

Over the years, I have been asked many times to tell the story of my participation in the 1961 Freedom Rides. After 50 years, it's about time I did so in writing. If I ever write down the story of my life (unlikely), a chapter on the Freedom Ride might look like the following.

In compiling this narrative, I am deeply indebted to my fellow riders (esp. Woolcott Smith who provided the picture of me picketing in Nashville), Jet Magazine and most of all to Dr. Raymond Arsenault and his book Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice (Oxford Press, 2006). He has collected and written the definitive work on this event and his book helped greatly in refreshing my own memory.

### PRE-RIDE

I was raised in Berkeley, California, a city now seen by the world as fairly progressive. As you will see, its current reputation is quite different from how it was when I grew up.

Berkeley lies on the east side of the SF Bay facing San Francisco. It starts low (down by the water), slopes gradually up passing through foothills and finally rising to about 900 feet. Racial lines were carefully followed—Negroes down by the water, poor Caucasians, Hispanics and some Asians as one moved away from the water. The foothills had more Caucasians and some Asians. When you started to climb in the hills, it was all white. The higher up one got, the higher the property values (along with better views). In the '50s, the big protest on the UC-Berkeley campus involved whether or not ROTC should continue to be *mandatory for all freshmen and sophomore men*. Much later, folks wanted it off campus all together, but that was not the '50s.

We lived about half-way up the hills (just above Codornices Park for those of you that know Berkeley). My parents had a long history of involvement with lefty causes (they were friends with Paul Robeson and Leadbelly sang at their wedding party in the late '30's) and I was brought up in a progressive tradition. Around 1953, my parents had built a rental cottage next door to our house. When we later rented it to the first Negro to live in the hills (he was a PhD English Professor at Oakland Community College), the neighborhood was scandalized and the mailboxes were vandalized. I entered Berkeley High in 1957. The year before, a Mason/Dixon Line had been painted on the student lunch area which was meant to enforce racial segregation (and who should eat where). We had student "social clubs" (kinda' like junior fraternities and sororities) which likewise were cut along racial lines. As a junior, I got involved with AFSC (American Friends Service Committee) and picketed a local realty for enforcing the color lines in housing. This realtor was of Japanese decent and had been interred in one of our camps during WW II—still he enforced the color line.

During my senior year, I buddied up with the son of my dad's office mate at SF State College. He was Negro and we became good friends—helping me survive my last year of high school. Before I went off to college, I spent the summer with his family as he was on an exchange in Japan. Through them I learned which restaurants in Berkeley we could go to and which ones we could not (think too much salt in the food). I also learned

which gas stations we could go to. Go to the wrong one and the attendant would “wash” your windshield with an oily rag. I began to develop the sixth sense of where we would be welcome and where we would not—what I believe Grier and Cobbs in their book Black Rage called “justifiable paranoia.” I have lost it now, but I did learn to trust minorities when they said there was discrimination that whites could not see. At the time, things were similar in San Francisco. In 1958, the Giants moved to SF and their star (Willie Mays) could not buy a house in a traditionally white area of San Francisco. In 1961, San Francisco hired its first Negro milk delivery driver.

### DECISION

The next year (Fall, 1960) I started at SF State as a freshman. Between my first and second year, I went with my parents on their annual trek back east where my dad taught summer school at Teachers College/Columbia University. During that summer, I read Martin Luther King’s book about the Montgomery bus boycott. While I intellectually knew that things were “quite different” in the south, I knew that I did not feel it in my soul. It was all academic, not real. I decided that instead of flying back to SF with my parents, I would take the bus home, routing through the south. Yet, the more I thought about this, I realized that I would very likely see things that I would find most abhorrent and that I would feel a very strong need to “do something.” I knew it would be impossible to witness such a situation without protesting in some way. Further, beyond what it did to Negroes, segregation and Jim Crow laws also represented a restriction on my ability to travel with whomever I pleased.

I realized that “doing something” on my own could be quite stupid and decided that it would make more sense to go with some legal support first. During the summer of 1961, a call was put out seeking people who were willing to be arrested for trying to integrate bus stations. The next day (Monday), I called the national office of CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) in NYC and said that I wanted to be part of a Freedom Ride. I got a same day appointment with Jim Farmer (National Director of CORE) and he interviewed me in their Park Avenue office. The minimum age was 18 and those under 21 needed to get parental permission. Tuesday, they called to tell me that I had been accepted. On Thursday, I was on a Greyhound bus with about 5 other folks bound for Nashville and nonviolent training. By Saturday, I was in jail.

My parents responded with what could probably be called panic, reluctance, pride and fear all at once. The Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) had already integrated interstate travel, but did not explicitly extend this to the waiting rooms (in spite of a Supreme Court ruling). As a way of supporting me, I asked my parents to send letters to everybody they knew urging them to write letters seeking our release from jail and an expansion of the commission’s order to include waiting rooms. As far as I know, they sent out over 50 such letters. A copy is attached at the end of this document.

### A BIT OF HISTORY

The best brief overall history of the Freedom Rides can be found at the civil rights memorial veteran’s page on the internet ([www.crmvet.org/riders/freedom\\_rides.pdf](http://www.crmvet.org/riders/freedom_rides.pdf)). Recently,

PBS had a two hour show (Freedom Riders) that also covers the important history. The Freedom Rides actually were started in the late '40s by the FOR (Fellowship Of Reconciliation—a Quaker based group). That ride got as far as North Carolina and Tennessee before returning to Washington, DC. They had been met with arrests and violence without ever going into the Deep South. In December, 1960, the US Supreme Court ruled on the Boynton case (*Boynton v. Virginia*). This ruling said the segregation in all inter-state travel was illegal. The ruling applied to all aspects of travel. That spring, the ICC ordered that all interstate travel be integrated, but they did not specifically extend their order to the waiting rooms and related facilities. In the south, the ruling was ignored and segregation persisted. On May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1961 (100 years after the start of the Civil War), the modern day rides were initiated by CORE. The purpose of the ride was to integrate waiting rooms, lunch counters, toilets and drinking fountains (in bus stations, train stations and airports) along the way and force the federal government to enforce the Boynton decision in full. The ride started in Washington, DC and was to end in New Orleans.

As the ride traveled south, resistance increased. In Anniston, Alabama, (on Mother's Day no less) a mob beat up the riders and set fire to the bus (while police stood by). More beatings/riots took place in Birmingham and later in Montgomery. Many have speculated that it was the police who told the mob of the schedule. Indeed, in Birmingham, the Chief of Police (Bull Connor) told the Klan that the police would give them 15 minutes before intervening. At this point, CORE wanted to stop the rides altogether (too dangerous), but SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee based in Nashville) said they were going to continue anyway. To stop would send the message that all the Klan needed to do to stop integration and maintain Jim Crow practices was to beat up protesters.

