

A F F I D A V I T

I, Mr. Willis Wright, 23, of 405 Broad Street, Greenwood, Mississippi, (no phone) being duly sworn depose and say: to wit:

On Wednesday and Thursday, March 25 and 26, 1964, I went up to the Leflore County Courthouse in order to register to vote. I have been trying to register to vote since June 1963 when I graduated from the Broad Street public high school, Greenwood, Mississippi. I had tried five times previously to register to vote, but was told that I had failed each time, but I was never given a reason why I had failed. The person who talked and dealt with me each time was Mrs. Martha Lamb, the Registrar. Both Wednesday the 25th and Thursday the 26th of March 1964, I came to the courthouse to register, but both times there were too many people already in the registrar's office for me to get in there at the same time. So both days I joined the picket line which was outside the courthouse to show Mrs. Martha Lamb and the public that I wanted to register to vote. I carried signs, changing them with others so that we all could carry different signs. I carried signs: "One Man - One Vote, Vote For Freedom, All Men Are Created Equal, Register To Vote Not Tomorrow But Today." Both days I noticed a policeman across the street watching us. This man was new, and had not been seen before the 25th nor after the 26th. He apparently had been hired specially, maybe from another town. He had a white helmet, a city policeman's uniform on, rode a motorcycle, had a full face, bluish-gray eyes, about 5'10" tall, brown hair, and was seemingly the youngest policeman there. He just observed while the local police were taking pictures of all participants both days. On Thursday, after picketing, at about five minutes after 12 noon, as I was walking to my job, this policeman yelled at me: "You think wouldn't anybody run over you, don't you. You black mother fucker." I work at Angelo's Cafe, 700 block of Carrollton Avenue. Jimmy Ballots is the manager. After reporting to work, Ballots sent me to get some canned goods at the Russel's Wholesale Company. As I was walking back with the goods, on Carrollton, about one block from the cafe, this same policeman spotted me from his motorcycle. He pulled over and said, "Hey where are you going?" I said, "I am going to Angelo's Cafe." He said, "That's where you work?" I said, "Yes." He said, "You mean to tell me that you picket in the morning and work up there in the afternoon?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Well then, we'll see what we can do about that." I said, "Alright, thank you." He left me and I saw him go into the cafe. He had left before I got back. Nothing was said that day. That was Thursday, the last day of the pay week. Friday, at 12 noon, when I appeared for work, Mr. Ballot met me on the outside with my check in his hand. He said: "Have your check cashed right in here at B&R's. I will have to lay you off right now. But I will let you know when I need you again." I had worked for him the two summers between my sophomore and junior years and between my junior and senior years. On March 7th, he asked me to start working with him again. We had gotten along real well. I believe that the sole reason that I was fired was this policeman telling my boss to fire me because of my voter registration activities.

Signed: Willis Wright

Sworn to and signed before me this 10th day of April, 1964

Signed James Carter, Notary Public