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Annotated article by Gene Sherman to Los Angeles Times, 30 September 1962

Gene Sherman

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To executive news editor, Los Angeles Times. NPR collect.

By Gene Sherman

Oxford, Miss.--There were tears at Ole Miss Sunday night, grim, gas-drawn tears through which a frightening, sometimes raging mob of 2000 or more students shouted their anger.

They screamed their ~~imprecations~~ imprecations as a cordon of U.S. Marshals forced them into retreat off their campus with tear gas.

Mob violence is a terrible, paralyzing thing to witness and I was ~~in~~ in the midst of it as ~~students~~ men and women students ~~in~~ streamed back to the campus from a football game at Jackson to learn that Mississippi had surrendered to the Federal government.

You can feel it congeal and fester and spread and then a helpless sorrow grips your heart. It builds slowly, but erupts quickly.

Tonight it burst forth when a television cameraman and his wife aroused the ire of the students two hours after the Federal officers surrounded the administration building with gas guns at ready.

They grabbed his camera and smashed it. They took refuge in their station wagon, but it was encircled by yelling students, and they were unable to move it.

The ~~man~~ ^{welled up,} the sound ~~of~~ interspersed with the tinkle of ~~broken~~ broken glass. The students began beating at the car and kicking dents into the doors and fenders.

"Go home, nigger-lover," the crowd yelled. "Go home Yankee."

The station wagon had Texas license plates.

"Get 'em out!" someone screamed. Others began rocking the car with the man and woman in the front seat. Mississippi State police finally edged a patrol car close to the station wagon.

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1st add....sherman for los angeles times

In a quick movement ~~_____~~ an officer opened the door of the patrol car and the station wagon simultaneously and the couple ~~_____~~ hastily made the transfer.

The woman was pale and thin-lipped and obviously terribly afraid. The patrol car's siren screamed and ~~_____~~ its red warning eye blinked.

Reluctantly the jeering students let it move around the circular drive and off the campus.

"I thought there was a nigger in there," said one student to no one in particular.

The mob moved from one side of a broad lawn to the other and took up its position in front of the administration building.

It moved under a constant cloud of atavistic sound.

The administration building, called the Lyceum, is a handsome colonial structure. Three Army troop carriers were parked in front of it.

Between them and the building was the line of marshals which they had delivered in a surprise maneuver. Outside, hundreds of Mississippi officers from several jurisdictions mingled with the students.

~~_____~~ Some of the students carried Confederate flags. Some walked hand in hand with their girls. Some stayed on the fringes of the activity, curious spectators to a curious event.

But the core of the mob moved together, as one entity. It seemed to explode into ~~_____~~ ^(fury) like that, too. The marshals stood their ground but left the control of the crowd to the State police.

For some of those the spectacle was as interesting as for the students. They grumbled when a report came over the radio

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they were not doing their job.

The sound of a crash rose ~~in the~~ over the voice of the mob in the night.

"There goes another camera!" a student shouted gleefully.

Once the State police, on orders from a Federal officer, moved the crowd back across the drive in front of the lyceum to the lawn. But its exploratory tenacles slowly drifted back across the pavement.

Someone threw a firebrand onto the canvas cover of one of the troop carriers. The mob cheered as the canvas caught fire and the soldier in the truck cab worked to extinguish it.

Three additional troop carriers moved onto the campus, loaded with soldiers in combat fatigues. They ran a gamut of jeers.

Over the shouting you could hear an occasional ~~hiss~~ hiss of a tire being slashed. Unseen by the line of officers on the other side, some students ~~made~~ made away with emergency equipment attached to the other side of the truck.

Someone threw a rock at the cab window. The order was given for the marshals to don their gas masks. The students backed off, but the marshals didn't fire.

So the mob congealed again, taunting their enemies.

Then suddenly there was a series of sharp bursts, something like a battery of mortars, and the sizzle of gas bombs flying through the air.

I was hustled along with the crowd as puffs of smoke grew out of the grass. With considerable effort I made my way behind a tree and the mob flowed around me, screaming and shouting.

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The gas drifted after them, but the wind was wrong for the marshals. It blew the gas back on them. The heavy barrage, glowing with the street lights, put the administration building behind an eerie, shifting curtain.

A few minutes later when those who had left began returning, the marshals fired another volley, this time advancing from their positions around the building.

After that, they fired sporadically and continued to advance, driving the students from the campus--but not before one of them ran the Confederate flag up the pole.

Some students made their way back armed with rocks with which they pelted the marshals' cars. By 8:30 p.m. all of the campus immediately surrounding the Lyceum was cleared.

Presumably James H. Meredith, the 29-year-old Negro whose presence on the campus turned 'Ole Miss to a sorry scene, will register officially Monday morning.

As I left the campus, wiping my eyes, I heard one student ask another if he intended going to class again.

"Not hardly," the other answered. "Not hardly." Endit.
Sherman.

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