



Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

6 RAYMOND STREET, N.W., ATLANTA 14, GEORGIA • 680-0331

702 Wall Street
McComb, Mississippi
39648

(601) 684-9414

COPY OF AFFIDAVIT

{ STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
{ COUNTY OF PIKE
{ CITY OF McCOMB

Russell Bennett
9127 5th Avenue, Inglewood California

Being duly sworn deposes and says: to-wit: I am a citizen of the United States of America and am a white participant in civil rights and desegregation work. On Wednesday, September 2, 1964, at about 2:00 p.m., the following happened:

I took Brian Peterson, a white volunteer on the Mississippi Summer Project of McComb to the Western Union office on North Front Street in downtown McComb, driving him there in my volkwagen. We parked two doors south of the office on North Front Street. Peterson left the car and entered the Western Union office, while I remained alone, in the car. A man put his head through the window on the right hand side of the car and asked me who I was and what was I doing in McComb. He was about 25 years old, a nice looking fellow with dark hair, wearing a white T-shirt. I told him my name; I said I was a minister and that I was involved in civil rights work in McComb. He then told me to remove my glasses. I did so, and he struck me in the face.

A group of men had been standing on the opposite side of the street when I parked, and two or three came over and pulled me out of the car. They struck me, I was dazed and briefly lost consciousness. I remember that I was lying down in the street that at one point I tried to get up, and that I was then hit and kicked. I stayed on the ground for several moments, and after they had left, I crawled into my car. I found my glasses, and waited in the car for Peterson to return, which he did, about five minutes later.

When Peterson got into the car, a man, coming out of a store, hit him on the back of the head through the open window of the car. Peterson rolled up the car window and we drove back to the Freedom House at 702 Wall Street, in Burgland. While still downtown, I noticed McComb Chief of Police, George Guy, following us in his car. He followed us to the Freedom House, where we told him what had happened. Chief Guy seemed surprised and regretful that this could happen in McComb, but was doubt-

"One Man, One Vote"



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ful as to whether he would be able to apprehend the assailants.

Throughout the time that I was being beaten, there were people walking back and forth on the street, or standing and watching. They made no attempt to help me.

I had been in McComb about ten days, working with the Council of Federated Organizations. I participated in voter registration work, both in persuading Negro citizens of Pike County to go to the County courthouse in Magnolia to apply to register to vote, and in accompanying them to the courthouse for that purpose.

"One Man, One Vote"