

chapter

| T W E N T Y |

I could barely wait until September, when I was to enroll in Tougaloo College as a junior. Meanwhile, I tried to find out as much as I could about the school. A girlfriend of mine at Natchez, after learning of my scholarship, told me that Tougaloo was not for people my color. When I asked her what she meant, she merely said, "Baby, you're too black. You gotta be high yellow with a rich-ass daddy." At first, I thought she was jealous because she didn't get a scholarship. But then I thought of the high-yellow registrar who had given me the scholarship exam. So I went back to my girlfriend for more information. She tried so hard to convince me not to go, I ended up by accusing her of being jealous and we had a big fight. A few days later she came to my room.

"Look out that window, Moody, I want to show you something," she said, pointing at a white student out on the lawn talking to some of the guys. "She's a student at Tougaloo and she ain't white either," she said, and left my room. I didn't believe her—that girl was as white as any woman I had ever seen. I went right downstairs and asked her if she was a student at Tougaloo. When she said, "Yes, I go there," without

even looking at me, I just walked away thinking that Tougaloo wasn't the place for me, after all.

That summer, while working at the restaurant, I seriously started looking for a school to attend in New Orleans. Since L.S.U. was only thirty-five dollars a semester for off-campus students I thought of going there. But when I learned that it had just been integrated and that all the teachers were white, I talked myself out of going. I was afraid that those white students would murder me in class. I was an A student but those A's were from Natchez. I didn't have much competition there, I thought. Besides Natchez wasn't anywhere near as good as L.S.U. I didn't want the white students to act like they were smarter than me just because they had gotten off to a better start.

I kept thinking and talking to myself until September rolled around. By then it was too late to register in any of the schools in New Orleans, and I knew it. So I sent Tougaloo ten dollars to reserve a room for me and five dollars for my registration fee.

One morning in mid-September, my grandmother woke me before she went to work. I got up and made sure all my things were packed. Four hours later I was headed for Tougaloo on "good old Greyhound."

By the time I arrived in Jackson, Mississippi, that evening, I was tired as hell. After wandering around the small segregated station for a while, I asked a little dark-skinned man with glasses how to get to Tougaloo. He smiled and asked, "Are you a freshman?"

"No. I'm a junior," I said.

We introduced ourselves. He told me his name was Steve and that he was a senior.

"I'm waiting for a cab," he said. "We could split the fare if you would like."

All during the seven and a half miles to the college I was

dying to ask if he was the only black student there. But instead we talked about our majors. I didn't like him because he tried too hard to impress me so I just sat back in the seat without saying much. At last, we came to a sign that said TOUGALOO SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE 1/4 mile. Soon we were riding on campus, but by now it was too dark for me to see what it looked like.

The driver dropped Steve off first because he had about five suitcases and two trunks stacked in front of my luggage. When we stopped in front of the boys' dormitory, some of the boys ran out to help with his suitcases. One of them looked inside the car and said, "I'm Jimmy. What's your name, pretty?" I was so mad, because he was yellow, that I didn't answer. I wondered how many of the other students were yellow, and probably with rich-ass daddies. Anyway, it pleased me to know that mulattos liked dark brown-skinned girls. Maybe some of the others would too, I thought.

A few minutes later, as I was carrying my own luggage into Galloway Hall, the girls' dormitory, I noticed several girls passing in and out of the lounge and going upstairs. Not all of them were yellow, either. As a matter of fact, some of them were even black. This really pleased me. I was disappointed when I went to the room that had been assigned me and found one of those white-looking girls sitting on a bed, smoking a cigarette. "Hi. I'm your new roommate," I said.

"I have a roommate," she answered. "You mean you are *one* of my roommates." I looked at her and wondered if the other one was as white as this one. If so, I couldn't take this diplomatic shit.

"Trotter sleeps there," she said, pointing to the lower half of the bunkbed against the opposite wall. "Therefore, you gotta sleep up there."

"Fine with me," I said, but I was thinking I would ask to be assigned to another room no later than tomorrow morning. Without saying anything more to her, I began to roll my hair

in big rollers. While I was looking in the mirror, I could see her smiling and sizing me up.

