JUNE 9-23, 1967

The Texas Observer

A Journal of Free Voices — A Window to The South — 50c

A PERSONAL ANALYSIS:

Nightmare in Houston

Houston

Avenging a comrade slain by one of their own stray bullets, 600 maddened, cursing Cossacks of the Houston police department riddled the dormitories of Texas South University with 6,000 shots, stormed in with clubs and gun butts swinging, and then methodically destroyed the students' personal property and living quarters.

This is one version of what happened here the wild night of May 16-17. The other version relates the policemen's ordeal: their hours of patience, their futile efforts to negotiate a truce, their abuse by bullets and profanity, their remarkable restraint in quelling a dangerous riot without seriously injuring a single student.

In Houston you take your choice of stories according to which side you're on, and you've got to be on one side or the other. There's no middle ground. Anyone who isn't with you is against you, and reason is treason. This situation made the TSU tragedy possible if not inevitable, and the community seems to have learned nothing from the experience. TSU not only widened the gap between black and white, but has inspired both sides to heights of self-righteousness that threaten Houston with its longest, hottest summer.

WHAT REALLY happened at TSU that night is hard to reconstruct. The press reports were worse than sketchy, and have been filled in by rumors and propaganda. Did the trouble start spontaneously with the arrest of a student, with the throwing of a watermelon rind, or with an unnecessary show of police force? Or was it a calculated response to earlier events? Was it a student riot or a police riot? Was it a riot at all, or a lot of noise, police cars, and arrests? How could patrolman Louis Kuba have been shot by a student when he was out of range of both dormitories, and the police found no weapon that could have fired the shot? Did the police leave the dorm rooms in the shambles pictured in the newspapers, and did they commit the billy-club atrocities of which they have been accused?

The early published accounts left so much to the imagination that even the hardest facts of the event can be given opposite interpretations, and the Houston press since then has been content to serve as a forum for both sides' angry accusations, flat denials, and countercharges.

A story in the Chronicle on May 19 is typical. It reported the following: that TSU Dean James Jones charged that the fatal riot was "grossly mishandled" in an effort to "soothe the white community and get votes"; that Mayor Louie Welch said Jones' charge was not worthy of reply, and again blamed the riot on TSU officials, who have "come up with nothing but alibis and counter-charges."

On Friday a week later the Harris County grand jury indicted five students for what might be called technical murder and completely exonerated the police of any wrong-doing.* Meanwhile a TSU faculty committee is methodically conducting its own investigation to determine the cause of the riot and whether police brutality and unnecessary property destruction occurred.

Three days were spent here talking to Negroes, newsmen, and policemen in a largely futile effort to get at the Truth. The town abounds in it, to be sure; but it's rather low grade so far.

THE "RIOT" had no simple, single cause. It had its roots in the mutual hostility between TSU students and city police that has been growing for many months, and it was triggered by — or escalated out of — several earlier incidents. During the day the police had arrested 36 Negroes who were picketing in support of closing a garbage dump in the Negro residential area of Sunnyside in south Houston. That morning on the other side of town the sheriff's department had arrested 28 Negro demonstrators at the Northwood Junior High School, the scene of a dispute over the fairness of discipline policies as applied to white and Negro students.

By early evening some of the members of both groups of protestors had gravitated to the TSU campus bearing stories of police roughness. Also current was the false report that a white boy had shot a Negro boy elsewhere in town. Actually a white boy had been accidenatlly shot by another white youngster, aged eleven. The stories circulated, but the students at TSU, many of whom were preparing for final examinations, showed little interest in manning any picket lines.

In the student union cafeteria 21-year-old Douglas Wayne Waller, just back from Vietnam and described as "able to take care of himself," tried to recruit students to go with him to the dump. Their disinterest angered him, and he reportedly slapped — to gain his attention — one of several TSU athletes sitting at a table. The athletes left with remarks to the effect that they would be back shortly, to take care of Waller, and presumably anyone else with him. According to third-hand-reports Waller at this time, early evening, left and returned with a pistol, and was busy attracting a small crowd outside the student union when two un-

Bill Helmer, an Observer contributing editor, became interested in police work and firearms in researching a master's thesis at the University of Texas at Austin on the history of the Thompson submachine gun, a work that will be published by the Macmillan Company. He knows something about ricochets from experience at shooting ranges and, last August, from having been "too close" to one of Tower sniper Charles Whitman's deflected shots (Obs., Aug. 19, 1966).

Bill Helmer

*Under Texas law anyone who starts a riot can be held responsible for any murders arising out of it, whether or not he had a hand in the actual killing.

marked police cars carrying four officers pulled up to investigate a report that trouble was brewing on the TSU campus. A watermelon rind was thrown at the police cars around 10 p.m. and the officers arrested Waller as the most conspicuous member of the fast-disappearing crowd.

By some accounts the "trouble" was nothing more than a bunch of students congregating and making noise. By others, it had already involved the firing of some shots as early as 7 or 8 o'clock, and the crowd had begun to take on the appearance of a mob. In any case it resulted in the arrest of Waller, when the real trouble started.

The police found Waller's pistol and took him away. They returned a few minutes later and were met by a hail of rocks and bottles. Their call for assistance brought three more police cars and KHOU-TV cameraman Bob Wolfe, a police-beat veteran who arrived in Mobile Unit No. 3 about 10:30, when there were only nine officers present. Wolfe spent the night at TSU and managed to stay in the middle of things. His account stands up as well as any, and has survived a good deal of verification from oth-

Three Million Alienated Texans

Texas' inability — or unwillingness — to adjust its social order and the relationships of its less powerful population segments is the subject of this rather sobering issue of the Observer. Mexican-Americans in Starr county and Negroes in Houston are expressing, every day in increasingly unmistakeable terms, their yearning for a more equal footing in our society; they are finding the institutions and leaders of that Texas society arrayed against them in apparent indifference.

Texas has delayed much too long in adjusting to acknowledge the needs of the nearly three million Negroes and Mexican-Americans whose state this also is. Houston and Starr county are simply the locales where the imperative nature of the required adjustment became apparent. Far more is at stake than merely law and order, maintaining domestic tranquility, and retaining the current economic status quo. At issue is the nagging question of Texas' soul, which is in jeopardy, and has been. If our state cannot meet the legitimate and too-long-put-off human needs of one-third of its population, then Texas will have no chance of becoming a fit place to live. The frontier is not yet civilized.

The Negroes and Mexican-Americans of this state have for decades borne in patience their second class status; it is too much to expect that this situation will continue indefinitely, and there are distinct signs that those days are passing. It is high time, too; no middle or upper class Anglo would display the forebearance which minority group citizens in East and South Texas exhibit daily.

It does no good for us or our leaders to bleat about respect for law and order, to moan about outside agitators. The question is far more profound than that; it is a matter of extending the rights most of us enjoy — social and economic rights — to *all* of our citizens.

If we are uncomfortable about and violence and strikes in our state let us consider their roots; only those who have nothing to lose will fire guns at officers of the law. Only those whose lives are a misery will endure the hardship of a strike in the face of manhandling and intimidation by the authorities. What reason persists for the existence of the Rangers? They are used far too often in situations where the issue is not so much law and order as it is a challenge to the social or economic order.

Gov. John Connally said at Laredo that the strikers at Rio Grande City are outsiders. So, of course, is La Casita Farms — owned wholly by a California corporation. So, of course, are the green-carders who come across the border from Mexico and work in U.S. fields. So, of course, are the Texas Rangers; they don't live in Starr county either. All, all outsiders. We are all human; we all care about our fellow man, if we're worth a damn.

The Observer urges the U.S. Senate subcommittee on farm labor to conduct hearings in Rio Grande City on why this strike has not succeeded, to satisfy themselves whether or not farm workers have a fair chance to organize. We urge Houston leaders to consider dramatizing that they are concerned about the plight of their Negro communities; good will is required and must be broadcast soon, else Houston will be a sorry place in which to live this summer.

People in places other than Starr county and Houston must learn the lesson that all Texans must take to heart: the old social order passes; the new must be welcomed with brave and good hearts. Alternative responses would be cruel and inhuman, and could lead to tragedy in Texas.

*

We have left aside, until next month, our wrap-up on the recent session of the legislature, so that we might more fully consider the situations in Houston and Rio Grande City. As this is a double issue, for June 9 and 23, the next issue will come out on July 7. It will be a special edition on some aspects of the oil industry in Texas. □

THE TEXAS OBSERVER

A Journal of Free Voices **A Window to the South**

61st YEAR—ESTABLISHED 1906

7¢ **June 9, and 23, 1967**

Incorporating the State Observer and the **East Texas** Democrat, which in turn incorported the State Week and Austin Forum-Advocate.

We will serve no group or party but will hew hard to the truth as we find it and the right as we see it. We are dedicated to the whole truth, to human values above all interests, to the rights of man as the foundation of democracy; we will take orders from none but our own conscience, and never will we overlook or misrepresent the truth to serve the interests of the powerful or cater to the ignoble in the human spirit.

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er persons who were interviewed by the Observer.

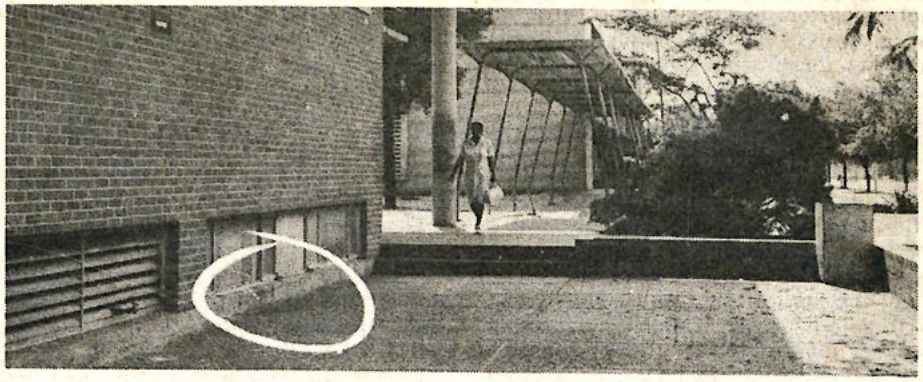
Wheeler Street is a thoroughfare that bisects the campus and runs in front of Lanier Hall dormitory and the student union. According to Wolfe, it was littered with debris, and the students in and around the dorms were "raising an hellacious racket," running up and down the walkways, and throwing things. From behind a tree near the police cars Wolfe could hear what sounded like an occasional firecracker. Then a bullet cut through the tree branches.

AT THIS TIME, about 10:40, there still were only five police cars in the street and nine officers crouched behind them and behind trees, returning fire when — and "only when" — they saw a muzzle flash, Wolfe says. More police arrived and one officer, Robert G. Blaylock, who had arrested Douglas Wayne Waller earlier, was hit in the upper leg by a small caliber bullet, apparently .22. The sporadic firing seemed to be coming from the Junior-Senior dorm, just behind Lanier Hall. The police, according to a Chronicle report by Lloyd Mathews, showed "no hesitation in returning fire," but only *returned* it, according to Wolfe and several other newsmen. Judging from the bullet holes the Observer noted, the police must have seen muzzle flashes coming from nearly every part of Lanier Hall.

Some time around 11 police inspector Weldon Waycott, at that time the ranking officer present, ordered his men to pull back from the dorm area to allow several Negro leaders to try to talk to the students without a backdrop of police cars. The effort failed. The Rev. Bill Lawson, arrested at the dump demonstration earlier that day, had been released from jail and driven to the campus by police to try to reason with the students. He found no leaders or spokesmen with whom he could negotiate a truce — "whoever yelled first and loudest got the most response" — and a situation much closer to simple anarchy than to any kind of organized rebellion. The way Lawson describes it, the disorder could have been mere collegiate rowdyism at finals time, except that several of the rowdies had guns. Recalls Bob Wolfe, "they weren't all rioting, they were having a ball — many of them."

When, after some 15 minutes, the talks failed the police moved back in, firing heavily when they saw a muzzle flash. Police Chief H. B. Short arrived around midnight. About 1 he pulled his cars and men back all the way to the corner of Tierwester, eastern border of the campus, several hundred feet from the men's dormitories, to give Negro leaders another chance to calm the students. They returned and reported that the students were demanding the permanent closing of Wheeler Street, an old campus grievance that the students apparently seized upon more because it was handy for the occasion, rather than important that evening.

While Chief Short was hearing, and turning down, this demand — street-closing was outside his jurisdiction — students began dragging construction materials into the street to block it. When someone set fire to a tar barrel, he sent his men back in to "clean up this damn mess."



—Photo by Bill Helmer

WHERE OFFICER KUBA DIED — This view of the Texas Southern University campus faces west, with Wheeler Street at the right. The white circle indicates the bloodstains caused when Houston policeman Louis Kuba was shot. The building in the foreground is the student union; in the background is Lanier Hall. The fatal shot was believed to have come from the Junior-Senior dormitory, which is to the left of Lanier Hall, around the corner from the union.

The police advance began around 2 a.m. With them went SNCC leader F. D. Kirkpatrick who made a last-ditch effort to talk to the students. He retreated when shots came from the Junior-Senior dorm, and the police opened a barrage. This ended with a "stop shooting" order to allow the officers to reach the dormitories. About the time the first groups had reached the first-floor doors Patrolman Kuba, still ten or twelve feet behind the corner of the student union building, fell mortally wounded with a ricochet bullet in the forehead. A few minutes later patrolman Allen Dale Dugger, approaching the Junior-Senior dorm, was grazed in the face by a bullet. The police poured through the dorms. By 3 a.m. it was all over but the shouting.

THE ABOVE recapitulates the battle, in a super-simplified way, to put its major events into sequence. Most of the newspaper accounts began, naturally, with the killing of Louis Kuba, the wounding of Blaylock and Dugger, and the capture of the dorms, and moved on from there to leave a rather incoherent picture of what happened that night. Nor do they contradict, by means of detailed reporting, the many rumors and misconceptions now circulating on both sides — and being disseminated in the black community by means of newspaper articles and leaflets.

Much controversy surrounds the actions of the police, and neither side is willing to give an inch. The grand jury and the white press have exonerated the police completely of charges of unnecessary violence and of mishandling the situation, while TSU spokesmen and the black press have pictured them as sadistic butchers; except for TSU President Joseph Pierce, who has diplomatically found both the students and the police at fault. To try to get at this part of the story the Observer talked to a dozen or more Negroes, newsmen, and police officers, some at great enough length and under informal enough conditions to feel safe in assessing their quality as sources.

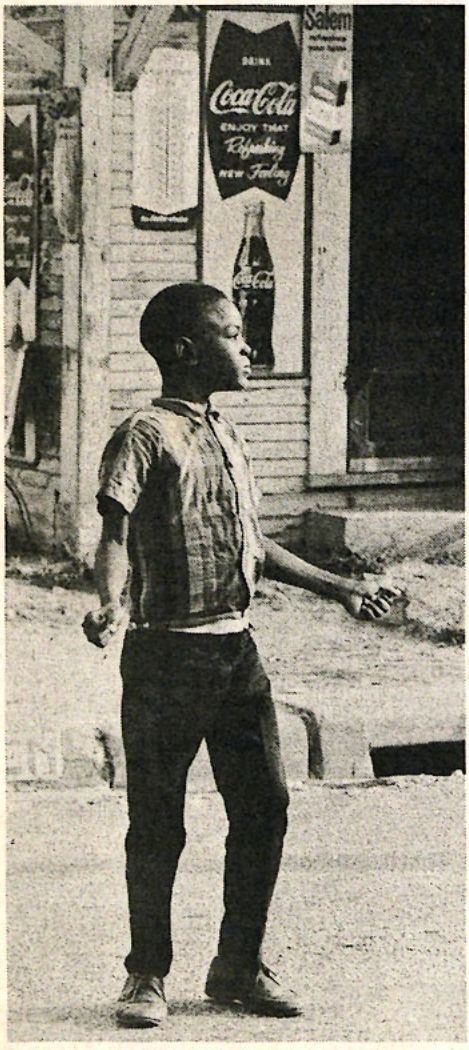
KHOU-TV cameraman Bob Wolfe is the Casey, Crime Photographer, of Houston television. After eight years in the Houston "cop shop," he seems to know every policeman in Houston on first-name and corny-joke terms, and as a result the inside tips come his way first. He loves the excitement of his work, and takes considerable pride in both his skills and his daring as a combat photographer. He was first on the TSU scene, first into the dorms. Wolfe was ten feet in front of Louis Kuba when the officer was shot, exposing himself to fire to get that picture, as well as films of the wounded Dugger. His station wagon had earlier been struck by several bullets as he pulled back with the police. ("You were pretty exposed getting that shot, weren't you?" "I'm stupid. I run on adrenalin more than good sense.")

Bob Wolfe likes cops and the cops like him, and it shows. But he seemed far too much the old-time newsman to consciously alter facts according to his obvious biases, which the Observer tried several times to tempt him into doing. He passed the tests and, moreover, spent most of one day opening police doors and putting some highly-suspicious cops at ease, greatly adding thereby to this report.

He claims, and convincingly claims, that he saw no police "brutality" or reckless destruction of property, and his conspicuously unedited films substantiate his story. He voluntarily qualifies this: "Of course I was one man in several places at several different times," and calls attention to his film shot of one student with a bloody T-shirt held to his head. His films otherwise show police opening

and sometimes kicking in doors, ordering the students out with hands on heads, ordering them to lie down on the grass outside, ordering them into wagons and out again at the jail. But *ordering*, not hitting, shoving, or even gesturing in any manner that would seem to express anger.

Certainly a 250-watt flood light on a television movie camera would put the cops on their best behavior, but Wolfe is not the kind of man to miss a shot of anything out of the ordinary, and his almost 30 minutes of raw film show more than a hundred students being treated with something less than courtesy, but nothing resembling brutality. The films, and Wolfe's detailed narration of them, plus interviews with both policemen and a Negro student who had obviously suffered from a police billy club, leave one with a strong feeling about what happened that night. No student who followed orders quickly and precisely could complain much about his treatment, but God help any of them who decided to be contrary. The Sheriff's Department, where most of the 488 arrested students were taken to jail, was reported in the papers to have treated 16 for "minor injuries, mostly cuts and bruises."



A young Houstonian
—Photo by John Scarborough

JIMMIE LAZARE, a TSU sophomore architecture major, was contrary. He now has his right arm in a sling, and a story to tell that would still be shocking if it proved to be only half true, which is about what it seems to be. He roomed in Lanier Hall, but happened to be in the Junior-Senior dorm when some of the early police shooting began. Later, says, while making a dash for Lanier, he was shot in the forearm. A friend helped him wrap the wound with a torn T-shirt. When the police stormed into the west end of Lanier, he and some others raced out the east end, back to the Junior-Senior dorm, where he was arrested in the recreation room. Lazare says the police shoved the students around and beat them with clubs and gun butts. At the jail the next morning (Wednesday) about 8:30, he says he was beaten when the students refused to make their own head-count, and he refused to answer police questions. Later his wounded arm was broken twice, once about 4 p.m. when he refused to give a written statement and threw his arm up to ward off a blow to the head, and again that night about 9 when he again refused to answer questions. He says he was finally released about 1:30 a.m. Thursday, without having eaten or received medical treatment. He says that at one point a police officer asked him, "Nigger, what's wrong with your arm?" and he answered "I got shot." "That's good. You ought to bleed to death."

Lazare says he had the wound treated at the county hospital Thursday. Friday afternoon he joined a number of other students in spreading the word from house to house of a meeting scheduled for that evening at a local church. About 3 p.m. he collapsed on the street from fatigue and weakness and from the bad cold he had caught in jail, and was noticed by a passing policeman. He says the officer asked a student helping him, "Is that nigger drunk?" and took him back to jail. "That time they didn't beat me so badly."

Jimmie Lazare did not volunteer his story; he had to be asked. In fact, he had to be encouraged to discuss his experiences, though he soon warmed to the subject. The foregoing paraphrase of his story reports the word "beating" several times, because that was the only word he would use.

"You mean that this time they pushed you around and roughed you up?"

"No, they beat me."

To Lazare, some beatings are just not as bad as others. Nor, it seems, are some broken arms. Upon closer questioning Lazare's arm turned out not to be quite "broken," but rather "fractured," a distinction that laymen often make, but not doctors, to whom a bone is either fractured or it isn't. Moreover, a fractured forearm normally requires more than a sling and a bandage.

At the Observer's request Bob Wolfe did some further checking. His telephone report was that the county hospital had admitted a Jimmie Lazare in May, 1966, but no one by that name since then. Nor had either the city police or the Sheriff's Department received a report of Jimmie Lazare's gunshot wound, which the law requires a doctor or hospital to submit.

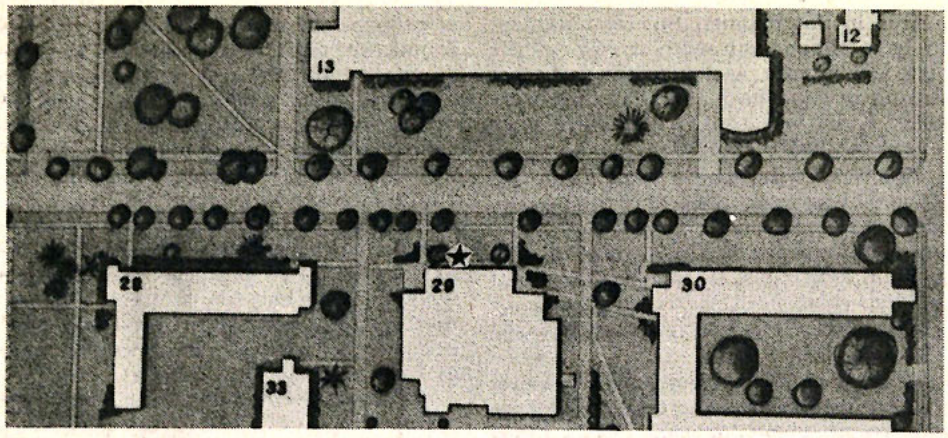
Lazare was the victim of Houston police brutality. He probably invited it, and the Houston cops apparently succumbed to the temptation to oblige him, unjustifiably. In doing so they have given the Negro community another truth that can be stretched, just a little, then accepted at face value, and then forever used against them.

AN AFTERNOON in the inner sanctum of Houston's police headquarters is an interesting experience — one made possible on this occasion by Bob Wolfe who, as a trusted insider, broke some of the ice between police officials and the Observer. For Houston's police have a local white press so pampered and so loyal that it is practically their public relations department, and they need no out-of-town reporters nosing around who might not play the game.

Which is not to say that Houston's police and police reporters collaborate in deception or in covering up embarrassing incidents. But the police, by all accounts, treat the press royally enough to command, without asking, a certain amount of loyalty, and to receive in any controversy the benefit of any doubt. At TSU that night, it was much easier for local reporters to understand the actions of their police friends than the actions of the strangers, the students.

To Houston police and to Houston newsmen, the Negro is a stranger. One that is both criticized and complimented in ways that reveal how little he is understood. Says Inspector O. H. Vahldiek (a tough, gruff, somewhat profane cop with a heart of gold, "once you get to know him"): "Why, you can't condemn most of the students for that; like always, a bunch of goddam rabble-rousers got things going, and then up and cleared out." He related the case of the parents of one TSU student who complained to him that the school's dean never called to tell them their son was "turning radical, getting up on a damn soapbox." They would not have put up with such nonsense.

