Burrage's trucking company located not far from the dam location and left it there. Posey stated he, Jordan and Sharpe go into the Meridian vehicle with the other individuals and left the trucking company. Posey stated he does not remember if he returned to the car lot or disabled vehicle prior to going home.

Posey denied membership in the Ku Klux Klan on several occasions during the interviews.





#### Handout 4

##### Horace Barnette's Confession

Nov. 20, 1964

“On June 21, 194 about 8:00 P.M., I was having supper at Jimmy Arledge’s house, Meridian, Mississippi. Travis Barnette called Arledge on the telephone and told Arledge that the Klan had a job and wanted to know if Arledge and I could go. Arledge asked me if I could go and we went to Akins trailer park on Highway 80 in Meridian, Miss. We did not know what the job was. “Upon arriving at Akins trailer park we were met by Preacher Killen, Mr. Akins, Jim Jordan and Wayne. I do not know Wayne’s last name, but I do know his brother is a police officer in Meridian, miss. Killen told us that three civil rights workers were in jail in Philadelphia, Miss,. And that these three civil rights workers were going to be released from jail and that we were going to catch them and give them a whipping. We were given brown clothe gloves and my car was filled with gas from Mr. Akins gas tank. Jim Snowden, who works for Troy Laundry in Meridian came to Akins trailer park, too. Arledge, Snowden, and Jordan got into my car and we drove to Philadelphia. Killen and Wayne left before we did and we were told that we would meet him there. Killen had a 1962 or 1961 white Buick. When we arrived in Philadelphia, about 9:30 P.M., we met Killen and he got into my car and directed me where to park and wait for someone to tell us when the three civil rights workers were being released from jail. While we were talking, Killen stated that ‘we have a place to bury them, and a man to run the dozer to cover them up.’ This was the first time I realized that the three civil rights workers were to be killed. About 5 or 10 minutes after we parked, a patrolman from Philadelphia came to the car and said that ‘they are going toward Meridian on Highway 19.’

We proceeded out Highway 19 and caught up to a Mississippi State Patrol Car, who pulled into a store on the left hand side of the road. We pulled alongside of the patrol car and then another car from Philadelphia pulled in between us. I was driving a 1957 Ford, 4 door, 2 tone blue bearing Louisiana license. The Philadelphia car was a 1958 Chevrolet, 2 door and color maroon. It also had a dent on front right hand fender next to the light. No one got out of the cars, but the drive of the Philadelphia car, who I later learned was named Posey, talked to the patrolman. Posey then drove away and we followed. About 2 or 3 miles down the Highway Posey’s car stopped and pulled off on the right hand side of the road. Posey motioned for me to go ahead.



I then drove fast and caught up to the car that the three civil rights workers were in, pulled over to the side of the road and stopped. About a minute or 2 later, Deputy Sheriff Price came along and stopped on the pavement beside my car. Jordan asked him who was going to stop them and Price said that he would and took after them and we followed. The Civil Rights workers turned off Highway 19 on to a side road and drove a couple of miles before Price stopped them. Price stopped his car behind the 1963 Ford Fairlane Station Wagon drive by the Civil Rights Workers and we stopped behind Price's car. Price was driving a 1957 Chevrolet, 2 door and 2 tone, blue in color. Price stated 'I thought you were going back to Meridian if we let you out of jail.' The Civil Rights Workers stated that they were and Price asked them why they were taking the long way around. Price told them to get out and get into his car. They got out of their car and proceeded to get into Price's car and then Price took his blackjack and struck Chaney on the back of the head.