"My name is Gloria," she said.

"Mine's Anne," I answered.

"Where are you from? I take it that you're a junior since they put you on this hall."

"Yes, I'm a junior. I'm from Natchez College."

"My home is Natchez," she said. "I lived down the street from the college."

I was getting tired of her probing, so I simply said, "Oh." I took my pajamas from a suitcase and got into bed—the top bunk.

"Trotter's not coming until next week. You can sleep in her bed if you like."

"Thanks," I said, and went to sleep thinking how much I would hate the school.

The next morning I got up around six because I wanted to get a glimpse of the campus. After I had taken a shower and dressed, I went outside. I could not believe it—this place was beautiful. It was large and spacious. There was evenly cut grass everywhere and huge old oak trees with lots of hanging moss. Birds were singing, and the air was fresh and clean. I must have walked all over the campus in a trance before I realized I was hungry and went to find some breakfast.

I spent the first two days going through the regular college routine—registration, meeting faculty. On Thursday it was announced that there was going to be a "freshmen and new students Talent Show" to be held on Saturday. All that night I tried to think of something I could do that would get me off to a good start. I had the feeling that I had to make that first good impression. I thought of singing a song. That was out—I didn't know the type of song that would impress intellectuals. I could sing real well, but nothing but good old Baptist hymns. Since some of my teachers were white, I knew they

would not have the right impression after that. Eliminating singing, I thought of dancing. I could not do anything except exotic, café-style dances. I remembered the exotic dance we'd had in high school. The one that the principal stopped before it got started. I couldn't do that, because I didn't want my white friends to think I was vulgar. Finally, I gave up the idea of participating in the talent show and went to sleep.

The next morning, walking through the lounge, I noticed some girls doing exercises. That's it, I thought. If I could get them to help me, I could do some tumbling. One of the girls was very agile and graceful.

I walked over to her and said, "Hi. My name is Anne. You're very good."

"I'm Freddie," she said. "Are you a freshman?"

"No, I'm a junior."

"Lucky you, I'm just beginning."

"That's not so bad. It seems like only yesterday that I started. Once you get that start, the time really rolls."

"Yeah, but the thing is getting started," she said.

"I'm on my way to breakfast," I said. "We could talk on our way over, if you like." She looked at me as if she thought I was funny or something. I guess she thought I had a hangup on girls. Finally, sounding a little embarrassed, she said yes. By the time we got to that old white frame dining hall, she had said she was willing to do the tumbling in the talent show. We agreed to practice in the lounge that same afternoon.

We met around three. She was good, she was really good. We practiced the Fly and the Bear until we had them perfect. While we were doing the Fly for the last time, we were interrupted by a short, muscular dark-skinned boy.

"My, my, my. What acrobats," he said. "I'm Paul. Do you girls mind letting me in on what's going on?"

Freddie, who was standing on my knees, seemed a little embarrassed again. I was too. I had to set this cat straight.

"Look," I said, "we're practicing for the talent show tomorrow night."

"No! No! I didn't mean no harm," he said. "You see, my major is P.E. I was just interested. I was trying to think of something to do in the talent show, too. I think maybe the three of us could win first prize."

He looked sincere, so I said, "O.K. What can you do?"

"Just about anything."

"Can you tumble?" I asked.

"Yes," he nodded.

"What about the Logroll?"

"Sure."

"O.K. That's great," I said. "We have a team. Here is what we're going to do. The Bear, the Fly, the Logroll, and some tumbling."

"I can walk on my hands," he said. "Let's do that."

"I can't do that," I said, "but it's O.K. if you do it."

The three of us agreed to meet the next day and practice for an hour or so. We needed other people, so I went around looking for other girls to squat for us. I found three just before dinner. They thought I was crazy, but I didn't mind. Freddie also had three or four friends she could depend on, so in about three hours we were to go on stage as unorganized as could be.

