

FORREST COUNTY

I reside in Ann Arbor, Michigan. I am 25 years old and am a naturalized American citizen. I am a graduate student in nuclear physics at the University of Michigan.

I have been teaching at the Freedom School located at the True Light Baptist Church in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. That school is operated under the program of the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO). I have been teaching there since the first week in July, 1964, and have been teaching science, math, and music to Negro children there.

On July 20, 1964, Susan B. Patterson, William D. Jones (two other teachers at that school), and I went shopping in Hattiesburg. Mr. Jones entered the Standard Walgreen drug store, and Susan and I were still outside. I went to the street curb to signal some people in a car who I thought were friends of mine. As I stood at the curb, I suddenly felt a barrage of heavy blows on the back of my head and neck and on my left ear. I was knocked across the sidewalk and fell to the pavement near the drug store window. I then covered my ears and head with my arms and curled up my legs as I lay there. I was then kicked in the face, the side of the head at the left temple, and in the area of the kidneys. At no time during this beating did I see the person who was beating me. I said nothing while I was being beaten. I never lost consciousness during the beating, and I heard Susan cry for the police. The beating lasted for about one minute. When it stopped I arose and saw a policeman searching a man who I subsequently learned was Houston Hartfield. The policemen asked me if I would sign a complaint against Hartfield for assault and battery. I agreed to do so and walked to the police station with Susan and Mr. Jones for that purpose. I was not asked to make any such complaint when I arrived at the station. I was then told that I was under arrest for assault and battery. I posted \$25 cash bond and was released on bond.

The police told me that I was under arrest because they could not ascertain who had started the fight. This was told to me by the officer who had searched Hartfield. I saw Hartfield arrested and booked. When I was being held in arrest, Hartfield told the police that I had elbowed him on the courthouse steps. That was not true at all, but I continued to say nothing to Hartfield. Mr. Jones called Hartfield a liar at that point and Hartfield tried to assault him. Hartfield had to be restrained by a number of officers.

Susan Patterson and I are white persons and Mr. Jones is a Negro.

SIGNED: *Peter C. Werner*