

THE MEREDITH STORY

June 6, 1966



A Report
To United Press International Personnel

United Press International

GENERAL OFFICES
NEWS BUILDING, 700 EAST 42ND STREET
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10017

H. L. STEVENSON
MANAGING EDITOR

June 7, 1966

Unipressers:

There are several lessons in the June 6th story handling on James Meredith, who was erroneously reported by the Associated Press as having been shot to death:

1. Advance planning obviously is important on all coverage. It is doubly so on stories with a high degree of danger or disaster potential. The word that Meredith planned to march through Mississippi was sufficient to prompt detailed coverage plans by us. Atlanta and New York consulted several times prior to the start of the march. It was determined to staff the march to its conclusion, even though it would extend more than 200 miles. Three highly competent UPI men were assigned to the march, Memphis bureau manager James K. Cazalas, photographer Sam Parrish and newfilm photographer Weber Hall.
2. Be wary of second hand reports. Double-check and triple-check. It is difficult to imagine a reporter and deskman mistaking the word "head" for "dead" in the context of this story. But it did happen. "Who said he was dead?" "Did you see him and satisfy yourself he was dead?" "Confirm that the Memphis reporter said 'dead'."
3. Once a mistake is known, move quickly to correct the situation. Put out an unmistakable, explicit kill, saying what the error was. Clearly slug the new lead as "1st lead and correct" or 2nd or 3rd lead or whatever). Some editors may have missed the kill. The A.P. copy I have examined indicates that between the time of the erroneous bulletin and the lead that Meredith was alive, there were no kills, editor's advisories to hold the story or notes that the information was being re-checked. The correct version was slugged simply "1st lead" and contained a phrase that earlier reports Meredith was dead were erroneous.
4. If the story is major and the error is very serious, editors should be told as quickly as possible in a wire note what caused the error. This should be cleared by an NX news executive. We may want to issue a published story.
5. An error such as this could happen to any newspaper or radio-tv station. It could happen to us. Some of the tarnish rubs off on us all. Our men at the scene and the Atlanta desk performed a magnificent job under extreme pressure. Our reporting and writing was right on target. This is as it should be, on every story.

Following is a detailed report.



Shortly before 11:30 a.m. EDT Monday, June 6, James Meredith, a few followers and a small band of reporters and photographers crossed into Mississippi on the second day of Meredith's Memphis-to-Jackson march.

Among the newsmen with Meredith were UPI's Cazalas and the A.P.'s Ron Alford. Shortly after 6 p.m. EDT, just outside the small town of Hernando, Miss., shots rang out.

At 6:14 p.m. EDT (4:14 p.m. CST in Mississippi) UPI filed its first bulletin, followed immediately by a Night Lead, with quotes from Meredith lying wounded:

247A
MEREDITH 6/6 AJ
BULLETIN
HERNANDO, MISS. (UPI)--NEGRO JAMES MEREDITH WAS SHOT IN THE
BACK ON HIS MARCH THROUGH MISSISSIPPI MONDAY. THE EXTENT OF
INJURIES WAS NOT IMMEDIATELY DETERMINED.
TS514PES

248A
MEREDITH 6/6 AJ
BULLETIN
NIGHT LD MEREDITH
BY JAMES K. CAZALAS
UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL
HERNANDO, MISS. (UPI)--NEGRO JAMES MEREDITH WAS SHOT IN THE BACK
FROM A FOREST AMBUSH MONDAY AS HE TRUDGED DOWN A HIGHWAY
ON THE SECOND DAY OF HIS MARCH THROUGH MISSISSIPPI.
MORE
TS516PES

249A
MEREDITH 6/6 AJ
1ST ADD NIGHT LD MEREDITH HERNANDO 248A XXX MISSISSIPPI.
MEREDITH, MARCHING TO URGE NEGRO VOTER REGISTRATION, WAS
WALKING PAST A PATCH OF WOODS WHEN A SHOT RANG OUT.
"OH, MY GOD," SCREAMED THE 32-YEAR-OLD NEGRO, FLUNG TO THE
SHOULDER OF THE HIGHWAY BY THE FORCE OF THE BULLET.
HE BEGAN WRIGGLING TOWARD THE PAVEMENT WHEN A SECOND SHOT RANG OUT.
"OH, OH," HE GROANED. HE CONTINUED TO SQUIRM GROTESQUELY UNTIL HE
WAS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF HIGHWAY 51, WHEN A THIRD SHOT WAS HEARD.
HE WAS RUSHED AWAY FROM THE SCENE IN AN AMBULANCE, PRESUMABLY TO
MEMPHIS, 20 MILES TO THE NORTH.
MORE
TS520PES

250A
MEREDITH 6/6 AJ
2ND ADD NIGHT LD MEREDITH HERNANDO 248A XXX THE NORTH.
"WHERE ARE YOU HIT?" SCREAMED SHERWOOD ROSS, A WHITE MAN WHO WAS
ACTING AS MEREDITH'S PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER ON THE MARCH.
"IN THE HEAD, IN THE HEAD," SOBBED MEREDITH, AND MAYBE SOMEWHERE
ELSE. LOOK AT ME."
BLOOD SOAKED THE BACK OF HIS GREEN CHECKED SPORT SHIRT. HE
APPEARED TO BE HIT IN THE BACK OF THE HEAD AND THE RIGHT SHOULDER.
FOUR OTHER PERSONS WERE CLOSE TO HIM--TWO BEFORE HIM AND TWO
BEHIND HIM-- WHEN THE SHOTS RANG OUT. THEY FELL TO THE GROUND
QUICKLY.
MORE
TS522PES

At 6:29 p.m. EDT, the Associated Press filed the following bulletin reporting Meredith had been shot (the A.P. got the first word from its staff photographer Jack Thornell; an hour prior to the shooting, the A.P.'s staff correspondent Ron Alford had left the scene, saying to UPI's Cazalas: "There's nothing going on. I think I'll head for Memphis."):

5429PCS

BULLETIN

HERNANDO, MISS., JUNE 6 (AP)-JAMES H. MEREDITH, THE NEGRO STUDENT WHO CRACKED THE RACIAL BARRIER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI, WAS SHOT FROM AMBUSH TODAY DURING A CIVIL RIGHTS MARCH TO ENCOURAGE NEGRO VOTER REGISTRATION IN MISSISSIPPI.