The show started around eight-thirty or a little after. I was kind of nervous about all those scared freshman girls that were supposed to squat for us. They were so damn scared we would fall on them or something that they might suddenly disappear before we went on. I kept an eye on them to make sure they didn't. There was not too much on the show except singing for quite some time. It was getting boring. Then just as I began to think of how we were going to show up all those singers, I was shocked. My eyes were glued to the stage as a tall, skinny guy was doing the limbo. He was well over six feet four. Each time he passed under the pole, it was lowered. It kept going down lower and lower, but no part of his body ever touched it and I mean it was low. Finally it was lowered about a foot from the floor. Boys in the audience began betting each

other that he couldn't do it. Everyone was all worked up. I knew he was going to win. He went under that pole twelve inches from the floor, feet still flat, and didn't touch that damn pole anywhere.

Next a guy came on playing a set of bongo drums. The audience seemed impressed. They were rocking heads and clapping hands rhythmically with the drums. I didn't think he was so good. I just thought they were still excited from the performance of that limbo cat, because I was.

Now it was our turn. I beckoned to my crowd, and we walked backstage looking like a bunch of beatniks or something. Boys began bellowing to Ramona, the M.C., "What's going on, Ramona? What are they going to do?" Ramona shrugged her shoulders, indicating she didn't know. When she introduced us, she said, "Next on the program we have Anne Moody and the Tumblers."

I put my best smile on and walked to the center of the stage. The reaction from the crowd was wild, especially the boys. They started shouting, whistling, and carrying on something terrible. I wore some skin-tight red short shorts over black leotards and looked even taller than five feet nine. I guess it was the contrast of the colors that started the boys. Maybe they thought they were going to see some sort of a burlesque. I stopped blushing and smiling long enough to say, "We'll do the Bear followed by the Fly, the Logroll, and a little bit of tumbling." Someone in the audience said, "Sho-o-o-nuff!"

I beckoned for Freddie. She walked to the center of the stage and we stood facing each other. I again turned to the audience and said, "If this act reminds you of a bear, let us know by your generous applause." As I stood facing Freddie again, I opened my legs by placing my feet about two feet apart; then I braced myself. Freddie placed a hand on each of my shoulders. She then jumped around my waist, locking her legs behind my back with her hands clasped to my ankles. I leaned forward until the palms of my hands were flat on the floor. I

began to walk on my hands and feet. The audience applauded long after we had stopped. The Fly and the Logroll also received lots of applause. Then Paul and I tumbled. We started by diving over one person squatted on hands and knees on the floor. Each dive was completed with a forward roll. Another person squatted next to the first one, we then dove over two, then three lined up side by side. After that, one person was placed on top of the one squatting on the center. We completed that dive successfully. This left the audience tense and worried that something would happen. By the time Paul and I had dived over nine bodies stacked like a pyramid, the entire audience was standing. The applause went on and on. We all came to the center of the stage and bowed. As we were about to walk off the stage, Paul started walking all around on his hands. The audience laughed, whistled, and applauded even louder, and some shouted, "More! More! More!" I knew we were too much for them. After a couple of songs the show ended. We received first prize, the limbo cat second, and one of the girls that sang got the third prize.

After the show was over and our prize had been awarded, the Dean of the College stopped me to say that we were good, and that if we would like to do something with our talent, the school was ready to help us. He asked me if I was a physical education major. I said no, that my intention was to major in biology. A few days later he sent the physical education instructor to talk to me and I told her the same thing.

Soon after classes began, I discovered I had only one Negro teacher for the semester. I began to get scared all over again. I had never had a white teacher before. Now I wished I had gone to L.S.U. I knew the whites in New Orleans weren't half as bad as the ones in Mississippi. I kept remembering the ones in my hometown, those that had Samuel O'Quinn murdered, those that burned the entire Taplin family, and those I worked for who treated me like a secondhand dirty dish

towel. I got so damn mad just sitting there thinking about those white teachers, chills started running down my back. I knew that if they were at all like the whites I had previously known, I would leave the school immediately.

By this time I had become friendly with my second roommate, Trotter, who was even darker than me. I asked her whether or not she thought I could take it at Tougaloo. If I couldn't, I didn't want to waste my little bit of money.

