



Murdered: Sammy Young

News Release
STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SNCC WORKER MURDERED

TUSKEGEE, ALABAMA, January 4, 1966 -- Civil rights worker Samuel Young, 22, was murdered here early this morning.

Young, a SNCC worker and a student at Tuskegee Institute, had been helping Negroes register to vote at the Macon county courthouse earlier in the day when he was pushed by ~~the~~ one of the registrars who threatened him with a knife. Later that evening, Young was told to use a segregated restroom in a gas station. His body was found in an alley near the station.

Earlier in the day, Young had reported to the Atlanta SNCC office that he was helping take 40 Negroes to register to vote. One of the registrar's told Young's co-worker, SNCC staffer Jimmy Rogers, "I'm tired of fooling around with you, I'm going to spill your guts all over the floor."

SNCC workers in Atlanta reported the incident in the courthouse to the FBI and the Justice Department and urged federal intervention and protection -- before the murder occurred -- but federal officials did not appear.

Later, last night, Young went to a service station to get gas and to use the restroom. When he asked to go to the rest room, the attendant told him to go to the back hole where Negroes go. Young refused. He asked the attendant if he'd heard of the Civil Rights Act. The attendant pulled a gun, fired one shot but missed. Young got into a car and drove to the police station five blocks away and asked for an investigation. It was reported that he went back to the station when he realized the police wouldn't help him.

Dean Phillips of Tuskegee Institute was called about 2 a.m. by the police who told him to come down and identify a body. He took several people with him and saw Young's body with a single bullet wound in the head.

John Lewis, SNCC chairman, issued the following statement:

We call upon the President of the United States to make the presence and the forces of the Federal government visible in the state of Alabama by ordering federal marshals to the following counties in Alabama: Macon, Greene, Barbour, Lowndes, Dallas, Hale, Wilcox, Bullock, Marengo, Sumter, Peary and all others where violence and terror are the order of the day. These federal marshals should have the power to make on-the-spot arrests, in order to protect, not just the civil rights, but the lives and limbs of the Negro people and civil rights workers of Alabama.

If the federal government cannot provide protection for people seeking civil rights guaranteed by the constitution, then people will have no protection but themselves. We find it increasingly difficult to ask the people of the Black Belt to remain nonviolent. We have asked the President for federal marshals for over three years. If our plea is not answered, we have no choice.

Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach addressed a civil rights rally in Mobile, Alabama, January 2, and said that nightriders seeking to put fear in the hearts of Negroes will run "straight into the federal government."

Yesterday an FBI agent listened to the report given him of Young and Rogers being threatened by the registrar in Tuskegee, and said, "You've done your duty. We'll take care of it." He then hung up.