



# Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

6 RAYMOND STREET, N.W., ATLANTA 14, GEORGIA • 688-0331

702 Wall Street  
McComb, Mississippi  
39648

(601) 684-9414

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{ COUNTY OF PIKE

Richard S. Sternberger  
95 Sterling Avenue, White Plains N.Y. WH 8-1781

At approximately 10:15 a.m. on the morning of October 26, 1964, I escorted two women to the Courthouse at Magnolia for the purpose of registering to vote. As we set foot on the parking lot, I was met by a deputy sheriff who inquired concerning the reason for our being there. He informed me that court was in a session and that it was not possible to register. I told him that we would wait until it recessed. He said that I could not and ordered us off the parking lot. I told him that it was public property and that he had no right to order us off. He repeated his order several times and then threatened to place us under arrest if we did not comply. He did place us under arrest. After he frisked me, he then gave me such a hard shove that it was not necessary for me to take many steps to reach the door of the jail. I was detained in the jail for forty-eight hours under the worst conditions imaginable. The cell was filthy; there was no place for us to sleep except the concrete ledge around the floor and the floor. There was not enough room for us to lie on the ledge; there were so many in the cell, it was necessary for some of us to lie on the floor. We were subjected to the most vile obscenities by the jailer. At no time were we informed what the nature of the charges were, from any of the law enforcement officials; it was only when our lawyer visited us that we were so informed. I was not permitted to make a phone call to anyone. The jailer suggested to me that this was my punishment for telling so many lies to the editor of the White Plains ReporterDispatch. Monday evening, the editor of my home town paper called me and I told him what had happened. The jailer began to curse at me and called me a liar; at one point he began to bang on the desk with his phone so that I could not hear. He also made a slurring remark about my being Jewish. The editor and a reporter of his were able to hear all of this over the phone. Each time I asked to make a phone call he either did not answer or answered with obscenities.

At one point, when a second group of people attempting to register to vote was brought (not long after I was incarcerated) I heard a woman screaming and yelling for someone to stop hurting her. Soon I saw Mendy Samstein being shoved into our cell so that he nearly hit the opposite wall when he tried to aid the woman

*"One Man, One Vote"*



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was shouting. The next day, I also saw Marshall Ganz being shoved into our cell.

On the evening of Tuesday, October 27, 1964, I received a call from Senator Keating but was refused permission to speak to him.

The jailer used the vilest language when speaking to the Negroes, especially when they demanded disinfectant and a mop to clean out the filth of their cell. He constantly referred to them as "niggers" with a few choice adjectives thrown in for good measure. At approximately 10:15, on Wednesday October 28, 1964, we were taken to the front of the jail and told that the charges were dropped and that we were free to go.

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