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Tillson: Never mind this, forget that, just talk to them.
James Rogers: My name is James Rogers, and I'm a field secretary for the student non-violent coordinating committee. I attend Tuskegee Institute, I'm originally from Brooklyn, New York. Um, on the Saturday proceeding, uh, the Friday when we were when were released from jail, I was the one who was mainly responsible for conducting the demonstration in Fort Deposit. This grew out of grievances that the residents of Fort Deposit had against some of the local merchants because when they entered the stores of the local merchants they were threatened, intimidated, and they were treated discourteously. On the Saturday preceeding the Friday when we were released from jail, we picketed three stores in Fort Deposit and we were promptly arrested by the police in Fort Deposit and they had also deputized some of the local hoodlums to arrest us. Immediately after our arrest we were sent to jail in Fort Deposit where we stayed for perhaps a half an hour. After this time we were transferred to Haynesville, where we stayed up until the following Friday. When we arrived at the jail in Haynesville, we were immediately unloaded from a garbage truck--that's how we were taken to the jail, on the back of a garbage truck--and uh, we were assigned to our cells. In my cell there were eight people and Father Morrisroe was one of them. In the cell next to me there were eight people in the cell, and Willie Vaughan was one of the occupants of this cell. In the third cell was Stokely Carmichael, Chris Wildey, and Jonathan Daniels. The conditions in the jail were quite deplorable. The toilet was stopped up some of the time, we didn't have anyplace to take a bath, we didn't have very good food, the food was very poor, and many people came to visit us, and some of them were permitted in, some of the people from the medical committee came, and some of the local residents came in, and they brought us food, and some of the episcopal ministers and other people came in, however there were quite a few people from hat I understand who attempted to gain entrance to the jail but were refused.

Tillson: Tell them what (unintelligible).

Ruby
Woman (Ruby Sales, I believe.) ? Well, this was the Saturday that we were arrested. I guess we had been in jail for about two hours or so. And this same gentleman came to the cell window where I was and he told me, he said something about the rooms the cell being stinking, something like that. And he said he was going to bail my ass out of jail that night at three o'clock and when I got outside the jailgate my ass would be his. It appeared to be the same man, yes.

Tillson: This was the same day that you went into jail.

Ruby: The same day that we went into jail, yes.

Tillson: And this was through the window?

Ruby: Through the window, yes.

Tillson: Standing outside the building.

Ruby: Right.

Tillson: What did he have on?

Ruby: In can't remember what he had on.

Tillson: Did he have a gun?

Ruby: No, he didn't have a gun. Deputy Lux Jackson well, one day while I was in jail, I think it was the second day after I'd been in jail I have ulcers and I had an attack while I was in jail, and I guess I was in pain for about two or three hours, and I was crying and moaning and I sent word to him at least 6 or 7 times the last time I sent word to him he sent a message back to me that we wasn't a doctor and he wouldn't come around to even check or allow anybody else to you know tell anybody that I was ill.

(Male, don't know who) That release from jail was-- four local police officers came up to our cell and said, "You're out on bond." And, we was so happy we was getting out on bond, that we didn't take time to think ah, who got us out, see, we were so happy to get out. on bond. And ah, we went down, and we signed release bond and after we signed the release bond we went outside, and we sit down beside the (dinkus?) on the hill in front of the jail, and ah, Joe Jackson, and Lancaster, 2 of the local policemen, driven by us, and told us to get off the county property. And I said, this is government property. He say, "I say, get the goddamn hell off." I say, "This is more safer for us here than walkin' up town and (great?) I mean, in an integrated group." And he said, "I say get the damn hell off." And so we left, and I went to make a telephone call, for someone to come and pick us up. And the rest of the people went out to the corner, and I, after I made a telephone call I came back around by the store, and I seen this man sitting down with this shotgun, pump shotgun, and he had a pistol on his side, and ah, the group was comin towards me some of the group was comin towards me. And Ruby Sales and Jon Daniels and Father Richard and Joyce had passed me before I'd told them, I'd told them "Don't go down there because this man got a gun, down there." And the rest of the group turned around, they turned around, and before I could get down there, I saw Ruby walkin in front of Jon Daniels and Jon right behind Ruby.