Trotter laughed and said, "Girl, I had the same feeling when I was a freshman. I came here scared stiff. I didn't know what to expect. I had heard about the white teachers, the high yellow students and all."

"I'm an A student, Trotter, but I've never had any of those tough white teachers. I know I'm going to have some problems."

"No, no, Moody. I came from a little country high school too. Here I am an honor student. You can do the same. All teachers start off pretending they are hot shit. It's the same with Negro teachers. You know that."

"If their disposition is anything similar to the whites in my hometown, I couldn't take that shit either," I said.

"But these teachers here on campus are all from up North or Europe or someplace. We don't have one white teacher here from the South. Northern whites have a different attitude toward Negroes."

"I certainly hope so," I said, relieved of some of my fright.

By the time mid-semester exams rolled in, I had gotten off to a very good start. It looked as though I could make the honor roll if I continued at this pace. I began to relax. I started taking time with my clothes, watching my weight, and wanting to look good. Keemp had not written in about a month. I started to worry because I knew that most of my girlfriends at Natchez College wanted him. I thought I'd better find me someone at Tougaloo to pass the time with. I knew I'd have to do some looking since there were three girls on campus to every boy. Three or four guys showed lots of interest in me, but they were

already dating girls I knew. Finally, in December, I started dating one of them—a guy named Dave Jones.

As it turned out, when the semester ended, I didn't make that damn honor roll. I came out with three points less than I needed. I rationalized by blaming my downfall on my adjustment to the white teachers. However, the real cause was that damn Dave. All he could think of after we had gone together for a month was going to bed. I didn't even like him that much—not enough to go to bed with him anyway. When we had a so-called "adult discussion" about sex, as he called it, I told him that I was a virgin and I was afraid to be screwing around on campus. He kept telling me that he would take care of me, that he wouldn't hurt me, and all that shit. To get him off my back, I told him that I would only when I felt that I was ready. After another month or so when I still wasn't ready, he got mad, and one night in the park, he tried to take me. We were walking back from the "Greasy Spoon," a little student hangout right outside the campus gate. He had drunk quite a bit of beer and now he suggested that we sit on a bench and talk for a while. I agreed only to discover that he wanted to start petting and going on.

"Dave, let's go. O.K.?" I said.

"Why are you in such a hurry? It's Saturday night. You could sleep late tomorrow."

"I just want to go," I said, trembling.

"O.K.," he said, "give me one sweet kiss and we can leave."

When I kissed him, I could taste the beer and cigarettes he'd had at the Greasy Spoon. I didn't like this at all, so I drew away. He got mad and jerked me to him, kissing me hard. He started caressing my breasts and breathing on my neck and everything.

"Let go of me, Dave!" I started crying. Then we saw another couple coming through the gate. Dave didn't want to act as if something was going on, so he let me go, but held on to my sweater. I jumped up to leave and tore every button off

it. I ran back to the dormitory, vowing I would never see Dave again.

On Monday I got a letter from him begging me to forgive him. He promised to buy me a new sweater and everything. I didn't want to go through that shit again, so I just acted as if I hadn't got the letter. He had asked me to call him, but I wouldn't. I was through and that was that.

One night, shortly after Dave and I had broken up, I asked Trotter what kind of meetings she was always going to. She said, "I thought you knew. I'm secretary of the NAACP chapter here on campus."

"I didn't even know they had a chapter here," I said.

"Why don't you become a member? We're starting a voter registration drive in Hinds County and we need canvassers. Besides, it would give you something to do in your spare time, now that you don't see Dave anymore."