"At the junction of Highway 19 and where we turned off, I had let Arledge out of the car to signal the fellows in the Philadelphia car. We then turned around and proceeded back toward Philadelphia. The first car to start back was Price and he had Jim Jordan in the front seat with him and the three civil rights workers in the back seat. I followed next and picked up Arledge at the junction of Highway 19. Snowden drove the 1963 Ford, belonging to the Civil Rights Workers. When we came to Posey's car Price and Snowden pulled over to the left side of the Highway and stopped in front of Posey's car. I stopped behind it. Wayne and Posey and the other men from Philadelphia got into the 1963 Ford and rode with Snowden. I do not know how many men were from Philadelphia. Price then started first and I pulled in behind him and Snowden driving the 1963 Ford came last. I followed Price down Highway 19 and he turned left on to a gravel road. About a mile up the road he stopped and Snowden and I stopped behind him, with about a car length between each car. Before I could get out of the car Wayne ran past my car to Price's car, opened the left rear door, pulled Schwerner out of the car, spun him around so that Schwerner was standing on the left side of the road, with his back to the ditch and said, 'Are you that nigger lover' and Schwerner said 'Sir, I know just how you feel.' Wayne had a pistol in his right hand, then shot Schwerner. Wayne then went back to Price's car and got Goodman, took him to the left side of the road with Goodman facing the road, and shot Goodman.

"When Wayne shot Schwerner, Wayne had his hand on Schwerner's shoulder. When Wayne shot Goodman, Wayne was standing within reach of him. Schwerner fell to the left so that he was laying alongside the road. Goodman spun around and fell back toward the bank in back. "At this time Jim Jordan said 'save one for me.' He then got out of Price's car and got Chaney out. I remember Chaney backing up, facing the road, and standing on the bank on the other side of the ditch and Jordan stood in the middle of the road and shot him. I do not remember how many



times Jordan shot. Jordan then said, 'You didn't leave me anything but a nigger, but at least I killed me a nigger.' The three civil rights workers were then put into the back of their 1963 Ford wagon. I do not know who put the bodies in the car, but I only put Chaney's foot inside the car, Price then got into his car and drove back toward Highway 19. Wayne, Posey and Jordan then got into the 1963 Ford and started up the road. Snowden, Arledge and another person who I do not know the name of got into my car and we followed. I do not know the roads we took, but went through the outskirts of Philadelphia and to the Dam site on Burrage's property. When we arrived at the Dam site someone said that the bulldozer operator was not there and Wayne, Arledge and I went in my car to find him. We drove out to a paved road about a mile down the road.

"We saw a 1957 Chevrolet, white and green, parked on the left side of the road. Wayne told me to stop and we backed up to this car. Burrage and 2 other men were in the car. Wayne said that they were already down there and Burrage said to follow them. I followed the 1957 Chevrolet back toward the Dam site, taking a different road, until the Chevrolet stopped. Burrage said 'it is just a little ways over there,' and Wayne and the bulldozer operator walked the rest of the way. The bulldozer operator was about 40 years old, 6 ft-2 inches tall, slim built and a white male. He was wearing khaki clothes. Arledge and I then followed Burrage and the other man back to Burrage's garage. The other man was a white male, about 40 years old, 5 feet 8 or 9 inches tall, stocky built. Burrage's garage is on the road toward Philadelphia and he had tractors and trailer parked there. His house is across the road.

"We were there about 30 minutes when the other fellows came from the dam site in the 1963 Ford. Burrage got a glass gallon jug and filled it with gasoline to be used to burn the 1963 Ford car owned by the three civil rights workers. Burrage took one of the diesel trucks from under a trailer and said 'I will use this to pick you up, no one will suspect a truck on the road this time at night.' It was then about 1:00 to 1:30 in the morning. Snowden, Arledge, Jordan, Wayne and I then got into my car and we drove back toward Philadelphia. When we got to Philadelphia a city patrol car stopped us and we got out. Sheriff Rainey, Deputy Sheriff Price and the City Patrolman, who told us which way the civil rights workers were leaving town, got out of the patrol car. The patrolman was a white male, about 50 years old, 5 feet 8 to 9 inches, 160 lbs., and was wearing a uniform. This was about 2:00 a.m., June 22, 1964. I do not know his name, but I have met him before and would know him again.