Ruby: Well, we got to the store, when we got to the store, I was in front, and Jon was behind, Jon, Joyce, and Father Morrisroe--they were behind me. And when we got to the door--I think I had walked up about one or two steps--this guy was standing in the door with a shotgun. And he told us that the st--he said that "The store is closed." And he said, "If you don't get off of this goddamned property I'm gonna blow your damned brains out. And I mean got off and---" Next thing I knew someone had pulled me from behind. And I heard a shotgun blast. And I looked, and I saw Jon falling, I saw Jon fall. And I laid down on the ground. And then I heard another shotgun blast. And then I saw Father--I saw Father Morrisroe fall on the ground. And he lay--he was lyin there moaning for help, for somebody to help him, for some-- and he was just lying there, just

moaning and moaning and moaning. And so finally, Joyce had --Joyce had gotten to the side of the house. And I was still lying there beside Jon, and so finally I crawled to the side of the house and Joyce picked me up, and we both went across the street, and this guy that shot Jon and Father Morrisroe he was still walking around, all the time with this gun, even after the sheriff had come down where the body was, he was still just walking around with the gun. Tillson: How far away from Jonathan was he when he fired? Ruby: About as close as this guy is to me.

Tillson: About 3 feet.

Ruby: Yes.

Rogers: This is James Rogers again. I would like to clear up one thing. I distinctly remember asking Lancaster one of the law enforcement agents who was on duty at the time, who released us, who ah, who signed our bond. And I never did receive an answer. I distinctly remember asking him twice. When we left the jail, I led the people down to the corner, and we were there approximately maybe ten or fifteen minutes, and four people decided to go to the store. Ruby Sales, Jonathan Daniels, Richard Morrisroe, and Joyce Bailey. They were gone approximately five minutes, when I heard someone say, "He has a gun, he has a gun."

Tillson: That was Willie, wasn't it.

Rogers: I didn't see who it was. "He has a gun, he has a gun." So I looked up the street, and then I looked down the street, and I saw Jon Daniels push Ruby Sales to the ground. And man rush out with an automatic pump shotgun. He shot Jon, and Jon fell back. After this, the man came out shouting something, I couldn't hear, what it was. But I saw Father Morrisroe and Joyce Bailey running away from the store. Father Morrisroe was looking back over his left shoulder, and Tom Coleman, the man who did the shooting, shot him in the back. He stood over them--after he shot Father Morrisroe, he stood over them for a minute, and then he looked up the street to the corner where I was standing, along with Gloria Larry. When he aimed the gun up the corner, we jumped into a clump of bushes. At this time, I remember seeing Joyce Bailey and I remember seeing Ruby Sales running past me. So I stopped for a minute to talk to Ruby Sales and Joyce Bailey and when I looked down the block Tom Coleman was getting into a car and speeding away. So at this time I told them to stay there and I went to see what happened to Jon and Richard. When I arrived at the scene there were approximately 10 white men standing I'd say a distance of maybe about 10 feet away, leaning up against a car. First, I went over and I looked at Jon, and he appeared to have been dead immediately. And then I went over to Richard, who was rolling around on the ground, yelling "help! Help!" "Water! Water!" So I tried to hold him still, and ~~xxxx~~ kept saying "Help will be here soon, help will be here soon." "Stay still, stay still. Help will be here soon." AT this time one of the ~~xxxx~~ white men in the crowd said, "Nigger, if you don't get away from here, right away, you're gonna be laying down beside them." So I looked around, and I didn't see a Negro in the crowd, all I saw was 'white people coming. So I had to leave. And I walked back up to the block where I was standing before the shooting, and ah, I kept looking

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down the block to see if there was an ambulance coming. But I couldn't see-I didn't see one. And then the doctor came out of his office right behind me which was approximately a block away, and he had a nurse with him, and he had a tall colored woman, who was wearing a white uniform, I believe that she was a nurse's aide.

Male speaks (Willie Vaughan?) When he came out of the store and sh-- when he shot Father Richard-- before he sh-shot Father Richard he he yelled, "All you black bastards get off of my property," and then he shot--time he said that he shot Father Richard. That's what I want to clear up--I was down closer than Jimmy were--that's what he said, when he shot Father Richard.

Female speaks, not Ruby--Joyce? After we got up to the corner, Jon didn't have any money, and Richard didn't either, so they asked Ruby and I, did we have any money and we told them yes. So Jon asked us to buy him a soda pop, so we told him OK, so we had started to the store, so he stopped and said, "Will you all buy Richard one?" So we both told him yes, so we --the 4 of us walked down to the store. Actually, I didn't see the man with the gun until we got to the door, and he had the gun on Ruby, and Jon pushed Ruby to the ground, and at that time, the man shot Jon, and Jon caught his stomach, and fell, he didn't even say a word. So, Richard caught me by my hand, and jerked me round somebody's car, I don't know who car it was; so after Richard jerked me around the car, I started running, and Richard was running with me and holdin me by the hand. So, , at that time, this man shot Richard, and I kept running, and I looked back, Richard was fallin to the ground, and Ruby was on her knees, crawling, so actually I thought the man had shot Ruby, and I turned around and helped Ruby get up. We ran across the ~~xxxx~~ street in some white person's yard, and then we went over ~~xxxx~~ there by a clinic. We didn't see Jimmy and Gloria. I guess they were lying in a ditch or something. AT that time Jimmy come up there and told us not to run. And then I saw Coleman jumped in his car and he was coming toward us, so Ruby and I started running again. Jimmy told us not to ~~xxxxxxx~~ go on and sit there till lux Jackson and Lancaster and them get there.

