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AFFADAVIT

My name is Samuel Block. I am 24 years old. I reside at 708 Avenue N, Greenwood, Mississippi. I am a field secretary for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, working in Greenwood on voter registration activities.

We left Greenwood about 6pm. Monday, June 8, 1964, enroute to Atlanta, Georgia. We arrived in Starkville, Miss., about 80 miles from Greenwood. We made a couple of stops in Starkville to visit friends. We left about 9pm. After getting 20 miles from Starkville, a car pulled up from the side of the highway, driven by a white man, a '56 Mercury, black and white. We passed the car, he caught up behind us. He blew his horn. He came up very close to the back of our car. He cut off his lights. We thought he would shoot into our car, because our car was very well known in Otterbein and Lowndes Counties in voter registration work. The car trailed us for 5 miles, he kept coming up to us and falling back and turning his lights on and off. When we came to Mayhaw Junction, he turned left.

We were pulled over by Mississippi State Highway Patrolman Roy Elder, badge number 358. The car had license tag MHP 97. He ordered the driver, James Black, 17, of Ruleville, Miss., to get out of the car. He got out and the highway patrolman asked him, why did he try to force that man in the Black and White Mercury off the highway? We all replied that we hadn't tried to force anyone off the highway. He said, "You all are the niggers that are trying to change our way of life in the State of Mississippi." He then ordered all of us to get out of the car on the right side. There was an unidentified white man in the car with the highway patrolman, dressed in a black suit. Elder then opened the trunk of our car, and saw literature for Mrs. Hamer, a ~~political~~ congressional candidate, and brochures on the Mississippi Summer Project and Freedom Schools. He took the literature out, and put it in the back of his car.

He called the sheriff, who came and got it out of his car with a long stick in his hand, ; Elder told the Sheriff, "these are the niggers who are trying to change our way of life."

Elder said, "that nigger over there tried to run a man off the highway." Sheriff said, "which one, that little short nigger over there?" Pointing at me. Elder said, "no, that big fuzzy-lipped nigger over there," pointing at James Black.

Elder ordered the sheriff to carry Charles McLaurin, James Jones, Willie Peacock, and I back to the county jail. They Handcuffed all of us, so tight that they almost cut our wrists. The sheriff put all four of us in the back of the car and carried us back to the county courthouse, which is also the county jail. He took our names and checked our belongings and then ordered the trusty and the jailor to carry us upstairs and lock us up. Before we went upstairs, there was a phone call, which the jailor answered and he gave it to the sheriff. It was a lady asking him permission to come and visit the jail that night. He told her, "No, because we have some very very important business tonight, and we don't have time, but you can come first thing in the morning."

He then told the jailor, "these are the niggers that are trying to change our way of life; they are working for the NAACP and CORE." The jailer replied, "The river is just right, let's carry them out and rifle them right now."

Then James Black walked in with Elder. His nose was bleeding very badly, and his eyes were swollen very badly and he had dirt in the right side of his hair. Elder said, "this nigger here, he can't even stan on his own two feet. He fell up side of the car."

They then carried us up stairs and put us all in the same cell. They didn't tell us we were under arrest. About five minutes later, about 10:00 pm. a white trusty along with a Negro trusty named Moore came to get James Black. They ~~just~~ questioned him about a draft registration card that he had in his pocket that didn't belong to him. (Black had a billfold belonging to someone who had left it at his house.) He stayed down about five minutes, and then they brought him back.

The white trusty returned about 10 minutes later, told all of us to line up at the door of the cell. He said, "they want to interview all of you down-stairs." He pointed to me and said, "we want to take you first."