"We talked about 2 or 3 minutes then someone said we better not talk about this and Sheriff Rainey said 'I'll kill anyone who talks, even if it was my own brother.' We then got back into my car and drove back to Meridian and passed Posey's car which was still parked alongside the road.



We did not stop and there was one or two men standing by Posey's car. We then kept going to Meridian. I took Wayne home, left Jordan and Snowden at Akins Mobile Homes, took Arledge home and went home myself. I have read the above Statement, consisting of this and 9 other pages and they are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I have signed my initials to the bottom of the first 9 pages and initial mistakes. No force threats or promises were made to induce me to make this statement.”



### Handout #5

#### Part 1

“July 23, 1964

“I, Wilmer Faye Jones, 1007 Lewis Ave., Pascagoula, Miss., make the following voluntary statement to Samuel N. Jennings and John P. Slayden who have identified themselves to me as Special Agents of the FBI.

“I am 19 years of age and single. I graduated from Carver High School, Pascagoula, Miss., in May 1964. I grew up at Philadelphia, Miss., and my mother Fannie H. Brown still resides in Philadelphia.

“On May 29, 1964, I returned to my home in Philadelphia, Miss., and on June 2, 1964, I took my sister’s bicycle and rode down to the recreation center near the Evers Hotel in Philadelphia. Between 4PM and 5PM on June 2, 1964, I was out in front of the Recreation Center and Constable Clayton Livingston, who was there when I arrived, came up to me and asked me where I was from. I told him I was from Pascagoula, Miss., and that I had just finished school down there. He told me to hold my hands out in front of me and looked at my graduation ring. He asked if the school I graduated from was in Philadelphia and I told him, no, it was in Pascagoula. He then said that he thought the Sheriff was looking for me. I asked him what for and he said I think you know what for. I told him I didn’t know what the Sheriff would be looking for me for since I had just got in town Saturday from Pascagoula. I recall that Livingston then told me he thought I was the one the Sheriff was looking for and that I had better go with him. About this time Huey Baxter, the manager of the Recreation Center came out and told me to make it easier on myself I should get in the car and go with Livingston. I then got in the front seat of the Dodge car driven by Livingston. I was told that the Sheriff wanted to see me but was not told that I was under arrest. Livingston then got in the car and drove me to the Southland Service Station on the west end of Philadelphia. When we arrived there Sheriff Lawrence Rainey was already at the station with Deputy Sheriff Cecil Price. Livingston told Rainey that he thought he had the boy that he (the Sheriff) had been looking for. Rainey said, ‘O.k., we’ll take him to Thompson’s Drug Store and see if the girl can identify him.’ I then rode on to Thompson’s Drug Store on the square at Philadelphia, with Constable Livingston. The Sheriff and deputy followed us. When we arrived

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at the drug store, Sheriff Rainey searched me to see if I had any weapons me. Then all three of the officers walked inside the drug store with me.

“When we walked into the Drug Store a young white female about 21 years of age was working there. When she finished waiting on a customer, Sheriff Rainey called her over to near where we were standing. He called her by the name Geraldine but I do not know her and had never seen her before. The sheriff then asked her if I was the boy who had called and asked her for a date. I didn’t say a word. The girl named Geraldine said, ‘He’s the one, I think.’ At this point I said to Sheriff Rainey, ‘She’s lying; I didn’t call her; I just got in town!’ Rainey then told me to shut up and Deputy Sheriff Price took me back and put me in the car of the Sheriff which is a new grey Oldsmobile. A short time later Sheriff Rainey and Deputy Sheriff Price came and got in the car where I was sitting and they drove me over to the county jail. Before I was placed in the jail, and while we were still in the Sheriff’s car, Sheriff Rainey and Deputy Price questioned me repeatedly about the call to this girl who works at the drug store but I didn’t call her and I denied it to them. Sheriff Rainey slapped me a couple of times on the face with his hand but it was not enough to cause any injury.