It is Inspector Vahldiek's view — and apparently the general view at police headquarters — that the Negro community as a whole is content, and race relations would be good but for a few goddam rabble-rousers. Nor is the inspector's view altogether inaccurate. From Negro civil rights "moderates," at least, one gets a picture of a Negro community divided by time — a complacent older generation which sired a new generation that includes activists frustrated by the apathy around them and willing "to make people mad just to get them to listen." Consequently, Houston has mostly "good niggers" and a few "black agitators" who,



THE TSU CAMPUS — Officer Kuba was standing by the north wall of the student union (building No. 29) and was facing west; his approximate position is indicated by the star. Building No. 28 is Lanier Hall, where some of the shots fired by the students came from; the east side of Lanier has no windows and a corner of the structure juts towards the street, blocking a view of the union. Some police officers were believed moving eastward from the northwest corner of Lanier Hall, firing as they came. Building No. 33 is the Junior-Senior dormitory, where most of the students' shots are believed to have originated. Other buildings are the girls' dormitory (No. 30) and the Science Bldg. (No. 13). Wheeler Street runs from right to left; the vertical street at the right is Tierwester.

Inspector Vahldiek likes to point out, often have a hard time finding enough manpower to stage a demonstration. Vahldiek has little good to say about TSU's officials who have tolerated trouble-makers on their campus, and allowed things there to get so out of hand.

During the interview a plain-clothes officer walked into the Inspector's office, shuffled through papers, and made some casual remark about "niggers."

"Nigroes," the inspector corrected him. "That's right. Nigroes. Color'd folk. I forget."

Also during the interview, which was more like an informal conversation, word came in that the grand jury had returned murder indictments against five of the students. Some the Inspector referred to by their nicknames. "Trazawell Franklin Jr., that's Trashcan, he's known as. Ol' Preacher [Floyd Nichols] is the one that had the rifle at home when we picked him up." This quote is a composite of several remarks, but those were the words used.

In casual hallway conversations, and in talks at other times with two off-duty patrolmen, the police exhibited the same, somewhat contemptuous familiarity, or at least superior attitude toward Negroes generally. Toward the students arrested at TSU, it was more like disdain for an unworthy foe.

DESPITE THEIR attitudes — indeed, *considering* their attitudes — the Houston police seem to have acted with a good deal more restraint than their "foes" give them credit for. Instances of unnecessary roughness appear to have been relatively rare (and sometimes exaggerated) exceptions to the rule.

Rice University sociology professor William McCord, who spent the famous long, hot summer of 1964 as a civil rights worker in Mississippi, watched the police arresting students at TSU. His observation: "Compared to the boys in Mississippi, anyway, the Houston police were gentlemen."

The charges that the police unnecessarily wrecked the dormitory rooms is even harder to assess. Everyone the Observer talked to, including Negroes who were there, seems to agree that the boys were whooping it up that night, and the rooms were less than orderly when the police went in. But some wanton destruction certainly occurred, and the police have in no way exonerated themselves before the black community by merely scoffing at the charges. The sad thing is, they don't feel they even have to.

Because the police seem unwilling to even consider charges made against them — even for public relations purposes, to discredit the charges — the "opposition" feels privileged to believe the worst, and to scrutinize rumors with no more integrity than the police have shown in investigating the charges of brutality and destructiveness. Consequently, both the white and black civil rights people in town, and probably black people generally, believe that some 600 cops fired some 6,000 rounds at the dormitories — a typical, if not too important, exaggeration. From an analysis of different eye-witness and printed accounts, it seems that around 400 cops fired closer to 2,000 rounds. (And unless hundreds of shots went through the dozen or so windows already repaired when the Observer visited the dormitories, most of the bullets left no mark.)

Whether the heavy police shooting was necessary at all is another matter — if their only objective was to quell the disorder as safely and as harmlessly as possible. Since the police could not do much shooting while charging the dormitories, for fear of hitting their own men, it would seem that they might simply have stayed out of range (which was easy enough to do) until the time came to move in.

The shots they fired may well have been in plain anger. No one likes being shot at. On the other hand they cannot be attributed, as many would like to think, to police outrage at the mortal wounding of a fellow officer. Nor could the shooting of Louis Kuba have provoked the police, as many would also like to think, into hitting the dorms like gangbusters and taking their wrath out on whatever student was handy. Kuba was shot after the rush on the dorms already had begun, and most of the officers did not learn of it until much later. "Which was probably a damn good thing," remarked one witness.

At this point it should be mentioned that the students did what they could to antagonize the cops with insults, profanity, and missiles. Also, they did more than the occasional sniping that some accounts imply. According to the estimates of several newsmen (the Negroes interviewed declined to even guess), they fired some 40 to 60 "or more" shots — some aimed, some fired in volleys, as if the shooter stuck a pistol out a window, emptied it, and then ducked back in.

THIS BRINGS up the tragic and delicate matter of a dead police officer — a 25-year-old rookie patrolman only 34 days out of the police academy, and married, with his wife expecting a baby.

Louis Kuba was not shot while charging the dormitories, as some papers have reported. He was not even in range of the dormitories (since Lanier Hall's east end has no doors or windows), but several feet back from the corner of the student union building, standing against a protective wall and next to KHOU-TV newsman Nick Gearhart.

Gearhart and Bob Wolfe, who was far enough from the wall to be in the line of fire from either dormitory, remember only the commotion when Kuba fell, not the sound of any shot from anywhere. They recall that neither the students nor the police had been shooting for several minutes; that the first group of officers had already rushed the dorms and, they guess, were just starting to gain entrance.

The mysteriousness of this fatal shot — which has headlined TSU students as cop-killers instead of merely rioters — has led also to largely unpublicized speculation that it was in fact a stray police bullet. This theory has several soft facts to support it.

If the shot came from the Junior-Senior dorm, it would have had to have been a most exotic, almost right-angle ricochet off one of the steel poles supporting a nearby canopy, or an extremely acute ricochet off the low brick wall that lines the sunken walkway along the front of the student union building. On none of these surfaces could the Observer find the mark of the powerful copper-jacketed rifle bullet whose fragment struck Kuba in the head. From a study of the fragment and its force of impact, the police judge the bullet to have been "larger than .22

caliber" and fired from a rifle. To cast further doubt on the theory that the shot came from the Junior-Senior dormitory is the fact that several persons near Kuba failed to notice the terrible whack that normally accompanies a ricochet, which, owing to the angle of fire, would have had to strike near them. A bullet from Lanier Hall could have reached Kuba by ricocheting at a more distant point, but the gunman probably would have had to expose himself on an open walkway in a most obvious manner, and one would guess that the muzzle blast of an apparently large-caliber weapon would have contrasted noticeably with the popping of the students' .22's.

The police found no rifle of any kind in the dormitories — only a 12-gauge shotgun (that must not have seen much action, judging from the absence of shotgun wounds) and two cheap .22-caliber "Saturday night specials." The police have proof that students were able to slip on and off the campus during the five-hour ordeal, and they "have no doubt" that some of the students' weapons disappeared in this manner. But for a student to have slipped out with a rifle at the very last minute, as the police were fast closing in from both sides, as they were when Kuba was shot, would have been an extraordinary escape.

Finally, the spot where Louis Kuba was standing was most vulnerable to any ricochets off the front of Lanier Hall, fired from the opposite end of the street. And all night long police M1 and M2 (machine) carbines had been throwing plenty of "larger than .22 caliber" copper-jacketed lead.

To deepen the mystery, and the above suspicions, the police are conspicuously untalkative about the shot that killed Kuba, as are newsmen who normally enjoy playing detective, especially in Houston. The most anyone will say is, "Just one of those things we'll probably never really know about." One waits to hear, "We hope."

ALL THIS speculation is more intriguing than illuminating; and it is propaganda to the extent that it fails to put the "mysterious bullet" in its proper context of darkness, commotion, and confustion that could obscure a ricochet or the noise of a gunshot. But it is a possibility that the police and press are ignoring, if not rejecting, to their equal discredit as sources of objective truth.

At least one segment of the Houston population must have chuckled wryly at Mayor Welch's advice that citizens ignore rumors and rely for their information on "the impartial, unbiased, independent members of the press who were at the scene."

The most frightening thing about the entire TSU episode is that Houston's biased white press and its prejudiced white police force seem to have played into the hands of the city's black propagandists. The gap between the races has been, and is being, turned into a gorge. In the past the civil rights struggle in Houston has been hobbled by apathy and complacency; in the future it could be crippled by violence. TSU may change too many minds too much. □

A Context for Tragedy

Houston

Houston seems like a psychotic person; he doesn't know he's sick, so isn't taking steps to deal with his problem. This is the way one Houstonian, an administrator at embattled Texas Southern University, has expressed the race relations situation in this city. The same point was made often, in various terms, by numerous persons of all sorts in speaking to the Observer about the traumatic night of May 16-17. Others who were interviewed believe the city fathers are more aware of the racial dilemma than they may appear but are fearful of acknowledging the situation lest the social dynamite explode in their faces. A third theory is that the leaders of this city are simply unwilling to concede that changes in Houston's social order are at hand.

Those concerned about race relations here are almost unanimous in saying that the city government and civic leaders have not been responding to the intensifying anguish of the rapidly-growing number of Negroes who live here. The most frequently-heard estimate is that 300,000, one-fourth of the city's population, is black.

The Observer, in contacting the mayor's office to discuss the situation, was referred to Ken Fairchild, an aide. What response, Fairchild was asked, will the city make to the outburst at TSU? "We will continue with plans that have been in effect in the past," Fairchild said. No special response was envisioned by city officials, he indicated, since "we didn't learn anything from this that people haven't known for years." He added that there is doubt that the TSU disorder represented an expression of Houston's Negro community.

What has the city been doing in the past to improve the lot of the Negroes who live there? Fairchild said that the mayor had appointed a committee to see to elimination of bad housing. "The Bottoms Project" will be continued; this refers to a program designed to improve part of the Fifth Ward, the worst slum in Houston, which is located just across Buffalo Bayou from downtown. Street paving, construction of sewer lines, tutoring, recreation, and other community services are envisioned. Fairchild says a similar program is planned in another Negro neighborhood, but he couldn't say where, at that time. Also, Fairchild continued, a Manpower Development Training project is planned for this summer to train 3,000 workers, and a youth opportunity program will be continued whereby young people are employed during the summer to work with the park department.

Houston was among the last of major U.S. cities to get into the War on Poverty, and the effectiveness of the program has been an object of considerable doubt here. It seems apparent that the Negroes in the poorest parts of town are feeling almost no impact of the effort; many of them say they haven't even heard of a poverty war. "The war on poverty is not effective because we face the same problem as the [activists] at TSU have," one staff member of the community action program told the Observer: the city government and civic leaders are not really interested in social change in Houston. "The war on poverty could be a way to channel the energies of Negroes, but it would annoy the mayor and the city councilmen and eventually they'd have to admit that things have not been right here," the poverty warrior said.

The poverty war situation is also on the mind of the Rev. William Lawson, a Negro leader and a Baptist minister whose church is near TSU. "Part of all this [unrest among Houston Negroes] stems from the war on poverty. We say 'community action' but then they run up against city hall." Programs are thought by city officials to be the only answer, Lawson complained, adding that he believes the poverty war is a "smokescreen" that hides the real problem in Houston's ghettoes, the absence of money and, most important of all, the lack of self-esteem.

THE QUESTION of self-esteem does appear to be a pervasive one in the Negro neighborhoods and apparently is at the root of many of the most frequently-voiced complaints there. Based on a number of interviews by the Observer it seems clear that many Negroes are convinced that city and school administrators are indifferent to their problems and lack understanding of them. The police are understood by Negroes to be racially-prejudiced. The few Negro policemen are not generally respected by other Negroes and are thought by many to be involved in rackets, such as running numbers games, among other things.

One gets the feeling, in talking to Houston's Negroes and their sympathizers in the white community, that there is a yearning for some sign of good will, of understanding, on the part of the city's white leaders. This was sensed again and again — in demands that the Sunnyside

dump be closed, that Wheeler Street be rerouted around TSU, that Negroes be treated the same as whites in discipline cases at schools, that the war on poverty be given a chance, that the police treat Negroes the same as whites.

"Do you think what happened at TSU would have ever happened at Rice, the University of Houston, or the University of Texas?" one young Negro man asked the Observer. What would happen, he went on, if several hundred policemen pumped several hundred rounds of bullets into a University of Texas dormitory without first attempting to evacuate students who were not involved in the shooting?

The same sense of damaged self-esteem, of being treated unfairly because of race, recurred in other questions raised by Negroes: the Beechnut Street compost plant for trash and garbage disposal was closed down when residents of a prosperous white neighborhood protested the odor. Yet the same complaints of Negroes in Sunnyside, where a large dump is operated by the city, have fallen largely on deaf ears. An incinerator will begin burning some of the dump's refuse this summer, but that will cause odor, too, and much of the trash and garbage will still be placed on the ground near homes. And some of the refuse that had been going to the Beechnut plant, before it was closed, is now going to the Sunnyside dump. The Beechnut plant was fenced, protecting white children from possible injury; at Sunnyside last month a young Negro boy drowned in a pit in the unfenced dump, which adjoins two playgrounds.

Why, the question is often asked, is Wheeler Street to be rerouted at the University of Houston, a few blocks away, but not at TSU, whose campus it bisects, thus disrupting a "campus atmosphere," as one young man expressed it.

And so the questions run.

THERE ARE those in the white community who agree with Negroes that Houston must face its race relations situation more squarely. Jack Murray, head of the Houston Council on Human Relations, believes that "Houston's basic problem is that there has long been a latent racism within the very fabric of its society that has only lately been exposed by recent turns of events. This is seen in a refusal to recognize the Negro's desire to actualize his humanity."

Rice University sociologist Dr. William McCord concurs, saying that the greatest problems, are, in this order, jobs (not unemployment so much as underemployment; Negroes need access to better sorts of work), housing (including adequate streets, street lighting, sanitation services, etc.), schools, and "last, way down on the list, the police." McCord wryly concedes that the police have moved up in the "ratings" a bit since TSU, in the view of many Negroes here.

Mrs. Rhona Wilber, who is white, teaches at all-Negro Wheatley High School in Houston's "Bloody Fifth" ward and is doing work on a master's degree at TSU. Mrs. Wilber requested the Wheatley assignment because of her conviction that Negroes and whites must increase their personal contacts across racial lines if better understanding is to be achieved. She is concerned about the attitude of the school board and administration, which have been reluctant to desegregate Houston's schools. There is criticism by many persons in the city of the legal fees that have been spent by Houston's schools to delay desegregation. Often bond issues involve the question of whether the improvements called for will have the effect of maintaining racially separate schools, by enlarging or building schools deep in Negro neighborhoods and neglecting those in areas where white and Negro families live nearest each other. About 60 of Houston's 9,000 teachers are in integrated situations.

At first, Mrs. Wilber was regarded with suspicion by her students, all of whom are Negro. But after the first few months at Wheatley she has been accepted wholeheartedly by most students and enjoys their confidence. On the day after the TSU disorder, Mrs. Wilber told the Observer, many of the students at the school were quite upset, a number of them in tears, about what had happened. In a speech class of Mrs. Wilber's, 20 of 24 students have close relatives at TSU. She decided to conduct a discussion of the occurrences.

"Nobody cares about what happens to Negroes," one boy said, adding that when four Negro children were killed while attending Sunday school in Birmingham no one seemed very upset. The boy then burst into tears, saying "I know a white cop's been killed and why should I care?"

"I almost lost control of the class," Mrs. Wilber says.

She recalls that, after the Chicago riots last year, several students came to her, asking "Do white people really feel that way about us — that we're dirty?"

"This was all new to them," she explains.

Other students reported rumors in her class the day after the TSU outburst: that several TSU students had been taken to Ben Taub hospital with dog bites, that

'Willing To Set the Torch'

Austin

Houston's mayor Louie Welch, in the wake of the Texas Southern University uprising, said he had not thought racial tensions in Houston had reached such a peak that it would lead Negro students to fire weapons at white policemen from

Don Adams

their dormitory windows. Yet, in Austin on March 21, a Houston man had predicted the terrible coming of the Negro wrath.

Bernard Friedberg, South Texas regional director of the Anti-Defamation League, and a white friend of the black cause, predicted the uprising when he talked to a small group at the University of Texas Hillel Foundation in Austin. With him was Rep. Curtis Graves of Houston, one of the three Negroes who served in the recent session of the state legislature. Young Negroes in Houston, Friedberg predicted that night, were willing to "set the torch to communities until something is done" about segregation practices. And the same turmoil bubbling in Houston's cauldron of emotions and human relations could boil over in Austin, he said.

Graves said integration in Texas is a joke. He said there is no integration, but only lip service by "the Establishment." Graves said something that night which he asked me not to repeat. "It would hurt what I'm trying to do," he said. But a day or two later he was quoted by the Daily Texan, University of Texas student newspaper, as making the same remark in another public speech. He said, in effect, that someone would have to be "hit upside the head with a two-by-four" before discrimination against Negroes ended in the state.

The torch Friedberg spoke of blazed at TSU two months later. "There is a growing group of Negro youth who are increasingly dissatisfied," Friedberg said. They are "willing to burn to see if they can get something done." A similar feeling is likely growing among Austin's Negro youth, he added.

Both Friedberg and Graves criticized Houston city and school officials for their blindness.

"The mayor of Houston closes his eyes to it [the growing dissatisfaction among Negro youth] and says he has no problem," Friedberg said. "Watts had to burn before they [Negroes] got any community action. There may be some in Austin who would do it [that is, set the torch] just to prove to people things aren't as they seem."

Graves said the problem was not a Negro problem, but a minority group problem. In so saying, he was speaking to sympathetic ears, for the members of Hillel are Jewish people primarily concerned with the constant battle of preserving the rights of minority groups. Some of them have been jailed in the Deep South in helping the Negro civil rights cause. Graves slammed Houston because only "money buys the vote" in the "silk stocking district," and the school districts discriminate in teacher hiring practices. □

a Negro maid had been killed and was being buried secretly, that TV cameramen had stopped shooting film when students were being beaten. It was heard that some Wheatley students had been asked to "riot" in sympathy for the TSU students; who had suggested this is not known. No disorders occurred at the school, although, Mrs. Wilber says, a number of students were simply walking the halls, too upset to attend class.

"That day is the only day I've ever noticed hostility [towards me at Wheatley]," Mrs. Wilber says, "simply because I was the only white face around." Normally, she says, she goes months at a time without thinking that she is the only white person at Wheatley.

Prior to May 16-17 Mrs. Wilber says she had, for a month, been coming home from school predicting, rather seriously, that a riot was imminent. She thought it might be centered at the intersection of Blodgett and Dowling, four blocks west of TSU, in the Third Ward, rather that in the Fifth Ward, where Wheatley is located. The Fifth has a reputation for violence but, Mrs. Wilber says, it also is a more stable neighborhood than the Third, having families who have lived there for more than one generation.

IN THE UNEASY center of Houston's dilemma is Mayor Louie Welch, who is a veteran of the city council and is now in his second two-year term as mayor, winning reelection last time while carrying all of the city's more than 200 precincts. There is grumbling in Negro areas now about the degree of support which Welch won from them, though they concede that the alternative candidates were even less to their liking. Welch has been described by several persons who appear to be in a position to know as a man who relishes the breadth of his political support almost to the point that he considers himself, probably unconsciously, the personification of Houston. This would explain his sensitive reaction to any criticism of the city and make it difficult for him to react with much detachment and objectivity to the suggestion that Houston has, for example, a race problem. He was said by one associate to be "astounded and deeply hurt" by what happened that night at TSU. Furthermore, several persons have stated that the mayor "refuses" to consider the possibility that the police may have handled the situation badly. Welch picked Herman Short as his chief of police shortly after becoming mayor and the relationship between the two men is said to be close.

Welch is maintaining a public image of firmness concerning Houston's increasingly apparent racial crisis. His attitude is explained as stemming from two causes; first, that the white voters of the city, who vastly outnumber the Negroes, would consider any softer stance as weakness on the mayor's part and, secondly, firmness will tend to discourage further lawbreaking. Of course it must be added that the mayor is basically conservative and so probably is generally inclined towards a "hard" line towards the Negro community anyway.

However, there is evidence that the firm outward appearance of the Welch administration may mask an alternative, more flexible response. He has, in recent months, hired some administrative aides to act as liaisons between the Negro community and city hall. Chief of these is Dr. Blair Justice, whose doctoral dissertation* at Rice University dealt with methods for determining in advance of civil disorders the extent of racial tension within a given community. Justice's work has drawn the attention of federal officials, and he has been granted federal funds to conduct some of his studies. Working with Justice are two Negroes, also mayoral aides.

'Hunky' Defined

The term "hunky," which Stokely Carmichael, among others, has made a current one to refer to white persons, comes from the word "Bohunk," which is something of a racial slur word meaning a Bohemian. □

These three men were active at the scene the night of the TSU uproar and have been working hard to stall off the Watts-type of tragedy that Houstonians have feared since the summer of 1965. There is a certain "cold war" in progress between the mayor's aides on racial affairs and police officials. The mayor's advisors have been urging Welch to rely on them to effect some sort of accommodation with the rising demands of Houston's Negroes, and evidently there is some concern that the day-by-day activities of the police could erode this effort. Since the TSU outbreak it is said that the police consider that the mayor's aides have failed and that a harder line should be followed by the city administration with the Negro population, particularly as to law enforcement.

Welch is known to be quietly forming a biracial advisory committee to counsel with him. However, there has been some criticism of the persons being considered for this committee, largely on grounds that they are unfamiliar with the nature of the problem at the grassroots, or are so close to the mayor's view of race relations that Welch will hear nothing more from the committee than what he already knows and, perhaps, what he wants to hear.

If virtual indifference to this city's racial problems seems to be indicated by all of the foregoing on the part of the Welch administartion, consider that this indifference may be more apparent than real, that it may disguise quite another characteristic, fear. This possibility, that the white leaders don't know how to cope with the rising Negro revolution, and are unwilling to do so, is inferred from events attending the appearance of Black Power advocate Stokely Carmichael here this spring. Government officials and civic leaders, including representatives of the press, met one day before the impending visit of Carmichael to mull strategy. Evidently as a result of this meeting at least one of the city's two daily newspapers, the Chronicle, decided to play down Carmichael's visit. The assistant managing editor sent a memo to the night news editor instructing him to run the story of the speech under a one-column headline on an inside page. Any photographs run, the memo said, should not feature any individual, but should be an overall shot of the crowd or the platform.

A Houstonian who was acquainted with both Carmichael and a staff member of a local television station sought to arrange an exclusive interview of the visitor, thinking he was doing the station a favor. However, the offer was declined by the station's news director.

After the disorder at TSU New York Times correspondent Martin Waldron returned to his office in the Chronicle building, stopping off at the Chronicle offices. He had just been out to TSU, and in conversation with some of the Chronicle staff it became apparent that Waldron intended to report on details of the damage to the dormitories, among other things. It was decided by Chronicle editors not to use whatever story Waldron filed.