5429PCS

The A.P. then bulletined Meredith's death at 6:33 p.m. EDT:

PM4 33PCS

BULLETIN

HERNANDO, MISS., JUNE 6 (AP)-JAMES H. MEREDITH WAS SHOT TO DEATH THIS AFTERNOON NEAR HERE. OFFICERS SAID MEREDITH, THE FIRST MAN TO BREAK THE RACIAL BARRIER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI, WAS SHOT FROM AMBUSH ON A CIVIL RIGHTS MARCH

PM4 33PCS

At 6:54 p.m. EDT, A.P. cleared this first lead:

EA9 5NU

U R G E N T

FIRST LEAD MEREDITH

HERNANDO, MISS., JUNE 6 (AP)--JAMES H. MEREDITH, WHO SET OUT TO SHOW MISSISSIPPI NEGROES THEY HAD NOTHING TO FEAR, WAS KILLED FROM AMBUSH TODAY AS HE WALKED ALONG A MISSISSIPPI HIGHWAY.

MEREDITH AND A SMALL BAND OF FOLLOWERS WERE "MARCHING" THE 225 MILES FROM MEMPHIS TO JACKSON, MISS., TO DRAMATIZE AND ENCOURAGE NEGRO VOTER REGISTRATION IN MISSISSIPPI.

HE WAS SHOT DOWN BY A SQUAD STATIONED IN A WOODED AREA BESIDE U.S. 51, A FEW MILES SOUTH OF HERNANDO. HE LAY ON THE SHOULDER OF THE HIGHWAY UNTIL AN AMBULANCE PICKED HIM UP.

OFFICERS ARRESTED A MAN ARMED WITH A SHOTGUN NEAR THE SCENE.

WEARING A PITH HELMET AND WALKING SHORTS, MEREDITH--THE NEGRO STUDENT WHO CRACKED THE RACIAL BARRIER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI IN 1962--WAS ON THE SECOND DAY OF THE MARCH. HE SAID HE EXPECTED NO TROUBLE.

"THERE ARE TWO PURPOSES FOR THIS TRIP," HE TOLD NEWSMEN AT THE START OF THE WALK. "FIRST, WE WANT TO TEAR DOWN THE FEAR THAT TRIPS NEGROES IN MISSISSIPPI, AND WE WANT TO ENCOURAGE THE 400,000 NEGROES REMAINING UNREGISTERED (AS VOTERS) IN MISSISSIPPI."

JHA 54905

In Atlanta, UPI's control point for the South, veteran civil rights reporter Al Kuettnr was among those working on the story. Shortly before 7 p.m. EDT, Kuettnr talked by telephone to Dr. William T. Tyson, director of the emergency room at John Gaston hospital in Memphis, where Meredith had been admitted. Moments later, UPI's first lead moved:

255A

MEREDITH 6/6 AJ

URGENT

1ST NIGHT LD 248A

BY JAMES K. CAZALAS

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL

HERNANDO, MISS. (UPI)--NEGRO JAMES MEREDITH WAS SHOT IN THE HEAD BY A FOREST SNIPER MONDAY AS HE TRUDGED DOWN A LONELY HIGHWAY ON THE SECOND DAY OF HIS MARCH THROUGH MISSISSIPPI.

MEREDITH WAS RUSHED AWAY IN AN AMBULANCE AND POLICE SAID THEY HAD ARRESTED A SUSPECT IN THE WOODS THAT LINED THE ROAD.

DR. WILLIAM T. TYSON, DIRECTOR OF THE EMERGENCY ROOM AT JOHN GASTON HOSPITAL IN MEMPHIS, SAID AT 5:50 P.M. HE HAD BEEN ADMITTED "BUT WE DON'T THINK IT'S GOING TO BE TOO SERIOUS."

"OH, MY GOD," SCREAMED THE 32-YEAR-OLD NEGRO WHEN THE FIRST SLUG SMASHED HIM TO THE DUSTY SHOULDER OF THE ROAD. SOBBING, HE WRITHED IN THE DIRT UNTIL HE REACHED THE HIGHWAY AND BEGAN WRIGGLING ACROSS IT. HIS FOLLOWERS DIVED FOR COVER.

A SECOND SHOT RANG OUT AND HIS BODY FLINCHED. "OH, OH," HE GROANED. HE CONTINUED TO SQUIRM GROTESQUELY UNTIL HE HAD REACHED THE OTHER SIDE OF HIGHWAY 51. A THIRD SHOT WAS FIRED BUT APPARENTLY MISSED. HE APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN SHOT IN THE BACK OF THE HEAD AND THE RIGHT SHOULDER.

"IS ANY HELP COMING?" CRIED THE STRICKEN NEGRO, WHO SAID HE WAS MARCHING TO PROMOTE VOTER REGISTRATION IN HIS HOME STATE. "IS ANYONE GOING TO HELP ME?"

PICKUP 7TH PGM 248A; *WHERE

JG600PES 6/6

At 7:08 p.m. EDT, the A.P. reported that Meredith was alive:

EA101*

BULLETIN

PRECEDE HERNANDO, MISS.

MEMPHIS, TENN., JUNE 6 (AP)--JAMES H. MEREDITH WAS SHOT AND
WOUNDED TODAY WHILE ON A MARCH IN MISSISSIPPI. FIRST REPORTS THAT HE
WAS KILLED WERE ERRONEOUS.

BB70XED

EA102*

BULLETIN MATTER

MEMPHIS--FIRST ADD MEREDITH (A101) X X X ERRONEOUS.