## Handout #6

### Part 2

Note: The story picks up after Wilmer Faye Jones had been arrested. He was riding in the car with the local law enforcement

“We all got out of the car and walked toward the jail. As we walked along, Sheriff Rainey asked me what they taught me in school at Pascagoula and I told him, History, Economics, and different subjects. He said I mean what did they teach you about integration. I told him they didn’t teach me anything about integration. He said he heard they taught integration down there. Deputy Sheriff Price asked me again if I called that white girl for a date and I denied it. This was after we had gotten inside the jail. At this point Deputy Sheriff Price slapped me on the face with his hand but it did not cause any injury. The jailer, Mr. Herring was present when Price slapped me. The jailer locked me in a cell with another unidentified Negro man, about 45 or 50 years of age. Sheriff told the jailer that I was going to be in jail until the next day and that I was not to be allowed to make any calls or have any visitors. I was left in the jail cell at this time. This was about 6PM, on 6/2/64. About an hour later I heard my mother up in the front office part of the jail but I couldn’t see her. She was talking to Mrs. Herring, wife of the jailer. She was not allowed to see me. I assumed she was trying to find out why I was in jail and to get in to see me. I called out to my mother that they had locked up the wrong person and that I would be out the next morning, not to worry about it. She left just after that.

“At about 8 PM that night, 6/2/64, the jailer, Mr. Herring, brought two uniformed police officers into the jail where I was. One of them was Officer ‘Dub’ Perry and the other officer was not known by name but described as white, male, about 55 years of age, about 6 feet tall and about 220 lbs. This larger police officer, described above, as about 220 lbs., asked me to stand up and they both looked over me close. I assumed they were looking me over so they could identify me later. They didn’t say why they had come into the jail to look me over. After looking at me for a few minutes they left. They did not question me and did not come into the cell where I was. Everything was quiet from that time until about midnight.

“At approximately midnight that night, Sheriff Rainey and Deputy Sheriff Price came into the jail and had the jailer let me out of the cell. They took me in the office and gave me my ring and wallet back and Sheriff Rainey told me that he was letting me go and that I should go on



home and be off the street by 1 AM, 6/3/64. He told me I had 15 minutes to walk from the jail house to my home. I told him, 'Yes Sir' and I walked out the front of the jail to the street. I noticed that Sheriff Rainey, Deputy Sheriff Price and the jailer, Mr. Herring were standing in the front door of the jail watching me. As I reached the sidewalk in front of the jail two unidentified white men were standing in the edge of the street a short distance from the jail. They were in clear view of the front of the jail and could be seen by Sheriff Rainey and the others at the jail. One of these two men had a shot gun in his hand and the other had an automatic pistol. I wish to describe these two men as follows: No.#1 The white male with the automatic pistol of the type used in the US Army, was about 35 to 40 years of age, about 6'2, about 180 lbs., black hair which was thick and hanging over his forehead a little, a flesh colored mole about the size of an eraser on a pencil, just below his cheek bone on his left cheek. He was wearing a long sleeve white shirt and dark trousers. No 2 This man was a white male armed with a .410 pump shot gun. He was about 25 to 30, about 5'6, fair complexion. He was wearing blue jean trousers and a light colored print sport shirt with short sleeves.





### Handout #7

#### Part 3

Note: After being released from jail at night on a false charge, Wilmer Faye Jones is approached by two men standing at a lamp post.

“These two men who were standing near the lamp post just east of the jail ordered me to stop. They then approached me and told me to walk west to the car which was parked on Myrtle St., by the side of the Chevrolet garage. They told me to get into the car which I did. Then they had me get back out and they handcuffed my hands behind my back. There were three other white men standing beside the car whom I will describe as follows: No 3 who was the driver of this automobile, was a heavy build white male between 35 and 40 years of age and whom I personally observed at Philadelphia Mississippi on July 21, 1964 and have positively identified as Pete Jordan. No. 4 who rode in the front seat beside me and whom the rest referred to as ‘Preacher’ was a white male about 6’, weight about 160, build slender, dark brown hair slightly receding hairline. He was wearing a black suit, white shirt, and necktie. No 5 a white male about 5’8 weighing about 180, wearing dark trousers and a white short sleeve shirt. This man had a snubnose 38 revolver which he held in my back. Also, Pete Jordan, the driver of the automobile had a 38 snubnose revolver.

