

Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

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Roy Lee
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I have lived in Mississippi all of my life. I work at the Bates Service Station on Summit Street in the City of McComb. I am active in civil rights and aid workers at the Council of Federated Organizations in their voter registration campaign.

I have been arrested three times since July, 1964. The first time I was arrested at the Burgland Supermarket right after it had been bombed. This is a Negro supermarket in the City of McComb. This was just one of the many bombings in McComb against Negro citizens and I was very upset. I got on my knees and began praying that the Lord would stop these bombings. Big John Sharpe, a policeman in the city of McComb saw me down on my knees in front of the supermarket and came toward me with a gun as if to strike me. Several C.O.F.O. workers began to holler "don't hit him," and covered me with their bodies. I went to the C.O.F.O. house. I had left my shoe at the bombing and went back when I was picked up by two patrolmen and arrested. One policeman was Buddy Miller. I do not know the other's name. Buddy Miller told me, "Nigger next time there is a bombing you'd better not show up or I am going to blow your brains out." I stayed in jail for three days and was charged with breach of the peace.

I was arrested the second time after Mrs. Alyene Quin's home was bombed. I was coming from a mass meeting with C.O.F.O. workers when we ran into a big blockade of policemen -- about a hundred. They called me "nigger" and threatened to kill me. Everybody in the car was taken to jail and they made us stay for two or three hours to take pictures. They warned me that if I stayed with Jesse Harris, the C.O.F.O. leader, that I would be in the penitentiary. They began fingerprinting, but decided not to and let me go.

The last time I was arrested, I was at the service station when Eddie Smith, a patrolman, came and picked me up. He told me R.R. Warren, the Sheriff, wanted to talk to me. Some man in Chief of Police, Guy's office told me, "Nigger, we down here to help you." He threatened me and cursed me continuously. He kept me for about an hour and a half. He tried to make me admit I knew something about the bombing of Mrs. Quin's home and was there when it happened. Though, I wasn't.

"One Man, One Vote