THE MEMPHIS POLICE AT JOHN GASTON HOSPITAL SAID
MEREDITH WAS SHOT IN THE BACK AND LEGS, BUT THAT HE STILL
WAS ALIVE.

BB710PED

EA103NU

U R G E N T

SUB INTRO FIRST LEAD MEREDITH
(ELIMINATING WORD THAT MEREDITH SLAIN)

HERNANDO, MISS., JUNE 6 (AP)--JAMES H. MEREDITH, WHO SET OUT TO
SHOW MISSISSIPPI NEGROES THEY HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR, WAS SHOT FROM
AMBUSH TODAY AS HE WALKED ALONG A HIGHWAY.

POLICE REPORTS SAID MEREDITH WAS DEAD. HOWEVER, HOSPITAL OFFICIALS
IN MEMPHIS, WHERE HE WAS TAKEN, SAID HE WAS ONLY WOUNDED.

IN SAN ANTONIO, PRESIDENT JOHNSON ORDERED THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT
TO "SPARE NO EFFORT" IN BRINGING TO JUSTICE THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE
SHOOTING.

MEREDITH, ETC., 2ND GRAF-(A95NU)

6

JN512PCS NHC

At 7:23 p.m. EDT, UPI's first picture, taken by staff photographer Sam Parrish of the Nashville bureau, showing Meredith lying beside the road, began moving.

A.P.'s first photo started at 7:28 p.m. EDT.

UPI's Broadcast Wire followed almost minute by minute all reports from the A-Wire trunk. UPI's Audio Network received a voice report from Correspondent Cazalas at the scene, and it cleared the network at 7:17 p.m. EDT. Other actuality reports followed within the hour.

Cazalas was walking 20 yards away from Meredith when the first shot was fired. "It came out of the blue," he recalled later. He rushed to Meredith's side and talked with him. Within minutes he was telephoning from a farm house the details to Atlanta, and by 8 p.m. EDT he had dictated a graphic eyewitness account.

265A

URGENT 6/6 AJ

EDITORS:

JAMES K. CAZALAS, UPI BUREAU MANAGER IN MEMPHIS, TENN., WAS COVERING THE MARCH OF JAMES MEREDITH TODAY AND WITNESSED HIS SHOOTING. IN THE FOLLOWING DISPATCH, CAZALAS DESCRIBES THE OCCURRENCE.

CAZALAS 6/6 AJ

WITH MEREDITH

BY JAMES K. CAZALAS

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL

HERNANDO, MISS. (UPI)--I SAW JAMES MEREDITH'S MARCH THROUGH MISSISSIPPI END IN A VOLLEY OF GUNFIRE TODAY.

IT HAD BEEN A PEACEFUL DAY FOR MEREDITH UNTIL ABOUT 3:15 IN THE AFTERNOON (CST) WHEN SHOTS RANG OUT AS HE WAS WALKING ALONG THE SHOULDER OF A BLACK TOP ASPHALT ROAD ABOUT ONE MILE SOUTH OF THIS RURAL NORTH MISSISSIPPI TOWN.

(MORE)JM645PES

266A

1ST ADD CAZALAS HERNANDO 265A XXX TOWN.
MEREDITH WAS IN GOOD SPIRITS BECAUSE THE PEOPLE OF THIS TOWN HAD RECEIVED HIM WELL. EVEN A FEW WHITE TEENAGERS HAD KIDDED HIM, AND HE HAD KIDDED RIGHT BACK WITH THEM.

THE TEENAGERS, ONLY SOME 25 MINUTES BEFORE THE SHOOTING, HAD ERECTED A HASTILY-CONSTRUCTED CHALK SIGN SAYING, "YOU'RE 197.4 MILES FROM JACKSON, JAMES, THAT'S 1,032,272 FEET."

MEREDITH CALMLY WALKED UP TO THE SIGN AND SAID, "WHY DON'T YOU GUYS JOIN ME?"

THE TEENAGERS LAUGHED AND ONE SAID, "YOU'RE A DAMN FOOL."
HE SAID IT IN A FRIENDLY MANNER AND MEREDITH LAUGHED RIGHT BACK, SAYING, "I WANT TO SHAKE YOUR HAND."

THE TEENAGERS LAUGHED AGAIN AND ONE OF THEM SAID, "NO, YOU'RE STILL IN MISSISSIPPI."

MEREDITH WAVED AT THEM AND WALKED AWAY DOWN HIGHWAY 51 SAYING, "I'VE GOT A LONG WAY TO GO."

ACTUALLY HE HAD GONE ONLY A LITTLE MORE THAN A MILE AND WAS PASSING ALONG A STRETCH OF ROAD THAT RAN THROUGH WOODS WHEN THE SHOOTING HAPPENED. MEREDITH WAS STILL SMILING AND JAUNTILY TWIRLING A SWAGGER STICK WHEN THE SHOTS RANG OUT. IN A SPLIT SECOND, HE WAS A HUNTED ANIMAL--CRAWLING IN THE HOT SUN AND MOANING.

HE HIT THE GROUND AT THE FIRST SHOT, CRAWLING FOR THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HIGHWAY WHERE POLICE CARS COULD PROTECT HIM. ANOTHER SHOT BOOMED.

EVEN ACROSS THE HIGHWAY, I COULD TELL HE WAS PANIC-STRICKEN-- HIS EYES WHITE AND HIS MOUTH WIDE OPEN. HE WAS MOVING SO QUICKLY, SQUIRMING LIKE A SNAKE, THAT I DIDN'T THINK HE HAD BEEN HIT. BUT I LEARNED LATER THAT TWO SHOTS HAD STRUCK HIM.

AS HE REACHED THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE PAVEMENT, THE THIRD SHOT EXPLODED.