There was a fair amount of debate over this decision with discussions about whether or not things were moving "too fast" or if it was "too dangerous. The NAACP certainly thought so. Indeed, Robert Kennedy (then Attorney General) blamed "extremists on both sides" for the violence. He clearly felt that the riders bore some of the blame. The Kennedys called for a "cooling off period" and condemned the riders as "unpatriotic" because they embarrassed the nation on the world stage. Robert Kennedy (as the chief law enforcement of the land) is quoted as saying that he did "not feel that the Department of Justice can side with one group or the other in disputes over Constitutional Rights." I marvel over that statement. Eventually, CORE agreed with SNCC to proceed (esp. since SNCC was going to go anyway, with or without CORE) and the rides continued.

Troops were eventually brought in (very reluctantly by the Kennedys and only because of the horrific pictures coming out of Aniston, Birmingham, and Montgomery, Alabama) and the riders were protected to the Mississippi State Line. At the next stop (Jackson), they were arrested, convicted on a charge of Breach Of Peace and put in the Hinds County Jail. While Alabama tried to stop the rides with violence, Mississippi decided to try to use legal means. It turns out that there was a "back-door deal" between the White House and the Governors of Alabama and Mississippi facilitated by Senator Eastland of Mississippi. If there was no more violence (i.e. protection from the KKK), Mississippi would be free to use legal means to stop the rides and the feds would not interfere. CORE and

SNCC decided that the best way to fight this was to pack the jails (JAIL, NO BAIL). The call was put out to send as many people down as possible to be arrested. Soon, so many were arrested that the city and county jails no longer had enough room to hold them all. The city and county then worked out a deal with the state to house prisoners at Parchman State Penitentiary instead.

### TRAINING AND MY GROUP

On July 26, 1961, my group left NYC by Greyhound bus for Nashville. In Nashville, we were joined with others so that our number going into Jackson was 10. We were all white (except for one gal who was mixed, but was classified by the police as white due to her skin color) and most of us were 20 to about 30 years of age. At just 18, I was at the minimum age acceptable to CORE. Mississippi had charged some with Contributing to the Delinquency of Minors if there were fellow riders under the age of 18. The notable exceptions were Norma Wagner (44) who was blind, Widjonaiko Tjokroadisumatro (the son of the former Indonesian Ambassador to Pakistan) whom we called "Weejo," and Hilmar Pabel (50), a German independent photojournalist for Life, Paris Match, Stern and Quick.

Training in Nashville was quite brief and consisted of lectures and role playing. Our training culminated in walking a picket line at a local grocery store for equal opportunity in hiring.



**Unidentified, Me, Weejo and Sally Rowley Picketing H. G. Hill's Grocery Store in Nashville, TN**

An angry crowd of white young men gathered. We were spit upon and eggs were thrown at us. It was on this picket line that a local white pulled out a knife and stood in front of

me so that I could not proceed. I stepped aside and went around him. As the tension was building, our leader/trainer (who apparently knew him) shouted out “Hey Larry, what kind of a mill you got in that rod of yours?” [*Translation*: “What kind of an engine do you have in that car of yours?”] He laughed, told our leader and the tension was broken. There is a Quaker saying “He drew a circle to shut me out, but I drew a larger circle to include him in”. For me, that was the turning point. A larger circle had been drawn, and I saw the power of nonviolence.

While my group was mostly white, the riders as a whole tended to be young and evenly divided between black and white. Females represented about a third of the total. North and South were again fairly equally divided. By this time, many riders (over 300) had been arrested in Jackson and so we received a good deal of information as to what was likely to happen when we arrived in Jackson. It all proved to be true. All in all, I think the training took maybe 10-12 hours and we were sent off to Jackson at midnight.

People have asked if I was scared when I got on the bus in Nashville. I really don’t remember being scared, rather I had decided to get on a train that would not stop and there was nothing I could do at that point. I was glad to be on the train, but knew that the stage was set and that what would happen, would happen. In talking with many other riders, a common theme is that we all felt that we HAD to do something—we could not just stand by. I think I was just too young and naive to be scared. At the same time, I do remember being very interested in one of the other riders (Judith Scoggins) who was my seatmate, but then I was just 18 so that is to be expected.

#### ARREST AND TRIAL

We arrived in Jackson at about 9 AM on the morning of Saturday, July 29, 1961 and filed into the Colored Waiting Room. We had called ahead to announce our plans and there was a crowd waiting for us. This was also part of the legal strategy so that it was clear from the beginning that we were nonviolent. I don’t think I was in the room for more than a minute, when Captain Ray came over and asked me to “Move on.” I refused. He asked “Did you hear the order?” I answered “Yes.” He then asked “Do you refuse to move on?” and when I said that I did, “Well you’re under arrest.” I was charged with Breach of Peace (a misdemeanor). It probably only took about 2-3 minutes for me to get arrested. The rationale for the arrest was that by our very presence in the Colored Waiting Room, we were inciting the locals to do violence against us (as had happened in Alabama and elsewhere) and that we were therefore the cause of the problem. This echoes some of the logic coming from the White House—that both sides were responsible for the violence.

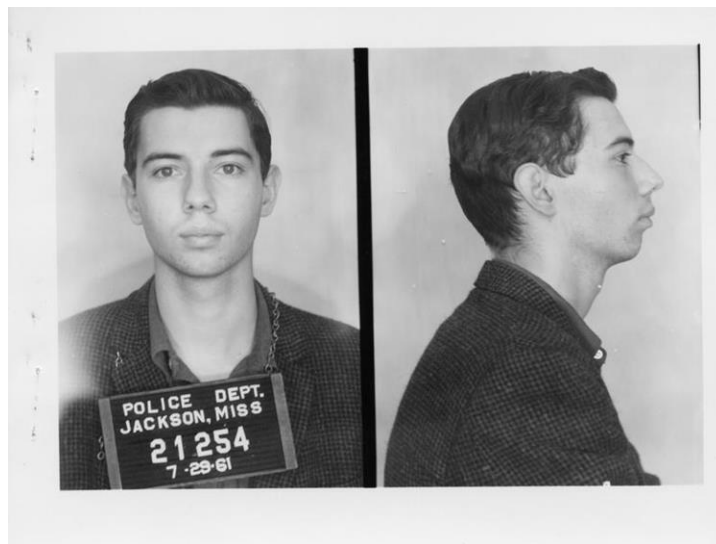
There is a picture of me (next to Ellen Ziskind) who is being arrested as well as Judith Scoggins (wearing a scarf) and Norma Wagner in the August 17, 1961 issue of Jet Magazine. The reprint rights to this picture still belong to Jet Magazine, but this issue is available through Google Books [click *More* and then *Books* on the Google Home Page] and type in the following: Jet, Aug 14, 1961. This gets you to the last page of that issue, but you can scroll backwards to the correct page. The picture of my arrest is on Page 14,

while Page 15 shows me being loaded (with my suitcase) into the paddy wagon. The man with the emerging bald spot is my future cell-mate.

