

AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF ALABAMA)
)
COUNTY OF DALLAS)

My name is Bosie Beest and I am a Negro. I am 19 years old and I have lived in Selma, Alabama, all of my life. I live at 1001 Winter Street in Selma. I finished the 9th grade. I was arrested in 1960 for stealing a bicycle, in 1961 for stealing a watch and twice for driving without a license, once in 1962 and once in 1963.

I have been working for about two months in the voter registration drive being carried on among Negroes in Dallas County, Alabama. Most of the work I have been doing in the drive has been passing out leaflets among Negroes in Selma. These leaflets either give the times, places and speakers for mass meetings to be held in our voter registration drive or else they urge Negroes to register to vote and state the place and times that Negroes can go to the Courthouse in Selma to register to vote. I pass out these leaflets along with other young Negroes at the homes of Negroes ^{or} places of business run by Negroes.

On Saturday, June 1, 1963, I was passing out some leaflets with some other Negroes in Selma. These leaflets urged Negroes to apply for registration the next Monday. While we were passing them out, a sheriff's car drove up and a deputy sheriff, I believe his name is Crawford, stopped me and said he had complaints that we were putting the leaflets on cars. He asked me my name, address and what I was doing. I told him we did not put leaflets on cars and gave him one of the leaflets. He asked for more than one so I gave him a stack of them. I went on passing out the leaflets after this.

During the morning of Monday, June 17, 1963, Bernard Lafayette asked me and Alexander Brown, another young Negro, to go to the Courthouse at Selma and to check to see how many Negroes were applying for registration and to

B. R.

get their names an' addresses. Bernard Lafayette is one of the leaders in the voting registration drive an' we try to keep recor's on who applies and how the drive is going.

Brown an' I went to the courthouse and got there about 12:30 in the afternoon. The registrar's office was closed and we didn't find anyone waiting to apply. Soon after we got there a young Negro man came in and waited at the registrar's door. Brown and I talked to him. Brown got his name, address and asked him if he could take his picture. The Negro agreed and Brown took a picture of him posed with his hand on the door as though he was going in to register. The Negro waited until about 1:20 and no registrars had shown up yet so he left to go back to work. Brown left with him.

I waited in the hallway on the first floor of the courthouse near the door to the registrar's office until about 1:40 p.m. No one else had come so I went outside and waited on the sidewalk in front of the courthouse. Brown returned and we waited in his car until shortly after 2:00 p.m. when we went back into the courthouse.

The registrar's office was open and it looked like some people were in applying. There was a white woman waiting outside the office to apply and a Negro man waiting behind her. Brown asked the Negro for his name and address and asked him if he could take his picture. The Negro said he could, but before Brown took his picture a Negro lady came up and stood behind the Negro man in the line. Brown talked to the lady. She didn't give him her name and address but said she would give it to Mrs. Boynton after she applied. Mrs. Boynton is a Negro woman active in the voter registration drive.

After talking to the Negro woman Brown said he was going over to Mrs. Boynton's office and asked me to wait for him in the courthouse. He gave me his camera and left. It is a small Brownie camera and I hung it around my neck. I went down the hallway to the next door down from the registrar's office and waited next to the wall. After standing there a short while sheriff Clark

walked over to me and asked me what I was doing, what was my name and asked me for my identification. He asked me what I was doing with a camera around my neck. I told him the camera belonged to a friend and that I was waiting for him to come back. He told me he had had complaints that I had been loitering in the hall and asked me to leave. I left.

I waited outside for Brown and he came back shortly after I left the courthouse. I told him what had happened and gave him back his camera. Brown said he was going back in and I told him if he was going back then I would go back too. He went into the courthouse from the side entrance and sat in some chairs toward the rear of the hallway on the first floor. Just after we sat down a man came by and asked us about what we were doing there. He told us we were loitering and that we would have to leave. Brown walked down the hall past the line by the registrars' office and started out the entrance. I followed him by about three feet.

Just as Brown was walking out the door I reached to hold the door open. I hadn't seen the sheriff around but just then someone grabbed me by the hand and neck, got behind me and shoved me into the sheriff's office which is by the entrance. It was Sheriff Clark. He pushed me through the sheriff's office and shoved me down the stairs at the back of the office. I kept my feet and was able to keep from falling down the stairs. At the bottom of the stairs he shoved me into another office over next to a chair that was leaning against the wall. He slapped at me but I put my hands in front of my face and the blows hit my hands.

He told me to pick up the chair and sit in it. After I sat down he hit me over the head with a billy stick three times and punched me twice in the stomach and once in the side with it. He could have swung harder but I still got a lump on my head from it. He said- Didn't I tell you to stay out of here. I told him yes but I had to come back in to get some change. He took everything out of my pockets, looked at some of the cards and papers in my billfold and then took it all out of the office.

There was a man in a highway patrol uniform sitting behind the desk and an old man sitting in another chair in the room. The man in the uniform asked me if I knew how to swim. I told him I did and then he asked me if I knew how to swim with a block of cement on my feet.

The sheriff came back downstairs and asked me if I was working with Bernard. I didn't answer and he asked me if I knew what they did with smart niggers around here. The elderly man said the highway patrolman had just told me what they did with smart niggers.

A deputy sheriff came downstairs and asked me if I knew the name of the other person who was with me. I started to say no and the sheriff kicked me and told me not to sit up there and tell a lie. I told him the other person's name was Lewis Brown. They asked me where he lived and I told them three houses off Jeff Davis on Sylvan Street. I didn't tell him because I didn't want to get him into the trouble I was in. The deputy sheriff and the sheriff left.

The highway patrolman told me he was going to beat all the nigger out of me and make me white. About this time a young man in civilian clothes came in. He had a gun on. He asked me who was taking the pictures and I told him I wasn't taking any pictures. The highway patrolman and elderly man left the room. This young man kept questioning me about the camera and what I was doing with it. He kept questioning me in a threatening way and tried to get me to admit that I was taking a picture of the water fountain in the hallway. I kept insisting I hadn't taken a picture of the water fountain and he told me I was lying and that I was calling a lady a liar.

After a short while the sheriff came back and he took me back to the upstairs office. On the way upstairs he punched me in the back with the billy stick. Upstairs he got some warrants and he and a deputy took me over to the Judge's Office in a building in town. While we were there I think the Judge changed one of the warrants. They charged me with two things and set bail at \$1,000 on one of them and \$500 on the other. Then they took me back

to the Courthouse and then over to the jail. At the jail they asked me questions about my name, address, age and took pictures and finger printed me.

I couldn't cover the bond and I had to stay in jail until about 10:30 Friday morning when two Negroes named Ross and Rev. Brown signed the bond for me. In Court on Thursday the Judge postponed my trial for one week and lowered my bond on the one charge from \$1,000 to \$500 at the request of my attorneys.

This affidavit has been read to me by David M. Harlin, an attorney for the Department of Justice, and I understand it and it is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Bessie Reese
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Subscribed and sworn to before me this 24 day of June, 1963.

P. L. Lindsey
Notary Public

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