

COAHOMA COUNTY

I am a white volunteer working in voter registration with the COFO Summer Project in Clarksdale, Mississippi, and am 20 years of age.

On Monday, July 22, 1964, at about 1 P.M., my wife Lisa and I were walking along Yazoo Ave. An unmarked police car, driven by Police Officer A_____, pulled up next to us. Officer A_____ called us over and started questioning us as to our names. We replied and he then said, "Didn't I tell you yesterday to get out of town?" He then asked us what we did for a living and by whom we were supported. Some discussion ensued as to what constituted support, after which Officer A_____ told us to get in the car. We were told that we were under arrest for vagrancy. On the way to the office, Officer A_____ kept up a constant stream of verbal abuse. He used such terms as "half-breed," "nigger-lover," "nigger whore," "nigger pimp." A white civilian, who was in the car when Officer A_____ drove up, also added to the stream of curses. Upon arrival at the station, Lisa and I were placed in the entry room and separated. We were instructed not to converse. We were not allowed to sit down. Officer A_____ left us with the white civilian who had been in the car as well as another unidentified civilian who was waiting at the jail. Both young men were in their middle twenties. They kept up a continuous stream of questions, insults, and veiled threats. After ten minutes, we were led into the investigation room by another officer who wore neither a badge number nor a name plate. He began questioning us, using a long investigation report containing questions on name, address, occupation, parents' occupation, etc. Lisa asked what the forms were, and he told her they were investigation forms. He asked me if we had actually been placed under arrest and we answered "Yes." He asked one of the aforementioned civilians to confirm this and he did. From then on, the officer left us under the impression that we were indeed under arrest. This officer then engaged us in conversation for a good hour on the racial situation in Mississippi. He was polite enough, though not friendly. He then fingerprinted us and took photographs. After about an hour and a half of questioning, unpleasant remarks, and stories about "niggers," Officer A_____ re-entered the room. He then proceeded to ask more questions, interspersing them with insults to my wife. The insults became the dominant part of the conversation, with Officer A_____ finally saying to me, "Why don't you get angry? Why don't you stand up like a man?" He was obviously trying to provoke me and would have, with the slightest provocation, proceeded to beat me. I refused to be baited and finally we were asked to leave the room. After a few minutes I was called back by myself. Officer A_____ started intensive questioning about where we stayed, how many stayed in the Freedom House, etc. I refused to answer the questions, whereupon he said, "Boy, if you give me any trouble, I'm going to kill you." He then continued the questioning and began to insult my wife again, asking, "How

many niggers did you sell your wife to last night?" "How many niggers did your wife _____?" I again refused to rise to the bait, at which point he said, "Why don't you stand up like a man? I'd like to bounce you off the floor three times. I'd like to kill you." After a few more minutes of this, Officer A_____ left. We were told that we were merely being investigated and would now be released. We left the station after having been held three hours.

SIGNED: *Robert Mandel*