The police refused to arrest Weejo (indeed, he was forced out of the room by some men in suits) and we strongly suspected that the FBI/State Department had influenced that decision so as to avoid an international incident. He was getting a lot of heat from our state department and his own embassy as well. We wondered how and why the Feds could intercede on his part and not on ours. Weejo reportedly spent the next week going back and forth between the two waiting rooms (and waiting rooms in other interstate travel areas) trying to get arrested. He never was. An additional problem was that the police didn't know which room he was *not* supposed to be in.

Norma Wagner (the woman in the white dress in the picture in Jet Magazine) who was blind could also not get arrested (this was before the days of handicapped rights). Being blind, she of course couldn't see which room she was supposed to be in or what all the fuss was about. After a second attempt (also failed), she went on New Orleans where she was arrested for distributing literature in a Negro neighborhood.

After our arrest, the rest of us were carted off to jail in a black paddy wagon that had been left out in the sun for quite some time. During the ride to the county jail, they made every effort to accelerate, brake and turn as sharply as possible to throw us around in the back of the wagon. I wasn't scared, but it was very unpleasant. We were booked, fingerprinted, had our mug shots taken and placed in a group cell in the city or county jail.



**My Mug Shot**

We were visited in jail by a priest and a rabbi. None of the other ministers wanted too much to do with us. I had talked this over with my parents before I went south. We decided that the Rabbi might be the most receptive. He said "All my boys come over here," and I so went—the uncircumcised Jew.

Hilmar Pabel was most upset over his arrest and demanded a phone call to the German Embassy—which was refused. We were able to get a pencil from a trusty and there was ample toilet paper. Hilmar used the time before his trial to write lengthy letters on this toilet paper which he later smuggled out in the lining of his coat.

My future cellmate also used some of the toilet paper to write a letter to his wife (home with their two children). This “toilet paper letter” is now in the archives of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History in Jackson, Mississippi and will be included in the new Civil Rights Museum to be built in Jackson (along with my bus ticket).

When we (along with 15 more riders who had been arrested on Sunday) were tried the following Monday (July 31, 1961) by the local judge (Municipal Judge James L. Spencer), Hilmar was released. As a reporter of international reputation, we again suspected that “someone” intervened on his behalf before the trial. Judge Spencer said from the bench that Pabel was a “foreigner from a foreign country” who due to “overzealous zeal” didn’t know what he was doing. We loved that language and later incorporated it into verses of the songs that we wrote and sang. Whether it was our imagination or not, we looked up at the scales of Lady Justice and saw that they were tilted rather dramatically. We assumed that some sympathetic janitor had done his work.

For his part, Hilmar “blessed out” the judge during the trial (c.f. Jet 8/17/61).

I stand before you unclean because I could not take a bath. I just covered the trial of Adolph Eichmann, who is accused of being the world’s worst criminal, and even he was treated better than this... Why do you arrest these people like criminals? What have they done? The law says there should be no segregation in interstate travel, yah... I was in the Congo in darkest Africa last year where I ate with Dr. Ralph Bunche and other black men, but here in the freest country in the world, I cannot sit next to a colored man.

In response to the reference to Adolph Eichmann, the prosecuting attorney said “Yes, but you didn’t kill 4 ½ million Jews.” He immediately withdrew his comment once he said it, but it still hung there in the air. Hilmar also said that he had recently met with President Kennedy a couple of days prior to the ride and that the President told him that this was a free country. Hilmar questioned this as he had also been to the wade-ins in Chicago and there, the attackers were arrested. In Mississippi, *he* was arrested—his first time in over 20 years of reporting. Later, he was quoted as saying to a fellow reporter, “They said I was disturbing the peace, but there was peace all around me”.

Again, we were impressed by the power of the US government and how it was used very selectively. They could influence the actions of the police or judicial system in Mississippi (by freeing Hilmar Pabel or hustling Weejo out of the bus station), but they could not enforce the Boynton decision. When elected, JFK was strongly supported by Senator James Eastland—a notorious segregationist and the other conservative Democrats in the south. That alliance allowed him to beat Richard Nixon. As a result, debts were owed. In addition, since the US Senate at the time was controlled by southern segregationists, Kennedy needed them to pass other legislation. It was only much later that the administration reluctantly agreed to support integration and civil rights.

To this day, I fail to understand the black community's specific love of Bobby Kennedy. He and his brother could have done so much more. They were not the enemy, but they clearly were not a friend and they repeatedly tried to minimize any federal involvement—preferring to “let the states take care of it” and arguing that we (civil rights demonstrators) were proceeding “too fast.” Now, clearly a lot was going on at that time. The Cold War was in full force. The Berlin Wall was being built. African diplomats were being harassed (for being black) as they traveled between the UN and Washington, and the US was actively trying to woo the newly emerging independent countries in Africa to join the West against Soviet Russia. Whatever the private feelings of the administration, pragmatically they hoped the Civil Rights struggle would simply “go away.” Such was not the case and they were very late in their support. It was Lyndon B Johnson and the civil rights workers who actually got the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 passed, not the Kennedys.

The rest of us pled *Nolo Contendere* (or “No Contest”) and received maximum misdemeanor sentences of 4 months in jail plus a fine of \$200. If the fine was not paid, it could be worked off at \$3/day (or another 66 days). We had no intention of allowing the state to make a profit from us (by paying off the fine), so we were basically looking at 6 months in jail. I was about the 300<sup>th</sup> rider to be arrested. Early arrestees had not received maximum sentences, but many early riders returned to the bus station, were re-arrested and received maximum sentences. The next day (Tuesday), we were shipped off to Parchman State Penitentiary in northwestern Mississippi in a camper shell mounted on the back of a pick-up truck. As with the ride after our arrest, this was also a rather rough trip.