MEREDITH CRUMPLED. HE LAY STILL ON HIS SIDE, BUT AFTER A COUPLE OF SECONDS HE STRAINED AND SQUIRMED TO THE PROTECTION OF A CAR. THERE

HE LAY STILL, BREATHING HEAVILY. EVERYBODY ELSE WAS MOVING QUICKLY. THE LAWYEN RAN ACROSS THE HIGHWAY TO THE SPOT IN THE BUSHES WHERE THE SHOTS CAME FROM, AND THE FOUR OTHER MARCHERS WERE CRAWLING FOR COVER. PHOTOGRAPHERS RAN ACROSS THE STREET TOWARD MEREDITH.

I WAS STANDING BY A CAR ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE HIGHWAY WITH OTHER NEWSMEN WHEN THE SHOTS CAME. WHEN I HEARD THE FIRST ONE, I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT BECAUSE NO ONE HAD EXPECTED TROUBLE IN THIS NORMALLY PEACEFUL COUNTY.

I DROPPED TO MY KNEES AND DOVE BEHIND A CAR. BUT I KEPT MY EYES ON MEREDITH.

SAM PARRISH, UPI STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER, WAS STANDING ABOUT FIVE YARDS NEARER TO MEREDITH THAN I WAS AND HE WAS DOWN ON ONE KNEE BUT STILL SHOOTING PICTURES AS FAST AS HE COULD. AFTER THE THIRD SHOT, WHEN WE WERE SURE THAT WAS ALL, BOTH OF US HEADED FOR MEREDITH. SAM YELLED, "MORE FILM," AND I GRABBED THREE ROLLS OUT OF THE BACK SEAT OF THE CAR, THREW THEM AT HIM, AND WENT TO MEREDITH'S SIDE.

MEREDITH'S FACE LOOKED PEACEFUL AND SHOWED NO PAIN, BUT HE GROANED AND HAD HIS ARMS FOLDED IN FRONT OF HIS STOMACH. HE WAS LYING ON HIS SIDE AND I THOUGHT FROM HIS POSITION THAT HE HAD BEEN SHOT FROM THE FRONT. THERE WAS THE BLOOD ON THE BACK OF HIS SHIRT, QUITE A BIT OF IT, BUT IT DIDN'T SEEM TO BE SPURTING OUT.

A COUPLE OF MINUTES LATER THE AMBULANCE CAME AND JAMES MEREDITH'S WALK CAME TO AN END AS THEY LOADED HIM ABOARD AND HEADED FOR MEMPHIS 24 MILES AWAY.

JM656PES

The A.P.'s official explanation came at 11:27 a.m. EDT the following day, June 7:

A151 (CORRECT) (RESTARTING A149)

(170)

NEW YORK, JUNE 7 (AP)—THE ASSOCIATED PRESS TODAY ISSUED THIS STATEMENT:

"THE ASSOCIATED PRESS EXPRESSED REGRET TODAY FOR AN ERRONEOUS REPORT LAST NIGHT THAT JAMES MEREDITH HAD BEEN KILLED ON HIS WALK FROM MEMPHIS TO JACKSON, MISS.

"THE AP'S FIRST BULLETIN AT 6:29 P.M. EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME, SAID THAT MEREDITH HAD BEEN SHOT FROM AMBUSH. THIS CORRECT INFORMATION CAME FROM AN ASSOCIATED PRESS STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER, JACK THORNELL, WHO TOOK THE DRAMATIC PICTURES OF MEREDITH LYING WOUNDED ON THE HIGHWAY.

"THE AP'S NASHVILLE BUREAU FILED A BULLETIN AT 6:33 P.M. THAT MEREDITH WAS SHOT TO DEATH. THIS WAS ON THE BASIS OF A REPORT FROM A MEMPHIS NEWSPERMAN AT THE SCENE, WHO SAID LATER HE REPORTED MEREDITH WAS 'SHOT IN THE HEAD.' THE AP NEWSMAN UNDERSTOOD HIM TO SAY THAT MEREDITH WAS 'SHOT DEAD.'

"THE ERRONEOUS REPORT WAS OVERTAKEN AT 7:08 P.M. WITH THE ORIGINAL AND CORRECT INFORMATION THAT MEREDITH HAD BEEN SHOT AND WOUNDED. MEANTIME, THE ERRONEOUS REPORT HAD BEEN CARRIED BY MANY RADIO AND TELEVISION STATIONS."

ML1127PED

(Only a few newspapers were caught with the error in print, largely because the mistake was made between publishing cycles at an hour too late for most PM's and too early for most AM's.)

(Broadcasters were less fortunate. The story broke during prime evening newscast time. Millions heard the erroneous report on radio and television, but the networks were quick to recover.)

As I See It

Huntley-Brinkley Slip on Meredith

By PAUL JONES

The usually reliable Huntley-Brinkley report on NBC and Channel 2 Monday night goofed with one of the major journalistic boobies of the year when Huntley made the flat statement that "James Meredith was shot in ambush and is dead."



Jones

Obviously ignoring conflicting wire reports (early Associated Press accounts reported Meredith was killed while reports from United Press International said that Meredith was wounded), Huntley aroused viewers of this area who obviously were infuriated with reports of the Meredith's death.

Some 28 minutes into the newscast which originates in New York with Huntley talking and in Washington with Brinkley talking, Huntley corrected his earlier story, stating that Meredith had been wounded, not killed.

But the damage had been done. Switchboards at both WSB-TV (Channel 2) and at The Atlanta Constitution were flooded with calls from viewers who were befuddled by conflicting reports.

Earlier, newsmen on both WSB radio and WSB-TV had reported the conflicting stories and had urged listeners and viewers to stand by until definite word was re-

ceived, WSB radio newsmen, Don Baird, cautioned listeners several times to wait until conflicting reports had been unscrambled. Finally, at approximately 5:55 p.m., Baird reported that United Press International was correct—Meredith was wounded, not seriously, he said.

Later, WSB news director Ray Moore stated on the regular WSB-TV 6 p.m. newscast that conflicting reports were issued by the news services before he left the air at 6:30 p.m. Moore stated that UPI was correct, Meredith was wounded.