HOUSTON'S NEGRO population has been growing perhaps more rapidly than that of whites here. Negroes who move here come from East Texas and the states of the Confederacy, settling largely in the Third Ward, around TSU and extending the boundaries of this black neighborhood south and west into formerly white sections of town. Relations between the two races have generally been good, due largely to the fact that the Negroes here have historically been apparently content with their life. The only exception was a race riot in 1917 in which 16 were killed, including seven white policemen, and 19 others were wounded. The riot was triggered by the attempted interference by a Negro soldier with the arrest of a Negro woman by a policeman. But for this incident 50 years ago Houston has had no widespread racially-motivated violence until last month.

However, at least since August, 1965, Houstonians, as people in many other large U.S. cities, have feared a race riot of the sort that struck Los Angeles that summer. Mayor Welch, however, said that chances for such a thing in Houston then were "extremely remote," since Houston, he believed, had fewer ghettoes than Los Angeles, less crowding per house, and more homeownership. However, the mayor changed his mind a few days later

*"An inquiry into Negro Identity and a Methodology for Investigating Potential Racial Violence," unpublished doctoral dissertation by Dr. Blair Justice, May, 1966, Rice University, Fondren Library.

after two separate incidents in Houston in which Negroes were wounded by shots fired by some white boys in a passing auto. Justice reports in his doctoral dissertation that a study of Houston and Los Angeles census data shows that there is not as much difference between the cities in housing for Negroes as Welch had believed.

Justice reports that in late August and early September of 1965 white and Negro families were arming themselves for defense, in response to the rumors of impending disorder. Police leaves were cancelled for the Labor Day weekend; an unusually large number of persons was believed to have left town that weekend, but the anticipated trouble didn't develop.

In January, 1966, a confidential federal survey was reported, by the Wall Street Journal, to show that Houston was one of 21 U.S. cities where Negro unrest "has grown to the point that a spark could set off a racial explosion."

A spark was struck off just a few weeks later, in March, but the explosion, somehow, didn't occur; perhaps cool weather was the reason. A Negro man was shot to death by a white policeman in the Third Ward. The Negro had been suspected, erroneously, of having shoplifted a barbecued chicken at a grocery store. A grand jury exonerated the policeman but tempers were short in Negro neighborhoods.

Was the TSU outbreak a riot in the usual sense? The Rev. Lawson, who took his undergraduate degree in sociology, thinks not. Usually, he says, a riot is characterized by a sequence of occurrences, some of which were not noted here in May: there normally are one or more sympathetic reactions in other areas, other parts of town; there almost always is, he said, some tendency to resist arrest, but there was almost none of this at TSU; and the usual plans for retaliation that follow tumult such as that on the campus were not heard of and, if they were being laid by someone, somewhere, were not immediately carried out, as would be expected.

"What we had here is certainly a few angry fellows on the campus," Lawson said, "but what is not generally known is that these are being smothered by apathy on the campus." The same apathy is still the case throughout most of black Houston. This is not to say there is no discontent; there is, as has been discussed, but there is a general absence of inclination towards violence in black Houston and a widespread sense of futility in seeking to deal with problems that grip the community.

Lawson and others suggested to the Observer that the disorders at TSU that night might have been avoided had police acted "more wisely" and been "less precipitate" in escalating the situation to the point where the two dormitories had to be stormed. Police and city officials scoff at this, saying that even leaders of the Negro community were unable to stem the rising tempers in the dorms. Several Negroes and whites said that the police have aggravated the situation in the Third Ward by at times being in the area in force, gathering near TSU at Jeppeson Stadium or on Tierwester Street when trouble was rumored to be at hand.

TSU IS BECOMING a center of what activism there is among Houston Negroes; the poverty war embraces most of the remainder of those who work for change. The university is something of an oddity in educational circles, a peculiarity that is traceable to the school's beginning, in 1947, when it was founded by the legislature to stall integration at the University of Texas. The TSU law school, established in 1948, cost the state $100,000 to accommodate the one Negro who had applied for admission to the U.T. law school. As TSU dean of law Kenneth S. Tollett puts it, "We were born in sin."

The future of TSU is in doubt, due to the progress of desegregation and the proximity of another, much larger state university, the University of Houston, just a few blocks away. Students who attend TSU come from a variety of academic and personal backgrounds; often they are not well-educated before they go to TSU, due to the poor education offered in segregated Negro public schools. Many courses here are remedial. Financing of TSU's operations by the state is tightfisted; there are no counselors for the dormitories, the dean of men doubles as dean of student life. Much of TSU, as one member of the English department puts it, is veneer. Yes, there is a library, but it is very small, and woefully ill-equipped for serious research. Yes, there is a bookstore, but it has an extensive selection of sweatshirts and greeting cards, and the only books open for browsing are a haphazard batch of used paperbacks on a card table at the rear of the store. Many of the courses listed and described in the catalogue year after year are simply never given.

Until the 1966-'67 academic year TSU largely reflected the apathy that envelopes the rest of black Houston. The seeds of change probably were sown earlier, but they first began to sprout last fall. In October James Forman, national coordinator of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee, spoke on campus and, afterwards, a Friends of SNCC chapter was formed. In February, while the legislature was in session at Austin, the Friends of SNCC organized and conducted a march of about 100 persons on downtown Houston in protest of some alleged police brutality in East Texas. The Friends of SNCC members who had been meeting on campus were told by appropriations-conscious administrators that they would not be permitted to meet at TSU in the future. The group's faculty sponsor, Mack Jones, was advised about this time that his teaching contract would not be renewed.

This triggered what now can be regarded as a prelude to the May disorders. A protest was organized in March by the Rev. F. D. Kirkpatrick, a graduate sociology student and the founder of the Deacons for Justice and Defense, a Negro self-defense organization; Millard Lowe, another student and, with Kirkpatrick, the co-chairman of the Friends of SNCC; Lee Otis Johnson, a former TSU student; and Franklin Alexander, of Chicago, the national chairman of the W.E.B. DuBois Club, which is said by the FBI to be a communist-front organization.

A boycott of classes was called and rallies and another march downtown held. Wheeler Street was blocked for a time by the students, who have long resented the presence of the thoroughfare in the middle of their campus. The protest widened to include the quality of food served at TSU cafeterias, curfew hours, and other student life matters. Kirkpatrick, Alexander, and Johnson were arrested as leaders of the protest and were jailed on $25,000 bond each.

Later the bonds were reduced to $1,000 each. University officials, after conferring for several days with Blair Justice of the mayor's office, finally agreed to recognize the Friends of SNCC as a bona fide campus organization and to work to correct the other grievances raised. That was in early April.

In the next six weeks the police assigned two Negro policemen to permanent duty at TSU to keep an eye on things. During the period numerous instances of students throwing rocks at cars driving along Wheeler Street were reported to police.

JUSTICE'S THEORY as set forth in his dissertation, for determining racial tension before a riot occurs relies on three methods: 1) conversations with impoverished members of a minority group, in this case, Negroes; 2) reports from "listening posts," manned by persons whose jobs put them in daily contact with lower class members of the minority group; and 3) reports on "organizations or individuals considered to take such strong positions on the racial question as to constitute a possible source of ignition or provocation in an outbreak of violence."

The first method, the conversations, would be conducted to determine certain factors in a subject's background. Justice writes that a strong potential for violence exists on the level of those who have the least to lose. To determine who such persons are Justice developed three measures he found reliable — the number of moves a person's family made while he was a child, any break-up of his family (as through divorce), and shifts from rural to urban environment. The greater the extent of these three factors in a person's background, Justice found, the more likely he would be to respond to calls to violence.

In a survey of 110 Houston Negroes, chosen at random during the summer of 1965, Justice found that 76% of them favored racial violence in some respect.

Justice also confirmed the general impression held by persons throughout the city that summer, that the potential for racial violence was great in Houston then.

Justice conducted another study that suggests one possible way of easing racial tension and a hope for developing persons who are likely to lend themselves to racial strife. He interviewed 108 Negro inmates at state prison, persons with known records of violence, showing them the photos of 20 celebrities, or "power figures." The names of the persons did not accompany the pictures, half of which were of Negroes. The persons being interviewed were asked to name the persons they most admired among the 20. The top six, in order, were Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Martin Luther King, Sammy Davis, Jr., Bob Hope, and Elijah Muhammed.

Justice concluded from this that "subjects who sanctioned the use of violence also 'most admired' the type of national leaders who gained power through nonviolent means. . . . Research done among the 108 Negro inmates suggests the possibility that the tendency to use violence may be modified by a person's acquiring other means of expression in his striving for power and identity. One possibility may be increased literacy. . . . Competency seems to be one hope. The competent person seems better able to cope with the world without resorting to violence."

G. O.

LIFE IN BLACK HOUSTON

From May through August of 1965 Saul Friedman, who was at that time a reporter for the Houston Chronicle, conducted research on what it is like to be a Negro in Houston. He acquainted himself with the Negro parts of town, visiting and getting to know many of the residents and acquiring a sense of the quality of their lives.

However, two weeks after Friedman completed writing a series of 17 articles on his findings, the Chronicle underwent a basic change in editorial policy (Obs., March 18, 1966). Bill Steven, the editor who had built the paper into Texas' largest and most lively, was fired. Steven, on leaving, urged that the Friedman series be run, saying "It sings. It's a beautiful job. I think it's the kind of thing that would win a Pulitzer Prize. Maybe a Sidney Hillman. It's a first-rate piece of work. It's significant because it is a study in depth of 300,000 Negroes and attitudes toward them in the rest of the community. There's been substantial progress; it's a document of what ought to have been done." The Chronicle has not printed the series.

Friedman, not long afterwards, departed the Chronicle. He now is Washington correspondent for Knight Newspapers (Detroit and Miami). Here are excerpts of four of his 17 articles on black Houston.

A Rainy Day

Houston

It is raining in the Fourth Ward; one of those slow, grey rains that cannot cleanse a ghetto. The water, pure and virgin from the sky, is dirtied in the drainage ditches of the unpaved streets. And the dormant smell of garbage is aroused by the wetness.

The young men kick the garbage and pat the mud with their shoes as they stand in a knot on the narrow street off West Gray. They shift and pace and fidget as they talk. They wait for the joint across the street to open. The ubiquitous dogs, with that peculiar pink-eyed, hungry look of slum hounds, forage in the alleys and beneath the sagging porches of cheap frame houses. Their tails remain between their legs. There are few scraps left for the dogs.

There is no work for the men standing

Saul Friedman

in the drizzle. Rain closes the construction jobs down. There is no place to go. They wait for the joint to open.

Couldn't stay home. The house is crowded and small. The kids run around crying for something, always something. The musty damp of old, flowered wallpaper, and slept-in beds, and steaming greens, and wetted cribs, smelled.

And the old woman. She done woke up mad. She looked at the rain and the kids and the roaches that don't bother to scurry for cover, and she was already feeling mad. Cooped up. Tired. Wasn't enough money yesterday. Ain't enough today. Won't be any better tomorrow.

"Baby, is it my fault it's rainin' and they ain't no work? Hell, baby, what you think I can do 'bout the rain? Going down to the corner. Don't know when I be back. Sometime."

Run. Escape. Somewhere. Out.

So they waited in front of the rat-trap houses and the abandoned rent shacks even a black man wouldn't live in. They waited, and they blended into the dingy, restless, futureless backdrop. They waited for the joint to open.

A stranger, white and awkward and out of his place, came up. The knot loosened. Insuranceman coming for a payment? Bill collector hunting somebody? Rent man? Finance company man? Cop? No other kind of white man comes into the ward on an ordinary rainy day.

Conversation — communication—comes hard. There is a wall, unseen, but clearly there. Not like the one between strangers of like color. This one is thicker, and made with the cement of suspicion. Negroes have a way of playing many roles and putting on many faces and telling you exactly what you want to hear. Like Br'er Rabbit, who outwitted the animal kingdom by playing the part he needed to play, by playing witless. "Got one mind for the white folks to see," goes an old Negro folksong, "and 'nother for what I know is me."

"EXCUSE ME," says the stranger at last, "you know this is one of the areas of the city where the government says the people are poverty-stricken."

"Yeah," says the barber, who without a word being passed becomes the spokesman for the street-corner group. "We're poverty-stricken all right. Tell me something 'bout that. That something new?"

Big laugh from the others.

"The government says a family of four is poverty-stricken if they make under $3,000 a year."

"Man, who makes close to $3,000 a year?" he mockingly asks the group. He gets another big laugh.

"That's more'n . . . let's see . . . that's more'n $55 every week of the year. They ain't a whole lot makes that much every week. And mos' everybody's got more'n two kids," says a T-shirted construction laborer. He pulls out an old wallet, stuffed with scraps of paper and stubs from paychecks cashed at the Chinese grocery.

"Looka here."

It was for two weeks' work, after taxes and rainy days: $89.72.

"Got to pay the lights and the gas and the rent. The landlord, he comes 'round every week to get his ten dollars," he says.

There are always payments to the finance company for the cheap furniture that's already shabby. And for the portable TV that you have to fool with to make it work.

Them stores is always getting you to buy something. They make it look so easy. And then there are all kinds of charges. Interest. Carrying charges. Special charges. Insurance.

And the peddlers who do their business only in the ghettoes come around door to door. Foreigners most of them. They come around getting the women to buy dresses and curtains and things. And they got to get their couple, three dollras every week. White men don't come 'round 'less they want your money.

"So how do you get by?"

"We got to get by," says the barber, watching down the street for the man who opens the joint. "Most of the time that's exactly what we do. Get by. Maybe we ain't never going to do anything else. But we're gonna get by."

The man comes in his gray, late-model

Cadillac; a little, fat, gray-haired man, with a shiny gold wristwatch on his brown arm, and a Masonic ring glittering on his chubby finger. In an instant after the door is open a dime rattles down the throat of the juke box and its belly blares with a bass-drum beat, and blues, decibels too loud.

"BABY! . . . BABY! . . . BA-A-A-BY! . . ."

"A Jax, man."

"Done drank too damn much last night. Gimme a Ahr-ah-cee."

"GOT TO HAVE YO' LOVIN', B-A-A-BY . . .!"

"THINGS ARE changing, aren't they? I mean, things are getting better for Negroes. Isn't that so?"

The barber stood at the corner of the dark bar, making rings on the linoleum top with the wet bottom of the beer can.

"Yeah, there's all this civil rights stuff. I don't have no time for that, myself. But I'm all for them folks gettin' out and fighting for what's right," he said.

"Lots of Negroes everywhere gettin' to be teachers and professors and all like that," said the laborer.

"But, man, you got be something really special if you're black," said the barber. "You got to be Willie Mays or Sammie Davis, or — what's that cat's name? — Ralph Bunche. What about the everyday black man? One o' these days maybe an ordinary, everyday black man's gonna be like an ordinary, everyday white man. That's when it's gonna be somethin' else."

Shotgun Life

Nobody knows exactly why they call them "shotgun" houses.

"Guess it's just 'cause they is straight, like the barrel of a shotgun," said Louis Vance. "I been livin' in every kind o' what they call Niggah house in Houston since 1909 and I ain't never heard nobody give a explanation."

His "awntie," Mrs. Callie McBride, a widow who is called "Big Mama," heard differently. "It's 'cause you could fire a shotgun right into de front do' and you could hit dat back wall right dere and kill everybody in de place."

"Dat's so," Vance chuckled and scratched the naked stump of a left leg. There was no singing at Big Mama's shotgun shack in the Fifth Ward that morning, and no smell of catfish stew. She'd fixed the ham hocks and greens the evening before when it was a little cooler. Come suppertime she'd heat it up and make some corn bread.

She and Vance sat in the dingy front room, where the fan was, silently watching the dim and battered television. A toothy MC on "The Price Is Right" was giving away thousands of dollars in gifts to happily-gibbering guests. A toothpick hung from her lips as Big Mama puffed on a mooched cigarette. She watched the flickering screen with hooded-eyed indifference, while Vance dipped some Garrett and sighted. A cockroach wandered aimlessly up a window sash. In the middle room a mouse moved in a blur across the torn linoleum.

THE MORNING sun burned the thin shingle roof and the one-ply wooden walls. It was too hot on the front porch and no idlers were around. Even the lowly shotgun has a front porch. There are no statistics on it, but it's a good bet there are more front porches on the wooden ghetto shacks than there are on the nicer houses in town. A landlord couldn't rent a house to the poorest Negro if it didn't have a porch. It's a place of escape, where a body can set of an evening to see part of the world outside, to get out of the dark hot hole of the house.

"I don't know where folks gits the idea that we can take the heat better'n white people," said Vance. "Now out in de sun we is all right. It don't get our skin all blistered and red. We can work in de sun for a long time, with it gettin' on our backs and all like that.

"But you stay in one of these houses or some that's got a tin roof and we gets just as hot as anybody. Like to die."

In the wintertime, except when it's raining and the damp seeps into the house, the shotgun stays warm. The steaming pots of beans, grits, and greens help keep out the cold. You have to be careful about those gas heaters, especially, the open kind, in the crowded wooden house.

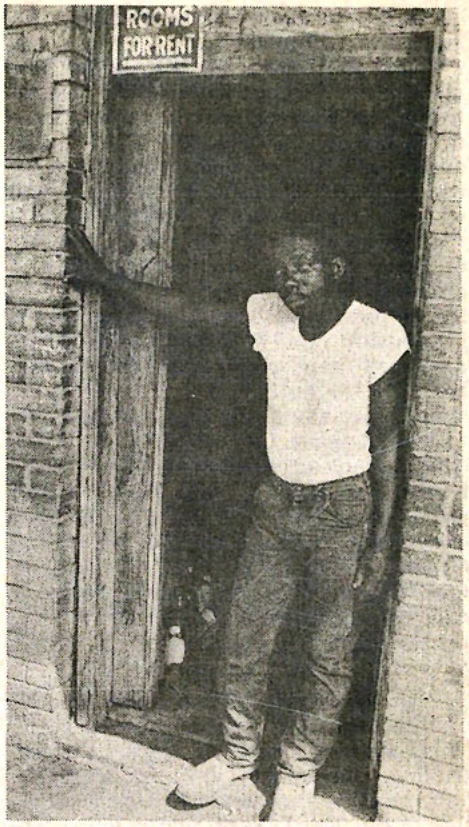
"Whoever said the living is easy in the summertime?" Vance laughed with bitterness. "Can't get away from the heat. Go to bed feeling tired. Get up feeling tired."

Sweat glistened like olive oil on Big Mama's broad black face. She's a big-bosomed, shapeless woman like the maids in the Hollywood movies. Except her teeth are too rotted for one of those big "Lawsie me!" grins. After her husband died she got to weighing 300; now she's down to 239. And at 68 she's having a time in the heat keeping up with the housework, the cooking for Vance and Johnny, her two boarders, and baby-sitting in the neighborhood for the women who have domestic jobs.

HER BIGGEST bother is taking a bath, and she can't get around to it but once or twice a week. It's a problem in her shack. There's no tub and no running hot water. She keeps a number three wash tub out on the little back porch and when the men aren't around and she can get some time to herself she sets it down on the kitchen floor, near the stove. That's because she has to heat several pots of water and carry them to the tub.

The tub's too small for her to get down in the water. So she stands in it and bathes herself with a cloth, her body, then one limb at a time. Then she's got to get someone to help her throw the water out the back door. There's no drain in the house.

"I ain't never been in no real bathtub since I been here," she said. "Once when I was out to Lockwood hospital I had me one of them private rooms and every morning I took me a bath. Like a real human bein'. It was a real white tub. Clean an' everything. And I set in all that water and all of me was in it at de same time."



Waiting
—Photo by John Scarborough

The Ghettoes

They are tucked nearly out of sight beneath and beside the fast freeways of the metropolis. But on the census maps they can be seen, looking like blotches on the city's face. These are the Negro ghettoes of metropolitan Houston. Not all of them are slums, not all are crowded with dilapidated houses and narrow streets. And there are no ugly, packed tenements, by which the ghettoes of the North are known.

But there are areas in which Negroes have been confined, by ordinance in the last century, and now by tradition, circumstance, and covenant. The dictionary defines a ghetto as "a quarter of the city in which members of minority groups live because of social, legal, or economic pressure." In Houston there are several such ghettoes, the largest of which were assigned to Negroes by law in 1855, on the fringe of the downtown area. Now Negroes live in wards, or special subdivisions, or traditional enclaves, or the seams of the city in which no one else will live. They can be called ghettoes be-

cause 95% of metropolitan Houston's Negroes live within them.

Living apart from the rest of the community, the Negroes within their "niggertowns" have developed their own traditions, cultures, mores, and that special overgrowth of indolence and violence which flourishes in any such jungle. And which is foreign to the white.

Although more than 75% of the Negroes of Houston were born in Texas, few of their families have roots in the city. The Negro population has risen from 86,000 in Houston in 1940 to nearly 300,000 today. Half have come since the Second World War, from the rural areas of the state, especially East Texas, barely able to read or write. Like immigrants from a backward country, they were bewildered by the city, clannish, and unfamiliar with elementary urban necessities of garbage and waste disposal. Living in the cheapest, most dilapidated areas of the ghettoes, they are even shunned as "country niggers" by the more urbane and sophisticated Negroes of Houston.

BY FAR THE most influential of Houston's Negro neighborhoods is the Third Ward, east of Main, generally extending from Walker south to Brays Bayou. Most of the most affluent Negroes live in the Third Ward, and it is the site of Texas Southern University and the two Negro newspapers, the Forward Times and the Houston Informer. Here also are the Houston (Negro) Citizens Chamber of Commerce (subsidized from time to time by the downtown chamber), the Negro-owned Riverside National Bank and the Standard Savings and Loan Assn., the Negro-oriented radio stations, and the offices of most of the professional Negroes in the city.

Most of the city's Negro businessmen and political and civic leaders make their homes in the Third Ward. The South Central YMCA, a hub of Negro activity, and the headquarters of the National Assn. for the Advancement of Colored People, are in the Third Ward.

The Third is also the most crowded of the Negro ghettoes. Dowling, the main street, is lined with ramshackle wooden buildings and hole-in-the-wall beer joints. And off the main drag are the clapboard and tin-roof hovels choking in their closeness, surrounded by gravel streets and open ditches.

Of the 4,000 miles of roads in Houston, about 10% are yet unpaved, according to the city public works director, who adds that most of those 400 miles of unpaved streets are in the Negro areas, some of which are the oldest settled parts of Houston.

The old Third is literally bursting the invisible walls that so long confined the Negroes. The ghetto is fast spreading to the south and west and now some Negroes of the Third Ward are living in stately old mansions built decades ago by affluent whites, and in sprawling modern ranchstyle houses costing between $20,000 and $50,000.

As dynamic as the Third Ward is, the Fourth Ward, west of downtown Houston between Buffalo Bayou and West Gray, is moribund. Cut off by the bayou and its freeways, the downtown area, and the wealthy areas to the south and west, the Fourth Ward is dying. Much of it has been razed for the Cullen Center. Area residents expect other new developments will dispossess them.

