Annotated article by Dudley Morris to Birmingham, time, inc, 19 September 1962

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University of Mississippi Desegregation, Act II

Blue shadows deepened on the wall clipped beams of the State Capitol at Jackson this afternoon as a whooping, rebel yelling State Legislature hollered their approval of two last ditch measures designed to bar 29 year old Negro James Meredith from the University of Mississippi. Earlier in the day a State Court in Laurel, Mississippi joined the battle to keep the State's school system lily white, and issued an injunction permitting Meredith from entering the University and passed a bill which would deny admission to any State College or University to any person, who has a "criminal charge of moral depravity pending against him."

Meredith has been charged with falsifying his voter registration card, but the charge was dismissed as "trifling" by Federal Judge John Minor Wisdom last June when he ordered Meredith admitted to the University. Barnett originally called the lawmakers into special session to consider the problem of reapportionment--but he lost no time in switching to the politically more profitable subject of race. After a long, secret session in his office with the State's Lieutenant Governor and the attorney General he passed the bill on to the Assembly, it was a key stone caps performance. The Senate gave unanimous approval to
bill 1501, an ex-post facto law if there ever was one, in just seven minutes.

Then it was passed to the house. Cigar chewing, coke drinking representatives lounged behind their oak desks in flush yellow leather chairs. In the back of the rotunda shaped chamber, two fans stirred the fetid air, and pale sunlight filtered through the green cut glass skylights in the dome. Screams of "vote", "vote", "yes", "yes" ripped across the chamber. A few bored stuck their noses deep into the afternoon papers. When bill 1501 was passed 130-2 a great roar went up. The only dissenters were Representative Karl Wiesenburg of Jackson County, and Representative Joseph Wrotten of Washington County. After the vote rose to ask the chamber to consider the bill again. In acid terms, he denounced it as "unnecessary, unconstitutional, and merely aggravating the situation which would force integration of the state's schools."

"The legislature in Louisiana did the same stupid thing," he told his colleagues, "that we are doing here. And all it got them there was desegregation from one end of the State to another."

shouted him

The house adjourned down, then previously adjourned till 12. 02 a.m.

sitting in the empty chamber, New born Wiesenburg who represents one of the most highly industrialized sections of the state predicted that the bill would be dead killed of outraged feeling, "just as fast as the Federal courts can strike it down."

"The Governor," he said, "has been transformed almost overnight
by this issue from a rather unpopular man to a rather popular one. But my opinion of the governor is still the same as when I said his administration would go down in history as the worst since reconstruction days."

Wiesenb"Og also argued that, "Barnett is a pretty honest man himself, but he has a pack of advisors around him including "Bill" Sims of the white Citizens Council. Barnett is merely a mouthpiece for them. The Citizens Council are really running this show. Barnett is just going to make as much political hay out of this as possible." (Sen. John Steinis comes up for reelection next year and Ross is thought to be eying his seat).

The Senate and the House also passed through a resolution before adjourning which provides for a Constitutional Amendment to give the Governor the authority to decide the case of any candidate for admission to a State Institute of Higher Learning when the College Board can not make up its mind. But

Like bill 1501 though, it is clearly an ex-post facto law, and probably cannot be applied to Meredith cases.

The best informed guess of what Ross is up to came from one Representative (who insisted on remaining anonymous) who said, "What Barnett is trying to do is to create enough confusion so that anarchy will take over and keep Meredith from registering. If you think there are bulls now, just wait and see what happens when
try to close the University. " That still remains Barnett's last and best weapon, though there seem to be few people who think he will go that far. For one thing, it would kill Ole Miss's football team, and cost the State $500,000 in pre-game gate guarantees. And, if there is one thing Mississippians love, especially hard-breathers, it's the Ole Miss eleven.

In the other development of the day, a State Chancery Judge issued an injunction in direct defiance of Three Federal Courts including the United States Supreme Court, and ordered the officials of the University of Mississippi to admit Meredith to classes. The action of Judge J.B. Porter of Union, at the request of 46 parents whose children are at the University, placed the harrassed school officials of being in defiance of a court order no matter which way they turned. In fact, the order was just another step down the road of that the State government seems intent on following.

