

Dictaphone tapes, Aug. 20, 1965. From John Morris

JackMinnis: Is this ESCRU?

Voice: Yes, it is.

Minnis: Well, this is Jack Minnis, at SNCC. To whom am I --(blurred)

John Morris: Go ahead, tell me, tell me that again, then.

Minnis: Ah, Father Morrisroe and Daniels were released from the Hayneville County Jail shortly before the shooting took place. They split up onto two groups; one group going back to the freedom house, the other going over to this store to get something to eat.

Morris: Yeah.

Minnis: As they were approaching the door to this store, the proprietor, --I presume he was the proprietor -- came out with a shotgun, and said, "Get off my property, you ---bastards, or Goddamn bastards," or something like that.

Morris: Uh-huh.

Minnis: Ah, Ruby Sales was standing right beside Daniels, and she says that somebody, she thinks it was Daniels, pushed her, and she fell to the ground, and then the guy with the shotgun started shooting. Ruby thinks that she probably would have been shot if Daniels hadn't pushed her. So she got up and ah, started running to the corner, -- this, all this took place about 500 yards from the courthouse.

Morris: What time was --was it this afternoon?

Minnis: The time, I don't know--it must have been around ah, between four and five.

Morris: And it was between five and six here, then.

Minnis: Yeah.

Morris: --I guess, uh-huh.

Minnis: Ah, well no I'm thinking between four and five this time.

Morris: OK. Right.

Minnis: Ah, Ruby and the other girls, ah, ran to the corner and just then Ruby's boy friend, ah, pulled up in a car and they got in the car and went immediately to Selma. They don't know where Willie Vaughan is.

Morris: Uh-huh.

Minnis: Ah, as they were pulling away they saw the two men, Daniels and Morrisroe, laying in the street, with the guy with the shotgun standing over them.

Morris: Um. This was Haynesville?

Minnis: Hayneville. Uh-huh.

Morris: H-A-Y-N--?

Minnis: --N-E, --V-I-L-L-E.

Morris: Yeah.

Minnis: Uh-huh.

Morris: And that --and so presumably then, then, I mean, we know who the guy is.

Minnis: Well, I--I--

Morris: It's not like a Klan rider---

Minnis: No, no, I --

Morris: If they--unless they'll try to conceal --

Minnis: Well, Ruby said that ah, they have frequently gone into that store to buy food.

Morris: Um-hum.

Minnis: And that the guy had never ah, exhibited any great hostility.

Morris: Um-hum.

Minnis: And apparently, ah, this time--I don't know that it was the proprietor, I don't really know who it was.

Morris: Yeah. I see.

Minnis: But apparently it was somebody who worked in the store, because he said, "Get off my property."

Morris: Uh-huh. Ah, any Justice or government people there yet?

Minnis: Well, we've talked to the FBI, in Mobile--

Morris: Um-hum.

Minnis: A fellow named, ah, Howell.

Morris: Yeah.

Minnis: And, he said that, ah, Colonel Lingo has taken over the whole thing.

Morris: Uh-huh.

Minnis: In fact, when we were still trying to locate the, where the body was.

Morris: Uh-huh.

Minnis: Ah, he suggested that we call Colonel Lingo.

Morris: Uh-huh.

Minnis: Ah, what we did was call Senator McIntyre from New Hampshire,

Morris: Ah-huh.

Minnis: And tell him about it.

Morris: You got him?

Minnis: Yeah, and ah, well, we talked to

Morris: That's better than we did--

Minnis: Somebody in his office.

Morris: Uh-huh.

Minnis: That was about, ah, forty-five minutes ago.

Morris: Yeah.

Minnis: Then we suggested that, ah, Senator MacIntyre's office call Lingo and try to find out where the body was.

Morris: Yeah.

Minnis: And we got a call about fifteen minutes ago back from his office saying that it was at White Chapel.

Morris: Yeah, ---go through all those channels to to find out things --

Minnis: Yeah.

Morris: Ah, I guess there's --I guess the Senator will of course send his condolences to his mother, but that still

doesn't make--for all I know, she may still not know, and I still wish I could send somebody who could tell her rather than just hear it on the radio.

Minnis: Yeah. Well, if she's anywhere near ah, radio station, why she's--probably found it out by now.

Morris: Incidentally, we --this--Jon was such an impressive young man that --I don't mean to say an impressive young man--impressive guy--

Minnis: Um-hum.

Morris: --and a very deeply committed churchman, that I ah, all I can do for now is to ah, is to help something of what he had to say be seen by others, and he wrote an article, it's ah, six pages, ah, double-single space, back in the spring, he wrote it for the mimeographed journal that the student body disseminates, puts out

Minnis: Um-hum. What seminary is that?

