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Frank to Burke, 26 June 1963

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TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY
KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE

OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

June 26, 1963

The Honorable Burke Marshall
Assistant Attorney General
Department of Justice
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Burke:

Perhaps you will be interested in some of my personal contacts with the man charged in the murder of Medgar Evers.

Several years ago De La (Delay) Beckworth came to my office in Greenwood to ask, in general, why the world was in the hands of the Communists.

"Let me know if I can kill a nigger for you," were his parting words.

De La is a product of all right-wing, racist organizations. He was district treasurer of the Sons of the American Revolution for several years and active in their affairs. He was an associate of the local John Birch leaders. His well known, outspoken talk about Negroes brought him attention and prominence. He occasionally embarrassed the Citizens Council leaders, but they regularly used him as a promoter and agitator.

A few years ago De La sent me a letter he had written to President Eisenhower, abusively protesting the integration of the Armed Forces. I sent it back to him, but he later got it published in one of the local papers. He was a frequent letter-writer to the Memphis Commercial Appeal and the Jackson paper.

Last spring during my campaign Beckworth was the only person in Greenwood who had a Whitten sticker on his car, until the last few days before the primary. He was an active field worker in the Whitten campaign, distributing the various unsigned attacks on my record.

Because of his family background, and acceptance in the local community, I think he should not be written off as an isolated fanatic. There are others like him all around.

Cordially,


Frank E. Smith

100-2- James W. Silver ✓