Ruby: I just wanted to say someting about when the man ~~xxxx~~ told us that the store was closed, the store was not closed. And, because there were people inside the store, and we had been going to that store for the whole time that we had been into the county, in integrated groups, and nobody had never said anything to us. And the store is directly behind the jail. And this lady that owns the store, everytime I've ever been into the store, she's always been very nice, and she's alw--even though she knew the type of work that we were doing, she was very nice, and she never said any harsh words to us. And so my belief is that they just, I mean, that man was there ~~xx~~ because he figured ~~xx~~ somebody would come to that store because that's the store that we always go to.

Tillson" And then he came out.

Ruby: And then he came out, and when he told us to leave, we didn't have time to even turn our backs, before he started firing, he just

started firing like a madman, he didn't even give us time to leave, like he asked, he just started firing.

Willie Vaughan (?) Jon had been in that store before, also. When it was the first time going into the store, he had been in that store with us, also when we were registering down at the old jail house.

Rogers: I would like to let you know that we definitely were not picketing, for one thing. And then again, during the time that I was interrogated by the FBI, they asked me did Jonathan have a knife, and I can assure you that that he definitely didn't have a knife, because we went from the jail to the corner and from the corner he went to the store. And they searched us very thoroughly while we were in the jail, and it would be almost utterly impossible for any of us to have a knife, or a gun, or any type of weapon.

Shirley Walker: I'm Shirley Walker, from Philadelphia, Mississippi (Maybe her name is Sheree Lee Walker?), but I work in the Alabama state SNCC office as secretary. Immediately after the 23 persons were arrested, Jean Wiley, Communications operator from Atlanta, she was out there, she called in and told us that the people had been arrested, and they had been carried to the Fort Deposit jail. OK, we called--started off by calling the sheriff, and his wife said that he wasn't in. We continued to make calls, and finally we talked to him, and he said he couldn't tell us anything because Mayor Atwoods (?) hadn't given his word and he was out of town and wouldn't be back until Monday. OK, after then, we thought it was best that we call the LCDC in Jackson, Mississippi, and I talked with Saltonstall, and he called out there, the mayor wasn't out of town, and he talked to him. But he still wouldn't give him any information. Finally, we kept calling I guess, Saturday night about eleven o'clock and I finally talked to him, and he told me that their charges were, ah, um, parading without a permit and disturbing the peace and it was one hundred dollars each cash bond. And he told me when the trial would be, that was on a Saturday, the twenty-first. Yeah. And ah, then we got a lawyer, Peter Hall, and I talked with bondsmen, a bondsman. We talked with Solomon Shey (?) in Montgomery and James Holman (?) in Montgomery. Haughan (the bondsman????????) told us that he would ah, take --he would get them out at ten percent. each, you know, per person. And um, he went out that Sunday afternoon and he talked to them, but they couldn't get them out that Sunday afternoon. OK, we worked on removing the case to appellate court, and, then, Winnsey (?), Stokely, and Chris Wiley, they were gotten out, they were on one thousand dollars charges, for reckless driving, Chris was driving without a license, and leaving the scene of an accident. They had decided to wait--the kids that were in with Jon and all of them said that they didn't want to get

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out unless everybody got out. So we were waiting until Saturday morning, and they would be released so the case could be carried to appellate court. OK, Friday afternoon, Willie Vaughan called in, I guess it must have been between three and four o'clock, and told us what had happened. We called--as I was on the phone talking to Willie, someone went downstairs, got the ambulance service (?), Miller's, called Dr. Danskins (?) and kDr. Morris, send them out there. When they got out there, they didn't see anyone, no bodies, nobody couldn't tell them anything, nothing. We started calling hospitals, in Montgomery, we called all hospitals in Montgomery, all ambulance services, they said they didn't know anything about it, they didn't have anyone there, they hadn't picked up anyone from Hayneville, about maybe thirty minutes ago. We called all the hospitals in Selma, and ambulance services, they didn't know anything about it. We made about three telephone calls to White Chapel funeral home in Montgomery. They said that they did not have Jon's body. We called St. Elizabeth's Hospital, and St. Jude's, and they said they didn't have a Richard Morrisroe there. We called them twice, also. And finally, the only thing we knew to do, we called ESCRU, and I talked with Father Morris, John Morris, and he suggested that he would try to get in contact with them. And he couldn't, and I called John Doar then, and told him what was happening, and that we had to find the people because it had been about five hours you know, and no one seemed to know where they were. And finally John Doar called back in about an hour, and told us that he had found, that Jon was in White Chapel funeral home, the funeral home that I had called twice, he was there, and Father Morrisroe was in St. Elizabeth's hospital, that I had called twice.