Though still in existence, the Fourth Ward Civic Club rarely meets. The older activists in the area have left for the Third Ward. The people wallow in indolence in the shacks and the taverns along West Dallas, waiting for real estate syndicates to clear out the area.

A middle-aged woman was hanging clothes on the front porch of her Fifth Ward home. She looked down at the dirt street and sniffed the gritty air, shaking her head. Her man had left her, and she was alone, penniless, without work experience, and too proud to be a maid.

"I used to live nice in the Third Ward," she said. "Now I've done hit bottom. Comin' here to the Fifth Ward is hittin' bottom. Can't get no lower."

Her voice was drowned out by the freight train running down the middle of the street, not 20 feet from her front door. It stirred the white dust of the gravel. The woman looked at her newly-washed clothes and shrugged.

A Sick Boy

The bus driver impatiently stomped on the gas pedal, mumbling curses. Through the opened doors of the air-conditioned Dreamliner he felt the blast furnace August heat against his face. He fiddled with the wrinkled transfers and waited while the Negro girl — she didn't seem older than 14 — struggled to carry a black skeleton off the bus. The doors hissed closed and the bus wheeled away from the curb trailing a diesel smell, a sickening odor when mixed with the morning heat.

The girl felt the burning pavement through the thin soles of her sandals, and she shifted her little brother higher in her arms and made her way into the cool hospital. The boy was nine and he'd been sick a long time. His mother knew he had to see a doctor, but she had no money. Besides, she had to work and couldn't wait in line at Ben Taub. So the girl volunteered to take the boy to the hospital's clinic.

She went up to a lady behind a desk in a starched yellow dress that made noises when she moved. "How do I get to someplace where a doctor can see my little brother?" the girl asked.

"Pediatric clinic. In the basement . . . elevator."

In the room beneath the hospital more than a hundred people were waiting. Most of them were black, come to see the white doctors. Children climbed on benches, noses running. Or they lay in their mothers' laps, some squalling, some whimpering, some very quiet. A lady took the girl's name and said to wait. She waited two hours. Her silent, sick brother shivered in her arms. He had to go to the bathroom, she knew, but she couldn't take him and he couldn't go by himself. And everybody was too busy so she didn't ask. Her brother wet his pants.

Someone called her name and she followed a lady in white into a little room. She waited some more. After awhile a man came in. He must have been a doctor. He wore a long white coat. Just outside the door of the room he was laughing with another man, like they were telling a joke. The girl didn't understand. The doctor looked for a long time at her little brother and asked her a lot of questions.

"He don't eat hardly nothing," she said. "I don't think he can swallow the food. He just lays in the bed all the time and when he ain't sleeping he's crying. I'm home from school now and I can take care of him, but when I go to school next month there won't be anybody. Can't you take him into the hospital?"

The girl nodded gravely when the doctor explained: little brother had cancer in his head and maybe in other places in his body. He was going to die, perhaps in six months' time. She understood that, but she was puzzled when the doctor said he was sorry, but there were no available beds in the hospital for terminal patients. She should take her brother home, and he would give her some medicine for the pain.

A FEW DAYS later an efficient but tired young woman in white, from the Visiting Nurse Assn. of Houston rattled on the screen door. Later she carefully made out a report. There were no tears in her eyes as she wrote. She no longer cried about such things.

"On August 12," she wrote, ". . . found a severely dehydrated, emaciated, bedfast child, who could not walk, talk, or move about, lying in a double bed with very dirty linens. . . . This bed was shared by three other people at night. The child was being attended to by [a sister]. The condition of the home was deplorable. The house was littered and infested with roaches and other household pests. No refrigeration or gas was in the home. The food which required cooking was prepared on a hot plate. A styrofoam chest was being used to preserve perishable food; however, there was no ice.

"There were several jars of spoiled baby food which the sister said she had been feeding the patient. There was no other edible food found for the other siblings except for beans and rice. . . . The existing conditions were reported to the Harris County Probation Dept. (which took no action), and the Harris County Welfare Board (which took no action). The American Cancer Society was also contacted (it said it could do nothing).

The Visiting Nurses Assn. put on all the pressure it could and on Aug. 19 the child was finally admitted to Ben Taub Hospital. On Sept. 7 he died. □

The Rangers and La Huelga

Rio Grande City and The Valley

Starr County's melon crop is mostly harvested now, and the trains are carting the melons to market daily. For the second year, neither the striking farm workers' pickets nor their appeals for justice have won them a union contract. Both the strike and the attempted nationwide boycott of the melons from La Casita Farms are more symbolic than effective.

But within the last month the Texas Rangers, the tough, pistol-packing lawmen whose range is Texas and whose uniform is boots and stetsons, have made mass arrests of the picketers and have been accused of offenses ranging from smashing a camera into a man's face to beating two Mexican-Americans over the head and neck with shotguns.

The Rangers started out as Indian-fighters and Mexican fighters. A company of Rangers fought as a unit in the war against Mexico. In the long decade of border conflict the Rangers became iden-

AN OBSERVER REPORT

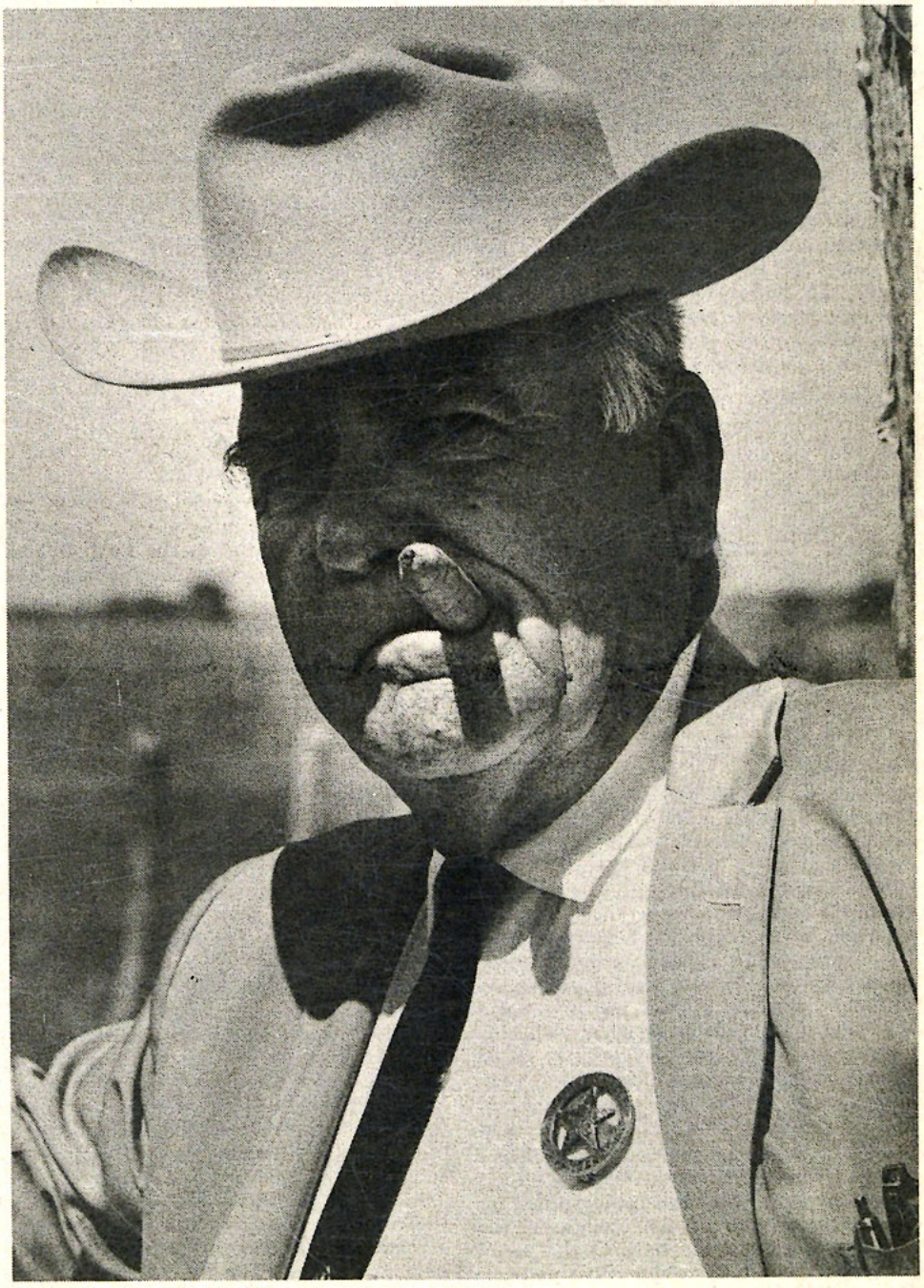
tified with the Anglos, even though their history was too complicated for this simplification to describe. Tales of Rangers' brutality to Mexican-Americans are legendary, and it was inherent in this fact that when they were dispatched to Starr County, there to enforce union-restricting state laws against mass and secondary picketing, a dispute would break out. It has.

As accusations of Ranger brutality piled up, Mexican-American militants called for the abolition of the Rangers, the Texas LULACS asked for their withdrawal from Starr County, Sen. Ralph Yarborough called them Governor John Connally's strikebreakers, and state senators went to Starr to investigate. Attempts are being made to interest at U.S. Senate subcommittee in going to Starr County to see why the farm workers' strike has failed and whether changes in federal law might make farm workers' unionization more feasible. Gov. Connally and Col. Homer Garrison, head of the Texas Department of Public Safety, have come to the defense of the Rangers as honored lawmen who are doing their job of enforcing the laws fairly and without brutality.

A minister accuses the Rangers of slapping a Mexican-American and throwing him against a car, and later of slapping the minister, himself, and slamming a car door on another man's leg. There are charges that the Rangers have shoved and abused picketers in the course of arresting them. A Pan American College student says he was threatened with violence, his brother-in-law was arrested when he asked for the name of the arresting Ranger, and another of his brothers-in-law, a Vietnam veteran, was arrested as he waited quietly in the courtroom to make bond. A 15-year-old picketer says he was struck in the chest and shoved by a Ranger and later spat blood in his cell. Newspapermen and cameramen attest that they were told not to take pictures; one was told he'd get his camera busted if he did, and another says he was narrowly missed by a car as he shot some film. The Rangers generally and specifically deny charges against them.

Many of these allegations concern the evening and night after a closed hearing held by members of the Texas advisory committee of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission had ended. Then Sen. Joe Bernal of San Antonio came to town and conducted his own inquiry into the situation — including an astonishing confrontation with Captain A. Y. Allee of the Rangers that ended when Allee left in anger.

That night, "the Dimas incident" occurred. The undisputed facts are these: That two of the Mexican-American strik-



—Photo by Bill Bridges

RANGER CAPT. A. Y. ALLEE

ers, both of whom have long police records and serious criminal convictions, were arrested by Captain Allee and others, that injuries were inflicted on the Mexican-Americans in the course of the arrests, that they were treated first that night by a male nurse who is not an M.D. (one of them being given four stitches in the head), and that the next day they were examined by one M.D. who said they were beaten worse than he had ever seen anyone beaten by police and by another M.D. who confirmed that they had injuries but said they were not as serious as the first doctor said. Allee told the Observer that they did not come when they were told to come and he used only what force he deemed necessary. They say the Rangers came in swinging shotgun butts and beat them over the head and neck with the guns, and then they were kicked when they were on the floor.

A full investigation of the Dimas incident is being conducted, as we go to press, by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. County Attorney Randall Nye, who helped call in the Rangers, was badly shaken by the Dimas incident and said he had been trying to get the federal authorities into the situation. What would be the F.B.I.'s role, he was asked. "I would think they would just lend some stability to the situation," he said. Nye also said he will have a special grand jury go into the incident.

On the other hand, the Starr County strikers now stand collectively accused, but none of them have been charged or personally accused, of burning a railroad trestle, stacking tie-plates and stakes in the railroad right-of-way, and causing $20,000 in damages by vandalism at La Casita, including burning buildings and trucks, putting sugar into equipment, and slashing tires. More than 100 of the *huelguistas* have been charged with such offenses as mass or secondary picketing, disturbing the peace, obstructing right-of-way, obstructing a railroad employee's right to labor, and driving without a license, but none of them has been charged with committing an act of violence, and union spokesmen say the strikres are committed to non-violence.

THE RANGERS are quartered in the Ringgold Hotel, a two-story hostelry before which one can so readily imagine stagecoaches and horses tied, the Rangers' flock of 1967 Furies seem out of place. Enclosing a lushly planted courtyard, the old Ringgold is run by a mild, conservative geologist, George Boyle, Harvard '22, who is very much against the strike, which he regards as a phony. The Rangers either kept to their rooms, sat around reading or swapping stories on the wooden armchairs in the recessed courtyard at the front of the hotel, or driving around town or downvalley looking to their jobs.

Their model, their "*patron*," is Captain Allee, a big, Western man of growling voice who said the Observer was the only paper that approached him for an interview down there and seemed to resent the idea that people are scared of the Rangers and think they are mean. In his holster he totes a .45 automatic, its stock decorated in Aztec designs of silver and gold. "I still prefer that old Colt single-action," he says. As Dr. Walter Prescott Webb pointed out, the early model Colt turned the tide of battle against the Indians in the plains wars.

Opposite the hotel in the Catfish Inn, spurs are strung across a doorway, old farm tools and ladies' high-heeled boots and rilfes with long histories adorn the walls, and for a dollar and a half they'll cook you all the catfish and hushpuppies you can eat. The Rangers did not hang around there much. Striding along, boots heightening them as they walked like ramrods, the older, pot-bellied ones hoisting their holsters up, sometimes stopping to chat and leaning the pads of their palms on their pistol-butts, they took their meals at cafes around the corner.

Eight blocks away the union office is nondescript and small, a front corner of the Old Mexico theater the union rents for $40 a month. On the office wall are pictures of John Kennedy and the Virgin Mary; in the bookshelf, two dictionaries, *Teenage Sports Stories,* and Max Shulman's *Anyone Got a Match?* The house next door, where union administrative assistant Bill Chandler and his wife live, is also a kind of adjunct to the union office, and on the sidewalk and street in front of these two structures the strikers and itinerant partisans meet and the press come to ask and photograph.

The Observer here presents a special report from Starr County in four parts. First, the background of events that had accumulated the first few weeks of May is presented. Second, Captain Allee is interviewed at length, and Senator Bernal's encounters with Allee and with the growers are reported in full. Third, the Dimas incident is taken up. Fourth, the strikers' situation and their anti-Ranger rally are reported.

As Eugene Nelson, the California farm worker organizer who first announced the Starr County strike June 1 a year ago, said of the strikers' testimony at the civil rights hearing, "We recited the sins of our enemies." Both sides have been doing this, and often there can be no certain knowing.

Arrests Impede the Picketing

FOR SEVERAL months the Texas AFL-CIO's top officials, Hank Brown and Roy Evans, had been negotiating with officials of the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM) of Mexico in an attempt to arrange what would have been a serious blow to the Starr County growers. CTM agreed to stretch a line of pickets across the Mexican side of the international bridge at Roma, where, on the U.S. side, *huelgistas* have been picketing for months. The Mexican workers, called "green-carders" because they have green permit cards, cross the bridge here into the U.S. and go into the fields of area farms, including La Casita. The unionists regard them as foreign strike-breakers.

On May 11, 17 Mexican pickets lined up across the mouth of the bridge on the Mexican side, and the bulk of the green carders were deterred from crossing over. However, politics then came into play. Mexican union officials said they were threatened with arrest if they did not desist. The CTM pickets were withdrawn that night, and green carders came over again.

At the bridge on the U.S. side that May 11, according to union official David Lopez, a Ranger ignored his extended hand and "pushed me roughly against my shoulders with both hands." Leonel Lopez, a striker, said he engaged Captain Allee in conversation, and Allee "said he was charged with getting the workers to the fields without interruption from us . . . Captain Allee said . . . that if we didn't pick the cantaloupes, they would rot," but that the Rangers were "not taking sides."

As a carload of strikers drove along that morning, Rangers stopped them and arrested Ismael Diaz, the driver, for not having a license. The Rev. Edward Krueger, 36, was in the car, also. He is a United Church of Christ minister who is representing the Texas Council of Churches in a ministry to the union side of the controversy. He says the Council is supposed to have a minister working with the growers' side, too, but one hasn't yet been assigned. Krueger has been close to the strikers and performs small services for them. He says that when the Rangers arrested Diaz, Ranger Jack Van Cleve "gave me a shove." Krueger also says he heard Allee say that morning "that this was a critical time of the harvest and that if the workers didn't go to the fields, the melons would rot and 'you all' would not get any money . . . "

Eugene Nelson says that he became "quite perturbed" with the Rangers by May 12 and went to the courthouse looking for Captain Allee. Instead, he found a deputy sheriff. Whatever it was Nelson then said is now the nub of a charge against him. Nelson says he told the deputy "that if the Texas Rangers don't stop acting as the private police of La Casita, there are going to be some red-faced Rangers around here when the Senate

investigators arrive." (He referred, he said, to reports U.S. senators might come.) Nelson was charged with threatening the lives of Rangers. County attorney Randall Nye quoted the deputy that Nelson had said, "You'd better tell that son of a bitch he had better lay off or there's going to be some dead Rangers."

Bond of $2,000 was required of him, and the union's attorney, James McKeithan of Mission, sought to have it posted by Joe Guerra, the mayor of Roma and one of the six Guerras who lead the Old Party. The New Party's Raul Pena, the chief deputy sheriff, refused to accept the bond without tax records proving Guerra had the property necessary to post the bond. It then being about 4 p.m. Friday, Nelson had to spend the weekend in jail. McKeithan says that the tax certificate presented Monday was 15 pages long: the Guerra partnership owns 75,000 acres in Starr County; Joe Guerra also owns a share of the Rio Grande International Bridge and stock in First State Bank and Trust in Rio Grande City. McKeithan believes Nelson's rights were violated in this incident since Guerra's situation was well known to everyone.

Another Guerra, Virgilio, who ran for county commissioner from the Roma area but lost to the New Party's man, became, on May 16, the first Starr County farmer to sign a contract with the union. He said he and his family had received threats, but they were not afraid. The Guerras' support of the strikers opened up the possibility of a liaison against the New Party at the next election.

STARR COUNTY's politics are feudal; they are pre-revolutionary Mexican. The New Party, so-called, has been in office 24 years, but before that the Old Party was in 40 years. The county judge, M. J. Rodriguez, is also a medical doctor. One cannot say the sheirff is a key figure in the New Party, because he is almost never, or never, to be found in his office. He is said to be a rancher, out on his ranch. In derision he's called "the phantom sheriff," yet he keeps being elected. His chief deputy, Raul Pena, and Raul's brother, Deputy Sheriff Roberto C. Pena, are referred to as "the Penas" and along with County Attorney Randall Nye are the most visible and active leaders of New Party politics.

The plums of power now are jobs in the war on poverty as well as the courthouse jobs. It is alleged that people associated with the Old Party, headquartered in Roma and captained by the wealthy Guerras, cannot get the time of day at the courthouse in Rio Grande City. There are other allegations. James McKeithan says that an investigation shows that the Starr County jury commission, which chooses the grand and petit jurors, has not included a member of the Old Party since 1959. The county jail is represented as worse than the Tower of London. Union leader Eugene Nelson says that his first night in the jail on his most recent stay there, he killed 212 cockroaches: that he counted them. Dr. Ramiro Casso says of the small room in which he examined the three Mexican-Americans hurt in the Dimas incident, "It was back in the dark ages."

THE MELONS are loaded first at Rio Grande City, just west of town, In the later afternoon the hulking refrigerated cars, which Ranger Allee often mentions cost $400,000 each, are towed downvalley to Mission, where there is some switching (and as often as not in May some picketing). Further downvalley, at Harlingen, the freight cars are regrouped, squeakingly and screechingly uncoupled and jammed back together in new chains, and hauled northward to San Antonio. The union's theory is that the law permits "information picket lines" of the trains, pickets that do not ask anyone to refuse to patronize the railroad, but advise everyone that there's a strike somewhere. The Rangers' theory, derived from the Texas law against secondary picketing, is that picketing the railroad was picketing a business against which the union was not striking and was therefore a misdemeanor. They therefore arrested picketers of the trains. The railroad sent a car ahead of each train on the tracks, the car being rigged with special bolt-on, snap-down railroad wheels, to be sure nothing amiss lay ahead.

A La Casita Manager Is Also a 'Special Deputy Sheriff'

One night as the Observer's man drove downvalley along old Highway 83 with the train, he counted three Ranger cars, each with two Rangers in it. You can tell the Ranger cars because their license plates begin with the letters "RKK." One of them kept abreast of the train's engine cab, the second one rode alongside on the highway at the train's midpoint, and the third brought up the rear as near the train's caboose as the vagaries of the road and the trackbed permit. The Texas Rangers were thus escorting the melons and th train carrying them westward through and then northward out of the Valley.

A second series of arrests was based on the state's law against mass picketing. Under this law, no two pickets may be closer together than 50 feet, nor may a picket use abusive language. McKeithan asked the union picketers please to keep 50 feet apart, but they were friends, it gets hot and lonely standing or sitting around in the sun, and from the Observer's observation, sometimes they were close together. Randall Nye said several times that the officers didn't arrest the pickets even when they were close together unless they were causing trouble or becoming abusive. Then, he said, they were arrested.

If it wasn't for the Rangers, said David Lopez of the union, workers would be coming out of the fields to join the union, and union railroad crews would be tying up the cantaloupes. Lopez says that every time the picketers at La Casita start making headway with the workers in the fields, there have been mass arrests. One day, he said, about 200 workers refused to cross the picket line; the next day there were 22 arrests.

Gilbert Padilla, national vice-president of the farm workers' organizing committee, which is officially recognized by the AFL-CIO, blamed "the Rangers interfering" for much of the strike's trouble. "None of their damn business being here," he said angrily.

ON MAY 18, the Rangers' mass arrests began. On a complaint signed by Onas Brand, a Trophy Farm executive, 22 pickets, including five women, were arrested and charged with mass picketing. On May 25-26, four members of the Texas Advisory Committee to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission held closed hearings in Rio Grande City. The night of May 26, Rangers arrested 16 persons near Mission during picketing of Missouri-Pacific's melon train; among those arrested were the Rev. Krueger and his wife and Pancho Medrano, a United Auto Workers national staffer.

Early the next morning three more persons were arrested during railroad picketing west of Harlingen. Bonds for these 19 totaled $9,500. May 29 in Rio Grande City a union crew refused to move the train past two pickets, so a management crew did it, and the train went on. On a complaint signed by Ray Rochester, vice president and general manager of La Casita Farms, the Rangers arrested 12 picketers at La Casita the morning of May 31 and charged them with mass picketing; two more railroad picketers were taken in for train picketing that night.

With four more picket arrests June 1 while State Sen. Joe Bernal watched, the total number of arrests by the Rangers and county officials in this year-long strike had come to about 117.

The Rangers and the growers were invited to the civil rights hearing, but chose not to testify. The union people presented their complaints in full, for seven hours; for the county, Nye, the county attorney, testified at length. The press was excluded. On the basis of a transcript, there may be some kind of report from Washington.