## PARCHMAN

Parchman is one of two rather notorious southern prisons (the other being Angola in Louisiana) that many have written and sung about. According to the State of Mississippi, Parchman covers about 18,000 acres and could accommodate almost 5000 prisoners. When it was constructed in 1909, it “was in many ways reminiscent of a gigantic antebellum plantation.” It was modeled after a working farm with cotton and food being the main crops. Home of the prison work gang, prisoners worked in the fields—frequently overseen by other prisoners (white, of course), who were made “trusty” and given whips, guns and horses to guard the black prisoners. Rapes, murders and beatings were common. If a trusty shot an escaping black prisoner whom he claimed was escaping, he was given time off of his sentence. These practices persisted until a lawsuit was filed in 1970 (initiated in part by the publicity brought on by our incarceration). This suit (the longest running suit on prison conditions) was finally settled (quite recently) and conditions have improved since then. We can take some pride in that.

Parchman is so large that perimeter boundary walls are not really needed. It is surrounded by open farm land and swamps. With no trees in the area, it would be hard for an escapee to hide anywhere. It was (and still is) organized into various housing units each of which is surrounded by fences with barbed wire—the most notorious being Unit 17 (at the time, also known as Maximum Security Unit or MSU) which housed Death Row as



well. MSU had guard towers at each corner and a “no man’s land” between the fence and the buildings. The perimeter fence was actually made up of three fences (inner and outer were chain-link [topped with razor wire]) with the middle fence electrified.

After a rather rough ride up to Parchman, this is where we were first placed. Early riders were apparently forced to work, but by the time I got there, this had stopped. Instead, we got MSU. Unit 17 as it is now called is set up as a giant H with a row of cells in each of the four wings. Regular MSU prisoners had been moved out and we were moved in. Black males were in one wing, white males in another and women in the third. The last wing had the actual death row prisoners as the execution chamber was also in that wing. Because of this separation, I never got a chance to see/meet with any of the black riders nor any of the women (except those who had come down with me from Nashville). We were able to converse with the black riders in the other wing of the H (by shouting), but communication was rather limited.



**One Of Four Wings of Cells In MSU**

On arrival, all our clothes were taken and we were stripped, searched, and given toothbrushes, a worn out t-shirt and stretched out boxer shorts to wear. Shoes and socks were forbidden. One had to tie knots in the waistband of the shorts so that they would not fall down. On the back of the shorts, the letters MSU were printed in large lettering. The students from Michigan thought this was hilarious. Men were not given body cavity searches, but women were given vaginal searches. For the early riders, this was done ungloved.

We were paired up and led to our cells. In retrospect, it was good that we were not mixed in with the regular prisoners as the whites would likely have beaten the snot out of us.

Elsewhere in the south, voter registration workers were arrested on trumped up charges, put in the drunk-tank with the announcement that the guards would be back in the morning. Many were beaten all night. The blacks would have treated us as heroes and the prison could not afford to have us “give them any ideas.” Anyway, I ended up with a most interesting fellow as my cellmate.

Coming on my bus, Byron Baer (age: 31 and married with two children) was a former Cornell student who at the time was working as a special effects man on Broadway, in television and the movies. Among other things, one of his jobs was to rig TV commercials so that cleansers looked like they were really cleaning. In addition to several horror movies, he also worked on several gangster movies—doing things like making it appear that machine gun bullets were hitting a car while it was driving by.

Because he knew that the men did not have body cavity searches, Byron was able to smuggle in an amazing variety of stuff. He had onion skin paper, pencil leads, strong thread wrapped around a toothpick or wooden matchstick, very fine pins and a piece of a razor blade. These were all wrapped in tinfoil gum-wrappers which he placed between his cheeks and gums (upper and lower on both sides). In Nashville, he also had purchased some glasses with a hearing aid built in. He removed the aid (keeping it and tossing the glasses) and added a tuning coil, a transistor and a long length of thin copper wire. This resulted in a compact sort of a radio. The original plan was to attach this to the back of his scrotum (as a sort of “third testicle”) using spirit gum, but when this didn’t work, he enclosed it in two rubber finger probes and inserted it in his rectum. At Parchman he was able to receive a local radio station from Cleveland, Mississippi (originally thought to be Cleveland, Ohio) and so we were able to keep up with the news (Freedom Rides, the Berlin Crisis as well as the Mantle/Maris homerun race.)

Since so many riders were getting arrested, Parchman was even running out of space in MSU. That afternoon (or maybe the next morning), we (the white males) were rounded up again and taken off to First Offenders Camp (FOC) where we joined the rest of the white males who had been moved before our arrival. All the other riders (black and female) remained at MSU. FOC was more like a large barracks (all the beds in one large room with community toilets). One rider calculated that 25 laps around the inside wall of the building was about 1 mile. There was minimal warning, but fortunately, Byron had time to reinsert all his contraband before we boarded the bus.

This was apparently a rather new facility (originally set to open much later) and soon after we arrived, there was a problem with the toilets/sewer. We could not use part of the bathroom and after they were finished fixing it, the workers cemented over where they had worked. Before the cement had had time to set and dry, Byron went over and put his towel down on the cement to soak up the surface layer. I asked him about this and he said “Well, you never know when you might need some cement.” Later, he scraped it off the towel and put it in the envelope that was supposed to hold our tooth powder.

We were fed three times a day with one or two pieces of meat (e.g. a 1½ inch piece of fat with a tiny amount of meat attached) every 3 days. Before going to Parchman, I had been

a fairly picky eater. That changed and I learned to eat grits (plain), beans, chicory coffee, tomatoes and many other things. Volume was rather minimal and I ended up losing about 10 pounds during my stay. At 5'10", I started at 130 pounds, but finished at 120 pounds. The only thing I could not stomach was okra—it was just too slimy. Byron didn't care much for it either, so we flushed it down the toilet so that the prison couldn't claim that we were so well fed that food was returned.

FOC was fairly low key with freedom of movement and we could gather in groups. As a result, we were able to have frequent meetings and classes. We could look out the windows and see the prison work gangs, but they were not allowed to get close enough that we could talk to them. Showers were "at will" and it was a moderately easy time. All other riders (black or female) remained at MSU.

Unlike myself (with only one year of college), many of the riders were rather well educated. A system was set up so that if anybody knew anything about anything, they taught it to others. The guy in the next cell (at MSU) was a biology student and his cellmate (a Penn Graduate) had just passed his boards to be a Veterinarian. We had a group of Anthro grad students from UCLA and another group of Sociology grad students from Michigan. In addition to students from all over the country, there were numerous ministers (a group of 15 Episcopalian ministers were arrested as I came out of Parchman), civil rights workers and an assortment of others (housewives, a prize fighter, a professional model, college professors, retired naval officers, rabbis, postal carriers, etc.). Dr. Arsenault's book places the total number of riders (including other states besides Mississippi) at 436.

