

*"I'm sick and tired of going to the funerals of black men who have been murdered by white men . . . ,"* he was quoted as saying in newspaper accounts of the service. *"I've got vengeance in my heart tonight. . . . If you go back home and sit down and take what these white men in Mississippi are doing to us . . . if you take it and don't do something about it . . . then God damn your souls. . . ."* He began crying as he spoke that day and finally broke off, sobbing.

And the other thing that I thought about was, during the time that Chaney and Goodman and Schwerner were missing . . . it would be interesting to find out how many bodies did they find. It was almost a daily thing. A body was found here. Two bodies were found floating in the river. . . . Most people I talked to were saying the same thing: "Whew, that wasn't them either." *They were finding people*, black people, floating in rivers and every place else, and nothing was being done about it.\* And I just began to think about what was going on, and to me it was just—I really got tired, mentally tired of the whole scene.

I felt then that there was only one solution. If we're gonna have a war, let's have it. And that people ought not to say, "Let's leave it up to the government to take care of this. . . ." Let's do it ourselves, let's go on and get it over with, one way or the other. That's the emotion I felt. I was just tired of going to funerals. I'm still tired of going to funerals. That's what that was all about. I never did . . . try to deal with anybody on nonviolence again. I would never do it.

\*There was an abundant supply of black bodies in Mississippi that summer. In searching for the bodies of the Philadelphia victims federal agents found several unidentified corpses. One of these, the body of a fourteen-year-old boy wearing a CORE T-shirt, was found floating in the Big Black River.

## MARY DORA JONES

*She is a tall, handsome black woman with a mouth full of gold-rimmed teeth. Her home in Cleveland, Mississippi, is comfortably furnished and spotlessly clean. On the living room wall is a tapestry of the Last Supper. Grouped around the tapestry are photographs of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert Kennedy. Robert Kennedy's photograph is in the center and higher than the others, because once, on a tour of the Delta, he visited the home of her friend Amzie Moore. Atop the television set is a giant plastic replica of an I.W. Harper bottle. There is also a half-gallon Gordon's Gin bottle filled with red water.*

*She loves to smoke Winston cigarettes and talk about the day the Freedom Summer volunteers came to Marks, Mississippi, where she used to live.*

I had about seven blacks and four whites in my house, wouldn't nobody else take 'em.

### *In Marks?*

Right . . . they really move. They comes in, they mean business. They didn't mind dyin', and as I see they really mean business, I just love that for 'em, because they was there to help us. And since they was there to help us, I was there to help them.

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*Did that cause you any problems in the community . . . opening your home up?*

Oh, really, because they talkin' 'bout burnin' my house down. . . . Some of the black folks got the news that they were gonna burn it down. . . . My neighbors was afraid of gettin' killed. People standin' behind buildin's, peepin' out behind the buildin's, to see what's goin' on. So I just told 'em, "Dyin' is all right. Ain't but one thing 'bout dyin'. That's make sho' you right, 'cause you gon' die anyway." . . . If they had burnt it down, it was just a house burned down. . . .

*That's the attitude that changed the South.*

So that's the way I thought about it. So those kids, some of 'em from California, some of 'em from Iowa, some of 'em from Cincinnati, they worked, and they sho' had them white people up there shook up.

*. . . youngsters that came in, particularly the white ones from outside the South, did they have a hard time adjusting . . . ?*

They had a hard time adjustin' because most all of the blacks up there didn't want to see 'em comin' . . . said they ain't lettin' no damn civil rights come. "If they come up here to my house, I'm gon' shoot 'em."

See, this is what the black folks were sayin', and those kids had went to the preachers' houses, they had done went to the deacons' houses, they had done went to the teachers' houses, all tryin' to get in. Some of 'em come in around five o'clock that evenin', landed in my house. I give 'em my house. "My house is yo' house." I was workin' for a man, he was workin' at the Post Office, and he and his wife was beggin' me everyday, "Don't fool with them Communists."

*The white people?*

That's what they was tellin' me, those kids was Communists. I said, "Well, I tell you what. I don't think they no more Communist than right here where I am, because if they Communists, then you Communists. They can't hurt me no mo' than I already been hurt." Anything that helped the peoples, then I'm right there. So I didn't stop, although I got him scared to fire me. He would have fired me, but I got him scared to fire me. . . .

*This was your white boss?*

\* \* \*

This was my white boss I was working for. His wife was sick, and every day she would talk to me about those people, askin' me where they lived. I said, "Well, they ain't livin' at yo' house. Why you want to know where they live?" So she said, "They ain't livin' with you?" And I said, "Well, I'm payin' the last note on that house," just like that. And I never did tell her.

Finally one day she brought me home, and it was a car sittin' there in my driveway, and two white men was in there, and there were some sittin' on the porch. She put me out and she went on back. When I went to work the next morning, she say, "Mary, was them, ah, civil rights peoples at yo' house?" I said, "Now when you turned around and stopped and they were sittin' there, you oughta been askin' 'em what they was. They'da told you."

And I never did tell 'em anything. So it went on some, she said, "Ain't but one thing I hate about it, this intermarriage." And I said, "Well, ain't no need in worryin' about that, because if you wanna worry about that, you oughta been talkin' to your granddaddy. . . ."