They carried me downstairs first and outside in back of the jail. Inside were the Negro trusty, the white trusty and the jailer. I walked outside with Roy Elder, and he began questioning me about trying to change their way of life. I told him we weren't trying to do that. He then hit me on my left cheek with his fist. I staggered and fell back to the window, and he grabbed me and hit me in the groin with his fist very hard. I fell down and he kicked me hard in the shin. I got up and he said, "tell me the truth nigger, tell me the damn truth." "Where are you going?" I told him we were headed to Atlanta for a staff meeting. Then another highway patrolman wearing brown horn-rimmed glasses walked up and Elder asked why did you have all of that god-damn literature in the car? I told him I didn't put the literature in the car. The other cop said, "its your car, isn't it? You mean to tell me you don't know what's in your car?" Elder said, no that isn't his car. Elder said, "come on and tell me the damn truth, nigget, just why are you all here, had any white person mistreated you in the state of Mississippi?" I answered "yes, you are mistreating me now." He then hit me again with his fist on the left cheek and knocled me back. He shouted, "stand up, stand up!" "what are you, a Negro or a nigger?" I said a Negro. He said what? And drew back his fist again, he then asked me the same question again. To keep him from hitting me again, I told him I was a nigger. He said, alright, go on back in. I could just barely make it back upstairs to the cell. After I got back into the cell, I fell to the concrete floor and blacked out and lafd there for about 20 minutes.

The same procedure was gone through for all the others except Black. We requested to make a telephone call several times and were refused. We spent the night in the cell. In the morning, we again requested to make a call, about 9:30 and were again refused.

About 10:00 am, the jailer and the trusty told us to come down to be fingerprinted and photographed, which we did.

The sheriff said we were charged with transporting illegal literature. Black was also charged with transporting illegal literature and running a stop sign. Afterwards, Elder and another highway patrolman, different from last night, came and carried us over to the justice of the peace office. We went in the front and out the back of the office and were put in the back of three highway cars. We were carried about 8 ~~miles~~ miles west on route 82, to judge R. V. Whittaker's office. We stood in there for about 20 minutes. The judge, some white citizens and lawyers went into the back of the judge's office, along with about 5 or 6 highway patrolmen. They talked for about 20 minutes. Then they carried us outside, handcuffed, except James Black. They put us under a tree and were guarded by a highway patrolman. They kept Black inside. After about 10 minutes, they called us individually into the office. I was called third. The judge questioned me, along with Roy Elder. He questioned me about, (general personal information), then James Black. How long had I known him? I said yesterday was my first time meeting him. Judge Whittaker said, "you can sit there and act a damn mother-fucking fool if you want too, but we are trying to help this 17 year old boy, whom we have two charges on." He then questioned me about SNCC, the summer project and about my leaders. This lasted about 15 minutes. I had been sworn in. I again asked for legal counselor. He said, "we are not trying you, we are trying this boy here, and you are a witness to him." ~~He said when we get ready to try you, we will allow you to get legal counsel.~~ Then he told me to go back outside. This continued until every-body had been questioned.

Then a man who I think was the county prosecuting attorney came out and told us, "boys, I don't have anything against you all for working for your cause, but the laws are on the book and they must be obeyed. And when you come into my town, I want you to obey all laws. I am going to drop the charges on you all and see if I can get the judge to fine him, (Black), and if he didn't appeal, to drop the other charges in Otterway county. But if he does appeal, the other charges will remain." He talked to the judge. We were called back to judge's office, and the judge told all the people in the room, "take a good look at these niggers, because it is more than sure that you will be seeing a lot of them this summer working on the Mississippi Summer Project. I don't want to catch none of you around here any more. If we see you again, we are going to get you, because we don't want you around. If we don't get you the colored people here will get you because they don't want you around either." We were then carried back to the county jail. We paid \$28 fine. Plus \$2.08 for car storage fee and we were released.

We then drove to Atlanta. We went to Dr. James D. Palmer in Atlanta and were examined. He said I had a very badly bruised muscle in my cheek. And in my back and groin, and he told me to get plenty of rest and gave me a prescription for pain and told me

to soak in a hot tub. He said tomorrow I would be sorer.

Samuel Theodore Block
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The above statement sworn and subscribed to before me this 11
day of June 1964.

Honore Julius Bond
Notary Public
Notary
My Commission