Because the guards could see us at all times, Byron's radio presented a bit of a problem. This was solved by having a large group gather in one spot while a fellow rider gave a rather loud class on some subject. Nearby, a much smaller group (2 or 3) gathered off to one side and talked. Byron was in this group and the riders who were with him carefully screened the guards off from seeing what Byron was doing.

No visitors were allowed (other than our lawyer, a priest and a rabbi). The rabbi (Rabbi Perry Nussbaum) said that he supported our goals, but like many, accused us of moving "too fast." Nevertheless, he came weekly to Parchman and wrote letters home to our families that we were OK. I still have the letters that he wrote my parents. Years later, his synagogue in Jackson was fire bombed.

We were allowed to write one letter out each week, but only to immediate family and we were allowed to receive one letter. All mail was read and censored. We were not allowed to say anything negative about Parchman, Mississippi or the south. Incoming letters would be delivered (if at all) if there was bad news. If something didn't go though, that was why. Few of us received any of the letters our families sent.

For my part, I had set up a communication system with my parents. Normally, I addressed my father by his given first name (George). If I started my letter with "Dear Father," then things were in reverse. Thus, "Dear Father, the food is fine" read just the opposite.

Before coming down, Byron had figured out other ways to communicate with his wife. Two systems were employed. In the first, he would place tiny pinholes over certain letters or words so that if one just looked at those letters or words, a different message emerged. His other method involved writing with a sliver of a bar of soap (cut with the razor blade he had concealed). To reveal the hidden message, a chemical (I seem to remember a urine rinse) and heat were applied and the message came out. Among other things, he used this system to tell his wife to call my parents in NYC to tell them how to reveal the hidden message written with the soap. He then sent a secret message to my parents on one of my letters that I really was doing well and OK. That message (which I still have) meant a lot to them. I was also able to send them one secret message.

It was at FOC that Byron made his chess set. He did this by chewing up some bread and then molding it into the various pieces. The black pieces were darkened by using coffee to stain them. After we were released, Byron passed his set on to one of the remaining riders who was eventually able to sneak it out when he was released. It is now housed at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York City.

I'm not clear on time, but after about 2-3 weeks, we were taken back to MSU (again Byron had time to reinsert his materials). The arrival rate of Freedom Riders had slowed down and they could now house all of us at MSU. Byron and I were cell-mates once again. Thus, I spent about half my time at FOC and the other half at MSU.

Cells at MSU were just as one sees in the movies. Each cell (about 6x9 feet) had three walls of concrete with the fourth (all bars) open to the corridor. Doors were opened and closed from a master switch at the head of the wing. There was a food slot/shelf through which a food tray was passed and later collected. There was an overhead light that was on 24 hours a day and across the hall, there was a narrow high window from which one could see the sky (but not much else). Towards the center of the H, were some showers as well as an isolation cell (completely dark with no windows and known as "The Hole") which was used for punishment. This took place several times before my arrival, but no one from my wing was punished during my time. There was poor ventilation with temperatures and humidity both reaching into the 100s in the summer. Each cell contained a bunk bed (I took the top bunk), cotton mattress and a combination toilet/wash basin/drinking fountain. We may have had a single sheet, I don't remember. Toilet paper was highly rationed and valued.

We were only given two things to read. One was a pamphlet called Race and Reason by the CEO of Delta Airlines (which "explained" why the races should be kept separate) and the other was a Bible. Sadly this pamphlet, Race and Reason (125 pages) is still available from Amazon. We were to be in our cells 24 hours a day with release twice a week for showers (at the end of the hall) and a shave (using oatmeal soap [made at Parchman] and a shared razor). We were told that if we didn't shave, the guards would do it for us. That was the only time we were allowed out of our cells. We were not allowed to use the exercise yard (outdoors), and could only do what we could do within a 6x9 space.

With nothing to do, we spent a lot of time sitting or lying on our bunks. During the day, we wrote songs and sang them, chatted, slept or played endless rounds of *Botticelli*. Those that could, played chess by shouting out the moves to their partner in another cell. Some didn't even need a board. I read the entire Bible and am now moderately conversant (for an Atheist) with Christianity. We had three divinity students who discussed the pros and cons of the three main versions of the bible. I learned quite a bit in jail.

One of the more interesting things to come out of my experience had to do with the effects of locking up a person in jail. We knew that we could post bail whenever we wished, so a traditional escape was not necessary. At the same time, we were fascinated by that prospect. Byron and I went so far as to fabricate (out of chewed-up bread dough) something that could be used to jamb the cell door in an unlocked position. We then spent our time trying to figure out a way to get past the 4 other gates between us and the outside world. We never did figure out how to get past the exterior fences. We may even have tried to test it, I'm not sure, but we certainly could have.

From this I learned that when you put a barrier in front of a person, he/she will inevitably try to figure out a way around it. This puts the whole penal system in a different light. If we think prisoners use their time to reflect and regret what they did and how to avoid getting back in jail again, they do not. All they really think about is escape! When that is not possible, then anger alternating with hopelessness and depression set in—not a good combination for when the prisoner eventually gets out and is “rehabilitated”.

Because of Byron's many skills and “spy tradecraft,” some of the other riders began to wonder if he might not be some sort of a spy (FBI/?). Paranoia (especially among some of the more seasoned, older leftys) was present, and Byron certainly seemed to know his way around. I assured them that to the best of my knowledge, this was not true. Future events have borne this out, but it does testify to the level of concern and doubt. It turns out that there was a “spy,” but he came from a much different source.

Upon our return to MSU, Byron used the cement powder he had gathered from First Offenders; and using some straw from a broom we had been given once to sweep out our cells, he fashioned a shelf inside one of the angles that held up our bunks. He was worried that if there was a surprise inspection, he would not have had time to reinsert his radio and other things. Previous to my first stay at MSU, the guards had removed the mattresses to get the riders to stop singing and protesting. When that didn't work, they turned on the fire hoses and then the fans/air conditioning (which were normally off). We never knew when this might happen again. As it was, it never did.

It was during my second time at MSU that a most unusual event took place. One day, I was called out of my cell by Deputy Tyson (whom the riders called “Depty Dawg” for his resemblance to a character in the TV show Huckleberry Hound). I was given a set of horizontal prison stripes (horizontal=prisoner, vertical=“trusty” and vertical on the pockets only=“half-trusty”) to put on and then taken out to his car. Deputy Tyson would not tell me why or where we were going. This had not happened to any other of the Freedom Riders, but looking back, again I think I was too naive to be scared. We drove to what I

assume is the main administration building and I was taken inside. There I met an old friend of my parents who had received one of their letters. His name was Bo Holliman and he was a local minister (Methodist, I believe) near Parchman. He came with his wife and daughter as well as a basket of food (fried chicken, fresh grapes, and I'm not sure what else). I had to eat it all there and was not allowed to take anything back to my cellmates at MSU. Bo and his family were most supportive of the rides, but he said it was too dangerous for them to speak out publicly. Apparently, Bo Holliman knew the warden, and as a minister, was able to get visiting privileges to check on my well-being for my parents. After our visit, I was taken back to MSU and my cell.

