

I am 21 years old and reside in Los Angeles, California.

On June 22, 1964, at 11:15 A.M., a police car pulled up to the curb as I was walking down Paul Edwards St. near 5th St. [in Clarksdale]. I had just come out of a house after talking with a Negro woman about voter registration. The man driving the police car, Officer A_____, called me over to the car and asked me what I was doing. I told him, "I am helping to register voters," and he said, "Don't you know that the niggers don't want any help? Don't you know you're not wanted here? What are you son-of-a-bitch bastards doing here anyway?" I responded, "We're just trying to register voters." Officer A_____ said, "Get in the car." I asked, "What is the charge?" and "Are we under arrest?" but Officer A_____ didn't answer but said to the other white man in the front seat to give him his stick. Officer A_____ quickly got out of the car and started towards me with the billy club, so I quickly got into the back seat of the police car. There were two other white men in the car, neither of which were in uniform. While we were driving, destination unknown to me, I was constantly harassed and threatened with statements like: "Your mother's not fit to work in a nigger whorehouse." "Don't you know that the people don't want you down here? Don't you know that the white people are getting angry? Don't you know that you're going to get hurt?" After a few minutes, I asked Officer A_____ under what charge was I picked up. He said that some "niggers" had called him and told him that I was stirring up trouble and what's more, I was trespassing.

I was cursed at continually until we reached city jail. I was ushered into a room, had my picture and fingerprints taken. I was questioned for about an hour by police and by white citizens. The questions were hostile and I could hardly answer any of them. I asked if I could use the telephone. They said, "Later." Officer A_____ came in and asked me if I was ready for trial and I said that I didn't know and wanted to make a phone call. I was finally put into a jail cell. I asked the guard if I could make a phone call and he said that he didn't have any authority. After about ten minutes, I was taken out and handcuffed and put back in the car. Harassment continued: "I guess you know you'd better leave town now. You can leave town or take thirty days in jail." (The charge was changed to vagrancy since it was found that I had \$2.75 and had no visible means of support, even though I told the police that I had \$15 a week coming to me by check.)

When we arrived at the county jail, I again asked for a telephone but was again denied it. I was then taken and imprisoned for about four hours, unable to talk to anyone who might know how long I was to be in jail or when I would be able to use a telephone. At about 4:30 P.M. I was taken downstairs and talked to a police

officer for about a half-hour. He told me that I was going to be released but that I was being investigated for Communist affiliations and that if they found any, I would be turned over to the FBI. He also said that if I had any "concern for my safety or health" I should "leave town and go back home." He said that "there are 100 deputized white citizens trained in the use of billy clubs and just waiting for the signal to split some heads open." He said that "the white folks are getting angry and things are coming to a head," and he said he was glad about it. "Some folks are going to get hurt, maybe some killed, but then things will settle down. The federal government was not going to tell these folks what to do and they are going to fight to keep their rights." I was released about 5 P.M.

SIGNED: *Lewis Sitzer*