It was then that Huntley in a news report taped in New York at 5:30 p.m. Atlanta time came on with the unqualified statement that Meredith had been ambushed and was dead. Huntley failed to mention there were conflicting wire service reports.

If NBC-TV's Huntley-Brinkley report is going to continue to give the "news" nightly and continue to influence the great number of people that watches this telecast nightly (the show was tied for 10th place among all shows on television in this area) it behooves NBC-TV to present the telecast "live" in this area.

It is understood that the telecast was updated Monday night for areas where it is presented at a time later than the original live New York telecast.

This was a serious mistake which resulted in thousands of viewers being misinformed. Let's have "news" from now on, Chef and David, not a lousy tape report.

Some published comment.

The New York Times, June 7, 1966

MEREDITH REPORT IN ERROR ON AIR

Millions Told, by a Mistake, He Was Shot to Death

Radio and television stations across the nation interrupted their regular programs last night to tell millions of persons that James H. Meredith had been shot to death. Their reports were based on an erroneous bulletin from The Associated Press.

The major television networks, the National Broadcasting Company, the Columbia Broadcasting System and the American Broadcasting Company, all indicated that at least 25 minutes elapsed from the time they broadcast the report of Mr. Meredith's death to the time of the corrected report. By 7 o'clock, just less than half an hour after the first

Gaston Hospital in Memphis, Tenn.

The first bulletin sent out by the wire service at 6:33 P.M. from Hernando, Miss., said: "James H. Meredith was shot to death this afternoon near here. Officers said Meredith, the first man to break the racial barrier at the University of Mississippi, was shot from ambush on a civil rights march."

The Associated Press sent out a revised report at 7:08 P.M. It said:

"James H. Meredith was shot, and wounded today while on a march in Mississippi. First reports that he was killed were erroneous."

Won't Issue Statement

The wire service's office here and its bureau in Memphis said there would be no formal statement on the error. It was learned, however, that the report of Mr. Meredith's death had been based on information provided to the wire service by a local newsmen.

By 7 o'clock, just less than half an hour after the first

erroneous bulletin from the Associated Press, some stations began to qualify their reports on the basis of telephone calls to the area of the shooting, and because United Press International, the other major news service, was reporting that Mr. Meredith had been shot but was still alive.

One reason for the time lag in determining whether Mr. Meredith was alive or dead was that it took an ambulance about 30 minutes to carry him from the scene of the shooting to the hospital in Memphis.

At the time, the television networks were broadcasting or taping their major early evening news reports. The bulletin reporting Mr. Meredith's death necessitated some retaping. Then more retaping had to be done to put the corrected version on the air.

In newscasts at 11 P. M., N. B. C. and C. B. S. referred to the earlier erroneous news report and gave the correct account. A. B. C., in a special report at 10:40 P. M., and in its

local 11 P. M. news, made no reference to the erroneous report.

Many persons here also saw the erroneous report on the moving sign bulletins that circle the Allied Chemical Company's building in Times Square. It, too, carried a corrected report.

According to a correspondent of radio station WWRL here, Mr. Meredith never lost consciousness. Sherwood Ross, who was walking with Mr. Meredith at the time of the shooting and was acting as Mr. Meredith's "grass murrinator," told his station that there was "no basis for any rumors" that Mr. Meredith had been killed.

Mr. Ross said that when a man appeared with a gun in the roadway and shouted "James Meredith," twice, the Meredith party scattered and headed for cars parked on the side of the road.

"Some of us fell down," he said, "and a shot rang out, and we got up and stumbled, and Meredith half-walked, half-stumbled to the side of the road."

AP Explains Error on Meredith: Reporter Took 'Head' for 'Dead'

A misunderstanding of the word "head" for "dead" by a reporter for The Associated Press in Memphis led to the agency's erroneous report on Monday that James H. Meredith had been shot to death.

In a statement to its clients yesterday, the news agency confirmed the error and apologized for having issued the mistaken report. It did not describe the circumstances that led to the original report, however.

Sources in Memphis and Nashville said yesterday that the reporter, Ron Alford, who has been with the Memphis bureau of The Associated Press for about six months, returned to that city from Hernando, Miss., before Mr. Meredith was shot.

He was in the newsroom of The Memphis Commercial Appeal when its reporter at the scene, Ramon Hemil, called to say that Mr. Meredith had been shot in the head.

William Street, assistant state editor of The Commercial Appeal, said that Mr. Alford was permitted to listen to Mr. Hemil's report on an extension telephone at the newspaper's tri-state desk.

"He heard Hemil give the report," Mr. Street said, "and one of our editors asked why Meredith had been shot. Hemil said it was in the head, but Alford misunderstood the word and assumed Hemil said Meredith was dead. He filed the bulletin to The Associated Press office in Nashville."

In the Nashville office of the news agency, Tom Aden, the bureau chief, confirmed that the report of Mr. Meredith's death had been sent from his office, which was coordinating coverage because the Memphis bureau was short-handed.

He would not disclose who had taken the call from Mr. Alford. "It was just misunderstanding the words 'shot in the head' for 'shot dead,'" he said. Mr. Alford could not be reached for comment.

In The Associated Press office at 50 Rockefeller Plaza, Sam Blackman, the agency's general news editor, said that "the newspaper published the wrong report, so far as we know."

"However, radio and television stations used it, and they're entitled to an explanation," he added.

The news agency sent the fol-

lowing statement to its clients at 11:26 A.M. yesterday:

"The Associated Press expressed regret today for an erroneous report last night that James Meredith had been killed on his walk from Memphis to Jackson, Miss."

"The Associated Press' first bulletin at 8:28 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time, said that Meredith had been shot from ambush. This correct information came from an Associated Press staff photographer, Jack Thornell, who took the dramatic pictures of Meredith lying wounded on the highway."