According to the Observer's information about these hearings, Benito Rodriguez, who was soon to be involved in the Dimas incident, testified that a grower had fired a shot at him. Members of the committee asked Nye about it, and according to good information, Nye said that the grower was probably rabbit hunting. The irony is striking: picketers Rodriguez and Magdaleno Dimas were soon to say in their own defense that *they* had gone rabbit hunting.

Jim Rochester is a duly sworn "special

deputy sheriff" of Starr County. A list in the county courthouse, dated May 5, lists him and 39 other men as such deputies, in addition to the county's regular 17 deputies. Jim Rochester is also in charge of on-the farm operations at La Casita. His brother, Ray Rochester, is the chief spokesman for La Casita. There are no members of the union among the county's special deputies. These circumstances were explored during the civil rights hearing.

Rodriguez told the hearing that Allee asked them on the picket line why they didn't go into the fields and work and that the Rangers abused the picketers as scum and the like when they were picketing.

Domingo Arredondo, an official of the union, told the commission he was arrested and brought to the county jail, whereupon a deputy sheriff, whom he named, set upon him in the presence of witnesses, knocked him down, and flashed his gun at him. A picketer named Zoila R. Ozuna said a grower, whom she named, pushed her and hurt her arm; she sought to file a complaint against him, but, she said, Nye, who has accepted many complaints against the strikers, investigated hers and refused it on grounds there was insufficient evidence. Nye acknowledged that he is an attorney for Starr Produce Packing Shed, which has been involved in an N.L.R.B. election dispute. (The shed comes under the federal act protecting unionists. Apart from disputed votes, the election was a tie.) Eugene Nelson, the organizer from the Delano, Calif., grape strike who started the melon strike here, said the Rangers had carried "the strikebreakers" into the fields.

Carlos Truan, a member of the commission who helped conduct the hearing, said it was "obvious" that Nye is on the side of the growers. In Corpus Christi, Truan, deputy state dierctor of the League of United Latin-American Citizens (the LULACS), told the Observer that the Rangers, while consulting with the growers, have refused repeated invitations to consult with the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee.

The advisory group also took an interest in the case of Pedro Dimas, who is charged with assault with intent to rape. Pedro Dimas was held in jail for about two and a half months before he was released on bond. Union sources have argued this is punishment because he was a union picketer. Nye says that no one tried to make bond on him for the first two months. Pedro Dimas said in Rio Grande City that he was given notice of his right to a lawyer and to make a phone call. He was released on bond after the advisory group's staffer, the Rev. Bill Oliver, intervened with county authorities. Pedro is a brother of Magdaleno Dimas.

The hearings ended Friday, May 26. That evening and right there was a lot of trouble in the Valley.

MEDRANO, A member of UAW's national staff connected with the citizenship department, has powerful friends in the UAW. This is his story about what happened to him at Mission the evening of May 26, as he told it to the Observer:

He had his Bell and Howell movie camera in his hands and another camera around his neck on a strap. Standing about 120 feet away from the tracks, he saw Rangers advancing on girls who were carrying picket signs; the Rangers tried to grab their signs, he said. "At this time Captain Allee saw me taking pictures. I was about 25 feet away. He started moving toward me and said, 'He's taking pic-

How It Is in Texas -- a U.S. Farm

Rio Grande City

(A Union view of recent proceedings in Rio Grande City was obtained by the Observer in the following interview of Gilbert Padilla, 40, vice-president of the National Farm Workers Organizing Committee. One of the top lieutenants of Cesar Chavez, the architect of the union's organizing victory at Delano, Calif., Padilla has been the director of the union's strike in the Rio Grande Valley since January of this year. The interview was conducted in Rio Grande City by one of the Observer's contributing editors, Larry Goodwyn.)

Q. What is the current status of the strike?

A. Pretty bad, as of this moment. The thing here is we don't have the very close relations between the community and the union that is essential if you're going to organize farm workers. The power structure won't give us an opportunity to present our views to the community. They're constantly running us down as "outside agitators." The fact is, of course, that the workers themselves voted to join our union and, under the circumstances, we're obligated to do what we can to help out. Now the local strikers are pretty militant and not scared, but the rest of the community *is* scared.

Q. Scared of who, or what?

A. The Rangers. And it's not hard to understand this fear. The way the Rangers operate is unbelievable. And let's face it, the people are starving. They've been used to working for 50 cents an hour but the pressures created by the strike have boosted this to $1 an hour. They will scab for $1 an hour because they are hungry. Remember, across the river [in Mexico] farm workers have been getting 20 pesos [$1.75] per day and recently won a strike to get this increased to 27 pesos [$2.15] per day. Now, they can make $8 a day by crossing the river and going to work for La Casita.

Q. I gather, then, that you have two problems — getting the cooperation of workers in Rio Grande City and getting cooperation of workers across the river?

Larry Goodwyn

A. Yes.

Q. Could we take them up one at a time?

A. Well, insofar as the workers on the Mexican side are concerned, we had that problem licked earlier this month [May] until some high-level international politics intruded.

Q. Would you review these events?

A. I guess you can say it began when [Cesar] Chavez and [Walter] Reuther talked to Fidel Velazquez [the George Meany of the Mexican labor movement] and got his general consent to a concerted action to improve working conditions in the border area. Then, after I got here this January, I talked to Elias Pena, the secretary-treasurer of CTM [the Confederation of Mexican Workers] for the state of Tamaulipas. With me were Roy Evans and Henry Munoz of the Texas AFL-CIO. We talked to Pena and a number of CTM leaders from border towns. We explained we were not against Mexican nationals coming over to try to improve their lot and feed their families, but that we did ask that they not come into a strike zone. They agreed. When the time came for the melon harvest, our strikers held firm and La Casita was in so much trouble that they frantically tried to import Mexican nationals. CTM hoisted the red flag [put out pickets] on the Mexican side and, believe me, that stopped it. Not a soul crossed the bridge. For three days — with the melons getting riper and riper all the time. Then on the night of the third day, the chief of the labor department of the state of Tamaulipas came to urge us [CTM and AFL-CIO] to remove the pickets. We argued back and forth for about an hour. Then he phoned the governor of Tamaulipas in our presence and the Governor [Pedro Martinez Vera] told him to see that the pickets were removed because "Mexico was not on strike against the United States." I said I'm not going to remove pickets until CTM tells us to move them. Then Vera said, "Well then, we'll have to bring in soldiers." With that, the local CTM people threw up their hands and said "That's it. We'll have to yield." The next day, the flag was down and the workers came across to work in the melon fields. It was not CTM who pulled out, it was the Mexican government apparatus that told us to get out.

Q. Why do you think the Mexican government did this?

tures, get that man,' and pointed, and said, 'and take that camera off my face.'" Medrano, taking account of Allee's later explanations that it was lights flashing in his eyes that he objected to, noted that this was broad daylight and he was using "no flash, no nothing."

When he was arrested, Medrano continues, he was standing in the middle of the street, over the stripe in the middle of the road, and when he asked what he was arrested for, he was told, "Trespassing on private property." Pointing to the road stripe he asked, "Whose private property?" and was told, "Well, you're obstructing traffic, come on."

Put in a Ranger car, he saw that Rangers were still struggling to get Kathy Baker's picket sign from her, and he started taking motion pictures of this from inside the car. Medrano said that, seeing this, a Ranger opened the car door, pulled the camera back "and hit me here," in the front of his face, "and then back again and hit me in the nose," took the camera and left it in the front seat, "broke the strap of the other camera" wrenching it off Medrano's neck, and left it on the front seat, too. Medrano said the license plate of the car was RKK-671.

Ray Davis, an Englishman who was active in the California strike and was arrested in the same episode in Mission, says he saw the Ranger smash the camera into Medrano's face.

Fifteen-year-old Guillermo de la Cruz, one of those arrested in Mission on this same occasion, says in a statement in Spanish he told the Observer he handwrote that a Ranger twisted his arm and pushed him against a box and hit him "very hard in the chest," and that when de la Cruz told the Ranger he was just going to give a cigarette to his cousin, "he told me to shut up and kicked me very strong." This happened, de la Cruz said, outside the PJ's office in Edinburg. Ray Davis says he saw this, and that the Ranger then turned on Medrano, who said to him, "Look, you put me here. You want me to go somewhere else, *tell* me, and I will," whereupon the Ranger turned away from Medrano. In cell, de la Cruz says, he began to spit blood.

Medrano wanted to make a phone call, but it was past midnight, he says, before he was permitted to do so. By then he had been deprived of all his papers, including phone numbers he had with him, but, he says, he remembered the number of Ray Martin, the public relations man of the UAW in Canada, and called him. Martin, Madrano says, called Walter Reuther and Roy Reuther. Roy Reuther, Medrano understands, called the White House and Gov. John Connally's office, despite the hour.

"I got special treatment in the jail," Medrano said. A jailer said to him, "I didn't know you were a personal friend of Lyndon Johnson," Medrano said. "I got breakfast in the office of the sheriff, and coffee with cream and sugar," Medrano concluded.

ALSO IN MISSION on May 26, the Rev. Krueger says in a statement he has prepared in affidavit form, the Rangers were waving the train through town with flashlights, so he took pictures of this. Allee, Krueger says, "very roughly grabbed me by the neck of my shirt, pulling it tight, and the seat of my pants" and arrested him. Mrs. Krueger took a picture of this and was thereupon arrested, too, and her camera confiscated, Krueger says.

The reporters were on the other side of the moving train at this time, Krueger says. His statement continues:

Workers Organizer Talks Things Over

A. I think Governor Connally called Vera.

Q. All right, what happened then?

A. The second part of the struggle began. When the pickets came down on the Mexican side, we put them up on our side of the bridge. And that's when the Texas Rangers moved in. We had Trophy Farm stopped completely, but then Captain Allee and his boys moved in. They arrested people indiscriminately, even people who were not in the picket line, and shoved people, and verbally intimidated as many as they could. Ultimately, as you know, they began beating people. The Rangers have been operating as if they can do literally anything they want.

Q. What has the effect been?

A. One thing is that it has run us out of money. They are making us post cash bonds. Five hundred dollars a head, one hundred dollars a head. Thousands of dollars have been tied up. And, we have very, very limited resources.

Q. Is there a difference in law enforcement techniques in Texas and California?

A. To put it mildly. We got shoved around some in California, but nothing like what is going on here. These guys do anything they want. Take the other night. I was sitting on the porch here at about 11 o'clock at night with Bill Chandler, Eliseo Medina, and Eddie Frankel. Captain Allee and another Ranger stormed up, saying "Move! Move! Where's Magdaleno Dimas?" When I said I don't know, Allee, said, "Well, you tell that guy I'm going to get him. He's gotten into something he's not going to get out of. And that goes for you, too, Chandler." Allee had a riot gun and the other Ranger had one, too. Allee kept waving his with his hand, with the barrel pointed up to the ceiling. The other one had his gun in front of him, sort of at port arms. I got scared.

Allee said that Dimas had been seen carrying a gun. I told him that was ridiculous. Dimas and one of the other men have been going out in the evening hunting birds. For food, for God's sake.

Now, I'll tell you one thing that made me sick. Kathy [Kathy Baker, a union aide] came in a little after Allee had left and she was very shaken. She'd just come from where Dimas was and he was gone but there was blood all over the house. So, I went to the courthouse, and the first thing I see is the Judge, B.S. Lopez,* and I ask him, "What's happened? Why did they have to beat him up?" And the Judge said he'd sent him to the hospital for his protection. Chandler and Moreno are in the sheriff's office and I asked the judge to come with me into that office. Chandler says he and Moreno had gone to see Dimas to tell him the Rangers were pretty drunk and looking for him and that they thought the Rangers were dangerous. But they can't find Dimas. Allee found him, though. And gave him the most brutal beating I've ever seen. Dimas is in the hospital now in very serious condition. He has a brain concussion and many other injuries.

I told the judge that he knew we were doing everything according to law and why were they holding Chandler and Moreno? And this Ranger turns on me and says, "Don't tell me how to run our business here," and he bodily threw me out of the office with the judge standing right there looking on. So I said to the judge, "Why are they pushing me right in front of you?" And he said, "I don't know, Padilla. They are having an investigation. I'll have to wait and see the complaints." And I said, "But Judge, they are taking over your court, right in front of you." But all he did was sorta of shake his head and tell me that we would get justice. And that's just about the way things are around here — the Rangers do anything they want.

Q. What are your plans from here on out?

A. We are going to continue. The people won't quit. I asked them at meetings, "Do you want to quit?" And they yell "No." We are going to build a community organization, just as we did in Delano. The people have to organize themselves. There is no other way if you are serious about organizing farm workers. By talking to each other, by helping each other, by learning how to work together, they will teach each other why no one should scab next year at La Casita.

Q. What is your objective?

A. To organize the farm workers of America. □

* A justice of the peace.

"Another Ranger grabbed Magdaleno Dimas who had been sitting on the car eating his hamburger. Out in the middle of the street two Rangers began working Magdaleno over. One was holding him roughly and another Ranger yelled, 'Get rid of that hamburger,' and immediately slapped it out of his hand. After he had slapped the hamburger out of his hands he reached back and seemingly with great aim and assuredly with all the force he could muster slapped Magdaleno in the face. Magdaleno gave no resistance at all. Nor did he say any word at all. The mark left on Magdaleno's cheek could be seen several hours later. Then they pushed Magdaleno over to the train which was still going by and held his face just a few inches from the train. . . . When they got Magdaleno over to the car they threw him against it. His body hit the car with a loud thud."

Krueger gave the Observer this statement before the Dimas incident which the F.B.I. is now investigating.

The Rangers also arrested Doug Adair, a friend of the Kruegers who is associated with the strikers, and Krueger avers that when Adair's pipe fell in the doorway of the car, Krueger reached down to pick it up and "At that, Ranger Jack Van Cleve slapped me with tremendous force on the left cheek." As Adair got into the back seat, Krueger says, "A Ranger kicked his leg, and then slammed the door on it. Later we could see where the leg had been skinned and was bleeding slightly."

Krueger's statement continues:

"As we were leaving town . . . Jack Van Cleve said, 'You're no minister. You're just a trouble-maker.' I said, 'May God bless you,' to which he responded, 'If you don't shut your mouth, I'll knock your head off.' At that my wife said, 'You know, I believe you would.' The rest of the trip was silent."

Krueger said he began making notes about this on a paper towel in jail. The Observer asked to see this piece of paper, and Krueger quickly produced it. It bears scrawled notes, including these: "Magdaleno Dimas knocked — hamburger out of hands — slapped him in face Tina tk. picture and then they arrested her too — threw Doug's pipe in front seat bounced off — reached down to pick it up and Ranger slapped me — Kicked Doug — slammed pushed door—Then in back seat and drove off — Jack Van Cleve turned and looked at me I said 'God bless you, and he sd, 'If you don't shut your mouth I'll knock your head off'."

The Observer asked Van Cleve, since he had been named, if he had any comment about this. "A lot of that is untrue. His statements are false," Van Cleve said. A Ranger standing nearby, in the street in Rio Grande City, said, "All of it's untrue, not a lot of it, about the slapping and whipping." This was Alfred Allee, Jr., son of Captain Allee. Van Cleve continued that he was born and raised in Del Rio, and "I been up and down this river all my life." He had as many friends as anyone in this area, he said. He mentioned that he had been in the United States Marine Corps, serving in the Pacific theater three years and 13 days in World War II, and of the Rangers he said, "I had an uncle in this outfit, and I'm proud of it."

Krueger did three years' missionary work in Honduras. "That was a lot easier than this," he said. "We were in the mountains there. Peaceful, except for a little revolution, but not anything as nerve-racking as the past two or three weeks."

In a statement, picketer John M. Muir said that on this date, Captain Allee and Ranger Price carried him across the railroad tracks, "bumping me on the ground and causing my shirt to be torn. . . . They let me down roughly in what appeared to be an attempt to dump me in a thorn bush." Medrano says he saw Muir with his shirt torn.

THAT NIGHT in Harlingen, according to Lee Harr, news manager of KGBT-TV there, a Ranger pushed a picket across the track, and then a railroad man "pushed the picket right into the camera." Then, Harr said, "Ranger Jack Van Cleve said to me, 'If you want that camera busted, just use it again.'" The AP's Gary Garrison told the Observer he heard Van Cleve say this, too. A Ranger also told Harr, "There are not going to be any pictures taken here."

Garrison said Capt. Allee told a cameraman who had been spot-hired by the AP, Felix Ramirez of Mission, " 'Keep your goddam camera off of me.' " Some other Ranger, according to Garrison, said, " 'The next person who uses a camera we're gonna take them and the camera to jail.' "

Garrison in his news account of that night said two Rangers and a railroad detective dragged a man across the railroad tracks, and Ranger Van Cleve pushed volunteer worker Kathy Baker as she was walking across the street to a police car and said, "See, I shoved another one."

This same night, Garrison also reported, a Missouri Pacific railroad officer shoved KGBT-TV cameraman Tony Chapa out of the way, and the detective also grabbed a picket sign carried by a Pan American student, Danny Lucio, and tore it up. "I got shoved pretty hard," Chapa told the Observer.

Garrison filed a protest with the As-

sociated Press, and it took effect. While Rangers continued to object to the use of flash lighting, they thereafter assented to other photography.

"There could be only one reason why they wanted no pictures to be taken and that is this, they were doing something they didn't want to be seen. They were pushing people around, they were doin' as they pleased, and they didn't want us around," Garrison told the Observer. "I've got no quarrel with either side as long as they leave us alone," he added.

The arrests early the morning of May 27 in Harlingen also involve accusations against the Rangers. Those arrested were Lucio, a government student at Pan American College; Manuel Becerra, Jr., a teacher in a school near Brownsville; and Kenneth Lafon, a captain in the U.S. Air Force. Becerra denied picketing and said Lafon was a bystander, also. Becerra and Lucio were charged with unlawful picketing to deprive a named railroad employee "of his right to labor." Charges against Lafon were dropped.

Lucio, 23, a pre-law student who expresses dedication to helping the poor among the Mexican-Americans, said both the other two men are brothers-in-law of his and that Lafon is a six-year veteran and a decorated navigator of C-47's who served in Vietnam a year and is now undergoing pilot training at Laredo Air Force Base. Lafon was in civilian clothes; he had come into the Valley for Lucio's niece's graduation.

Lucio was arrested for picketing. Then, Lucio said, Becerra asked the Ranger making the arrest for his name, and Becerra was arrested. Garrison of AP told the Observer he heard Becerra ask Ranger Bob Dawson his name, Dawson reply he didn't have to tell his name, Becerra reply that he had a right as a taxpayer to know who was enforcing the laws, and Dawson rejoin that he didn't think he had to give his name and that Becerra was under arrest.

Lucio says that as he got into the Ranger car, "somebody kicked me from behind." In the car, Lucio says, Van Cleve said to him, "So you want to stop a train? Well, I'm gonna throw you under a train so you can stop it."

"I didn't say anything. I was afraid they'd stop and beat me up and say I was trying to escape," Lucio says.

At the justice court in Harlingen, Lucio says, Captain Lafon came in with his wife and Lucio's wife and little sister and sat down in the front row. Dawson and Jack Van Cleve then, Lucio says, told Lafon to get up, that he had falsely told them before he was not with these people — he rejoined he had said only that he was a bystander — and Van Cleve then told him he was under arrest.

"You know," Lucio concluded, "I would not mind getting arrested, if I wasn't just pushed around."

The night of May 29 in Harlingen, as Harr of KGBT-TV was taking pictures, a car came all the way across the road and narrowly missed the lens of his camera. Harr gauges the miss-margin at about six inches. They shined a spotlight into his camera, too, he said.

This same night a newsman carrying a tape-recorder recorded the words of a railroad man as the newsman took pictures. "That's dangerous . . . We don't want that no more," a voice on the tape recording said as it was played back, across the street from the tracks, on the hood of a car.

There were unconfirmed reports that the Rangers had submachine guns. This night, for instance, Martin Rosales, KGBT program manager, said he saw such a gun taken from a Chevy station wagon and put into a Ranger car. But Capt. Allee said there were no such guns around. He thought that what people were seeing was a new kind of carbine with a clip on it; the Rangers of this district have a submachine gun, he said, but they did not take it to the Valley.

Picketing proceeded quietly this night, with no arrests. But unionist militant Baldemar Garza knew the respite was temporary. "I can smell nothing sweet," he said as he left the tracks at Harlingen.

Conversations with the Captain

ONE AFTERNOON early this month two Mexican-American girls were picketing the train at La Casita shed in Rio Grande City, and Texas Rangers and railroad people were standing at a distance, watching them. The temperature was 105 degrees, and in the glary afternoon the hamburger stands on the highway nearby were selling soda water at a fast pace. Father Charles Turners of Pasadena, watching the pickets and the Rangers from a grove of mesquite trees between the highway and the packing shed, had just had a talk with Captain Allee. "He said that these union organizers are trained in violence," the priest, who is a partisan of the union, said. "'Just like you're trained in being a priest, they're trained in that,'" Father Turners quoted Allee, who also told the priest that he is for "legitimate unions."

The Observer approached Captain Allee while he was seated in his car, and the captain said, "Get in."

"I've come down here as a law enforcement officer to preserve life and property," the 35-year veteran of the Rangers began. These people, picketing La Casita despite a permanent injunction against their doing this, "have gone to extremes," he said. "They've gone to mass picketing, they've gone to secondary picketing at the railroad. It's illegal. . . . I just feel like the train should go through, that's the way it is. . . . This thing has gotten plumb outa hand as far as law enforcement is concerned."

This is not the first time Rangers have been called into such situations, he said, replying to Sen. Ralph Yarborough's criticism. "We've been involved in these matters from time to time . . . the oilfield strike, the Celanese Corporation strike, the International Longshoremen's strike. I've had three major strikes.

"We're not prejudiced against organized labor. If they want to organize, let 'em go ahead and organize, but let 'em do it in a way favorable to all the people of the country and not just favorable to the union.

"You go talk to 'em in the fields. They're working. They're satisfied. There's none of 'em walking off their jobs. There's none of 'em walking off," Captain Allee said.

"The people of Rio Grande City don't want this thing. They don't want it," he also said. "It's outsiders and a few agitators. They're outsiders they've brought in here."

What about charges that the Rangers

have been physically rough? "Not one drop of blood has been spilt. Not one piece of hair has been knocked off anybody's head," Allee replied. "Certainly they've been arrested. . . . They've alleged they shoved 'em. I don't know, I haven't seen it. Each man does his own work." The way it is these days, the rugged captain said, "if you as much as touch a person by the arm and get him out of the way of an automobile, you're shoving. We haven't mistreated anybody that I know." He had arrested Krueger himself and put him in the car, and "I certainly didn't slap Krueger, and I'll tell him so to his face," the captain said.

"I think if the outside people knew the true facts . . .' Allee said, breaking off the thought, but resuming it: "If they want to contribute it's fine and dandy, but I tell you, if they knew the real, true facts, about this thing. The only violence I've seen has been from the union side."

