



## “Likely That None of Them Were Burned”

**Date:** 1964-06-23

**Conversation:** WH6406-16-3882, WH6406-16-3884, and WH6406-16-3887

**Participant:** Lyndon B. Johnson

**Participant:** Robert Goodman

**Participant:** Anne Schwerner

**Participant:** Lee C. White

**Participant:** White House Operators

**Start Time:** 20:35, 20:50, Unknown

**Duration:** 03:25

**Place:** Oval Office

SCENE SETTER: While President Johnson called the parents of two White civil rights workers missing in Mississippi, the White House struggled to find a telephone number for the family of the third missing man, a Black civil rights activist named James Chaney. White House aide Lee C. White consulted newspaper reports and the AT&T operator in an attempt to reach the Chaney's.

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**President Johnson:** Mrs. Schwerner?

**Anne Schwerner:** Hello, President Johnson.

**President Johnson:** Are you the mother of the—

**Schwerner:** Of Michael.

**President Johnson:** Yes. We have received word from Mr. [J. Edgar] Hoover that the investigation in the car indicates that there were no people in the car, and that it's very likely that none of them were burned as could have been possible under the early information.

**Schwerner:** Yes, thank you.

**President Johnson:** And I have talked to the governor [Paul B. Johnson Jr.] there, and he is making all the facilities of the state available in the search. And they have seen some tracks leaving the car.

**Schwerner:** Yes.

**President Johnson:** And they're going to try to continue. We're flying people in from the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] tonight, and I just wanted you to know that, and that was a little hope that we didn't have earlier, and I thought that we would enjoy it as long as we could.

**Schwerner:** [*emotionally*] Thank you so much, President Johnson. I appreciate this. Thank you very much.

**President Johnson:** Thank you, ma'am.

**Schwerner:** [*emotionally*] Thank you.

**President Johnson:** Bye.

*End of WH6406-16-3882 excerpt.*

**Robert Goodman:** Hello, [*unclear*].

**President Johnson:** The FBI got in the car.

**Goodman:** Yes.

**President Johnson:** And think that there's reasons to believe that no people were in the car, because they've been unable to find any evidence of that. And there are indications that there were tracks leading from the car back to the highway.

**Goodman:** That's wonderful news. [*Unclear.*]

**President Johnson:** And we don't know where we'll go from there, but I thought you should have that information as soon as we had it.

**Goodman:** [*emotionally*] Thank you so much.

**President Johnson:** We've talked to the governor, and he's agreed to make available all the facilities at his command to search that entire area. And he and the FBI together are working up a plan to go through the area and see if they can find any further information and give it to us. So we're making arrangements to send additional people in tonight and tomorrow.

**Goodman:** [*emotionally*] Mr. President, I can't express my words to thank you for what you're doing for these boys and for us. Thank you so much.

**President Johnson:** Thank you, sir.

**Goodman:** [*emotionally*] Thank you.

**President Johnson:** Good-bye.

**Goodman:** [*Unclear.*]

*End of WH6406-16-3884 excerpt.*

**White House Operator #1:** Hello?

**Lee C. White:** Lee White. Do you have any luck with that family by the name of Chaney in—

**White House Operator #1:** Wait a minute. [*Places the call on hold.*]

**White:** —Meridian?

*End of WH6406-16-3887 excerpt 1.*

**White House Operator #2:** Hello?

**White:** Yes?

**White House Operator #2:** I haven't—can't find out anything, sir. I'm trying now for little towns outside of Meridian to see if they might have anything listed.

**White:** I'd appreciate it if you would and if you could keep at it [*unclear*]—

**White House Operator #2:** Yeah, I have the long-distance operator on the line trying for me.

**White:** If—

**White House Operator #2:** You haven't—You're sure of the spelling, C-H-A-Y-N-E-Y?

**White:** Well, that's what came to us out of the paper. It could possibly be C-H-E-N . . . C-H-E-Y-N-E-Y.

**White House Operator #2:** C-H-E-Y-N-E-Y, OK.

**White:** I guess that would be an alternative spelling.

**White House Operator #2:** I'll try either way.

**White:** If you can't catch me here, if you can catch me at home, I'd appreciate it.

**White House Operator #2:** All right, Mr. White, I'll be glad to.

**White:** Thank you.

*End of WH6406-16-3887 excerpt 2.*

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CITATION: "Lyndon Johnson and Anne Schwerner on 23 June 1964," Tape WH6406.16, Citation #3882; "Lyndon Johnson and Robert Goodman on 23 June 1964," Tape WH6406.16, Citation #3884; and "White House Operators and Lee White on 23 June 1964," Tape WH6406.16, Citation #3887, *Presidential Recordings Digital Edition* [Mississippi Burning and the Passage of the Civil Rights Act, vol. 8, ed. Kent B. Germany and David C. Carter] (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014–). URL: <http://prde.upress.virginia.edu/conversations/9080047>; <http://prde.upress.virginia.edu/conversations/9080049>; <http://prde.upress.virginia.edu/conversations/9080052>

This conversation was transcribed by the [Miller Center's Presidential Recordings Program](#) with the generous support of the [National Historical Publications and Records Commission](#).

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