Tillson: Both of those in Selma?

Walker: No, they are in Montgomery. And what we were trying to do, get in touch with Jon's family, tell them not to touch the body or anything, you know, because, I mean you know they can perform illegality--you know, destroy everything of evidence. And after John Doar called back, in about an hour, they called us and told us that they had performed an autopsy, and the body--they were ready to release the body. But something that should go in before then, ah, the judge state toxicologist had told us that he turned the body over to the state, Al Lingo and his boys, and they couldn't no one touch it, his parents or nobody. ---called the Justice Department and they said that the FBI said that they didn't have anyone over there, and ???called the Justice Department, and the Justice Department told us that they couldn't tell us anything until they make their report, which would probably be Monday. And then, we called them back, and they said the case had been turned over to the state. And Bob Frey told us ~~usxxxxStokely~~ some kids, Stokely and about 5 more people are going out there to look for Jimmy Rogers because didn't no one know where he was. And we told him that these kids in a fury, the car that John had rented, and he told me they would not protect us, they were investigators.

Tillson: This is the FBI?

Walker: Yes. Bob Frey, in Selma.

My name is Gloria Larry, I was a volunteer with SNCC in Lowndes County. On the day that we'd planned the picketing in Fort Deposit, when we were in the yard of a local church before we'd gone into the town itself and to the stores, the two FBI agents came to visit us and to inform us that they thought it was better that we didn't picket, that they knew that the people in town were very upset and they said that someone was going to get killed, they were sure that someone would get killed if we carried on with the picket. And I remember asking one of the agents if there wasn't anything he could do about it and he said that um, their function was, um to be observers, and to be completely neutral in this situation, that they had no other authority. This seems to be the general response of the FBI agents in the south.

Ruby (?) While I was being questioned by the FBI, which was ah, I think his name was Frye, he asked me whether or not Jon had pulled a knife at this guy, on this guy, and so I told him no, that the guys had been searched before they were put in jail, and that it was impossible and ridiculous for anyone to think that he could have had a knife, after he had gotten out of jail, or in jail. That they would probably try to build a case around that this guy was protecting himself, he was acting in self-defense.

James Rogers;: Also another point that I feel that is very significant is that he was definitely not a deputy sheriff, that if he was a law enforcement agent that he became a law enforcement agent after this incident.

Ms Walker? But this Haygood, I think is DL Haygood, did say that he was a special deputized person, that they use him in case of emergency.

Willie Vaughan(?) NBC interviewed Richmond Flowers, attorney general, and he said himself that he definitely think Coleman was a Clansman, he definitely think Coleman was a clansman. And he said that, and I think so myself.

Ms. Walker? His son is a state trooper--ah, Tom Coleman's son, the man that murdered Jon and shot Richard, son is a state trooper, and his sister is superintendent of schools in Lowndes County.

Willie Vaughan? His brother is the president of Water Works in Montgomery, Alabama.

Gloria Larry: You might want to mention that it was Halda Coleman, the sister of Tom Coleman, who was instrumental in blocking the school integration in Hayneville. A number of Negro children had applied for admission to Hayneville High School and had been rejected. A few of them accepted, but--two out of forty some children were accepted, and with

no explanation at all. And she asked to have the parents come down and meet her if they had any objections and the parents certainly had objections and they went down to meet her and they were determined not to be dissuaded by her. They decided that if they could--if their children couldn't go to the Hayneville School there'd be a boycott of the Negro school, and certainly she was feeling pressured by their response to her.

James Rogers. Um--Officer Jenkins a newly appointed Negro law enforcement officer was forced to make the arrest of the picketers in Fort Deposit, but he refused. His son was among the group. Another point that I feel is particularly relevant, to the whole event, is, that we were arrested in Fort Deposit Jon said to one of the deputy sheriffs, "We are perfectly within our constitutional rights to picket." And the man asked, him, he said, "Where is your Constitution? You don't have any rights in Fort Deposit." Lowndes County is a county that is predominantly Negro. Negroes constitute approximately eighty-three percent of the total population. When we first moved into the county, we --Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee-- there were no Negro registered voters. But there were 118% of the white people were registered. At this time, there are approximately five or six hundred people registered--Negro people, registered. We have approximately five hundred --5,000, I'm sorry, 5,240 Negroes eligible to vote. And you have 1800 white people of voting age. However, there are approximately 2,240 white people registered.
(end of tape)