Allee said that tie-plates and spikes had been found stacked a week earlier on the railroad tracks between Donna and Harlingen. Could these derail a train? A Ranger who was listening at the window said that they could, and that this is why the car was going ahead of the train on the tracks. Rocks have been thrown at the train out of the dark, Allee said. "Last year they've burned the bridge."

A railroad trestle west of Rio Grande City burned for six or eight hours before the fire was extinguished. The union denies any connection with this and hints, but cannot prove, that the deed was done to frame them. Company spokesmen leave no doubt that they believe unionists are responsible, but they can't prove it either. No charges have been filed in this matter.

The train pulled out, and the Rangers with it. Where it crosses Highway 83 a few miles west of town the Rangers waited for it, and it rumbled past, bearing its cargo of cantaloupes west and downvalley. The Rangers followed it on down the county road to Garciasville and La Casita Farms, which lie in the choice alluvial plains of the river valley there.

IN MISSION the union attorney, McKeithan, said that the injunction issued about a year ago by Judge Woodrow Laughlin had been assessed, by earlier union lawyers, as "so loosely drawn they could disregard it," and that despite that, the Rangers could not make arrests for violating injunctions without specific court papers authorizing such arrests. As for the Texas statute against secondary picketing, "We contend that it's a violation of free speech," and this question will be tested now in the courts, he said.

The next morning, told over a cup of coffee what McKeithan had said, Allee agreed that the Rangers could not enforce injunctions without specific orders to do so. "We have some laws there against secondary picketing, and that's what we're enforcing at this time," he said.

Increasingly nettled by criticism he was hearing from many sides, Allee said, "I can't be with my Rangers all the time. I don't think any of 'em slapped 'em around. If they did they'd have reported it to me. At a time like this they [the strikers] *do* make allegations to make a point."

In a San Antonio Express interview Allee had said, "We're not a bunch of cutthroats or hoodlums. We don't treat these people with disrespect." Now he said, "They're trying to say we're monsters, which we're not, we're human beings just like anybody else. We just happen to be law enforcement officers, that's all."

"We're not damn strikebreakers," he said. "I told you yesterday I don't give a damn if they picket and picket ten years, as long as they do it legally I don't care."

But, he said, "We're here to prevent a wreck, that's why we're here." To an inquiry whether there had been proof who stacked the ties, he responded, "No, I can't prove what dog killed a sheep, either, but I'll tell you this much, we're working on it, but whether we're going to actually be able to pin it down or not we don't know."

When the subject of fear of the Rangers came up, Allee said, "I hope that as long as I live nobody gets the idea of being afraid to approach the Rangers. As long as they're doing right, if they've done nothing wrong, they have no fear. We're human beings just like everybody else."

THERE HAD BEEN a report that Allee and Van Cleve had attempted to arrest Nelson one night, subsequent to Nelson's being accused of threatening the lives of Rangers.

As Nelson tells about this, on the night of May 25, he, two union officials, Medrano, and a member and staffer of the civil rights advisory committee had been eating at the Catfish Inn. The group had to pass Allee and Van Cleve to get to their own car, and as they did so Allee opened the door of the Rangers' car and told Nelson to get in, he was under arrest. "Oh, man, my heart dropped through my shoes, I'll tell you," Nelson said. "I had a vision of my corpse lying on the river bank or floating down the Rio Grande." (Nelson makes a counter-allegation against the Rangers involving a threat on his life; this is the background of the remark just quoted.) When Van Cleve got into the front, Nelson says, Nelson said "Hi" to him "because I was so frightened. I don't think I've ever been so terrified in my life." But then Allee said he just wanted to talk to Nelson because one of the union people was "raising hell under a bridge outside town" and he wanted Nelson to go with them while they checked it out. Two other union officials with Nelson could go, too, if they wanted to, Nelson quoted Allee. Nelson said he thought Allee had "backed down" because of the presence of the others who were with Nelson.

Allee said, at coffee this morning, that he had received reliable information that a striker "was seen coming out from under a railroad bridge" in an agitated condition and that he saw Nelson and Gilbert Padilla of the union on the street and asked Nelson to get in and go along, also asking Padilla if he wanted to go. "I wanted to let them know and see how the Rangers work," Allee said. "Nelson and Padilla asked me if they were under arrest, and I told them no. . . . We don't attempt to arrest anybody. We either arrest 'em or we don't."

THIS WAS THE tone and temper of the situation when, on June 2nd, Senator Bernal of San Antonio came to town to investigate. He bore with him the moral support of seven other senators who voted with him for a legislative investigation of the Rangers' role in the strike. He was accompanied by a TV cameraman, Johnny Moore, from a San Antonio station. Three other senators, A. R. (Babe) Schwartz of Galveston, Don Kennard of Fort Worth, and Oscar Mauzy of Dallas, had planned to come with Bernal, but bad flying weather had deterred them. They came in the subsequent Monday, but the edge was off by then.

Bernal first stopped and visited with pickets at La Casita. Thence he went by

MEETINGS

THE THURSDAY CLUB of Dallas meets each Thursday noon for lunch (cafeteria style) at the Downtown YMCA, 605 No. Ervay St., Dallas. Good discussion. You're welcome. Informal, no dues.

The **TRAVIS COUNTY LIBERAL DEMOCRATS** meet at the City Health Auditorium, 1313 Sabine, at 8 p.m. on the first Thursday. You're invited.

ITEMS for this feature cost, for the first entry, 7c a word, and for each subsequent entry, 5c a word. We must receive them one week before the date of the issue in which they are to be published.

the union hall and made his presence known. Thence he went to the courthouse and the sheriff's office. He did not know that the sheriff is seldom or never in, so, passing by the Pena brothers, who were seated in the anteroom, he asked dispatcher Fred Ellert if he was the sheriff. Cameraman Moore went in beside Bernal, camera light on and camera humming. Ellert, infuriated, went for Moore, grabbing his camera, which Moore would not let go of. "Hey, wait a minute, don't take my picture," said Ellert, shoving Moore, through the camera now clutched between them, out of his office, around a corner, and against a wall — "hold it, get out of here, what you trying to do?" Backed up against the wall, his film and light still running, Moore answered, "Take your picture," and 18 feet of this scene ran on his television station that night.

The Observer asked the dispatcher his name: he refused to give it. The Pena brothers refused, too. Moore identified Ellert later.

Bernal, remarking nothing, walked then to the J.P.'s court and engaged Judge Brigido Lopez in discussion over why Horacio Carrillo, a picket, had been held 15 hours without being charged. The judge explained that he had come in last night to let out a woman picket on her own recognizance, but that Captain Allee had said he'd be in the next morning as to charges against Carrillo, that he had come in and preferred charges that morning, and that Carrillo was being released now. Onto the periphery of this bizarre scene, a state senator standing at the desk of a justice of the peace interrogating him about the rights of a defendant who was standing on the other side of the desk, there now appeared Capt. A. Y. Allee and one of his Rangers, name of Sam Rogers.

"YOU CAPTAIN Allee? I'm Senator Bernal."

"I know you and you oughta know me, I've seen you a lot of times," Allee replied; and thus began a 45-minute confrontation that degenerated from polite fencing into a shouting match capped off by the captain's departure in a blaze of anger.

"Please don't shine that in my face," Allee said to Moore of his light. "I've got eye trouble, and I just can't stand that in my face — please. Those things blind me several minutes." Moore shut off his light. "I never threatened to break anybody's camera," Allee said, asking Bernal if he would not feel as Allee did, under the circumstances. "I suppose so," Bernal said.

The senators could talk to him any time, he said. Seven other senators "oppose my action down here, and also Albert Pena . . . You've read a lot about me," he said. Rangers had not drawn blood or skinned anyone's head, he said. The sheriff had asked the Rangers to come down, and they had a right to be here, enforcing the law where they felt life was in danger.

Bernal said everything he'd read had been very unfriendly to the Rangers, "prejudiced, even biased," and that's why he had come down, to see what was what. He had gotten in at 9:30 that morning, he said. "You were here earlier," Allee said flatly. "You doubt that I came in [when I said]? You shouldn't, because I told you," Bernal said sharply. "I'm gonna take your word on that," Allee said. "That's good," said the senator with seriousness. Thus did Bernal's first attempt at a friendly approach come to naught.

Bernal not only is not aligned with County Cmsr. Albert Pena of San Antonio, they have been opposed politically, Bernal being with the Good Government League, Pena with the Democratic Coalition and its successors. Bernal told Allee that he and Pena had not matched any information on the matter at hand.

The Rev. Krueger was present because of the union matter that had been pending in the court. Allee said he had arrested Krueger, and he demonstrated to Bernal how he had done so by taking the back of Bernal's shirt and the back of his belt and propelling him forward slightly. "Now if you think *that* is out of line," Allee said.

Bernal then began reading lines out of San Antonio Express stories and asking Allee if they were true. One quoted Allee that he had come in at the request of the growers and local officials. "I *am* here at the invitation of the growers, they are a part of it." "Aren't the growers part of the management?" Bernal asked. "What just a minute—you're trying to put words in my mouth," Allee said.

He had not mistreated anybody, Allee said. "I'm not as bad a man as you think

I am, senator. None of my Rangers are. You and Albert Pena and [State Rep.] Jake Johnson have been after my men."

Bernal said this wasn't so. "I've had my information," Allee said. "I've been after you for years?" Bernal asked. "That's my information," Allee said. "It's all wrong," Bernal said, alluding to the seven other senators he represented.

Bernal asked if Allee had said that the strikers were on welfare and old age assistance. Allee said that was his information. Bernal said he resented anyone saying people on relief are agitating; that by the time they get to that point, they need sympathy.

"Now wait a minute," Allee said. "I said they're on the picket line. Eugene Nelson. . . . They're outside agitators. William Chandler. . . ."

What, Bernal asked, about La Casita, owned by a California corporation? "They're operating on Texas land," Allee said. "Aren't they growing melons down here in South Texas? Aren't they helping local people, givin' people work?"

Bernal said he didn't see anything wrong with trying to get membership in a national organization, such as the farm union. "Well, there might not be anything wrong, as long as they don't violate the law," Allee said.

Turning to Deputy Roberto C. Pena, who was sitting in the window, Bernal asked how many older people were on the picket lines. Pena named Severo Benavides and Nasario Trevino. Two, Bernal noted. "I can just tell you a heck of a lot, senator, I don't know whether you want it in the newspaper . . ." Allee put in. He said there was a woman with her children on the picket lines who had had mental trouble, and he had told her she should go home. Did Bernal think the Rangers should condone using such a person in that way? "I think the only thing you shouldn't condone is violence," the senator replied.

TURNING TO Krueger, Alle said, "Rev. Krueger, I never roughed you up." Krueger, badly rattled, nevertheless replied, "You did rough me up."

Turning back to Bernal, Allee said to him, "The first ones you contacted was these *huelguistas.*"

"I did?" said Bernal, meaning, oh, is that so?

"I think you did," Allee said.

"You don't know," Bernal said. Krueger was the first man he had called on, he said, adding, "He's the representative of the Texas Council of Churches."

No, Allee said, Krueger was with the strikers. Bernal said he, himself, had taken an interest in the matter because of a request from the Texas Council of Churches, the Catholic Church, and the Jewish Committee. They got then into a shouting match whether Allee had said Bernal had first called on the union or, as Allee said he had said, on "some of these people." "I know what you said," Bernal exclaimed.

"This is my territory, and I've been working down here 35 years," Allee told the senator.

"I'm very proud of you for that," Bernal said.

"I don't wave anything bu the United States flag," Allee said.

"I do, too, and the Texas flag, too. I'm a flag waver, too," Bernal said.

"Randall Nye, how are you?" put in the county attorney in a soothing voice. What the senator had meant, Nye began . . . but Bernal cut him off, telling him he had no right to presume to interpret what Bernal had said.

"I have an idea what you're down here for," Allee told Bernal. "If people don't like what I'm doing, if it gets to the point where they can't go along with my work up in my boss' office, I'll lay down my boots and my pistol and my hat and lay up there where I'm supposed to stay."

Advancing on Bernal, he referred to rock-throwing at the trains, and in doing so, Allee tapped Bernal twice or so on the ball of his left shoulder.

"Don't push me," Bernal said.

"I'm not pushing you but I want you to look at me," Allee said. "They're just like a bunch of coyotes in the road," throwing rocks out of the dark at $400,000 railroad cars. "Do you think they should do that?"

Nye and Bernal had a brief conversation then on why there have been no trials of the accused unionists in Rio Grande City. Nye said 12 had been tried and convicted on charges of blocking right of way (this was in Roma).

Trying, perhaps, to salvage something from the so far disastrous encounter with Allee, Bernal said to him, "You and I meet in one area. We want to do what's right for the people."

"Before you get up there and criticize Rangers, I think you should come down here and have a fair and impartial investigation," Allee said. He referred then to the demand, voiced by Pena and others, that the Rangers be abolished.

"I'm gonna tell you, when they abolish the Ranger service," said Captain Allee, groping then for words, "well . . . they've abolished a whole heck of a lot.' '

Bernal remembered to ask Allee about purple marks he said he had been shown by Mrs. Krueger on her arm where she said it had been twisted by a Ranger. "I didn't arrest her," Allee said. "No, you didn't," Bernal said. Allee turned to Krueger and said the minister had said to Allee, just before the captain arrested him, "Why don't you arrest me, too?" When Krueger did not say anything to this, Allee said, "I place my hand on the Bible and do it and you can put your hand on it, too, if you want to." As for the purple marks on Mrs. Kruegers' arm, Allee said, "Well, I can take you and put a purple mark on you after it's all over."

Bernal started to say what a grocer in Mission had told him he had seen a Ranger do, but Allee asked which Ranger, and Bernal didn't know. "You don't know which Ranger, no. You're down here accusing all the Rangers. It's my personal opinion that she had those marks put on there," Allee said. Prisoners had been beaten in jail, and "I've had 'em to lay it on me," Allee said.

Bernal said he was not accusing Allee of this. "Senator, I'm taking it personal because you're the one up there raisin' hell about the Rangers. . . . You've taken a personal action against me, senator. Right up there in Austin."

Allee said "I'm gonna protect their crops, too, if they're loaded and on their way out of here."

"I think that's where we differ. I think the people are more important than the crops," Bernal said.

"The rights of *everyone,*" Nye put in.

Is it true, Bernal asked, that Van Cleve slapped soneone? "You lay it off on Van Cleve because that's the only name you know," Allee said.

With that, and without a parting handshake, Allee and Rogers walked from the courtroom. Krueger was standing at the door, and from the hallway Allee said to him: "I want to tell you one thing, I hope to hell you don't preach my funeral service, because I know where I'd be going. There's no more religion in your soul than there is in the gates of hell." With that, he left.

AFTER A conference with Nye, Bernal next got earsful from growers and two ministers friendly to them. Meeting at the home of the Rev. Hector Gonzalez of the local Methodist Church, with the Rev. A. T. Grout, district Methodist superintendent, also present, Bernal talked at length with Ray Rochester and La Casita's sales manager, Billy Cellam, and with A. B. Petersen, a partner in another large Starr County farm, Sun-Tex.

Rochester said that he has spent $20,000 repairing results of vandalism, including

$14,000 in the last three months: "burning buildings, burning trucks, putting sugar into equipment." "Slashing tires," Petersen added. They said there are only 20 or 30 strikers (the union says 70 or 80 people are actively striking of its several thousand members). "So help me, as God is my witness," Rochester said, "not one of my people walked out and joined them, outside of my normal turnover." Rochester has been quoted in dailies that one did and another four former La Casita workers are among the strikers, but they had been discharged before that for cause; he qualified his statement to Bernal by adding that one worker had gone over.

Lettuce workers make $2.50 an hour, produce people $3 an hour, so the $1.25 promise an hour does not attract such workers, nor those getting $1.15 an hour at La Casita, Rochester said. By converting to piece work, Rochester said, "What I'm going to do is pay $2.50 or $3 an hour, I'm going to get rid of half the people" and "turn 'em loose on the community, let 'em do what they want to with 'em. I'm not gonna fight this thing again. They can do what they want to with 'em."

Cellam said his children had been cursed and abused, and his wife suffered from harassment. "Brother, there's two sides," he said. Petersen said the strikers were "vigilantes. Why you think they want to get rid of the Rangers? To take the law in their own hands."

Speaking of the Rangers, Cellam asked, "When did it become a law you can't hove a man, just simply shove a man?" the Rev. Grout said, "Simple assault." "OK, simple assault," Cellam responded. At another point Petersen, a sunburned, rough-made farmer, said, "If a man gets out of line he certainly oughta get pushed around a little bit."

Of La Casita Rochester said, "They will close before they sign with them, because I won't sign with those people, and when I leave, they'll close up. Starr Produce is the same thing. They will not sign with these irresponsible people."

Rochester said his firm had been $300,000 from previous vegetable crops and that if he'd been shut down during the last ten days of the melon harvest, it would have cost La Casita $200,000. In contrast with such considerations, and giving more than 300 local people jobs, he said, "Here's a bunch of people from California got a few people outa the pool hall and off welfare."

Two months ago, Cellam said, south off Falfurrias "this bunch of goons" broke coke bottles in front of workers on their way to La Casita, ruining two new tires.

The Revs. Grout and Gonzalez concurred that the civic leaders of the community wanted the Rangers there. George Boyle, manager of the local chamber of commerce as well as proprietor of the Ringgold Hotel, shraed this view. He also made the point that migrants like to go on the road, a point Bernal did not accept.

AT MISSION that evening, four pickets waited until Bernal arrived, and then they began picketing. In a flurry the Rangers arrested the pickets. Bernal said to Allee he'd always heard "one riot, one Ranger," but here it looked like four pickets, eight Rangers. Allee told him, "I never thought I'd live to so see the day some senators would come down here" and do as Bernal had. Bernal said he'd stick to being senator and Allee should stick to being a Ranger, and Allee said for him not to tell him what to stick to.

Allee told reporters then, "I told him he had his flash, what he's looking for — he's got it."

"I'm thoroughly convinced," Bernal said to reporters, that Allee is "on the side of the growers." Bernal did not think they should have come in at the request of the growers. The Rangers were correct legally in arresting people for secondary picketing, but they had just violated Kathy Lynch's rights by arresting her for this though she was not carrying a picket sign, he said. He thought the governor should call them out of the Valley and that despite the governor's saying he did not have this authority, he did. Did Bernal think the Rangers were acting as strikebreakers? "If they aren't, they're doing a darn good job at it," Bernal said. The Rangers, he concluded, are "the Mexican-Americans' Ku Klux Klan. All they need is a white hood with 'Rinches' written across it."

After Bernal went back to McAllen, there occurred, that night, whatever the events were that are now referred to as "the Dimas incident" and have led to a full-fledged investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

THE DIMAS INCIDENT

WHAT HAD happened in that house?

Captain Allee was relaxing in front of the Ringgold Hotel in one of the big wooden armchairs when he gave the Observer his account. He began by drawing from his shirt pocket the police "rap sheets" on the two men the Rangers had arrested. Showing Dimas' record, he said, "See what the Starr County put on there, 'Criminal Specialty: Murder'," and he showed the place on the form where the county authorities had, indeed, written this onto Dimas' record. They had received the page-and-a-half-long record, itself, from the Texas Department of Public Safety three days after Dimas had been arrested for unlawful picketing last November.

A U.S. citizen, Mexico-born, 29-year-old Dimas is heavily tattooed. There is a dragon on his right arm, and there is a rose on his left arm.

He was deported to Mexico in 1954, and, four years later, Dimas was convicted of "murder without malice, assault to murder," sentenced to five years from Wilson County, and evidently served three years. He was charged with driving without a license and passing on the right in Brownfield, and he paid a $25.50 fine there for being drunk. The record says he got a year in Starr county jail in 1963 for aggravated assault. That same year he was fined $100 and given three days for driving while drunk in Farwell, Tex. In 1965, at Del Rio and Lubbock, he was in trouble about smuggling aliens; the disposition is unclear from the record, but evidently he is on a probated sentence in this connection. The last entry of this kind is dated Aug. 25, 1965.

On Nov. 9, 1966, at Rio Grande City, he was charged with secondary picketing.

Benito Rodriguez' record shows charges of being drunk, vagrant, and of disturbing the peace; he was jailed on a two-year sentence in 1963 for attempted burglary. He was fined $30 for drinking, although a minor, in 1960, he paid $21 of it and served three days to satisfy the rest of it.

CAPTAIN ALLEE said that he got a call that Dimas was seen walking down at La Casita packing shed with a rifle. "He had already threatened a man's life, Jim Rochester — said he'd get even with him." Allee had received information, he said, that Dimas told Jim Rochester last November "that he was going to

get him, and it looked to me this situation is very tense and serious." Rochester told him, (Allee continued about the night before at the packing shed) that when Rochester got to La Casita shed, he saw a red car, with Rodriguez driving, approach the loading ramp. "Rochester walked out and took a shot at the wheel of the car tires, trying to puncture it," Captain Allee said. "He took another shot at the car. That's what he says." The Rangers were looking for this car, but had not been able to find it, the captain said.

A Mexican boy about 14 shined the captain's boots as this interview continued.

"So we attempted to find this Magdaleno Dimas," Captain Allee said.

Allee said he went to the union office and told Bill Chandler, administrative assistant to the union, that "it looked like [Dimas] was going to create trouble," and asked where Dimas was. Chandler said he didn't know where he was. The captain continued:

"We pulled away from the union hall. Drove up there, cut our lights off. A few minutes later Chandler and another subject who I later learned was Alejandro Moreno, Jr., his address, Mercedes, Texas, got in their car. Pulled out. We followed them to where he stopped . . . They called Magdaleno Dimas out. He came out with a rifle in his hand. We threw our lights on. I got out of the car and asked him to stop, that he was under arrest. Magdaleno dropped the rifle and ran back into the house. Chandler told me, 'Don't shoot, don't shoot, he isn't armed, and he dropped his rifle here at the car.' By the front of Chandler's car."

"Thereupon I called the Sheriff's Department. Told 'em to get the Justice of the Peace, that I wanted to get Magdaleno Dimas, Rodriguez out of the house. The Justice of the Peace and Sheriff's Department arrived very shortly. The Justice of the Peace [Brigido S. Lopez] gave me orders to go into the house and make the arrest, which I did.

"Madaleno Dimas and Rodriguez proceeded into apparently what they use as a kitchen or dining room, at a table. I told 'em they were under arrest, come go with me. At this point I didn't know whether they had a gun under the table. They refused to come with me, refused to move. I used only the force that I deemed necessary to effect their arrest."

Asked if he had given Dimas a rap on the head, Allee replied, "I told you . . . I used what force was necessary when he wouldn't come along."

He repeated that the men had their hands under the table and he did not know if they were armed. "These things are unfortunate, certainly they are, we don't like to do that kind of thing. But in order to effect an arrest we'll use force if it's necessary, and in this incident it was certainly warranted."

"Magdaleno Dimas told me he was out there hunting rabbits," Allee said. "I don't think he's going to find any rabbits around La Casita packing sheds at that time of night. Besides that, people don't hunt rabbits that time of night." Dimas said also he had not got a rabbit, but got a bird. "They certainly wasn't eatin' any bird when I walked in there," Allee said.

