GOVERNOR COLEMAN=
JACKSON MISS=

NEWS REPORTS state that a young Negro, Charles Parker, age 23, was abducted from jail in Poplarville, Mississippi early Saturday morning by a hooded group of men who wore gloves to avoid finer prints. A trail of blood from the jail to the curb is allegedly all the evidence of what might have happened to young Parker. He nor his body has been found. This apparent lynching shockingly demonstrates again the all-too-frequent failure of southern law officers to provide "equal protection of the law" for Negroes in their custody. Although Parker was charged with rape, no jailer was on duty last night. It is unthinkable that any law officer concerned with the safety of his prisoner would have left a Negro charged with rape of a white woman in an unguarded jail in any southern town and in Mississippi in particular. It would almost appear that mob action was being invited. We strongly urge you to use all of the constitutional resources at your disposal to investigate this outrageous deed and bring those who committed it to the bar of justice=

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR PRESIDENT THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE=

PWSr. JPCP-Ms-Ar.

response from the president has been located. However, in what may have been a draft of the wire to Eisenhower, King noted the damage this incident would do to America's international prestige and called for "forthright federal civil rights legislation" (King, Statement on apparent lynching of Mack Charles Parker, 25 April 1959).

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project

Interview on "Front Page Challenge"

[28 April 1959]
[Toronto, Canada]

On a popular Canadian television quiz show and interview program, King distinguishes between legal desegregation, which he believes may be achieved in "ten or fifteen years," and "genuine, inter-group, interpersonal living," which will take much longer. Appearing as a mystery guest, King was hidden from the panel, who attempted to guess his identity before this interview took place.¹ This

¹. Stanley Levison had helped arrange the appearance (see note 4 to Levison to King, 8 January 1959, p. 104 in this volume). Soon after its premiere in the summer of 1957, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's "Front Page Challenge" became Canada's most popular television program. James L. Gray, president of Atomic Energy of Canada, appeared in the first half of the 28 April program.
Tonight, "Front Page Challenge" welcomes, in person, Reverend Martin Luther King. [applause]

Dr. King, if you were in charge of rectifying this situation, what decisions would you make? How can we best rectify the whole problem of segregation?

Dr. King: Well, I think it will entail many forces working together. There isn't one answer or one force that will solve the problem. I think it will, it means that the federal government will have to do a great deal in taking a positive, forthright stand. The moderates of the white South will have to become more courageous and positive in their stands, and liberals all over the country. And, I think, the church, religious organizations have a great deal to do in this period of transition. And the attitude of the Negro himself. He must be firm. He must work continuously for first-class citizenship, but certainly he must not use second-class methods to gain it. I think the methods are very important in thinking in terms of the end.

Robins: Well, what do you mean by "second-class methods?"

Dr. King: Well, I would think of violence as a second-class method. I would think of hatred as a second-class method. It seems to me that it is possible to move on toward the goal of justice with wise restraint and calm reasonableness, not compromising principles and never capitulating to the whims and caprices of the guardians of the deadening status quo, but at the same time, maintaining a positive attitude of goodwill.

Frank Turnpane: Dr. King, how long do you think it will be before the Negro in the southern states attains racial equality? Social equality?

Dr. King: Well, I would have to make a distinction here between desegregation and integration. Now, on the question of desegregation, I think within ten or fifteen years we will achieve desegregation. We will break down the legal barriers in almost all areas, except in the most remote situations. Now, when we think in terms of integration, which is genuine, inter-group, interpersonal living, that will take longer. I think, however, before the turn of the century we will have moved a great deal toward an integrated society.

Turnpane: Do you believe, Dr. King, that racial and religious prejudice, generally speaking, feeds on ignorance?

Dr. King: Well, I think so. I think this is certainly a . . . .

2. Fred Davis was the host of "Front Page Challenge" from its inception in 1957 until it was canceled in 1995.
3. Canadian actress Toby Robins was a panelist on the show from 1957 until 1961.
4. Toronto Telegram columnist Francis M. Turnpane appeared as the program's guest panelist.
Ignorance on both sides, I mean. Pardon?