I promised her that I would go to the next meeting. All that night I didn't sleep. Everything started coming back to me. I thought of Samuel O'Quinn. I thought of how he had been shot in the back with a shotgun because they suspected him of being a member. I thought of Reverend Dupree and his family who had been run out of Woodville when I was a senior in high school, and all he had done was to get up and mention NAACP in a sermon. The more I remembered the killings, beatings, and intimidations, the more I worried what might possibly happen to me or my family if I joined the NAACP. But I knew I was going to join, anyway. I had wanted to for a long time.

chapter

| T W E N T Y - O N E |

A few weeks after I got involved with the Tougaloo chapter of the NAACP, they organized a demonstration at the state fair in Jackson. Just before it was to come off, Medgar Evers came to campus and gave a big hearty speech about how "Jackson was gonna move." Tougaloo sent four picketers to the fair, and one of them was Dave Jones. Because he was chosen to be the spokesman for the group, he was the first to be interviewed on TV. That evening when the demonstration was televised on all the news programs, it seemed as though every girl in the dorm was down in the lounge in front of the set. They were all shooting off about how they would take part in the next demonstration. The girl Dave was now seeing was running all around talking about how good he looked.

Dave and the other demonstrators had been arrested and were to be bailed out around eight that night. By eight-thirty a lot of us were sitting outside on the dormitory steps awaiting their arrival, and they still hadn't shown up. One of the girls had just gone inside to call the NAACP headquarters in Jackson, when suddenly two police cars came speeding through the campus. Students came running from every building. Within

minutes the police cars were completely surrounded, blocked in from every direction. There were two cops in the front seat of each car. They looked frightened to death of us. When the students got out of the cars, they were hugged, kissed, and congratulated for well over an hour. All during this time the cops remained in their seats behind locked doors. Finally someone started singing "We Shall Overcome," and everyone joined in. When we finished singing, someone suggested we go to the football field and have a big rally. In minutes every student was on the football field singing all kinds of freedom songs, giving testimonies as to what we were going to do, and praying and carrying on something terrible. The rally ended at twelve-thirty, and by this time all the students were ready to tear Jackson to pieces.

The following evening Medgar Evers again came to campus to, as he put it, "get some of Tougaloo's spirit and try and spread it around all over Jackson." He gave us a good pep talk and said we would be called upon from time to time to demonstrate.

That spring term I had really wanted to do well in all my subjects, but I had become so wrapped up in the Movement that by the time mid-semester grades came out, I had barely a one-point average. Other students who had gotten involved with the NAACP were actually flunking. I started concentrating more on my work—with little success. It seemed as though everything was going wrong.

In addition to my academic problems, I was running out of money. In May I was so broke, I could not pay my last month's bill and was forced to write Mama and ask her to send me thirty dollars. A couple of weeks went by without a letter from her. If Mama had the money, I knew she would have sent it. Apparently she didn't have it, but why didn't she write anyway? Finally I got a letter from Adline, who was working in New Orleans. Mama had written Adline and asked her to send me some money, because Raymond wouldn't let her send me any herself. Adline could only spare ten dollars, and

she wrote me that she was sorry I had gone to Tougaloo when I knew I could not afford it.

The letter made me so mad that I was sick all the next week. I decided to write Emma and ask her for the thirty dollars. She sent me forty right away and said that she and my daddy would have helped me more and that they wanted to, but my daddy had been bothered with his back and had not been working.

Emma's money took care of the spring term, but now I was faced with the problem of the summer. I had to make up some credits in summer school, and I was counting on getting a student loan.

One day as I passed the main bulletin board on campus, I noticed a memorandum from the Dean, saying that applications for federal loans had to be turned in before the week was up. The next day I stopped in at the Dean's office to pick up a form. His secretary told me that I was too late. There were too many applicants already. I went to see the Dean, and had to give him my whole damn life history. I didn't like that at all, but I needed the money. I told him I wouldn't be able to graduate next year if I couldn't go to summer school. He wasn't very encouraging, but he gave me a form to fill out just in case one of the other students had a change in plans. My luck was so bad, I didn't believe this could possibly happen.

By now I was so low I needed someone's comfort. I started seeing Dave again, and the same old trouble started. But this time I didn't care so much. School would be out soon and I wouldn't see him again. Dave would graduate if anyone did. He had even received a Woodrow Wilson fellowship.

I took my final exams and was preparing to leave the campus, when I received a notice from the Dean's office. It said that I had been given the sum of one hundred fifty dollars to assist me in summer school. Even though I had asked for three hundred, I started feeling better—better than I had felt in a long time. I didn't know how I would manage on a hundred and fifty dollars, but I knew I would find some way to do it.