"I conducted my actions merely as a law enforcement officer. . . . I've tried to be fair and impartial in the situation," Allee said. "I am doing my utmost to prevent violence or bloodshed, and I only hope that we can get by, or get through this situation, without any serious incident . . . We are here to protect life and property, and we're not going to tolerate any such action, and that's it."

"I'm proud of this Ranger service. I've been a Ranger 35 years. I'm proud of my boss, Colonel [Homer] Garrison. I'm certainly not going to do anything to embarrass him or Gov. John Connally," Allee also said.

His shoeshine finished, the captain, reaching into his pocket, said, "See if I got a goddam nickel." Rising and standing back, the boy said, "Or penny! A penny's all right." "Oh hell no," the captain said, and gave him a coin, probably a quarter.

It came into the captain's mind then that the other morning he had gone to his car and found it with four flat tires. "Four nails in four tires," he said. He went to his car and came back with his clip of gas station credit-card receipts, showing one on which payment for four tire repairs was recorded. "Fifth, the 25th, four damn flats fixed," he said. "Four flats."

Medical and Press Matters

THE FOUR arrested men — Dimas, Rodriguez, Moreno, and Chandler — were taken to the courthouse. Dimas and Rodriguez (but evidently not Moreno) were then driven to the medical clinic in Rio Grande City that is run by Dr. Rodriguez, the Starr County judge who is a medical doctor. The men were to tell Dr. Ramiro Casso of McAllen, about twelve hours later, that Dr. Rodriguez' male nurse, Cesar Espinosa, gave Dimas an injection around his laceration and took four stitches in it and also dispensed some pills. Casso said he is going to report to the state board of medical examiners about this.

Dr. Rodriguez confirmed to the Observer that the men "were treated by my first-aid man and the nurse on duty at the time." Espinosa, Dr. Rodriguez said, is "Army-trained. He was a sergeant." The nurse is registered, he added. "The injuries were not — according to our records, they did not have serious injuries, not serious, not critical, anything like that," Dr. Rodriguez said. Espinosa, Dr. Rodriguez said, took four stitches in Dimas' scalp. "They called me, but by the time I was there, they were gone," Dr. Rodriguez said.

The Observer asked Dr. Rodriguez whether what Espinosa did was the practice of medicine or surgery. "In emergency cases like that," he said, "it can be done. Just like in the Army — I'm a colonel in the reserve — a sergeant takes care of that, a little work can be done."

McKeithan, the lawyer for the union, heard of the incident at once, called a reporter or two, and went to Rio Grande City, where he demanded to be permitted to see his clients. Reporters were in the courthouse, a fact the authorities knew. McKeithan saw his clients and is represented as having photographs of them.

David Lopez of the union said first called the F.B.I. and gave them a report; the agent talked to Kathy Baker, too. Then Lopez went to the courthouse and met Allee outside. Lopez said Allee "was incoherent. I couldn't get any straight answer." Lopez said it was his impression Allee had been drinking. Lopez said he also called the Texas Department of Public Safety to report to them and asked them to call back, but that they did not. (For union official Gilbert Padilla's account of events that night, see a related story on pages 16 and 17 .

ROBIN Lloyd, a camerman for KIII-TV in Corput Christi, was born in England and worked for an influential corporation in Caracas before taking up his present trade. He happened into town about 11:30 that night, having checked into a motel in Roma; and returned to Rio Grande City to look around. He went by the union office, heard of the Dimas incident, and proceeded to the courthouse, where he got film of Allee and others walking down the hall. He said Allee roughly asked him to turn off his light, but that Allee did not seem to have been drinking — "He was just acting like a Ranger," Lloyd said. Allee wanted to see his credentials, and Lloyd gave him his card.

There then ensued a scene in Lopez' little courtroom in the basement. Lloyd, sensing, he said, he would not be welcome inside, shot pictures from outside the door. "The courtroom was hot, it was all kind of scary. The place was full of Rangers, everyone was very serious. Here is this man swathed in bandages being advised of his rights. He looked so dejected. Everybody was a little embarrassed," Lloyd said.

Lloyd also said that Allee took him aside after this and said, "'They've got your phone number'." "Right," Lloyd replied, thinking the captain referred to the phone number on the card he had given Allee. Lloyd said Allee replied, "I knew that, son of a bitch'!" and made it clear he had meant that the farm union had had Lloyd's phone number and this was the only reason he could have gotten there so quickly. Lloyd told Allee this was not the case.

Lloyd then phoned ABC network on the

question of whether to send in a crew. ABC arrived the next day.

That morning Sen. Bernal had scheduled a press conference in McAllen. Hearing about the Dimas incident, he went to the courthouse in Rio Grande City and talked with Dimas; but reporters were not permitted to be present. Afterward, asked how Dimas was, Bernal said, "Well, he's as well as anyone who has been hit with a rifle on his head can be." Bernal said Nye had asked for an F.B.I. investigation. Then Bernal held his press conference and left the Valley.

McKEITHAN, FEARFUL that his clients' injuries might be said later to have been made more serious after their release from jail, called Dr. Casso, an M.D. who runs the McAllen Poly-Clinic. Casso sees between 50 and 100 patients a day, many of them poor Mexican-Americans. His fees are reputed to be lower than many doctors', and he is said to give away a lot of his services. He has been a leading figure in PASO, the militant, although lately moribund Political Association of Spanish-speaking Organizations. He has treated many of the Starr County strikers sent to him, and union people say he has not charged them.

Dr. Casso told the Observer this about his examination of the three hurt strikers in the Starr County jail:

"Benito Rodriguez first told me that Allee and two other Rangers tore the door down and that they came in swinging the shotguns by their butts. Rodriguez told me that he was knocked down at least twice, and 'the second time I was senseless, staggering, I don't know whether I was down again or not. Every time I was knocked down they hit me across the back and neck with the butts of the guns,' and one of 'em rammed his shotgun barrel into his head — he had his hand covering his head — and tore his fingernail off, and there was a cut about an inch long in his little finger. He also had an area of skin completely torn off behind his left ear, with . . . swelling there; apparently this was done again with a rifle barrel."

Examining Moreno, Casso said Moreno told him he was standing outside the house when the Rangers went into it and that Allee "rammed his gun into his ribs." Casso found "two concentric circles on the right chest about the level of the ninth rib. The ninth rib was quite tender." Nothing was broken.

Dimas, arrested inside with Rodriguez, told Casso "essentially the same thing" Rodriguez had, Casso said. "Dimas says that he was knocked down at least three times. When he got up the third time he was blind — 'in between knockdowns they came down on top of me with rifle butts up and down on top of me and my head.' Dimas has numerous contusions, numerous bruises, all over his back. He had a blood clot about the size of an orange on his low-back. . . . That was definitely done with the butt of a rifle right across his back. No other way to do it. You can't do that with a kick." Nothing was broken. The muscle fibers were sore, and the swelling was quite visible, Casso said, continuing: "He has a laceration cut on his head behind his left ear that had been sutured with four stitches of black silk or cotton. . . . An infection had already set in" where this suturing had been done, and "Under this laceration was a huge swelling.

"The most serious thing of all is the brain concussion that he has," Casso said of Dimas, who was at the moment his patient in the McAllen Hospital. Casso explained that a concussion is a swelling of the brain after it has been jarred inside the cranial vault and that this can cause intense headaches, nausea, convulsions, and finally coma. Dimas had the headaches and nausea, Casso said; The man appeared as in a trance when I questioned him. Stupefied." Casso added, "He was beaten out of his wits. Horrible. For somebody with a brain concussion to that extent to be in jail — that doesn't belong to this age at all."

Casso said he told Chief Deputy Raul Pena, "This man belongs in a hospital, not in a jail," and that the Chief Deputy shrugged his shoulders, said nothing, and took the men back to their cells.

Dr. Casso made angry statements to the press after having examined the men, and he was quoted. He says he was at his clinic when he and his secretary by chance picked up extensions of the phone at the same time and both heard an Anglo voice say, "Tell Dr. Casso he better stop squawkin' about the Rangers," and then the line went dead. He and his secretary, Dr. Casso says, have a specific idea who made this call; the voice reminded them of one they had heard on television.

Casso also told the Observer that his wife received a call the night after the Dimas incident in which an Anglo voice asked, "Is that you, Ramiro?" repeatedly, and then hung up. Casso also said he had received a third call in which an Anglo voice said, "Ramiro, you're a kike," three times, and hung up.

'What Force We Deemed Necessary'

ONLY ONE OTHER news medium, KRGV-TV of Harlingen, interviewed Allee that day about the Dimas matter. While the equipment was being set up at the Ringgold, Allee kind of growled that if "all the radicals" would keep on good behavior, they'd get through this all right. He started out his TV interview with a reference to "the better elements of the people of this country" and a statement that 98% of the people are glad the Rangers are in Starr County. Asked about the force used in the arrests the night before, Allee said, "We had to use what force we deemed necessary. This Dimas, we requested him to come out of the house. He failed to do so. They didn't respond to our command," and the Rangers didn't know whether they had guns in their hands under the table.

The TV interview was quickly over, as TV interviews usually are. Allee was disgruntled he'd not had time to show the two men's police records. "That's the kind of people we're dealing with," he said. "We had reports several months ago that he [Dimas] was going to get Jim Rochester. So we took it for granted that he was out there [at La Casita] for that purpose."

It was during this TV interview that Allee learned Casso had examined the hurt men. Allee asked who the doctor was; he would not comment on a report that the doctor had said Dimas might have a fractured skull. But he promptly left the Ringgold Hotel for the courthouse, and three of us reporters followed there. Allee went into a conference with the two Penas and Justice of the Peace Lopez in the sheriff's office. When Lopez came out of that office, we were interviewing him in the lobby of the courthouse, but he motioned us to follow him to his courtroom in the basement, which we did. Lopez, asked if the men were still in jail, said, "As far as I know, yes." What were the charges?

Lopez read the charges, fully and at times rather slowly. Dimas was charged with rudely displaying a deadly weapon at the La Casita farm shed and also with disturbing the peace there by yelling *"Viva la Huelga!"* Both these complaints were signed by Jim Rochester. Lopez said he didn't know whether Rochester signed them as a "special deputy" or a private citizen. Moreno and Chandler were jointly charged with unlawfully concealing and giving aid to Dimas so that he might evade arrest, and Rodriguez was charged with assisting in the resisting of the arrest of another. These later complaints were signed by Allee.

Dimas himself was not charged with resisting arrest, at least as of that time.

Lopez said he had been called, and "I gave the order to go in the house" and make the arrests. He said one of the Penas and Allee were the only two he saw go into the house, but another officer may have. They were inside three or four minutes; the JP said he heard no cries. Dimas, emerging, "was bleeding" from "a small wound" on his head, and "Rodriguez had a small cut on one of his fingers." Asked if he had any opinion in the matter, Lopez said, "Well, no, I don't want to mention it."

Deputy Roberto Pena, encountered in the courthouse lobby, told us, when asked where the men were, that "One of our officers took 'em to Ramirez Hospital today," about 15 minutes ago. Confirming that Casso had examined them in jail ear-

lier, Pena said with a gesture of dismissal that Casso "belongs to the PASO organization." Pena thought that Allee had asked the men be taken to a hospital again.

Ramirez Hospital is in Roma, 13 miles from Rio Grande City.

At Ramirez Hospital, Deputies Adolfo Ramirez and Eulogio Munoz were seated in the lobby. "When we went upstairs to get them," Ramirez said the the newsmen, "you were there [in the lobby]. When we came back down you were gone."

Rodriguez, 27, was sitting beside them in the lobby. One could see a lengthwise discoloration on the back of his neck. "I got hit with a shotgun on the back of the neck," he said. Asked further about it, he said the Rangers "just broke in the house and started attacking us." He said Allee said, "Move on out," and that "We started moving out, then when we went past they started swinging on us with shotguns and when we fell down they started kicking us." Had they resisted arrest? "Not at all," Rodriguez said. Asked about whether they were at La Casita shed, Rodriguez said, "I don't think I should say," and indicated he had said all he wanted to.

MORENO TURNED out to be a senior economics student at the University of Texas who had arrived in Rio Grande City three days before.

"We were sitting around in front of Chandler's house drinking beer, and they drove up and stopped. Allee flashed a light on us and told us not to move. He got out and said in rather vulgar language that Dimas had been out threatening people. . . . He had a shotgun in his hand. The other guy was out with his shotgun, held kind of up, not pointing at anyone, just ready in case they saw Dimas, I guess. . . ."

Allee, Moreno said, "was just cussing and acting like a captain of the Texas Rangers. He was just cussing and saying the union was trying to cause a lot of trouble here, but he wasn't gonna let it happen."

From outside the house where the arrests were made, Moreno said, "I could hear a lot of noise from the house and flashlights." The Rangers, he said, "didn't even knock on the door or ask to come in or anything. They just knocked in the door and stuck a shotgun through the window. You could see the lights flashing, and hear noises, just a lot of loud noise like they were beating up somebody."

As for what happened to Moreno himself, he said, "They punched a riot gun in my ribs. It's just a bruise." They wanted him to move, he said, and "Instead of asking me they just stuck me with a gun."

Dr. Mario Ramirez is the only doctor in Roma, and his hospital is the only hospital there. He has been working 18 or 20 hours as day and has treated all comers; he has treated people with the farm union without pressing for payment.

He says he does "not want to be affiliated politically, one way or the other." Six years ago he ran for the Roma school board, thinking, he explained, that this was non-political; but it became political. He was opposed by the Old Party and lost. He states that he then completely withdrew from politics. "I am not involved in any political thing and do not want to be," he said.

He declined at first to discuss the case at hand without releases from the patients. The Observer obtained such a release through Dr. Casso from Dimas. Dr. Ramirez said by telephone that he examined Dimas and "could not make a diagnosis of cerebral concussion." Dr. Ramirez said he did not want to get into an argument with Dr. Casso; that Casso had probably seen Dimas for longer than he had, and that when he, Ramirez, examined Dimas, "I had not been informed of any of the details." (Casso had wondered why Ramirez had not called him to talk over the case, as doctors usually do in similar situations.)

Dimas, Dr. Ramirez said, was fully conscious, oriented, and well-coordinated, was not complaining of any headaches, did not mention any nausea, and "the vital signs were all normal." From examination of X-rays Dr. Ramirez judged that "the skull was normal completely," and a qualified radiologist examined the X-rays and found no abnormalities, also, the doctor said. Dimas told Ramirez he had not been unconscious, the doctor said, and under these circumstances he did not think a concussion had occurred.

"He had other multiple bruises," about six or seven, Dr. Ramirez said. The doctor also mentioned "a little hematoma behind the ear" and "a small laceration in the scalp, one inch in length," that had been sutured: "the edges were well approximated, it looked clean." There were "other small bruises in his body, arms, and back," but the doctor did not see any large hematomas or other injuries. Nor did he see a blood clot in the low back, he answered when questioned on that point.

Casso said Dimas told him Ramirez was with him for about ten seconds.

The officers whisked the three men back to courthouse, and they were released on bond. Before Dimas was taken to the McAllen hospital, he submitted to interview at the union hall. He walked stiffly and slowly. His hair was shaved off a circle of skin at the left rear side of his skull, where stitches were visible. He was not bandaged here; Dr. Casso said the next day he was re-bandaged at McAllen Hospital. Seated in the union office, Dimas told this story:

HE AND evidently Rodriguez got Dimas' .22 rifle and went walking to shoot rabbits. They were walking. "We didn't kill no rabbits. I killed one bird," a *chachalaca*. They were hunting not a La Casita, but "over there to the river," at Rancho Colorado off a county road. About the time it got dark, they came back with the bird. A man, a girl, and a little kid, whose names he was trying to recall, as they would be witnesses, gave the two men a ride back home. They peeled the bird at Kathy Baker's house, and she cooked it with potatoes, and they ate this. Chandler came up and told Dimas the Rangers were looking for him and looked like they were drunk. The Rangers flashed their light and had shotguns in their hands. Dimas continued:

"I put down the .22 and run back to the house. I don't hear nobody say nothing. I hear when somebody break the window, and I put my hands up." He said the Rangers told him to put his hands down, and they told him this three or four times, but he did not do it. "I figure if I put my hands down they're gonna shoot me. . . . That's when they hit me the first time," on the head. It was Captain Allee who did this, Dimas said. Another Ranger or other Rangers also hit him, he said. He showed a reddened place on the underside of his left arm where he said a gun struck him when he raised his arm to protect his head. Ordered to lie down, he did so, he said; then, he said, "a Texas Ranger and [a named deputy] started kicking me." He also said a named deputy "come with a shotgun and hit me like that in my back."

Chandler, administrative assistant at the union, said Allee appeared to him to have been drinking. Chandler said he did not know where Dimas was, as he told Allee, but went to see if he could find him. Chandler said he feared for Dimas' life. After Dimas dropped his rifle by the car, Chandler said, Chandler hollered at the Rangers "at least seven times not to shoot him, he was unarmed." (On this point, Allee said, "I never had any intention to shoot.")

The Rangers, Chandler said, "busted down the door, and one of the Rangers and shoved a shotgun in the window. They went in with shotguns raised, swearing and cursing, with deputies."

On these events, Allee said, "Under circumstances like that, a man should use every precaution in the world. We didn't know what else they had in there inside. We just didn't have any way of knowing."

KATHY BAKER, 24, has been in the strike office here nine months. Born in Montana, she graduated in biology and chemistry and did graduate work in the Delano strike with the migrant ministry as a volunteer. She told the Observer this:

About 7:30 in the evening of the Dimas incident, Dimas and Rodriguez decided to go hunting. They put together pocket money for shells, and the two left about a quarter to eight. About 9:30 they returned with a small wild turkey; Dimas plucked it and "conned me into cooking it," and by about 10:30 they had eaten it.

She was in the kitchen when the trouble started. She say she heard Chandler say "They're after you" and one of the two other men say, "I'm not afraid of the Rangers." When they arrived, Dimas turned off the lights in the bedroom and

dining room and locked the bar door. Rodriguez told her to get into the bathroom; when she tried to watch through a window he told her to get away, and watched himself. Hearing the kicking at the back door, she went and asked Dimas in the dining room if she should leave by the back door, and he said no, the house was surrounded; she went to the kitchen and sat down on the drainboard, and by that time the Rangers were inside. She saw nothing. She continued:

"I heard Captain Allee say, 'Come on out, you two, or I'm going to kill you.'" Several others were yelling, and "the whole house was just shaking, the walls and everything. I have never heard such hatred in men's voices. I never heard Ben or Magdaleno say one word or even go 'unh' from a blow or anything. I sat there with my hands over my ears, I was so afraid. I just knew there was going to be and everything. I have never heard such hatred in men's voices. I never heard Ben a shot."

When they were gone, she said, she found blood on the living room floor, the davenport, and "all over Horacio Carrillo's hat." Carrillo, she said, had taken a cot out back to sleep, and was watched by sheriff's deputies, but not arrested or manhandled.

Nye, recounting the events as he had heard them the night before, said, "the Rangers said [Dimas] had the rifle and they had to subdue him to get it." Allee told the Observer that Dimas dropped the rifle outside before he ran back into the house.

Nye understood that Dimas claimed he was hit in the head with the butt of a rifle or shotgun and also kicked. He and Rodriguez were arrested, Nye said, by "either two or three Rangers."

The Strike Is Beset by Woes

A UNION rally in San Juan Plaza the right of June 3rd attracted about 150 persons, officers or other observers who filtered through the audience in rustic clothes, about 15 or 20 newspapermen, and an ABC camera team. The crowd was small compared to the thousands Padilla had hoped for. The animus of the rally was the Rangers; the strike, while not forgotten, was simply the backdrop. Although Captain Allee had said earlier he'd stop in but probably wouldn't stay long, no Rangers were seen anywhere around. On the other hand, Martin Waldron of the New York Times was approached by a man in rustic clothes who said the Rangers were no good and should be abolished, didn't Waldron agree? Waldron said he didn't know. The questioner was later seen at the side of a car of agents from the internal security division of the Department of Public Safety. The rally site on the plaza was surrounded by many cars full of spectators who did not come into the plaza.

David Lopez, the union official who emceed the rally, said, at different times, that Col. Homer Garrison, director of D.P.S., and Allee are liars, that the Rangers have "a long history of violence and prejudice and ruthlessness," and that the Rangers are here "to preserve the poverty of South Texas;" he spoke of a "big fat Ranger" and of "these drunken fools out here trying to beat us up."

So far, Lopez said, no striker has committed an act of violence. The Rev. Krueger praised Magdaleno Dimas' refusal to "fight back" during the hamburger and slapping incident Krueger asserts that he saw; "I would like to offer a word of gratitude to the union in the development of human beings such as Magdaleno Dimas," Krueger said. Lopez, who contends that the reason Dimas "was framed, if he was framed," was his record, said of it at the rally, "I don't think the people of this state are in such a degenerate state that they cannot give a man a second chance." Benito Rodriguez told the rally, "We're not afraid of the Rangers and we're going to stand up and fight 'em."

Lopez said the strikers would picket Gov. John Connally in Laredo this month; Pancho Medrano reminded the *huelguistas* to reward their friends and punish their enemies at the polls.

Padilla, who was Cesar Chavez' right-hand man through the successful grape-pickers' strike in Delano, Calif., and is now directing the Rio Grande City strike, spoke of "the injustice that our people have suffered for hundreds of years." He thanked churchmen, politicians, professors, who have given support to the strike. Four years ago, he said, they were being told in Delano they could not defeat "the big giant," but "it was the courage of the worker who knows courage. We took beatings and the beatings didn't stop us and we brought DiGiorgio to the bargaining table."

The unionists are emphatic that they are going on with the strike, but they concede that they have lost this showdown. The harvest and the marketing continue. Lopez says that night picketing is discontinued until lawyers are present; this mostly cuts out picketing the trains except at Rio Grande City in the late afternoon. Besides, McKeithan and Lopez have been concerned about the drain on the union treasury for bail money, and they now know that the Rangers will arrest train pickets at any time for secondary picketing. The union's picketing of the bridge at Roma has been discontinued, probably from discouragement over CTM's withdrawal of the pickets on the Mexican side. While Lopez hopes Mexican authorities can be brought around, he says, "In Mexico things like that take time." The coordinator of the attempts to boycott La Casita products, Ernie Cortez of Austin, exclaimed "Boycott those melons!" at the rally, but he concedes the program has been difficult to make real with marketing outlets so far-flung and produce so hard to trace into the vegetable counters. The weight of the Starr County "ins" is thrown onto the scales against the strikers. The application of the minimum wage to such large farms as La Casita, a development that occurred after the Starr County strike was launched, has obviously deprived the union of its initial contention that the workers at La Casita are making 40 and 50 cents an hour, since by law they must make $1 or more now. The union, of course, is not limited to seeking $1.25 an hour and has never said that's all it wants. However, because the political objective of last year's long march to Austin was the $1.25 minimum wage, this sum is imprinted deeply into the Starr County strike, so that Rochester argues against his workers paying the prices of striking for so small a wage differential. Padilla replies: the workers at Delano get $1.75 an hour now, but more important, they sit down with dignity as workers and bargain with the growers. Yet the union does not contend that many of the fieldhands have been coming out of the fields to join the pickets. To the contrary, they say that each time they have gotten such results, mass arrests by Rangers and local authorities have occurred, cutting these events short. The rally in the plaza demonstrated the unionists' acceptance of their present failure to stop either the melon harvest or the railroads carrying this harvest to market and their deep hostility toward the Rangers, whom they regard as the agents of the growers and Governor Connally against them. Basic to all these considerations, but often overlooked because it is not an event, is the fact that the farm worker is not protected under the National Labor Relations Act from being fired if he tries to unionize. The argument is not available to farm union organizers that if a worker is fired for coming out on strike, he can be protected by a complaint against the employer alleging unfair labor practices.