Near the end of my stay at MSU, several of us were approached by a "half-trusty" who sought our help. He was black and frequently brought us our food. I've heard that he even supplied a couple of cigarettes, but I did not observe that. Anyway, several of the riders got acquainted with him (as much as was possible under the watchful eyes of the guards). He said that his name was Paul and he sought help from us for after the time he was released. The riders he spoke with were very sympathetic and gave him numerous contacts for when he was released. Cuba and Africa came up a good deal in their conversations.

It turns out his real name was not Paul but rather Peter Hunter and he had been recruited by Tom Scarbrough (an investigator with the Sovereignty Commission [an official state commission committed to preserving Jim Crow]) to gather information from the riders about possible affiliations with the Communist Party. He was serving a sentence for forgery and I suspect he was trying to get time off his sentence. He seems to have had written contact with about 10 of the riders (from August to September) including my cellmate Byron. Nothing clear-cut seems to have come out of these contacts, but he was the spy we should have been worrying about—not Byron.

There was a subsequent news item in the Jackson Daily (10/26/61) about his escaping from Parchman. He was described as a being an inmate at Parchman who had been sent out on his own by a guard to another unit to buy cigarettes at the canteen there. According to the guard, he "just walked away." I do not know what finally happened to him, but perhaps he was allowed to "escape" as a way of paying him off for his efforts against us. It really is not possible to "just walk away" from Parchman.

#### RELEASE AND NEXT EVENTS

Our lawyer frequently said "Due to the peculiarities of Mississippi Law..." before giving any legal opinion. Well, "Due to the peculiarities of Mississippi Law..." unless one filed an appeal by the 39<sup>th</sup> day of their sentence, one lost all right to appeal. Several riders had made the decision to serve their full time, but most of us decided to file appeals on our 39<sup>th</sup> day. Part of my thinking was that the issue really needed to get settled again in the courts (especially after the Boynton decision), but I also hoped to have my conviction removed because it was wrong. Finally, I did want to get back to school.

A couple of days later, those of us who had filed an appeal were taken back to Jackson (a much less violent ride) and released (on \$500 bail paid by CORE and NAACP Legal Defense Fund). Counting my time before trial as well as the days after my appeal was filed; I had been in jail for about 45 days total. I still remember how heavy my clothes felt on my body after 6½ weeks of just underwear. Energy-wise, I was very weak and sometimes got dizzy when I sat up quickly. I also got reacquainted with shoes and socks. I stayed with a local dentist (not white), and was given a lovely fried chicken dinner and a real bed (which was wonderful). The folks of Jackson took us in (at great risk to themselves) and (as with the early riders in Montgomery, Aniston and Birmingham) showed so much more bravery than anything I ever did.

In so many ways, the local people of Jackson took much greater risks than anything I ever did. I was protected by the walls of MSU and later, could return to the north. The local blacks would still be there after I left and were at the continued mercy of the KKK, White Citizens Council and the Sovereignty Commission. They could be intimidated, fired from their jobs, beaten or killed with little or no publicity. For them, their risk was so much greater.

The local authorities did not want to make anything easy for us. As mentioned above, our original trial before Judge Spencer was rather informal and so there was no official court record (transcript) of the proceedings. We all needed to be given a formal jury trial so that a record could be established on which to base an appeal. All the riders who had previously been released (and gone home) had to return for a mass arraignment (or forfeit bail and be a fugitive). That coincided with my release; so soon after, there was a rather large rally in Jackson (most likely at the black Masonic Temple on Lynch St.) to which I was taken and introduced (along with many of the other riders). I walked in very tall and have never walked so tall since. Later, I flew out of Jackson to Dallas and then on to San Francisco. It bothered me greatly to have to fly on the airline of the person who wrote Race And Reason, but to get out of Jackson by plane, one really had no choice in those days.

Finally, on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1961 the ICC issued another order and the waiting rooms and lunch counters are finally opened to all. At this point, the movement shifted to voter registration and other issues. The rides had achieved their purpose.

In spite of this ICC ruling, the following spring at my parents' expense I had to fly back down to Jackson for my individual jury trial (before a jury of "peers" consisting of 12 white men). They were doing two individual trials a day (including jury selection). The scales were still askew and after a very brief trial, I was promptly convicted again. My bail was raised to \$1500. CORE/NAACP did not have the funds for the higher bail (they barely had the money to file the appeals) and neither did my parents. My parents ended up borrowing the money (with interest) from my grandmother.

Years later, my parents and I found that my case (along with all the other riders) had gotten up to the Supreme Court and our convictions were reversed on 4/26/1965. I now had an arrest on my record, but no conviction. We didn't find out about the reversal until

well after it happened; and by the time we did, CORE no longer had the additional \$1000 bail money. My parents (who had loaned CORE the money) were stuck. They eventually repaid my grandmother, but it took some time.

Many people have asked me if my arrest had any impact on potential jobs. At the time, I felt that if anybody didn't want to hire me because of my Freedom Ride, I wouldn't want to work for them. I still feel that way. As it happened, when I returned to California in 1970 (having finished my PhD training at UW-Madison), there was a very conservative State Superintendent of Public Instruction in office (Max Rafferty). Superintendent Rafferty had set up a "review committee" to review the credential application of any person who had a political arrest on his/her record.

This committee served as a holding action to delay/deny the issuance of a credential to anybody who had been arrested for political reasons. After I was hired by the Marin County Office of Education, it was discovered that my credential was being held up by that committee in Sacramento. While the County Board of Education could grant me a provisional (or "emergency") credential, the County Superintendent was also very conservative and staff did not want to broach the subject with him. As a result, the Associate County Superintendent had to place numerous phone calls to Sacramento to get them to release my credential. This was finally done, but was the only negative impact I ever experienced.

All other comments have been very positive and my arrest has given me extra credibility with many of the folks (parents) with whom I have had contact—esp. African-Americans. As I sat in on Student Study Teams (as the School Psychologist), I could ask the "unspoken question." *"Is there any role that racism or perceived racism might be playing in this child's difficulties?"* This goes all the way back to my experiences in Berkeley and the justifiable paranoia that often exists. Non-white parents (often the only non-white folks at the table) were frequently very much relieved to have a school person put the issue out and on the table for discussion. Staff sometimes cringed at the question (and the answer), but that was OK too. It is a question that still to this day needs to be asked on an ongoing basis.