“ The automobile was a white two door 1964 Ford Galaxie hard top, with black fabric upholstery. There was a paper on the left rear glass which I think was the price list put on at the factory.

“I got in this automobile on the front seat between Pete Jordan and the man they called ‘Preacher’. We turned left passing the Benwalt Hotel and drove to the corner and turned to the right and went straight on out of town and down highway 21 southwest of Philadelphia Mississippi to Payne’s store where we turned to the right on a dirt road. After turning down this dirt road we drove around for quite a while turning down, various country roads. They finally pulled up to a barbed wire gap and the man they called ‘Preacher’ got out and opened the gap and they pulled in about twenty feet. The driver put the parking lights on and they made me get in front of the car. They asked me if I belonged to the NAACP and if I had engaged in civil rights work. They questioned me about my ideas and opinions on integration and they asked me if I had tried to date the girl at Thompson’s Drug Store. I told them I had just come to town and had not called this girl at the drug store to try to date her. I told them I did not take part in integration and civil



rights activities. The man with the wart or mole on his face did most of the talking. He told me if I would furnish them with information concerning civil rights activities they would pay me fifty dollars each time I gave them any information. They said if I would write out this information together with the identities of any of the civil rights workers and mail it to myself, general delivery at Philadelphia, Mississippi they would pay me at my address in Pascagoula, Mississippi. I agreed to do this and four of them went to the rear of the car and had a conference and the man with the shot gun joined the group at the back of the car. Then all these men finally came around to the front of the car and said to me that I could thank the 'Preacher' for saving my life. They mentioned they had planned to shoot me and throw me in a well. I never did see a well, however the place where we stopped appeared to be an abandoned farm place.



## Handout #8

### Part 4

Note: This conversation starts with Wilmer Faye Jones talking to a group of Klan members that have decided to let him live

“They then asked me which was the nearest way to Pascagoula, by Carthage, Mississippi or Union, Mississippi. I told them by Union, Mississippi and they said they wanted me to go back to Pascagoula and stay until this had all quieted down. They said they would take me home and let me get my clothes and we backed out of this place and proceeded North to highway 488. I did not know where we were and I asked the driver Pete Jordan if we had not turned the wrong way and he said this is a new road.

“We drove back to Philadelphia in about twenty minutes and I directed them to my home. They told me not to say anything to my Mother after I got to Pascagoula. They further said they had a hand grenade in the car but I did not see it.

“I went into the house and got my clothes and told my Mother I was being taken Union, Mississippi by some men and to be quiet. I had two suit cases and when I came out Pete Jordan opened the trunk of the car and put my luggage in. The man they called ‘Preacher’ slid over and let me sit by the window. They turned the car around and proceeded back the same way we had come except they took a left turn on highway 15 and proceeded toward Union, Mississippi. They had me slide across the ‘Preacher’ and sit in the middle of the front seat before we got to Union as they said they did not want the police to stop them and question them in Union.

“They asked me if I had any money and I told them I didn’t. They asked me how much it cost to go to Pascagoula and I said \$6.13 from Philadelphia but I did not know how much it cost to go from Union. The man with the wart or mole on his cheek asked the ‘Preacher’ how much money he had and I saw him pull out a large roll of bills and this man told him give me seven dollars. The man with the wart or mole told me to mail this money back addressed to myself, general delivery Philadelphia, Mississippi. They gave me the seven dollars as we were coming into Union and we pulled up by the bus station about 3 A.M. June 3, 1964. Pete Jordan got out of the car and opened the trunk so I could get my luggage. The man with the wart or mole said to me to let this be a lesson to me and when everything quieted down I could come back to Philadelphia.