During the summer a white student moved into the room across the hall from me. Her name was Joan Trumpauer, and she told me she worked for SNCC as a secretary. In a short time we got to know each other very well, and soon I was going into Jackson with Joan and hanging out at her office. SNCC was starting a voter registration drive in the Delta (Greenwood and Greenville) and was recruiting students at Tougaloo. When they asked me if I wanted to canvass every other weekend, I agreed to go.

The first time I went to the Delta, I was with three other girls. A local family put us up and we slept two to a room. The second time I was there I stayed at the Freedom House—a huge white frame house that SNCC was renting from a widow for sixty dollars a month. This time I was with Bettye Poole, who had been canvassing for SNCC for a couple of months, and Carolyn Quinn, a new recruit like me. We arrived at the Freedom House on a Friday night about twelve-thirty and found fifteen boys all sleeping in one large room on triple-decker beds. They were all sleeping in their clothes. Some of the boys got up and we played cards for a while. A couple of them were from McComb, Mississippi, which was only twenty miles from Centreville. We cracked jokes about how bad the whites were in Wilkinson County. Around 2 A.M. I started to get sleepy and asked where the girls were going to stay. I was told we were going to stay right in the same room with all those boys. I was some shocked. Now I understood why Bettye Poole was wearing jeans; just then she was climbing into one of the empty bunks and settling down for the night. Here I was with only a transparent nylon pajama set to sleep in. Carolyn Quinn wasn't prepared either. The two of us just sat up in chairs until some extra pairs of pants were found for us. The boys explained that they slept in their clothes because they had had bomb threats, and had to be ready to run

anytime. They all slept here in this one big room because it was sheltered by another house.

The next morning I woke up to the sounds of someone banging on a skillet and hollering, "Come and get it! Come and get it!" When we walked in the kitchen, the boy who'd made the racket said, "All right, girls, take over. Us boys have been cooking all week." Most of the guys were angry because he had gotten them up in that manner, but they didn't make a big fuss over it. Carolyn and I started cooking. When we announced that the food was ready, the boys ran over each other to get to the kitchen. It seemed they thought the food would disappear. It did. Within five minutes, everything on the table was gone. The food ran out and three boys were left standing in line.

I really got to like all of the SNCC workers. I had never known people so willing and determined to help others. I thought Bob Moses, the director of SNCC in Mississippi, was Jesus Christ in the flesh. A lot of other people thought of him as J.C., too.

The SNCC workers who were employed full-time were paid only ten dollars a week. They could do more with that ten dollars than most people I knew could do with fifty. Sometimes when we were in the Delta, the boys would take us out. We did not finish with our work some Saturdays until ten or eleven, and all the Negro places had a twelve o'clock curfew. But we would have more fun in an hour than most people could have in twenty-four. We would often go to one place where the boys had made friends with the waitresses, and they would sneak us fifths of liquor. Those SNCC boys had friends everywhere, among the Negroes, that is. Most whites were just waiting for the chance to kill them all off.

I guess mostly the SNCC workers were just lucky. Most of them had missed a bullet by an inch or so on many occasions. Threats didn't stop them. They just kept going all the time. One Saturday we got to Greenville and discovered that the office had been bombed Friday night. The office was located up two flights of outside steps in a little broken-down building. It

seemed as though a real hard wind would have blown it away. The bomb knocked the steps off, but that didn't stop the rally on Saturday night. Some of the boys made steps. When the new steps began to collapse, we ended up using a ladder. I remember when the rally ended, we found that the ladder was gone. For a few minutes we were real scared. We just knew some whites had moved it. We were all standing up there in the doorway wondering what to do. There was only one exit, and it was too high up to jump from. We figured we were going to be blown up. It seemed as though the whites had finally trapped us. The high school students were about to panic, when suddenly one of the SNCC boys came walking up with the ladder and yelled up to ask if the excitement was over. A lot of the other guys were mad enough to hit him. Those that did only tapped him lightly and smiled as they did it. "The nerve of those guys!" I thought.