As I look over the roster of riders in Arsenault's book, I am most humbled by the company I keep. Many are lawyers, judges, and college professors. Two are now in the US Congress (John Lewis and Bob Filner) and my cellmate became Speaker Pro-Tem of the New Jersey State Senate. Other riders include Ralph Abernathy, Fred Shuttlesworth, William Sloan Coffin, Stokely Carmichael (who coined the term *Black Power*) and Tom Hayden (the "socialist" mayor of Santa Monica, one of the "Chicago 7", the first "Mr. Jane Fonda" and later, a state legislator in California). All in all, it's quite a group.

#### WHY WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?



It has been said that the publicity and success of the Freedom Rides changed or bent “the arc of history.” We had forced the Kennedys and the nation as a whole to change course and take the morally correct stand. Civil Rights became an accepted thing and the backbone of Jim Crow was broken forever. Now, at the time, we did not expect to be as successful as we were. All of us just knew that we could not stand by—that we had to do something and we did it. Others have said that most of us were just ordinary people doing extraordinary things. That may very be true. That also means that others can do it too.

As I look back over the years, I think three points are important.

1. We had a simple, positive message: Enforce the Supreme Court Ruling (Boynton)/“Integrate the waiting rooms so that people can travel as they wish.” My participation was (in part) simply so that I could travel with whomever and wherever I wished.
2. The single, underlying issue is easy to understand, had *moral authority* and “makes sense” to the average person. As such, it appeals to the basic humanity in all of us.
3. The clear, honest suffering that we endured elicited great sympathy. By not fighting back physically, by being nonviolently assertive, it was very hard for the Kennedys in Washington and the public in general to ignore or reject us (blaming us clearly did not work). Publicity was probably our greatest ally. If the Klan and police in Alabama had simply ignored those riders on Mother’s Day, the whole movement might have been stopped.

Recently (while not an expert), I have been greatly impressed by the recent events in the Middle East (esp. Tunisia and Egypt) as their process was so similar. Their results are as positive. They used nonviolent protests to focus world attention on a bad situation. They were met with violence and they responded with more nonviolence. CNN, the international press and cell phones were their greatest allies. There is still hope for Syria and Iran. Contrast that with Libya and other countries like Yemen, where violence has been met with violence. There the likely end-game may very well be a rather protracted struggle with many more deaths.

Recently, I have learned that FOR (who organized the first Freedom Ride in 1947) wrote a comic book about the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1958. As a result of the 9/11 tragedy, in 2008 this was translated into Arabic and Farsi by HAMSA (Hands Across the Mid-east Support Alliance) and distributed throughout the Middle East. It is still available online for free from their website (in English, Farsi and Arabic). Many copies were handed out in Tahrir Square in Cairo. It is still being passed around and deserves a good deal of the credit for the peacefulness and success of the current “Arab Spring”. Indeed, there are many veterans of civil rights that are now conducting nonviolent training in the Middle East.

## RETROSPECTION AND THE FUTURE

Looking back, I was not nearly as brave as so many others. I was not beaten, shocked with cattle prods, killed, fired from my job or anything else like that. Even at Parchman, whites were treated much better than blacks. Southern blacks had so much to lose with fewer resources at their disposal. All I could give was about 6 weeks of my time in the late summer. I was (and am) happy to do that, but I do not consider myself a hero. Rather, I just knew I had to “do something” and I did it. I was not a leader, nor did I take significant risks. In some ways, I feel as if I was more like Forrest Gump—naive and in the right place and right time. My role (as one rider accurately described it) was to be a “foot soldier” or “cannon fodder” and pack the jails. Others did so much more and that must be remembered and honored.

All the arguments against integration (“It’s too quick”, “It’s not in the Bible,” “It is against our [family]values,” “It will drive families apart”, etc.) are the very ones I heard about the anti-miscegenation laws in years past and about gay marriage today. I find it most distressing that these arguments still influence people.

A couple of years ago, my wife and I took a 2-3 week vacation in the south (including Mississippi). The highway out of Greenwood (to Parchman Prison) is now the Emmett Till Memorial Highway. In motels we saw fellow guests (from the south) on business trips comfortably conversing across racial lines over breakfast. We went to a blues club in Clarksdale jointly owned by a white and a black man. The man currently in charge of the three state prisons in Mississippi is a black man. The warden at Central Mississippi is a black female. Not only has Parchman settled their suit over the conditions there (MSU is now closed); they have even achieved national certification.

At the same time, education and income between black and white are still very disparate. In Mississippi, blacks now earn half the income that whites earn. African-American infant mortality is twice that of whites. To this day, there continue to be a horrifying number of hanging deaths in Mississippi of African-Americans which are too quickly ruled as “suicide.” There are about 50 outright murders of African-Americans in Mississippi that are either not investigated or not prosecuted. One can go on and on. By all manner of statistics (education, income, community resources, etc.), it is not at all advantageous to be black and a resident of Mississippi. I recently spoke with a fellow rider (black) who said that while things have improved, Mississippi was still the worst. I have no reason to doubt him.

In 1991, two sisters (Jamie and Gladys Scott) in Mississippi were given two consecutive life sentences for supposedly planning a robbery (netting only \$11) for which there was no physical evidence to connect them with the crime. Indeed, all agreed that they weren’t even present. The three young men, who did commit the robbery, are already out of prison. After almost 16 years in prison and much outside pressure, the Scott sisters were recently paroled *on the condition* that once released, one sister donate her kidney to the other (who has kidney failure). In contrast, the current governor (Haley Barbour) has unconditionally pardoned 5 white men who were convicted of 5 different murders after they did some remodeling work on the Governor’s Mansion.

The debate in the last election as to whether Barack Obama was “too black” (for whites) or “not black enough” (for blacks) to be elected President was both racist and stupid. Yet that was the debate. Clearly after 50 years, there is still much to be done.

There have been changes in the South (which looks more and more like the North), but a wide gap between black and white remains. In the South, discrimination seems to have moved closer to all the ways that are so evident in the North. Instead of race, “discrimination” is now based on money and class (which in this country is so highly correlated with race that they really cannot be separated). This kind of discrimination is the most insidious kind of segregation

Following the exuberance of the ‘60s, civil rights (as an issue) and equal rights for all seem to have faded from our (esp. white’s) consciousness. While the Vietnam War, Watergate and other things had a role, looking back, I think the rise of Black Power also cannot be ignored. African-Americans certainly had justifiable reason to be angry over centuries of mistreatment. I strongly supported that right and need to find their own voice in response to that treatment.