Morris: Ah, the Episcopal-- it's called the Episcopal Theological School, in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Minnis: Cambridge.

Morris: And, ah, I've given this to the Times, I think they dictated it all to the New York office, ah, and ah, it's such a moving article about life in Selma during the spring when he was there--

Minnis: Um-hum.

Morris: And all --anybody who's looking for this kind of stuff, here we got--ah, somebody's coming in a little while to stencil this, mimeograph it, I only have a thermofax right now.

Minnis: Yeah. You gave it to the Times, huh?

Morris: Yeah.

Minnis: How old a fellow was Daniels?

Morris: I'm not even sure, I think he was he was in his second year of seminary, he must have gotten out of college at eighteen, and therefore he was about--

Dreisbach: 24 or 25, I---

Morris: Well, he wasn't that old Kim, he was he was younger, he was more like 22 or 23, cause--don't you think. He wasn't in the service, in the military.

Dreisbach: No, but normal college is 22, 21, 22, then two years.

Morris: That's right, I was --

Dreisbach: He must be 24 or 25, somewhere in there.

Morris: That's right, I was back in the---yeah.

Minnis: Well, OK, John, if there's anything else we can do I--

Morris: That's that's Kim Dreisbach, one of my associates here, on the other line. This is Jack Minnis, Kim.

Dreisbach: Hi.

Morris: Ah, OK, Jack, thank you, bye.

Minnis: bye-bye. (phone hangs up, noise of machine running.)

Next call.

Francis Walters: First of all, there are two eye-witnesses.

Morris: Um-hum.

Walters: And ah, we are extremely concerned about them.

Morris: Uh-huh Where are they?

Walters: Ah, well, I don't--I would rather not say over the over the telephone.

Morris: OK. OK. OK, right.

Walters: Ah, John Doar, whom I just talked to again, said that he will be sending two FBI agents to interview the kids.

Morris: Yes.

Walters: But, ah, the SNCC workers are very undecided as to whether they should allow this to happen.

Morris: Oh, I think so.

Walters: I think so too, but they say that the FBI you know they can't---then the FBI will know where they are, and, they'll tell the police.

Morris: Yeah.

Walters: Police might even kill them.

Morris: Yeah.

Walters: So, I told them that I thought this was the best thing to do, but it, as I say, their main leader is not here, and they're young and it's rough over there.

Morris: Yeah.

Walters: Ah, so anyway, that's for them, and the one of the girls, Ruby, I don't know her last name--

Dreisbach: Sales.

Morris: Ah, Kim Dreisbach's on the line with me, too.

Walters: Yeah, OK. Ah, and ah, given the story to the wire service UP, I believe--

Morris: Yeah.

Walters: And ah, also to the Catholic Inter-racial Council.

Morris: Yeah.

Walters: And I told them and I think I tell you too, if we think any statements that we--we ought to raise the issue of the autopsy ---I think we ought to get it in print that this can often be used to show things that aren't true.

Morris: Uh-huh.

Walters: And that we're very concerned --we we have --to view(?) the body morally and we don't want an autopsy.

Morris: What can we do, can we ask that another physician or something be present?

Walters: Ah, this is possible. I don't know. I haven't been able to find Dr. Finer, the head of the medical committee----want some of the details of the shooting?

Morris: Yeah, OK.

Walters: From Mu Lee (Asian woman on SNCC staff, Morris believes) I understand that that some evidence that it was a put-up job. But anyway, Sheriff Lux Jon Drift and the deputy, ah, told him that he thought he could--he called up here, I believe, and said he thought he would be releasing them on their own recognizance.. and ah, why they'd be ever--put out of jail, I don't know. But that was 4:00, this call was made.

Morris: Uh-huh.

Walters: Approximately right after that call walked out of the jailj, approximately fifteen of them, that Hugh (?) told me just now that--

Morris: Who?

Walters: Mu Lee.

Morris: Oh, yes, yeah.

Walters: You know her. Told me that the other stores were all closed. Wait a minute. ----(unintelligible)

Morris: Yeah, okay.

Walters: KAnd I gather they wanted to make a telephone call, though I haven't heard anybody say that, but anyway, they did----.

Morris: Um-hum.

Walters: And they went to this store, that we --I think we were in it, Wednesday.

Morris: Um-hum.

Walters: And they walked to the door, and when they got to the door, Ruby was first, and she saw behind the door and I presume she means the screen door, a man armed with a shot gun.

Morris: Yeah.

Walters:--whom she says is the owner of the store. Said, "Get off my property, you God-damn bastards, " or something like that.