Ignorance on both sides.

Yes, yes, I think so.

Dr. King, you mentioned the church’s role in this. Some of the churches in the South are still segregated, aren’t they?

Oh yes, by and large, the churches in the South are segregated.

How can they preach the Christian religion and segregate people? This must seem ironic to you as a minister yourself.

Yes, it is, but this is a perennial problem. This whole problem of the gulf or the gap between our profession and our practice.

Billy Graham changed his mind on this thing, didn’t he?

Yes, he has taken, in recent years, a very active, I mean, a very strong stand against segregation. There was a time that he would even preach before segregated audiences. But now he refuses to preach to any audience that is segregated, which, I think, is a marvelous step.

Am I right in suspecting there’s a large body of the white South who do not raise their voice but who have more liberal views than we get in Canada from the newspaper reports?

Oh yes, I think you’re quite right. I’m convinced that there are many more moderates and people of goodwill in the white South than we are able to see on the surface. But they are afraid to speak out today—the fear of social, political, and economic reprisals.

Dr. King, you recently visited India and had talks with Mr. Nehru, and tonight you tell us it’s useful and desirable that there should be no violence in your cause. Did you get these ideas from Mahatma Gandhi?

Yes, I did. I would say from Mahatma Gandhi and Jesus. My whole Christian background had a great deal to do with my coming to this conclusion that love and nonviolence should be the regulating ideals in any struggle for human dignity. And, along with this, I read Mahatma Gandhi in my student days and got a great deal from him.

This last visit to India, did you discuss these things with Mr. Nehru?

Yes, I did.

Is he a nonviolent type also?

Yes, he was. He followed Gandhi quite closely through the independence struggle, and he believed in the way of nonviolence, certainly in that par-

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5. Canadian columnist and commentator Pierre Berton was a panelist for the show’s entire run.
6. King had delivered an invocation at one of evangelist Billy Graham’s 1957 campaigns in New York City (King, Invocation Delivered at Billy Graham Evangelistic Association Crusade, 18 July 1957, in Papers 4:238).
Mr. Nehru would say that violence would have been both immoral and impractical in their struggle in India. Now, I think he would make some difference when it comes to the question of international relations. Gandhi believed in absolute nonviolence in all situations; when I think Nehru would believe in it in internal situations within nations, but when it comes to international conflicts, then he believes that a nation has to maintain an army.

[David]: Thank you. Dr. King, I'm sorry to interrupt, but our time is running out. We thank you very much, and may we wish you continued success in your most worthwhile endeavors. Thank you for coming to the program. [applause]

To K. A. Gbedemah

4 May 1959

[Montgomery, Ala.]

King thanks Ghana’s finance minister for his hospitality during the March 1957 Ghanaian independence ceremonies and laments Gbedemah’s encounter with segregation during a visit to the United States. He also promises to send him a copy of Stride Toward Freedom. In his 3 August reply, Gbedemah indicated that he had received the book and planned to read it during an upcoming holiday.

Mr. K. A. Gbedemah
Minister of Finance
GHANA

Dear Mr. Gbedemah:

I have been intending to write you ever since I left Ghana in 1957 after having a most rewarding experience in your country during the Independence Celebration. Words are inadequate to express my appreciation to you for the personal courtesies that you extended to me and my wife. It was certainly gracious of you to take time out of your extremely busy schedule to entertain us in your lovely home. All of these things will remain in our thoughts so long as the cords of memory shall lengthen.

I am sorry that I missed seeing you when you were in the United States last year. I am also sorry that you faced such a humiliating experience in our country. But in spite of the odious effects of that experience, I think that it helped in the sense that it served to dramatize the absurdity of the whole system of segregation. The fact that the President hastily invited you to the White House reveals that America is now more sensitive to the rolling tide of world opinion than ever before.1