"The Associated Press' Nashville bureau filed a bulletin at 6:33 P.M. that Meredith was shot to death. This was on the basis of a report from a Memphis newspaperman at the scene, who said later he reported Meredith was 'shot in the head.' The Associated Press newsman understood him to say that Meredith was 'shot dead.'"

"The erroneous report was overtaken at 7:08 P.M. with the original and correct information that Meredith had been shot and wounded. Meantime, the erroneous report had been carried by many radio and television stations."

The false report and subsequent correction came at a time when the major networks were presenting their principal news programs, but most television stations indicated yesterday that they had received few complaints.

The National Broadcasting Company said its calls "were for information not a reaction of an incensed public, but curiosity whether Meredith was dead or alive."

A spokesman for the Columbia Broadcasting System said there had been "40 or 50 calls" during the whole evening. He said these were "just people inquiring if it was true that Meredith had been shot."

Editor & Publisher, June 11, 1966

Apology Made For Meredith Death Report

The reporter says he said "shot in the head" but the man on the other end of the telephone line thought he said "shot dead," and for about half an hour many people believed James H. Meredith had been slain on his civil rights walk in Mississippi on Monday.

On Tuesday, the Associated Press expressed its regret for the erroneous report which went out as a bulletin from the Nashville bureau at 6:33 p.m. on June 6. Its explanation of the mistake was as follows:

"The AP's first bulletin at 6:29 p.m. EDT said that Meredith had been shot from ambush. This correct information came from an Associated Press staff photographer, Jack Thornell, who took the dramatic pictures of Meredith lying wounded on the highway."

"The AP's Nashville bureau filed a bulletin at 6:33 p.m. that Meredith was shot to death. This was on the basis of a report from a Memphis newspaperman at the scene, who said later he reported Meredith 'shot in the head.' The AP newsman understood him to say the Meredith was 'shot dead.'"

"The erroneous report was overtaken at 7:08 p.m. with the original and correct information that Meredith had been shot and wounded. Meantime, the erroneous report had been carried by many radio and television stations."

Daily News Repeated

The New York Daily News went to press with the erroneous report but none of the papers got out to the street. The

early press run was held up for a replay.

The AP lead moved at 6:54 p.m. and Meredith, the first man to break the racial barrier at the University of Mississippi, shot to death from ambush. The revised lead at 7:08 reported he was shot and wounded, and added, "First reports that he was killed were erroneous."

According to a version of the incident at the scene, Ron Alford of the AP Memphis staff was in the newsroom of The Memphis Commercial Appeal when that paper's reporter, Ramon Hemil, called from Hernando to report that Meredith had been shot in the head.

Alford was allowed to monitor the call and he relayed the "shot dead" information to Nashville, where coverage of the civil rights march was coordinated. Alford, 25 years old, served in the Air Force, graduated from Memphis State University as a journalism major and worked as a copy boy and reporter at the Commercial Appeal before joining the AP last August.

IPI Finds a Moral

Roger H. Tatarian, editor of United Press International, which first reported Meredith shot at 6:15 p.m., wrote in his newsletter to editors:

"If there is a moral to the Meredith story, it is to stress once again the importance to an editor of having access to both primary news services. This is far more than a question of checks and balances on a Meredith story, although that is not an insignificant consideration. It also guarantees an editor countless times every day that he is giving his readers the best of both possible worlds. It is not only a question of right and wrong but of good or better, of having a choice between a diversity of viewpoints and of the enterprise that only competition can foster."

Broadcasting, June 13, 1966

Erroneous report brings little reaction

Television and radio stations across the nation broadcast an erroneous report last Monday (June 6) that civil rights worker James H. Meredith had been shot to death, but network officials said later that audience phone calls received in New York were far more concerned with Meredith's condition than the error.

Millions in network and local audiences were told Mr. Meredith was dead, based on an Associated Press bulletin issued at 6:33 p.m. EDT, June 6, the day of the shooting near Hernando, Miss.

The correct information that Mr. Meredith was wounded—and not killed—issued from AP at 7:08 p.m., in time for the networks to correct themselves on the principal evening news programs.

However, many stations began to qualify the AP report around 7 p.m. because of United Press International reports indicating that Mr. Meredith was wounded but alive.

At 6:16 p.m. UPI had issued a report from its three men on the rights walk with Mr. Meredith that quoted the Negro leader speaking after he was shot. At 6:58 p.m. UPI quoted the director of Gaston hospital, Memphis, as saying Mr. Meredith was admitted but his wounds did not seem serious. At no time did UPI report him dead.

Some stations carried only the UPI report.

On Tuesday (June 7) AP issued a formal apology to its clients, particularly to the broadcast media. The statement explained that a reporter with AP's Memphis bureau about six months had misunderstood a telephoned report from a local reporter at the shooting scene.

Time, June 17, 1966

WIRE SERVICES

The "Death" Blunder

Ronald Alford, 24, was having a hectic day. Illness and vacation had left him the only reporter in the Memphis bureau of the Associated Press. That morning he had been trudging a dusty road south of the city covering James Meredith's march into Mississippi, but at 1:30 he had returned to the unmanned office. Now the news was coming through that Meredith had been shot, and Alford was in a bind.

He rushed down the hall to the noisy newsroom of the Memphis Commercial Appeal. He was apparently unaware that A.P.'s Photographer Jack Thornell had already reached a phone, and that at 4:29 Memphis time A.P. had sent off its first bulletin, which simply reported the shooting. Alford was still desperately trying to catch up, and when an Appeal reporter called with an account of what had happened, the A.P. man picked up an extension to listen in. "Meredith has been shot in the back and the head," the reporter said. In the clamor, Alford thought he heard "Meredith has been shot dead."

Without checking with anyone else in the room, Alford moved the false news. At 4:33, A.P. sent a bulletin to its 8,500 members reporting that Meredith was dead—and 21 minutes later a fuller paragraph went out, repeating that Meredith had been killed from ambush. For a little more than half an hour the blunder stood. Finally Alford asked an Appeal staffer: "You do have Meredith dead, don't you?" And at 5:08, A.P. got off the overdue correction bulletin.