Sadly, that voice went to separatism and never proceeded beyond that to a joint bi-racial solution. Thus, we saw the expulsion of all white members from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee—the very group that had pushed for the rides to continue after the Anniston bus burning. There simply was little room left for whites to participate. Worse, nonviolence was also rejected by many who were too full of rage to be peaceful. With “no room at the table”, my own activities decreased and I was limited to what I could do on an individual case-by-case basis.

After years of mistreatment, the police and community as a whole should not have been surprised by the Rodney King (then) and the Oscar Grant Riots (now). Now we have right-wing pundits pushing us toward further division and distrust. Instead of supporting prevention programs that work, all they can do is try to cut those programs in order to fund tax cuts for corporations, the rich and the super-rich. Instead of rehabilitation, we now have a “3 strikes/lock ‘em up forever” mentality which only leads to over-crowded jails. On the other side, too many minority youth are involved with drugs and gangs under the false banner of respect. They do not get any real improvement in their situation. All they really get in return is the opportunity to kill each other. When so many young men glorify gangs and invest so much in violence (and end up dead or in prison), who will provide a family model for the next generation on how to *really* be a man?

I see several ways this course can be changed.

First, we (especially the civil rights activists of the ‘60’s) need to find our voice again and forcefully, but nonviolently, speak out against division, racism and injustice (prison, economic justice, education are the major points here).

Second, we need to engage our young people, to show them that nonviolence is a proven and viable tactic for positive change.

Finally, 150 years after the Civil War and 50 years after the Freedom Rides, we still urgently need a dialogue about race and history. Here, I see it along the lines of what has been done in Northern Ireland, South Africa and Rwanda—a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. If Northern Ireland and South Africa can do it, why can't we? We in the North need to get past our smugness, and both the North *and* the South need to get past their continued racism. All of us need to work together to reduce the divide between rich and poor, powerful and weak, AND black and white. Now, it also needs to be black and white and brown and yellow and lavender and whatever other color we human beings are. As a transplanted Russian learning English, my father never understood the term "white". Rather, he thought whites should be called "pinkish" as that was more accurate. Rodney King said it so eloquently, "Can't we all just get along?"

Soon there will be two events to recognize and honor what took place 50 years ago—one in Chicago and another in Jackson, Mississippi. Oprah Winfrey has offered to pay the expenses of all living freedom riders to travel to Chicago and be on her show. It will be broadcast on Wednesday, May 4<sup>th</sup>—the anniversary of the start of the '61 Freedom Rides. Afterward, there will be a three day reunion in Chicago. Jackson, Mississippi has also thrown out the welcome mat for us to return for a week-long observation (May 22-26, 2011). There has been talk of an attempt at some sort of "truth commission" which is long overdue. Part of the Mississippi reunion will also focus on a re-engagement of our youth toward a goal of full integration and nonviolent confrontation with the real issues facing us all. I am pleased with this and think it has been far too long in coming. We have missed too many opportunities and cannot afford to miss another chance to heal the wounds of slavery, Jim Crow and segregation.

The Civil War started 150 years ago. 50 years ago, the Freedom Rides took place in the south, and in Hawaii, a baby boy named Barack Obama was born. What's next?

This was and remains our challenge.

*All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.*  
Edmund Burke

Rick Sheviakov, May, 2011

Parchman, Class of '61  
MSU, C Block, Cell #7



**A Cell In MSU (We Were Double-Bunked)**



**Me (In My Old Cell) With Byron's Son In Back**

August 15, 1961

Dear

After considerable thinking and talking it over with us, Rick has decided to ask Teachers College, Columbia University, to permit him to resign in the middle of the summer session (he was a projectionist) and to go south with a group of Freedom Riders. I am proud of T.C. to say that they respected his wish. After very careful screening by CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) that he is not a Communist, Beatnik, or something, and after careful explanation by CORE staff and by former Freedom Riders as to what he is headed for and what non-violent resistance means, he left New York on July 26th with a group of about 12 other persons (all white in this group). Most of these people were college students, university professors, ministers, a few businessmen and other individuals. They stopped in Nashville, Tennessee, for further briefing and on July 29th arrived in Jackson, Mississippi (their destination) where they were promptly arrested and placed in maximum security in the State prison at Parchman, Mississippi. (The police refused to arrest a blind girl and a son of an Indonesian diplomat who were in the same group).

From what Rick told us before leaving there is no reading matter available except for the Bible and anti-integration literature. The Freedom Riders were instructed to memorize as much as possible of current events to pass on by word of mouth to other inmates, as well as to memorize personal messages from families of the "Freedom Jail" inmates. Theoretically the prisoners are permitted to see a minister or priest once a week. So far only a Rabbi has been able to get in. He has seen Rick and has written to us.

The prisoners are restricted to writing one letter a week to their family and are permitted to receive one letter a week. But here the real "brainwashing" begins. Since all mail is censored, the censor takes his time reading the mail and some inmates stay without mail for many weeks, while others do not ever get even one letter. The whole thing seems to be a play on nerves. The State wants these people to break down and ask for bail--the inmates are intent on crowding the jail. Various devices are used, including the denial of towels and toilet paper. The inmates, through a lawyer, can apply for a \$500 bail any time, which CORE will supply immediately--most of them stick it out.

I don't want to make this letter too long and there are many things which I do not know for sure yet, but the whole thing seems almost incredible.

When Rick was leaving, his plans were to stay until our college starts in about mid-September and then apply for bail. I think we have convinced him that sacrificing a whole semester is a bit too much. (The regular sentence is four months plus fine).

2.

I am sending this letter to many of our friends. Wherever you live, if you wish to do something for the cause CORE stands for you can write to Hon. Governor Ross R. Barnett, Jackson, Mississippi, voice your abhorrence, and tell him what he is doing to the reputation of Mississippi as well as to the reputation of the USA abroad. (In Rick's group there was a magazine feature writer for one of the magazines of West Germany). Wherever you live you can write to your Governor, Senator, President Kennedy--whomever you can think of. Eventually public opinion will prevail. As far as Mississippi is concerned (many of the other southern states have given in) the cost of the police-jail program is terrific. By last count there were 278 Freedom Riders in the Parchman jail.

Natasha and I are back in California. If you wish you can reach us: c/o Mr. T. O'Connor, Route #2, Box 250, La Honda, California. After August 27th we will be back at 1125 Euclid Avenue, Berkeley Ca.

With best wishes,

George and Natasha Sheviakov