Dear Lyman Col,

It is now about 12:30 at night on a Saturday on a Saturday night. I am tired. I have just finished driving the last of the Juvenals who were arrested today. They were being let out of the jail four at a time about an hour apart and left to walk home. (Juvenals, by the way, are those under 16 not 18). The last group was let out at about 12 o'clock. After we drove them home we stopped to pick up a coke at one of the Negro restaurants, while we were in there sitting at the both (we were both white) three different people came up to us and began talking to us very friendly. They all said they thought that we were doing a wonderful thing etc. I mention this because it is completely typical. I have yet to talk in front of the state a complete food and clothes that were sent and distributed in the county. They were being let out of the jail four at a time beginning at 10:15 A.M. (We had told to work at SCLC) and at intervals during the day send them out to picket downtown, that way the maximum number of people would see them being arrested, and it would also keep the police on the streets for the longest time (there presence in large numbers greatly inhibits business). The first group of 7 left from the funeral home about 10:15 A.M. (We had sneak our demonstrators into the funeral parlor and into Walkers restaurant and also smuggled the signs into them, all during the day the cops were looking for the place were we were issuing from in the hopes of confiscating the signs and stopping us as soon as we walked out of the door. As it was we were always on the street and picketing before they saw us). Anyway the first group of 7 left from the funeral home, the picket captain of this group was a 15 year old girl, all but 2 of the team were girls one of whom was 13 and another 14, this was typical of the composition of the teams. Anyway this team got a full block before they were arrested. A few minutes after they left the funeral home a team left Walkers cafe, they also got only a block. At 11:30 I sent a 3rd team out from Walkers, they only got 50 steps before they were arrested (the cops turned the corner a second after we left the cafe, this blew the cafe and we had to move everybody through the alleys to the funeral home while there attention was taken with arresting the team of pickets). The next team left from the funeral home, by careful planning of the route they were able to get a full block before being arrested. The next group (1:00 P.M.) which was the one I went with got a block before being arrested, this was the largest group with 12 pickets and instead of being driven the few blocks to the jail we were marched down the middle of the street. The next group only got 1 block, and the last group was arrested for walking along and singing, they didn't have any signs because we had run out.
There were also a few people arrested for passing out leaflets or preaching on the corner. All in all there were either 56 or 57 persons arrested, about 22 of those were under 16 (mostly girls, the over 16 were mostly girls too). We were in for about 4 hours the juvenals longer. I can not describe to how it affects me to see these young kids participating in the movement while there parents are to frightened. 8 year old girl who leads singing, 12 & 13 year olds who go to jail and get beaten and tear gassed, and cattle prodded, 15 year olds who are picket captains. One of the 14 year old girls talked back to a cop in the jail and got slapped around a bit but she was not seriously hurt. Well, our trial comes up soon. FOUND OUT more about that girl that was slapped. Her name is Vernoica Smith and she is either 12 or 13. She insisted on being called Miss Veronica Smith so the deputy slapped her twice and then hit her down with his club.

Letters are funny things. I started this letter Saturday night, it is now Teusday night. Yesterday I was arrested by Jim Clark's Deputy for Contributing to the Delinquency of Minors. What happened was that I went to the trial of the under 16 pickets Monday and Judge Reynolds ordered me out of the court, later I went back in (a damn fool thing to do) and the Judge ordered me arrested for contributing to the delinquency of minors. I was thrown into a cell (I was never allowed to make a phone call) with a White man who, until he was arrested for armed robbery, was a member of Jim Clarks posse. He was one of the men who was mounted on a horse and carried a bull whip. It was not a pleasant stay (I was in 24 hours) he only knew me around one, injuring my shoulder, but I had to listen to his constant haranguing, which was pretty sickening.

5 of the teen age girl who were in court were also in jail for contempt of court they "got smart" with the judge. No one knows how long they are in for but I could hear them being beat-up every time the started to sing, I knew that they were being beat-up because I could hear the slaps and their screams. These girls are all 12,13 or 14. One of them is Veronica Smith.

It looks like Alabama is going to get hot again. In fact hot is an inadequate word, what is going to happen this June in Montgomery is going to make Birmingham and Selma look like a candle next to an atom bomb. The plan is to get 10,000 demonstrators from all over the state to go to Montgomery and demonstrate to get rid of Wallace and to demand a fair and free election for all offices in the state. The idea is that if they put the 10,000 in jail ( and we are going to demonstrate so that they have only three choices- 1-close down the government and the city of Montgomery, 2-put all of the demonstrators in jail or 3-disperse us by force) we will get another 10,000. Actually the feeling is that this is going to be the rough one, the final push, the show down. We arn't kidding and Wallace isn't kidding. It is going to be a LONG HOT SUMMER only I mean really LONG and really HOT.

Bruce Hartford

[Notes added 2018 by Bruce Hartford
1. "Veronica Smith" is a pseudonym used to protect her and her family from Citizens Council retaliation in the event that some portion of the letter was later published in California.
2. The anticipated Montgomery protests described at the end referred to a campaign proposed and advocated by Jim Bevel. Ultimately, the campaign did not get off the ground and was shelved in favor of the SCOPE project.
3. Some of the dates and days are in error, May 8, for example, was a Saturday not a Friday. And this letter was probably started in the early morning of May 23 and completed May 25]