United Press International, meanwhile, had done far better. U.P.I.'s Reporter Ken Cazalas, 27, was with Meredith when the shooting took place, and he reported the news 15 minutes ahead of his rivals. To his credit, he stood by his "shot and wounded" version despite the call-backs and pressure touched off by the A.P. report.

Representative UPI play across the country.

Rambling Rain
New York to show...
17 to 20...
10 to 15...
10 to 15...
10 to 15...

The Miami Herald

Friday, June 7, 1966 No. 187 Florida's Best Complete Newspaper 56th Year 36 Pages 10 Cents

Action Line
... on Page 24
CITY EDITION

James Meredith Shot On a 'March of Fear'



By JAMES C. SPAN
MIAMI (UPI) — James Meredith was shot and wounded in a tense, chaotic scene in Memphis, Tenn., today as he led a march of thousands of Negroes through the city.

His march was met with...
The march was met with...
The march was met with...

The Washington Post

FINAL

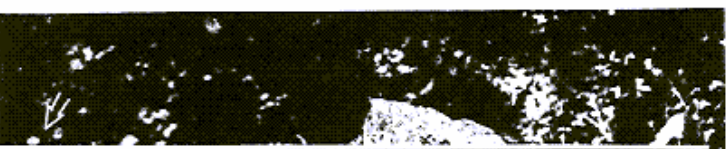
Table with 2 columns: Category and Price. Includes rates for Domestic, Foreign, and Single Copies.

The Feather
Substantially steady with scattered fluctuations in activity...
... and today's events on page 27

89th Year No. 184 TUESDAY, JUNE 7, 1966 WASHINGTON, D.C. 20541-1000

Sniper Fells Meredith on March

10 Civilians Join Junta In Saigon
Buddhists Wary As Ky, Thien Get...



White Man Is Arrested In Shooting
Negro Leaders Urge Thousands To Continue Trek

Top Court: Try Dr. Sam Again Or Drop Case

Dr. Sam Sheppard...
The Supreme Court...
The Supreme Court...



Dr. Sam Sheppard...
No New Charges

EXTRA Los Angeles Times
TUESDAY PREMIUM EDITION
Largest circulation in the world...
VOL. LXXXV FIVE PARTS—PART ONE *** 1 TUESDAY MORNING, JUNE 7, 1966 100 PAGES DAILY 75c

Negro Meredith Ambushed SHOT IN BACK

NEWS SUMMARY

THE NATION
CITY OF L.A. BUDGET — Los Angeles...
TAX BREAK — The House...
SURVIVOR — The...
INCREASE IN BIRTHS — The...
THE WORLD



Attacked on Mississippi Rights Hike

MEMPHIS (UPI) — James Meredith was shot and wounded today as he led a march of thousands of Negroes through Memphis.

James Meredith was shot and wounded by a sniper today as he led a march of thousands of Negroes through Memphis. The march was met with...
The march was met with...
The march was met with...

The Dallas Morning News

Vol. 117—No. 250

Phone RT-4611

Dallas, Texas, Tuesday, June 7, 1966

4 Sections

Price 10 Cents

James Meredith Shot in Mississippi Crull Resigns as City Manager of Dallas

McDonald Named Acting Replacement

By DON MITCHELL

Edward Crull, Dallas city manager for more than 12 years, resigned Monday and the appointment of Don McDonald was expected to require less than an hour. The resignation effective June 6, was announced at a news conference at the city council meeting and was accepted with much aplomb.

Crull, who had served the city for 12 years, had a professional background. He had served as the city's chief of planning and as acting city manager in 1957-58.

Crull had resigned a position in the past of the Texas National Bank and as vice-president of the Dallas 1962, a wholly owned bank subsidiary.

McDonald, who has both with the city



White Man Seized After Road Ambush

MEMPHIS, Miss. (UPI) — Negro James Meredith was shot and wounded by a white man Monday as he walked down a highway on the second day of his march through Mississippi.

Meredith, it was reported, was hit from the rear by a white pickup truck.

Police officers, who were on duty at the time, seized the white man.

Meredith, who has both with the city

THE BOSTON HERALD

OUR ALL TO BE HONORED WITH

WED. COXXXI NO. 123 LATE CITY EDITION MA 6-3000 BOSTON, TUESDAY, JUNE 7, 1966—FORTY PAGES

Meredith Shot by Miss. Sniper

Will Live; White Man Arrested

"That is one purpose of my march—to get rid of fear. I've had one report that somebody would kill me."

—James Meredith as he set out on his march.

A 'Hunted Animal' on Highway 51

By JAMES R. TABERY
HEINZ ANDERSON
—Sergeant James Meredith was shot and wounded by a sniper sniper Monday as he marched down a highway on the second day of his march through Mississippi.



James Meredith Writes in Pain After Ambush

Doctors said Meredith would survive the bullet, which struck his chest, but he would be hospitalized for several days. Meredith said he was not hurt and that he would continue his march.



McDonald was named acting city manager Monday. He had served as the city's chief of planning and as acting city manager in 1957-58. Crull had resigned a position in the past of the Texas National Bank and as vice-president of the Dallas 1962, a wholly owned bank subsidiary.

DiNatale Wins Acquittal; Jury Out 4 Hours

DiNatale Wins Acquittal; Jury Out 4 Hours

A Dallas County jury at 4 o'clock Monday night acquitted Anthony DiNatale of both counts of conspiracy.

The jury, which had been deliberating since 10 o'clock, returned its verdict in the case of DiNatale, who was charged with conspiracy to defraud the state of Texas.

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Meredith, who has both with the city

"We Had a T-Spr..."

Benoit Case to Jurors

When you need us, we deliver. Send your photographs to us and we will send you the best of them.

'th Drop

When you need us, we deliver. Send your photographs to us and we will send you the best of them.