WORKING AGAINST the strike, also, has been the poverty throughout Starr County, which dazes the imagination. Rodolfo de la Garza, the school superintendent of the county, testified about this poverty at hearings in Edinburg on Sen. Ralph Yarborough's bilingual education bill. Starr, said the superintendent, is rated as the poorest county in Texas and the 17th poorest in the U.S. All but three percent of the people are Mexican-Americans. "There is nothing but stoop labor and little enough of that," and in the main the people eat beans and rice. Of the males over 14, 29% are unemployed. More than two-thirds of all the families make less than $3,000 a year. Last year,

of the 160 professional people in the school system, "we lost 50," said the superintendent, and 85% of the high school graduates "leave the community and do not come back." In this situation Ray Rochester's threat to close La Casita before he signs with the union or to halve his workforce has impact.

The failure of the strike as of now is being advanced in Washington as a reason why the Senate subcommittee on farm labor should hold hearings in Rio Grande City. Legislation is pending to bring farm workers under the National Labor Relations Act. If the senators decided on hearings in Starr County, one presumes they would conduct them in the same county courtroom in Rio Grande City where the four members of the advisory civil rights committee conducted theirs. Members of the Senate subcommittee include Harrison Williams, whose legislative specialty is farm labor, and the Kennedy brothers.

R. D.

THE PUBLIC DEBATE

Sen. Ralph Yarborough, who now calls the Texas Rangers "John Connally's strikebreakers," gave the Observer this statement in Edinburg:

"Traditionally the Texas Rangers were created to bring law and order to the wild frontier. Marauding bands of wild Indians or brutal outlaws terrorized the remote settlements when law and order had not come to the frontier. On their reputation for taming the wild frontier, the Texas Rangers have gone into the history books as one of the great law-giving forces of the frontier, as have the Canadian Northwestern Mounted Police.

"In the Rio Grande Valley at this time," Senator Yarborough continued, "we see a labor-management dispute, where unarmed pickets are disputing with managements over their right to picket. The role of the Texas Rangers in this labor-management dispute must be an unhappy one for the Rangers, who see their great reputation of searching out the most dangerous outlaws in the world lowered to that of pushing an unarmed girl carrying a picket sign. . . .

"However, in fairness to the Rangers, it should be noted that they did not order themselves into this duty. The Texas Rangers are under the command of the Governor of Texas. When the Governor of Texas orders them into the duty of keeping wages low in Texas, the Rangers face the dilemma of every militray man or every para-military force, namely, the duty of obeying an unsavory order. It must be an unsavory duty for the Rangers, inheritors of a proud tradition, to be ordered to keep wages low in Texas. I think the responsibility rests squarely upon the shoulders of the Governor of Texas for — instead of ordering the Texas Rangers to 'get their man' — he has ordered them to get a low standard of wages, and to keep wages low."

AT A PRESS conference, Connally came to his own and the Rangers' defense. The governor said the Rangers went to Starr without his knowledge; he added that they are under Col. Homer Garrison, director of the Department of Public Safety, in whom the governor stressed he had complete confidence. The burning of a railroad trestle was a reason for their presence, he said. There has been no violence or bloodshed there, he said, (speaking as of May 31,) and the Rangers had not prohibited lawful picketing.

If Rangers had prevented newsmen from doing their jobs, that, Connally said, would be a matter of "considerable concern," but it was understandable that the Rangers might get "irritated" by having flash bulbs pop in their faces. "They are there to do a job and not to hold press conferences. In fact, you might find some of them pretty hard to talk to," he said.

"The Rangers are in there as a routine matter to enforce the law. They were called on by local law enforcement officers to assist, and they continue to be called on. They have nothing to hide," and they are, he said, "the most honored group of law enforcement officers in the state."

Col. Garrison said after the Dimas incident that charges of brutality by Rangers are "totally false and unfounded." Laws, he said, prohibit stopping trains and mass picketing, and they have been violated. In a prepared statement, shaped in part as a discussion of the Dimas incident, Garrison said:

"We further know that some of the participants [in the strike] have criminal records, that many are not employed in Texas nor are even Texas residents, but reside in other states.

"We know that some participants have been armed with deadly weapons. We know that several participants have criminal records.

"One has been convicted for smuggling aliens, for aggravated assault, for driving while intoxicated, and for murder, besides at one time being deported to Mexico after illegal entry into the United States. This particular individual was placed under arrest last night by the Rangers after a magistrate told them to forcibly enter a house and arrest him."

THE CONTROVERSY was launched when the Mexican-American Joint Conference, meeting at Laredo May 13, resolved that the Texas Rangers, "comic . . . in their cowboy boots, large hats, and larger pistols," are used by state and local political establishments "to intimidate, harass, and terrorize Mexican-Americans and other minority groups" and that the Rangers should be dissolved.

Cty. Cmsr. Albert Pena of San Antonio, who sponsored this resolution, said in San Antonio he received two anonymous phone calls threatening to smash him in the mouth because of it. He said he would report the calls to the Rangers except that he feared the caller might be one of them.

In the legislature, Sen. Joe Bernal proposed a Senate investigation of the Rangers in Starr County, citing allegations that they were "acting as a partisan police force on the side of management" and using unnecessary force. Seven senators voted with him, Barbara Jordan, A. R. (Babe) Schwartz, Don Kennard, Oscar Mauzy, Roy Harrington, Chet Brooks, and Charles Wilson.

On the House side, Rep. Lauro Cruz, Houston, introduced a resolution asking Connally to remove the Rangers from Starr County; it was sent to silence in a committee.

The state convention of the League of United Latin-American Citizens, held at Corpus Christi late last month, condemned the governor for sending the Rangers "to assist the growers in their efforts to intimidate the farm workers." In Dallas, the North Dallas Democratic Women's Club denounced "brutality" by the Rangers.

Cong. Henry Gonzalez, San Antonio, said the Rangers are being required to enforce the state's "unjust and harsh anti-labor laws." It appears, Gonzalez said, that Captain A. Y. Allee "already symbolizes partisanship to many people in the Valley."

Cong. Joe Pool, Dallas, intimated that the strikers were using communist tactics by "hollering police brutality." The chairman of the Dallas Young Democrats' *huelga* support committee, Ronald Clower, accused Pool of siding with "un-American elements" that would use police force to suppress strikes.

The senators who have visited Starr were still making news as we closed this issue. Bernal's activities are reported in this issue's special report. He has been commended for his role by two San Antonio officeholders who have been aligned against him, Pena and ex-Rep. John Alaniz. Senators Mauzy, Kennard, and Schwartz in a one-day visit got a replay of much that Bernal had heard. Mauzy said in Dallas that he thinks the Rangers should stay in Starr County. "Everyone we talked to felt that the Rangers are vitally needed down there," he was quoted. Kennard said the Rangers are needed since local law enforcement agencies are insufficient. Schwartz said that of course local people would prefer, for political reasons, that the Rangers make the arrests. □

WHAT ARE YOU DOING DURING VIETNAM SUMMER 1967?

"It is time now to meet the escalation of the War in Vietnam with an escalation of opposition to that War. I think the time has come for all people of good will to engage in a massive program of organization, of mobilization. This is the purpose of Vietnam Summer. And I'm happy to join as one of the sponsors of what I consider a most necessary program, a program that may well determine the destiny of our nation."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,
at press conference announcing
VIETNAM SUMMER,
Cambridge, Mass., April 23, 1967

In 1964, the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project mobilized thousands of students, clergymen and concerned citizens in the struggle against racial injustice.

The time has come for an even more massive effort to arouse the conscience of the nation — this time against the brutal and unjust war in Vietnam.

VIETNAM SUMMER is a call for 10,000 volunteers, including 2,000 full-time workers, to spend the summer in 500 communities organizing and educating against the War. During the next four weeks speakers and field organizers will visit campuses and cities around the country recruiting participants for VIETNAM SUMMER. All peace, civil rights and civic groups and all concerned citizens are invited to join in this nationwide effort and to begin preparation in local communities for a VIETNAM SUMMER project.

VIETNAM SUMMER is a project to reach the millions of citizens in communities across the nation who oppose the war in Vietnam but whose voices have not yet been heard. The goal is to create a new, independent force in America which will undertake a broad range of concrete actions to end the war. In many communities, VIETNAM SUMMER will focus on establishing a powerful political base of anti-war sentiment capable of electing candidates in 1968 who call for an immediate peaceful settlement of the war. VIETNAM SUMMER will support and organize opposition to the war in ghetto areas of the nation and among young men of draft age who in ever greater numbers are refusing to fight.

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Dr. King's call for VIETNAM SUMMER is supported by Dr. Albert Szent-Gyorgi, Dr. Benjamin Spock, Robert Scheer, Dr. John C. Bennett, Rabbi Abraham Heschel, Carl Oglesby, William Pepper, Carey McWilliams, and many others.

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THEY'RE BEING CONSIDERED

Why Not Bilingual Classes?

Corpus Christi and Edinburg

When he was a schoolchild, said Al Ramirez, former mayor of Edinburg who is now an anti-poverty official, he and some Mexican-American friends were walking along to school speaking Spanish, "and as soon as we crossed the curb and stepped onto the campus, we started speaking English. That's how indoctrinated we were."

Later, as a school teacher he was patrolling the schoolgrounds and told a student to stop speaking Spanish. Why? the student asked. "I didn't know why. I had just accepted the system," Ramirez said.

"I can still remember," said Carlos Truan of Corpus Christi, state deputy director of the League of United Latin-American Citizens, "when I was placed in the so-called 'beginners' grade' and not the first grade because of the language barrier. Also, I can still feel the many spankings given to me because I would talk in Spanish instead of English. There was no consideration given to my family environment whatsoever."

Paul Montemayor of Corpus Christi, staff representative for the U.S. steelworkers in a five-state area, said he was never a high school drop-out because he didn't get to high school. "It took the first ten years of my life to be able to understand my neighbors in this community," Montemayor said.

"From the moment our [Spanish-speaking] children enter school," said Edinburg school-teacher Mrs. Helinda Garcia, "their Spanish, their only means of communication, has been stopped. They have been instructed that they must learn English, speak it at all times because it is the official language of our country. They must push their language into a corner, and along with that, any and all pride in their inherited culture . . . If only [the teachers] could use *one word* in Spanish, for clarity, for comprehension, and then go on in English."

Mrs. Ann Parker, an elementary school teacher (and now a Woodrow Wilson fellow at Texas A&I in Kingsville), said current teaching practices in the early grades also deny Anglo children the opportunity to learn to speak Spanish fluently when they are young, and can best learn language.

She said that she had Spanish-speaking children of 16 in migrant schools who were so confused by such sound-similarities as "wash" and "watch," "which" and "wish," and "pick" and "peek" that they had "built up the idea they could *not* read," and in the end they could not. "I immediately went to the principal and asked, 'Why don't we teach them Spanish first?' . . . and of course," she said, "it seemed like so very radical a suggestion."

THIS WAS SOME of the testimony in Texas last month as Senator Ralph Yarborough conducted hearings of his subcommittee of the Senate labor committee on his bill, the first such measure introduced in the Congress, to provide $30 million in federal funds over the next three years to plan, develop, and conduct pilot programs in bilingual education.

Asked what kind of Spanish, Castilian, Mexican, or regional U.S. dialects, would be taught, Yarborough said that would be up to individual districts. As to what "bilingualism" means, he said that to some educators it means that if a child knows no English, you teach him two or three years in Spanish first, while to others it means that you teach the child the same materials in both English and Spanish. His bill, he said, deals with special problems of children "whose mother tongue in Spanish in a country where the national language is English." The objective of bilingual teaching, he said, is to make a student fluent in both languages while teaching him by a more intelligent route of the national language. "As soon as the war is over," Yarborough said in Edinburg, (in the course of the second of three Texas hearings on the bill, the first in Corpus Christi and the third in San Antonio,) "we hope to vastly expand this and greatly increase the amounts of money."

Professors, school administrators, teachers, and political leaders of Mexican-Americans endorsed the new bill. There was an awareness that this is a sharp departure from recent educational practice throughout the Southwest. Harold C. Brantley, superintendent of the United Consolidated Schools of Webb County, where bilingual teaching of all materials in both languages has now been practiced for three years, said the introduction of the bill and the hearings have reassured educators "that it might be *popular* to support these programs." To local educators he said, "You can't do this until you have had a lot of cups of coffee downtown, and you've had a lot of haircuts, if you know what I mean." Given local public support, the ways of teaching that make use of the first-grade Spanish-speaking child's language resources can be found, Brantley said.

In the Corpus Christi hearing the local school superintendent, Dana Williams, endorsed Yarborough's bill, but in such a way that Yarborough dressed him down publicly. Twice, the superintendent tried to interrupt the Senator during the administration of this chastisement; each time Yarborough, with contained but relentless persistence, powered on with what he was saying.

It was the thrust of Williams' testimony that the Corpus schools have done a good job for Mexican-American students. "It isn't necessary to wait for this bill to try to broaden their horizons," he said. He recited programs he said had been in existence since 1956 that give special attention to the language problems of Spanish-speaking students, including recent federally-funded programs. Supt. Williams referred to children "who are handicapped by the inability to speak the English language"; the prime reason for a bilingual program, he said, "is that the Spanish-speaking child is not achieving" under present methods of teaching him.

Although he supported the Yarborough bill, Williams said, it could be strengthened if state educational agencies "could be given more leeway in administering it." He favored more responsibility for state agencies, and while he said that federal aid for specific educational programs had been necessary, he wanted there to be less such aid and more general aid — that is, federal money given to the schools without specification as to what programs it will be spent on. "I spoke to some of those people who are close to the President of the United States about this," Williams said quickly, as an

interpolation in the course of making other remarks.

YARBOROUGH SAID he appreciated Corpus' leadership in the war on poverty and in federally-funded programs for education, but "Quite frankly, Texas has done the poorest job of educating these children of any state in the union." If it was left up to the Texas Education Agency, he said, the result would be "tokenism." Texas is 32nd in general education among the states, 37th in higher education, and 42nd in comparative progress; "If Texas had done this job, I wouldn't have introduced this bill," he said sharply. At this point there was a burst of applause from the now somewhat audience of about 100.

In the five Southwestern states, Yarborough continued, the average Anglo has 12 years' education, the average Spanish-speaker seven; but among Spanish-speaking Texans, he said, (referring to those 25 and over,) it's 4.7. "I would like to say just one thing—" Williams began; but Yarborough continued. The federal government has given funds to state educational agencies to build them up, he said. "I'd like to make my point—" Williams said, and Yarborough continued: "The federal government is trying to stimulate the state governments to *do* the job so we in Texas ought to drag along behind. We oughta be a leading state. I want that million Mexican-Americans in Texas to *not* drop out in 4.7 years. This million is too great an asset we're losing."

Seeing, beyond any doubt, that he had antagonized the state's senior senator, Williams began, "I agree with what you've said about our state not having met its commitment. I apologize for our state not meeting our commitment; we all know it hasn't." Second, he said, strengthening the state agencies is a way of "lifting these people up."

Yarborough said the bil he has introduced follows standard language for related legislation requiring that the state agencies be asked for recommendations, but he recalled that the first two gubernatorial vetoes of war on poverty projects occurred in Texas and Alabama, and "I don't want the governor to come along and veto these programs." Is that, he asked the superintendent, what he wants? "Oh, no, no. No, I would like to see state review and state analysis." "Well," the senator said, "we have this, but we don't want 'em to review it till it's dead."

As Yarborough reviewed terms of his bill about consultation with state agencies, Williams said, "Right. Right. Right." Then Williams said Corpus had some project proposals pending, and "We've got to have some of your money to do these projects . . . And I congratulate you for your leadership."

"Thank you, doctor," Yarborough said.

Apart from this encounter, the hearings in deep South Texas were tranquil.

IN EDINBURG, Mrs. Dolores Earl and seven of her first-grade students gave a demonstration of bilingual classroom teaching as it has evolved in Webb County. Three of the children were Anglos, four Latin-Americans. "We have made these children feel not only a need for each other, but a need and a desire to speak both Spanish and English," she said. "We want to make them literate in both languages."

The seven children, all of them six or seven years old, stood around a table, and one of the Mexican girls led them in pledging allegiance to the flag together, in English. Then an Anglo boy led them in the pledge, in Spanish. They sang "America," first in English, then in Spanish. The spectators at the Edinburg hearing were held rapt during these recitations and songs. The children of different backgrounds, speaking and singing together in each others' languages, carried one back to his own schooldays, and yet in a new way.

All the children took dictation, writing down sentences Mrs. Earl gave in one language, but writing them down in the other language. Reading out words chosen at random from an eighth-grade speller and flashed on a board, a little Spanish-speaking girl read "choruses" as "chorales." "No, it's in Spanish, not in English," Mrs. Earl explained.

Cong. Kika de la Garza of Mission attended the Edinburg hearing, sitting beside Sen. Yarborough throughout. De la Garza is for the Yarborough bill, despite the fact that the two men are not political *compadres*. De la Garza enterde one demurrer: the schools had not been en-

tirely deficient in this area. Yarborough said he agreed, and he would like to see the 4.7 grades of average schooling yet further improved.

Other highlights from the testimony:

Dr. H. T. Manuel, of the University of Texas, a professor of educational psychology, who has in the past been skeptical of teaching the early grades bilingually, said the idea is worth an experiment, but to learn English a child must have sufficient exposure to it and practice in its use. "There is no simple solution," Manuel said. Yarborough responded by emphasizing the experimental purposes of his legislation, which he said was designed to find ways to make children proficient in English without injury to them.

Dr. Theodore Anderssen, chairman of Romance languages at U.T., was all-out for the bill as "a direct frontal attack not only on our educational deficiencies but also upon our social and economic inequalities," and "a glorious answer to a foreign language educator's dream." Yarborough asked each of the professors if a young child's learning two languages at once might do him mental or psychological damage. Manuel thought it would depend on one language being learned informally. Anderssen said no, there would not be such damage; that social pressures about biculturalism create such damage, but not learning two languages.

Dr. Hector Garcia, M.D. and founder of the patriotic as well as political American GI Forum, which has heretofore emphasized not speaking Spanish in favor of speaking English only, wholeheartedly endorsed the new approach. "True American democracy will be possible when the majority becomes bilingual in the Southwest," he said.

Garcia told this story of his own invention. Some Anglo friends discovered oil, and deciding they would like to acquire culture in one day, they exclaimed to each other over the subtleties and special qualities of the French in a movie starring Brigitte Bardot, the Italian in "Madame Butterfly," the German in an old newsreel rerun about Hitler, and the Chinese spoke to them in a Chinese restaurant. Leaving the restaurant, they saw two Mexican-American ditch-diggers, who happened to be looking across the street at a pretty girl in a mini-skirt. One of the workmen said to the other, *"Que chula mujer!"* (What a pretty girl!), to which the other replied, *"Que vestido tan rabon! Y que piernas tan chulas!"* (What a short skirt, and what pretty legs!) One of the Anglos turned to the other and said, "Those goddam Mexicans — they're talking about us."

Closing on a different note, Garcia said, "For the last two weeks we have buried on the average one Mexican-American soldier per day in South Texas . . . Since they did not have a chance for good education, and since most of them not only died in poverty but left their families in poverty, it is important that their children have a better chance."

Cecil Burney, director of the Corpus Christi anti-poverty agency, said its executive board has endorsed the Yarborough bill. In Edinburg the bill was endorsed by the local school superintendent, Thomas Pickens, and the dean of the college of education at Pan American College.

IN BETTER-OFF Mexican-Americans' homes, Bob Sanchez, McAllen attorney, said, the problem is not that the children cannot speak English, but that they cannot speak Spanish, while among poorer *chicanos* the English is the difficulty. Jesse Trevino, a member of the McAllen school board, said bilingual teaching will enhance the resources of both Anglo and Spanish-speaking children. Edinburg Supt. Pickens said the Yarborough bill would make possible not only expanded programs in bilingualism, but also the promotion of "greater bicultural appreciations and understandings."

"No longer can we tell ourselves that if this [Spanish-Speaking] child fails to perform on the accepted level, he must be of inferior mentality," Supt. Brantley of Webb County said. "We believe if it is good for Juan to learn a second language, it's also good for little Johnny to learn a second language . . . We are attempting to prepare our students to become not only bilingual, but bicultural as well."

Sen. Yarborough is bilingual, but not in Spanish. When he was 18, he said, he worked his way to Europe on a cattle boat and spent most of his time there in Germany, where he became fairly proficient in that country's language. Still, the East Texan has always been willing to try a little Spanish, and the Edinburg hearing was no exception. After the teacher and her first graders showed how bilingual teaching works, Yarborough said with zest, *"Gracias* to all of yuh!"

The U.S. Office of Education has yet to take a position on the Yarborough bill. It has recently established a division on special problems in the education of Mexican-Americans; its spokesmen have expressed a hope that no bill will pre-empt the field legislatively and have promised they will make their own preferences known soon. Perhaps they had in mind the experience of the U.S. Department of Defense, the Veterans' Administration, and the Bureau of the Budget when they each and all opposed Sen. Yarborough's Cold War GI Bill, which now, as is well known, is law. R.D.

Gonzalez Opposes

San Antonio

With most Mexican-American organizations and leaders favoring Senator Yarborough's bilingual education bill so far in Texas, the opposition of Cong. Henry Gonzalez of San Antonio is noteworthy. Gonzalez said he would vote against the bill in its present form.

Filing a report with the Yarborough Senate subcommittee hearing on the bill in San Antonio, Gonzalez said it ignores the interests of ethnic minorities other than the Spanish-speaking and denies to such other groups what it gives the Spanish-speaking. This, he said, is unjust and may be unconstitutional. He thought the bill should aim at training teachers and at research rather than at the financing of "programs of dubious quality and unpredictable result," and he foretold "a competition in grantsmanship" among school districts for the available funds.

However, Gonzalez said that the bill's basic intent, to reduce the barriers in front of people who speak Spanish in a country where English is the legal and socially accepted language, is good.

The San Antonio hearing was dominantly favorable to the bill, as were the earlier hearings in Corpus Christi and Edinburg. Dr. Jacques M. P. Wilson, chairman of the foreign language department of Our Lady of the Lake College, said the San Antonio area's proliferation of independent school districts has isolated the poor in poor school districts, so that the rich Alamo Heights district has $72 million in assessed property to support 4,749 pupils while the Edgewood district has $36 million in property to support 16,973 pupils. Among the other witnesses testifying for the bill in San Antonio were Sen. Joe Bernal, who said that "bilingualism is and should be an asset and not a liability," and Cty. Cmsr. Albert Pena. □