Things didn't seem to be coming along too well in the Delta. On Saturdays we would spend all day canvassing and often at night we would have mass rallies. But these were usually poorly attended. Many Negroes were afraid to come. In the beginning some were even afraid to talk to us. Most of these old plantation Negroes had been brain-washed so by the whites, they really thought that only whites were supposed to vote. There were even a few who had never heard of voting. The only thing most of them knew was how to handle a hoe. For years they had demonstrated how well they could do that. Some of them had calluses on their hands so thick they would hide them if they noticed you looking at them.

On Sundays we usually went to Negro churches to speak. We were split into groups according to our religious affiliation. We were supposed to know how to reach those with the same faith as ourselves. In church we hoped to be able to reach many more Negroes. We knew that even those that slammed doors in our faces or said, "I don't want no part of

voting" would be there. There would also be the schoolteachers and the middle-class professional Negroes who dared not participate. They knew that once they did, they would lose that \$250 a month job. But the people started getting wise to us. Most of them stopped coming to church. They knew if they came, they would have to face us. Then the ministers started asking us not to come because we scared their congregations away. SNCC had to come up with a new strategy.

As the work continued that summer, people began to come around. I guess they saw that our intentions were good. But some began getting fired from their jobs, thrown off plantations and left homeless. They could often find somewhere else to stay, but food and clothing became a problem. SNCC started to send representatives to Northern college campuses. They went begging for food, clothing, and money for the people in Mississippi, and the food, clothing, and money started coming in. The Delta Negroes still didn't understand the voting, but they knew they had found friends, friends they could trust.

That summer I could feel myself beginning to change. For the first time I began to think something would be done about whites killing, beating, and misusing Negroes. I knew I was going to be a part of whatever happened.

A week before summer school ended, I was in town shopping with Rose, a girl from the dorm. We had planned to split cab fare back to campus, but discovered we did not have enough money. Cab fare out to Tougaloo was \$2.50 and bus fare was thirty-five cents one way. We decided to take the Trailways back. When we got to the station, I suggested to Rose that we use the white side. "I'm game if you are," she said.

I walked in the white entrance. When I looked back, I saw that Rose had not followed. I decided I would not go back to see what had happened, because she would try and talk me out of it. As I was buying my ticket, she walked up behind me.

"Shit, Moody, I thought you were kidding," she said.

I didn't answer. I was noticing the reaction of the man behind the counter. He stood looking at me as if he were paralyzed.

"Make that two tickets, please," I said to him.

"Where is the other one to?" he said.

"Both to Tougaloo," I said.

As he was getting the tickets for us, another man had gotten on the phone. He kept looking at us as he was talking. I think he was reporting to the police what was taking place. The man that sold us the tickets acted as if that was the last thing in the world he wanted to do. He slapped the tickets down on the counter, and threw the change at me. The change fell off the counter and rolled over to the floor. That bastard had the nerve to laugh as we picked it up. Rose and I sat opposite each other, so we could see what was happening throughout the terminal. The bus was to leave at three-thirty, and we had gotten there about two-forty-five. We had some time to wait. Rose had a watch. I asked her to keep a check on the time.

People came in and stared. Some even laughed. Nothing happened until a bunch of white soldiers sat with us and started talking. The conversation had gone on for some time when a Negro woman got off one of the incoming buses. She saw us sitting in there and walked right in. She had about six small children with her. The little Negro children started running around the station picking up things from the counter and asking if they could buy them. At that point the excitement started. A drunken white man walked into the station behind the Negro lady with all the children. He started cursing, calling us all kinds of niggers.

"Get them little dirty swines outta heah," he said, pulling one of the little boys to the door.

"Take your filthy hands off my child," the Negro woman said. "What's going on here anyway?"

"They got a place for you folks, now why don't you take them chilluns of yours and go on right over there?" the drunkard said, pointing to the Negro side of the bus station.

The lady looked at us. I guess she wanted us to say something. Rose and I just sat there. Finally she realized a sit-in or something was going on. She took her children and hurried out of the door. Instead of going to the Negro side, she went back on the bus. She looked as though she was really angry with us.