'Meredith Was Hunted Animal'

Seattle Post-Intelligencer

THE QUALITY NEWSPAPER OF THE GREAT NORTHWEST

GREENSBORO DAILY NEWS

North Carolina's
Finest Newspaper
24 Pages—2 Sections

1964 And Fair
Illustrated Today
Expanded Staff Today
High in Line 4
Open Date Page 1, Section 1

Vol. 127, No. 141

GREENSBORO, N.C., TUESDAY MORNING, JUNE 7, 1966

PHOTO: Tom Givens

Gun Shots Wound Meredith During Mississippi March

GREENSBORO, N.C. (AP)— Negro James Meredith was shot and wounded by a sniper Monday as he led a march of 100,000 people on the second day of the 1966 March Against Missions.

Meredit was shot in the right arm and leg as he led a march of 100,000 people on the second day of the 1966 March Against Missions.

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Meredit Entering Miss.



Grounds Heads For A Safe...



... And A Very Close Splashdown

Belgium New Site Of NATO

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AP)— France's pact with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to build a major missile base and divide it in Belgium as a new site for an atomic military headquarters. It is the first time that the pact has been used to build a major missile base.

Hurricane Is Heading For Cuba

MIAMI, Fla. (AP)— A fast-moving storm headed for the Gulf of Mexico Monday, and a major hurricane was expected to strike the island in the next few days.

Good Spirits Disappeared As Gunfire Lashed Road

BY JAMES H. CALAN... THE TROUSERS, early in the morning, were a scene of good spirits. The road was lined with people, and the atmosphere was festive.

No Compromise Buddhists Hold Firm On Ky's Resignation

SAYON, South Viet Nam (AP)— Buddhist monks Monday announced they would stand firm against a government proposal to accept the resignation of a Buddhist leader.

Dr. Frank Says Let Court Rule On Speaker Ban

Dr. Frank says... The speaker ban... The court should rule on the matter.

Supreme Court Orders Freedom Or New Trial For Dr. Sheppard

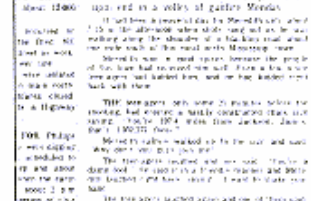
WASHINGTON (AP)— The Supreme Court Monday ordered freedom or a new trial for Dr. Sheppard.

Commission May Oversee Viet Vote

U.N. Envoy Gives U.S. Position... The commission may oversee the Viet vote.

Eyewitness Stunned By Shooting

A man with a gun... Eyewitness stunned by shooting.



... And A Very Close Splashdown

Astronauts Bring Space Craft Home With Pinpoint Accuracy

CAPE KENNEDY (UPI)— Three astronauts Tuesday brought the Freedom 7 space capsule home with pinpoint accuracy.

Supreme Court Orders Freedom Or New Trial For Dr. Sheppard

WASHINGTON (AP)— The Supreme Court Monday ordered freedom or a new trial for Dr. Sheppard.

Commission May Oversee Viet Vote

U.N. Envoy Gives U.S. Position... The commission may oversee the Viet vote.

Moore Critical Of Shooting

Moore critical of shooting... Moore's criticism of the shooting.

Dr. Frank Says Let Court Rule On Speaker Ban

Dr. Frank says... Let court rule on speaker ban.



... And A Very Close Splashdown



... And A Very Close Splashdown



... And A Very Close Splashdown



... And A Very Close Splashdown

U.P.I. REPORTER

OFFICE OF ROGER TATARIAN
VICE-PRESIDENT AND EDITOR



UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL, 220 EAST 42ND STREET, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017

June 9, 1965

One of the hidden but significant costs of operating a world-wide news service is the expense of insuring the subscribers against outside chance -- against things that probably won't happen, but might.

In the Falkland Islands, for example, very little happens that is of great moment to the outside world. But there is always the outside chance that it might. So periodically a retainer goes out from the London office to the correspondent who flies the U.P.I. flag in this distant South Atlantic outpost. There are literally thousands of similar spots around the world where this form of insurance is in force on a continuing basis.

There are also other forms of insurance that have to be bought a la carte every day in dozens of different situations around the world. As with so much risk insurance, it usually turns out not to be needed but that in no way reduces the wisdom of obtaining it.

When the cruise ship Viking Princess went down in the Caribbean a few months ago there was uncertainty as to whether survivors would be taken to San Juan, Puerto Rico, or Kingston, Jamaica. San Juan is a bureau point, so there was no problem there. But the correspondent in Jamaica would certainly require reinforcement to cope with scores of survivors. The only possible plane connection was from New York. And the New York staffer who landed in Kingston a few hours later found a message waiting for him at the airport to catch the next plane home -- the survivors had, after all, been taken to San Juan.

The recent Dominican elections posed the problem in another way. Santo Domingo is also a bureau point. But given the recent history of the country, did not the possibility of attendant violence require an additional correspondent? The answer was obviously yes. The fact that the elections produced no major upheaval made the answer no less correct.

There was never any doubt that James Meredith would have to be accompanied every step of the way, both by a reporter and a photographer, on his walk through Mississippi. There was nothing inevitable about what happened to Meredith; I doubt anyone can honestly say he felt all along that it was more probable than possible that something untoward might occur. But given all the circumstances it would have been irresponsible to ignore the outside chance.

So staffer Ken Cazalas and photographer Sam Parrish were there when Meredith was shot. Their performance was press association journalism at its best for accuracy, speed and breadth of detail. I am confident that the congratulations they received would have been no less warranted had the other service not met with adversity in its coverage.

If there is a moral to the Meredith episode, it can only point once again to the benefits of having access to both basic news services. This is far more than a question of checks and balances on a Meredith story, although that alone is an important consideration. It also assures an editor countless

times a day that he is giving his readers the best of both possible worlds, that he has a choice between a diversity of viewpoints and of the enterprise that only competition can foster.

Roger Tatarian

