

Attention
Charles R. McLaurin

October 29, 1962

On the morning of October 26, 1962 at the Coahoma County Court House in Clarksdale, Mississippi, at 10:45 am James Jones and I took two persons down to register, James took them into the registrar's office and told Mr. Smith who is the registrar that they wanted to fill out registration forms. Mr. Smith took them into the next office.

James was standing in the hall when Mr. Smith came out where he was and asked him his name and where he was from James told him his name and that he lived in Jackson, Mr. Smith went back into the office. About five minutes later a man came up to James and asked him his name and his business there, James told him his name and that he was working in voter registration, the man told James that he didn't want people from Jackson, Tennessee or any place else teaching people in Clarksdale how to vote. The man then told James to (get out of the office and don't come back) James did not say anything but went out in front of the building.

I returned to the court house thirty-five minutes later, James told me what had happened and that the people was in the court house, I went into registrar's office and asked him if the court house wasn't a public place, and anyone with business there should be ~~able~~ able to use it, Mr. Smith did not say anything, I then asked him if we could stand in the outer office he said he didn't mind. We walked out in the hall, Mr. Smith came out and asked me my name and where I was from. I told him I was from Jackson and that I was also working in voter registration. Mr. Smith went back into his office. James and I walked out in front of the court house and walked around the block.

I saw a police car pulling in on the side of the court house ~~with~~ ^{with} two men in it, one of them was in uniform, the other I could not tell. The officer in uniform got out and went into the court house by the side door, James and I walked across the streets and watched for the people to come out. About forty or fifty minutes, I saw the people coming out of the court house, James and I went over to meet them, one of the persons was old and could not walk very well, asked me if I would bring the car around front, I said yes and went to get the car. Smith walked out of the court house and across the streets, when I got in the car and started around in front of the place Smith raised his hand over his head, then he walked back ~~to~~ across the streets and into the court house, as I pulled up in front and started to stop I saw the police car turn the corner, I then pull off and went around the block the police followed me around back and stoped me. I got out of the car and went to see what he wanted.

The officer in the car asked to see my Drivers License, I gave them to him, he then asked me what I was doing there I told him I worked on voter registration. He then said, "Nigger I'm not going to have none of your shit, you son of a bitch, do you know the way out of town?" I said, yes. He said, "Nigger! can't you say yes sir? I'll beat your dam ass now! You get your ass down there and pay these tickets and don't let me see you again or I'll beat your ass." The man next to him asked how much to charge him, "Charge the son of a bitch \$26.00 On both charges" Nigger you got \$52.00? he said, I said, no, then your ass is going to jail," he said. The officer then told me to get in the car, I asked if I could get a cab for the lady and man in front of the court house. He ask what kind of

'lady is it? I told him a Negro lady. He said, why didn't you say it was a nigger woman? I asked if I could go call a cab, he told me to shut up.

I had been gone about fifteen minutes when James came to see what had happened to me. The officer saw him walk up to the car and called him to the car. He asked James what he was doing there, James told him he ~~was~~ worked on voter registration. He asked James if he knew the way out of town, James said yes. Nigger can't you see I'm an officer, say yes sir to me. James said he didn't have to say yes sir to him. Nigger let me see how fast you can get out of here. James asked him what he ~~said~~, he told James he was under arrest for interfering with the law, to get in the car.

At the police station we found out that the officer was the Chief of police, Ben Collins. We ~~was~~ booked and put in jail. We ~~was~~ there about five or six minutes, bonds was posted amounting to \$100.00. We also had to pay a \$1000 wrecker cost.

We decided to forfeit bond rather than run the risk of a higher fine or incur the legal expenses of an appeal.