“None of these men physically mistreated me in any manner whatsoever. They did not use any profanity while talking to me. It was my impression they were business men. None of these men are people I had ever known before, however I believe I have seen Pete Jordan around Philadelphia sometime during the past two years.

“During the time I was in the custody of Sheriff Lawrence Rainey on June 2, 1964 until I was released by these five men at 3 A.M. on June 3, 1964 I was not physically injured and did not receive any medical treatment.

“I recall as I left the jail about midnight with these five men Sheriff RAINEY stood in the doorway of the jail and waived to them. From this I am certain Sheriff Rainey knew who these men were and I feel certain I can identify these men if I see them again.



### Handout #9

Teacher Reference (Mitchell, 2000)

Note to Teacher: In 2000, Ernest Gilbert confessed to Jerry Mitchell that he had been one of the abductors of Wilmer Faye Jones. The following are excerpts from the September 2010 article in the Clarion Ledger:

Ernest Gilbert told The Clarion-Ledger that then-Neshoba County Sheriff Lawrence Rainey and then-Deputy Cecil Price arrested and jailed 19-year-old student Wilmer Faye Jones, then released Jones to him and other armed Klansmen, who kidnapped Jones. Gilbert also says fellow Klansman Edgar Ray Killen, also known as "Preacher" Killen, told him to kill the teen, whom the Klan believed had asked a white girl for a date. "Hell, he was adamant about it," Gilbert told The Clarion-Ledger. "I told him, 'No, I won't kill nobody, not for something like that.'" Killen and Rainey have denied any role in the kidnapping and have denied belonging to the Klan. Price could not be reached for comment and has previously declined a request for an interview. Gilbert's role in the June 2, 1964, kidnapping of Jones has never been made public before now, nor has Killen's alleged role.

These allegations regarding Jones' kidnapping prior to the so-called "Mississippi Burning" case were never heard by jurors in the 1967 federal conspiracy trial who acquitted Rainey and seven others, convicted Price and six others, and couldn't decide on Killen and two others. In early 1964, Gilbert had nothing to do with the FBI. He was a Klan leader from Brookhaven, seeking to recruit new members for the burgeoning organization known as the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in Mississippi - later blamed for 10 killings.

In a recent interview, Gilbert, now 75, told The Clarion-Ledger he recalled being invited by Killen to speak to Neshoba County Klansmen the night of June 2, 1964, at an abandoned school building - the same place the Klan met 14 days later before they burned down a black church and beat its members. Gilbert said he soon found out he had been asked for another reason - to intercept Jones after the sheriff released him from jail. "We were supposed to kill him," the former Klan leader said.

What Gilbert is telling The Clarion-Ledger matches up with what the FBI learned at the time about Jones' kidnapping, said former FBI agent Joe Sullivan, who investigated the case. "There's no question. I think Jones convinced those guys he wasn't trying to date the girl. That did defuse the reason for having him down there." An FBI memorandum from Sullivan dated Sept. 25, 1964 - shortly after Gilbert became an FBI informant - confirms Gilbert's purpose for attending the Klan meeting: "Ostensibly the visit pertained to a plan to dispose of a subversive."

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That memo, which lists Gilbert as the source of its information, confirms Rainey and Price were present at that Klan gathering: "Rainey was in charge of the meeting, and he and Killen were in Klan regalia. Numerous police officers were in attendance." That memo also says Klansmen discussed Jones' arrest and decided to form an action squad, including Killen and four others.

Gilbert explained to *The Clarion-Ledger* that Klansmen were upset with Jones because they believed the black teenager asked a white female worker for a date. In a July 23, 1964, statement to the FBI, he said Rainey and Price freed him from jail at midnight and watched as five armed men kidnapped him. Jones said he didn't know his captors, but said they referred to one man with them as "Preacher."

In an Aug. 3, 1964, statement to the FBI, Killen denied any involvement in Jones' kidnapping and said he had gone once to the county jail months ago to minister to an inmate there, but hadn't been back.