Federal officials gave it little heed; a Justice Department official in Washington said that it will ask a Federal Court, probably a three man Board presided over by Judge John Minor Wisdom, to strike it down in the morning. And, the Justice Department also reaffirmed that with a mission and a nervous stomach," J.H.

Meredith would begin his 75 mile ride from Memphis to Oxford to register. Accompanying will be three or four unarmed U.S. Marshals.
Meanwhile, while the sound and the fury raged across the State Capitol, the State College Board was meeting. They have been behind closed doors most of the day. But, as we reported yesterday, they remain tightly deadlocked with no sign of exchange. One member, however, Dr. Verner Holmes of McComb, Mississippi, has come out publicly for keeping the college open even at the price of integration.

And doing its share to keep the situation ugly is the Jackson Daily News. Its pages have been one long steady call to riot all week. Tonight, (Wednesday) they outdid themselves. In a front page Editorial they declared the numbers of out of State "newspaper" who have descended on the state. "Unfortunately," they said, "they represent voices that have never stopped to consider that Mississippi has one of the lowest crime rates in the 50 states."

"Unfortunately, some of them have never read the truth of Mississippi but have taken those radical "reign of terror" releases issued by questionable organizations to embarrass the nation in the eyes of the world and to use Mississippi as the guinea pig symbol of racism for propaganda purposes."

Therefore, bear in mind that the representatives of the news media are entitled to watch and observe this week's happenings. We do not expect any of those on assignment to do as was done at Little Rock and other sensitive areas—to stand in the street and tout
disorder.

"If they are here to do factual information, they are entitled to do so.

If they are here to dig up slander, that is -- as we have stated previously -- no moment. Every decent, law abiding citizen of this State has been "had" on slander.

When it comes to that subject there isn't a virgin in the whole territory.

"Let the verbs and adjectives flow."

Also featured in black type, in a three column head above the fold on the front page was the head: "Clon's secretary mugged by Negro." It told of the brutal beating of Representatives 'ilbar Mills Secretary in Washington, and on the front page was a two column story by Jack Lotto headed: "On Your Guard, Commies & using Negro as tool."

The main story was a four column head on a two column story on Chancery Judge J.B. Porter injunction against University officials, the F.B.I. Federal Court officials, and Attorney General Robert Kennedy. The banner head read: "State Judge Knocks Rules Meredith Out."

But, not satisfied with this tabloid treatment of the news, the self-styled "Greatest Newspaper" in Mississippi, teed off on its editorial page. They blasted stringer Dave Brown's Pascagoula Chronicle, the only paper in the state to take a strong stand against Barnett's rabble rousing.

Said the Daily News, "We hope the Pascagoula paper wins some leftwing prize in journalism, It deserves it."
From Washington, the Justice Department was keeping a fine hand on all developments, but saying very little. It was learned in Jackson, however, that Bobby Kennedy had been in constant contact with Barnett over the phone. The chief subject for discussion was the telegram sent to Meredith early this morning. In it, University registrar Robert W. Ellis told Meredith that the Board of Trustees had assumed complete jurisdiction over the matter and would meet in Jackson to consider his admission. He was also told that he (Meredith) was to appear in Jackson Wednesday morning to register rather than in Oxford. "None of this exchange was made public, and did not come to light till late Wednesday. However, sources in the Mississippi State Legislature close to Barnett say that Bobby Kennedy agreed to send Meredith to Jackson if Barnett would guarantee that he would be registered. The assurance was not given, and the word went out that Meredith was finally coming to Oxford.

Tonight the Trustees and College Board are meeting in closed session again in Jackson. And the rumor that is making the rounds is that the trustees and the College Board will appoint Barnett as registrar so that he can go to Oxford tomorrow and receive the Federal Court order in person. Whether this will happen remains anyone's guess, but we pass it along.
as a good example of the belligerant mood that grips the capitol.
And high on the crest of confusion, rides King Ross Barnett.
And riding high on the crest of the excitement is King Ross Barnett.

regards. dudley morris, colonial hotel, oxford, miss.

more to come xxx first thing in morning on Oxford mood with later files on days developments etc.