

WH6406-15-3869

Date: 1964-06-23

Participant: Lyndon B. Johnson

Participant: J. Edgar Hoover

Start Time: 19:15

Place: Oval Office

SCROLLER TITLE: "The Bodies Were Not in the Car"

SCENE SETTER: Federal Bureau of Investigation director J. Edgar Hoover called President Johnson with news that the bodies of the three civil rights workers who had gone missing in Mississippi were not in the car when agents found it earlier that afternoon. The car had been badly burned, but initial observations detected no human remains inside.

President Johnson: Yes?

J. Edgar Hoover: This is Edgar Hoover, Mr. President.

President Johnson: Mm-hmm.

Hoover: [*Clears throat.*] I wanted to let you know first, the governor [Paul B. Johnson Jr.] has issued the statement along the lines suggested.

President Johnson: Good.

Hoover: And has also indicated that he will give every assistance, that even to the extent of calling out the National Guard, to aid in any search that we might desire.

President Johnson: Good.

Hoover: And that he'll support us in every way he possibly can.

President Johnson: Good.

Hoover: Now, the . . . I talked to the Secretary of Defense [Robert S. "Bob" McNamara], and he's placed at our disposal a plane, which has taken the two laboratory men, and they will arrive at Meridian, Mississippi, at midnight; otherwise, we couldn't have got down there till tomorrow morning.

President Johnson: Good.

Hoover: We have moved them—the all—inside of the car from the place the car was found to Meridian, [*President Johnson acknowledges throughout*] where the experts will make the examination immediately upon their arrival.

Now, it's the impression of the agents who have removed the material, most of which are ashes and all kinds of debris, there were no bones that could be found, although bones would burn [in] a fire as hot as that. However, there were no dental plates or anything of that type [*President Johnson acknowledges throughout*] that would normally would not burn, so the offhand presumption is that the bodies were not in the car. However, we will not know that definitely until the laboratory men

tomorrow by—at midnight will make the examination, and I'll have word the first thing in the morning.

President Johnson: Fine, thank you.

Hoover: Then we'll, of course, have to start the search for where they are or who did this thing.

President Johnson: Mm-hmm. Any information they get, if they call you tonight or in the morning, you call me.

Hoover: Yes, I will, Mr. President.

President Johnson: Thank you. Thank you very much.

Hoover: Thank you.

End of excerpt.

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