Eight days after Killen made his statement, Rainey told FBI agents he arrested Jones because he suspected the youth of stealing a high school graduation ring he was wearing. Rainey told the FBI he didn't release Jones to Klansmen: "I have no knowledge of Jones having been picked up by any local citizens who allegedly forced him to leave Neshoba County. My only reason for letting Jones out at midnight was so that he could go home and meet his obligation to report for military service."

FBI agents found no proof for Rainey's claim, Sullivan told *The Clarion-Ledger*. "Rainey wouldn't turn him over to a hit squad if he was thinking about his military obligations."

The FBI first learned of Jones' kidnapping in July 1964 from resident Florence Mars, who learned of the crime from a friend of Jones' mother. FBI agents then found Jones in Chicago and brought him back to Mississippi for interviews.

Sullivan said he was immediately struck by the similarities Jones described to FBI agents and what they believed had taken place in the trio's killings.

In his 1964 statement to the FBI, Jones described his "Number One" captor as 35 to 40 years old, 180 pounds, and "black hair which was thick and hanging over his forehead a little, a flesh-colored mole about the size of an eraser on a pencil, just below his cheek bone on his left cheek."

Upon reading the FBI statement recently, Gilbert said, "That's me. I put a gun in his back and told him to get in the car." Jones sat in the front seat between two armed Klansmen, Gilbert said.



As they drove away, Jones told the FBI "Number One" tried to get him to admit he called the white girl and told him he was sent from Alabama to kill him. "I didn't want him to know I was from Mississippi," Gilbert told The Clarion-Ledger. "I didn't have no intention of killing him. I fought in the war, but I ain't no murderer."

According to FBI reports, Klansmen drove Jones to an abandoned farm in Neshoba County not far from a present-day golf course near Silver Star Casino. Headlights shone in Jones' face as he said Klansmen interrogated him, asking him if he belonged to the NAACP, had been involved in civil rights activities or tried to date a white girl.

To each question, Jones answered no.

Gilbert told The Clarion-Ledger he confronted Jones: "I told him, 'You know, you're fixing to die, and I want to know the truth.' He told me, 'I did not call that girl. She called me.' I asked him, 'What kind of girl is she?' He said, 'I don't really know.'" After Jones' responses, Klansmen huddled at the rear of the car where he couldn't hear.

Gilbert told The Clarion-Ledger Killen asked him to shoot the teen and said that he replied, "Let me tell you one damn thing, Killen, you got a gun, and you got me into a damn mess. I tell you what you do, you kill him." With those words, Killen backed off, Gilbert said. "Killen got upset because I didn't kill him."

After the Klansmen ended their private discussion, Jones said Klansmen told him he should thank the "Preacher" for saving his life. Jones also said Klansmen "mentioned they had planned to shoot me and throw me in a well." Klansmen insisted Jones leave town or die, Gilbert told The Clarion-Ledger. He said he and Killen took Jones to his mother's house where he could pick up clothing to travel to Pascagoula, where he had relatives.

Gilbert said he threatened to kill Jones if he fled: "You go in the house. You get your clothes. If you try to run, I'm going to go in, and I ain't gonna leave nobody alive."

Gilbert said he and Killen then took Jones to a bus station, where he was given bus fare for the trip.

Before Jones left, Gilbert said, he warned the teen he'd be killed if he returned to Neshoba County.

Jones told the FBI the man called the "Preacher" pulled \$7 from a wad of bills.

Gilbert said he believes he may have also given Jones money that day.



"I certainly didn't believe in killing him because he was scared to death," Gilbert told The Clarion-Ledger. "That's why he's alive today. God was there with him."

For Sullivan, the kidnapping of Jones represented a break FBI agents had been looking for in the summer of 1964, clearly revealing how the Klan worked in Neshoba County. "This was really part of a pattern. In this case, it was supposed to be a similar episode to that of the three civil rights workers. Gilbert spoiled their plans."