After that the drunkard started yelling at us. I didn't get too scared, but Rose was now shaking. She had begun to smoke cigarettes one after the other. She looked at her watch. "Moody, we have missed the bus," she said.

"What time is it?" I asked.

"It's almost four-thirty."

"They didn't even announce that the bus was loading," I said.

I walked over to the man at the ticket counter. "Has the bus come in that's going to Tougaloo?" I asked him.

"One just left," he said.

"You didn't announce that the bus was in."

"Are you telling me how to do my job?" he said. "I hear you niggers at Tougaloo think you run Mississippi."

"When is the next bus?" I asked.

"Five-thirty," he said, very indignant.

I went back and told Rose that the next bus left at five-thirty. She wanted to leave, but I insisted that we stay. Just as I was trying to explain to her why we should not leave, the white drunk walked up behind her. He had what appeared to be a wine bottle in his hand.

"Talk to me, Rose," I said.

"What's going on?" Rose said, almost shouting.

"Nothing. Stop acting so damn scared and start talking," I said.

The drunk walked up behind her and held the bottle up as though he was going to hit her on the head. All the time, I was looking him straight in the face as if to say, "Would you, would you really hit her?" Rose knew someone was behind her. She wouldn't have been able to talk or act normal if someone in

the station threatened to shoot her if she didn't. The drunkard saw that I was pleading with him. He cursed me, throwing the bottle on the floor and breaking it. At this point, more people got all rallied up. They had now started shouting cat-calls from every direction. Some bus drivers walked into the station. "What's wrong? What's going on heah?" one of them shouted. One took a chair and sat right in front of us. "Do you girls want to see a show?" he said. "Did you come here for a little entertainment?"

We didn't say anything.

"I guess you didn't. I'll put it on anyhow," he said. "Now here's how white folks entertain," putting his thumbs in his ears and wiggling his fingers, kicking his feet and making all kind of facial expressions. The rest of the whites in the bus station laughed and laughed at him. Some asked him to imitate a monkey, Martin Luther King, Medgar Evers. His performance went on for what seemed to be a good thirty minutes. When he finished, or rather got tired of, clowning, he said, "Now some of you other people give them what they really came for."

All this time the man was still on the phone talking to someone. We were sure he was talking to the police. Some of the other people that were sitting around in the bus station starting shouting remarks. I guess they were taking the advice of the bus driver. Again Rose looked at her watch to report that we had missed the second bus. It was almost a quarter to seven.

We didn't know what to do. The place was getting more tense by the minute. People had now begun to crowd around us.

"Let's go, Moody," Rose began to plead with me. "If you don't I'll leave you here," she said.

I knew she meant it, and I didn't want to be left alone. The crowd was going to get violent any minute now.

"O.K., Rose, let's go," I said. "Don't turn your back to anyone, though."

We got up and walked backward to the door. The crowd

followed us just three or four feet away. Some were threatening to kick us out—or throw us all the way to Tougaloo, and a lot of other possible and impossible things.

Rose and I hit the swinging doors with our backs at the same time. The doors closed immediately behind us. We were now outside the station not knowing what to do or where to run. We were afraid to leave. We were at the back of the station and thought the mob would be waiting for us if we ran around in front and tried to leave. Any moment now, those that had followed us would be on us again. We were standing there just going to pieces.

“Get in this here car,” a Negro voice said.

I glanced to one side and saw that Rose was getting into the back seat. At that moment the mob was coming toward me through the doors. I just started moving backward until I fell into the car. The driver sped away.

After we had gotten blocks away from the station, I was still looking out of the back window to see who would follow. No one had. For the first time I looked to see who was driving the car and asked the driver who he was. He said he was a minister, that he worked at the bus station part-time. He asked us not to ever try and sit-in again without first planning it with an organization.

“You girls just can’t go around doing things on your own,” he said. He drove us all the way to campus, then made us feel bad by telling us he probably would get fired. He said he was on a thirty-minute break. That’s a Negro preacher for you.

Summer school ended the following week. I headed for New Orleans to get that good three weeks of work in before the fall term of my senior year began.