Morris: Yeah.

Walters: With that she said she found herself on the ground, and I heard from someone else that Jonathan or the priest pushed her to the ground, and was behind her and then she said she doesn't know what happened but she heard shots everywhere, and she heard somebody moaning and she crawled away, down the sidewalk and around the corner of the building, and there she found another girl who had run away, and they ran, a little later they came back, and they saw deputy sheriff Lux Jackson standing over the two bodies, with a shotgun. And nobody ----

Morris ---they don't know---??the man, was he the onw that shot him?

Walters: The man who shot him is presumed to be named a Mr. Colman.

Morris: Uh-hjuh. . Okay.

Walters:: A local --

Morris: Merchant?

Walters: Merchant.

Morris: Yeah. OK

Walters: Well, since you don't know any of the local residents --of you get over therethe girl says that he was the owner of the store.

Morris: Yeah.

Walters: Then sheriff Luv Jackson, whom I have the displeasure to meet the other day, the girl said smiled and gloated at the two girls. Well, he (they?) got away, and I don't know how. And then the next thing that happened and I talked to John Doar, with the SNCC workers, and the next thing that we heard which burst us all into tears, or hysteria, whatever-- (?)--the verypopular leader named Stokely Carmichael was in the cell with Jonathan and a good friend of Jonathan--???--about a half an hour ago we heard he left a friend's house a girl friend's house, and was headed to the square with a shot gun.

Morris: Oh! Oh!

Walters: And that the whites are still milling around there, armed. So I called Doar right away and told him this, and he said he'd get some of his men over there. And then he also I also asked him what to do about the girls, the witnesses and he said well, come out of there. and I said, all right, he said, then I'll send some jFBI men over the SNCC office and they will um, tell them where they are, and they'll get a statement. And said we've got to get a statement from them. Well, they don't seem to want to do that.

Morris: --cooperate with the united states federal government, and then that's the only hope.

Walters: I know. I think John--

Morris: I'll call Jack Minnis at the SNCC office here and tell him this.

Walters:: All right, I was going to suggest that you call them---dyou got one of their own people.



Morris: I'll be talking with Minnis, and he's OK.

Walters: OK, well, you get him to call them, talk to Shirley Walker, and tell her that she's got to do this. And  
-----Lowndes County--tellhim that--

Morris: The implication is that Scott B (Stokely?) is on a rampage, and he's gonna get revenge, is that it? He was a very close friend of Jon's.

Walters: That's right. Well, this is what----taking revenge.

Morris: Yes. Oh, my goodness!

Walters: Well, anyway, as I said, I told Doar this, he said, oh, I'll have men over there.

Morris: But on this autopsy thing, I --I don't know what we do. I'm gonna start yelling and screaming about the autopsy when we hear the usual legal procedure and when it seems like the nature of the shooting and with witnesses like we've got, like there's no doubt but that he was shot, in other words, they can't say that he shot himself, I should not think.

Walters: No, but they might say that he died of an overdose of ah, cocaine, or you know, anything.

Morris: We wanna-- we wana have our--we need to have our own doctor, I don't know what kind of doctor you have for this, our own pathologist, I guess, for at least to be present, during the autopsy. That's what we need, now where can we get a pathologist in Alabama that we can ask him if he would be willing --

Walters: I don't know.

Morris: I'll see if I can call anybody here. Get some ideas.

Walters: Ah, now, ah,

Morris: --work on that too, I'm--

Walters: As far as publicity, the SNCC workers say well, they don't worry about that right now, the girls have given a statement. that the Atlanta office usually things like that, ah, --

Morris: There's publicity all over the country, it's already on the radio.

Walters: OK, did Frank Matthews get you?

Morris: No, was he trying to call me?

Walters: Would you call him?

Morris: Why?

Walters: He's trying to get you, he wants to know the address of the Daniels family, he wants to send a letter of condolence.

Morris: I can't talk to Frank. I don't have his address except Keene, New Hampshire. All I have is the town and the phone number, no street address.

Walters: (sighs) And they don't answer the phone.

Morris: Yeah. Ah, let me turn this thing up here, let me turn this up here, there. (noise of machine)

(Unknown voice) --from shortly before the shooting took place, ah, they split up into two groups, one group--

Morris: (1993) I'm now recording again, ah, the same thing, just to ensure quality.

Morris: Yes, it is.

Minnis: This is Jack Minnis at SNCC, to whom am I speaking (becomes garbled) They split up into two groups, one group going back to the freedom house, the other going over to this store to get something to eat.

Morris: Yeah.

Minnis: As they were approaching the door to the store, the proprietor, I presume he was--- (tape ends)