

Of the many affidavits available on general treatment of Negroes in Mississippi, the following is one example of both unprovoked police hostility and what may be called the "semantics of race." It is worth noting that the event described took place in the largest and most cosmopolitan city in the state.

WILLIE FUNCHES, being duly sworn, deposes and says:

On July 5, 1964, at about midnight, I was walking from Farish Street to the COFO office on Lynch Street with Harry Lowe and Jimmy Lee Wilcox. At the corner of Poindexter and Lynch we were passing a police car which was parked there. This police car had a cross on the side and a red light on the top, an "accident car." As we passed by, one of the two policemen in the car said, "Hey, nigger, were you throwing stones?" I said, "No sir." Jimmy Lee Wilcox said, "No, we weren't." The policeman said, "Can't you say 'yes sir' to me, nigger? That's one of them smart niggers standing in the middle there (referring to Jimmy)." He then said, "Don't you lie to me, nigger, or I'll make your face blacker than his (referring to Jimmy)."

They called in and told headquarters that they had the black s.o.b.s who had thrown the bricks--they had the little nigger in the red shirt. My shirt was red. Two other police cars came up. The policeman in the first car said that he would take off his belt and beat my rump if I was identified. Another car came up and one of the two policemen in that car said, "Yeah, I want that little nigger with the red shirt especially." The policeman who had said this snatched me out of the car and put me in the other car. Then he hit me in the stomach four times. Then he asked me where I lived. He asked me if I had been throwing rocks and when I said no he called me a "goddamned liar." Then he told me to get "your goddamned ass on the ground out there with the rest of the niggers." The other cop had brought Jimmy back and we were all sitting on the ground next to the car. The policeman who had been talking to Jimmy then said, "I ought to kick all three of your teeth in." He said, "Get up, nigger, and if I catch any of you three in any of the demonstrations I'll shoot all of you niggers and smoke my cigar on top of you and think nothing about it." Then he said, "You niggers go home and let's run." We ran and I met my boss who told me to come to the COFO office and tell you about it.

(signed) Willie Funches