

Danville Civil Rights Protests, 1963

Paul Price Testimony (excerpt), Dec. 15, 1966, Transcription (page 1 of 2)

Ruth Harvey: Would you tell the court whether or not you participated in such a demonstration?

Paul Price: I did not participate in the demonstration on June the 13th.

RH: Were you in the downtown area on June 13th at the time of a demonstration?

PP: I was

RH: Where were you?

PP: Well, I was coming up Craghead Street in my car, it was probably about 11, 11:30. I was leaving [after dropping his date at home]...I was coming up the street there and an officer was standing in the middle of the street, right there at that corner in the middle of the street, and with a, like a machine gun in their hand. And some people were standing on the other side of the street over there looking up this way. I pulled over to the side there and then stopped right there across the street in front of Gentry's fish market, and parked my car, with other people standing over there on the other side of the street looking up towards the courthouse so I got out there and looked up there too. And after a while, a big . . . [police officer] came running back down that way. And the fella was running, so I started back to the car. And he said, "Get on down in the street with 'em." And I said, "Here's my car here. I want to get in my car. Cause I ain't in no demonstration." You either go on down the street so they can . . . there about First," and I said . . . The next block, there's a warehouse there, and that's where the officer hit me with the blackstick. And I fell in the door and that's where I was beaten until another car, with a white spotlight on it drove up there and jumped out of the car. I thought it was more officers to whup me some more. I looked up and it was another little colored boy and a white fella was in the car with a camera. And he said "What's happening?" And I said "The officer done beat me with that stick." He said "can you stand up?" And I said "No, I can't." So he stayed there with me and this other boy and this other fella went back to the car, and called the ambulance, and the ambulance come and got me and carried me to the hospital."

RH: And that particular night, at the time that the officer hit you, what, if anything, were you doing?

PP: I wasn't doing anything, was looking like the other people over there, standing over there, standing up there, looking at them people standing up by that fence there where they had blockaded off right there at the other corner... I was looking up that way with the other people on the other side of the street, white people and colored people on the other side of the street over there.

Citation: Paul Price testimony in Sylvester Burrell et. als., Dec. 15-16, 1966, Dictabelt 9 (7:49-11:05), Danville (Virginia) Corporation Court, 1963 Civil Rights Case Files, 1963-1973, Accession 38099, Local Government Records Collection, Library of Virginia.

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But they weren't on this side over here where the demonstration people were up We were there looking at them and when they broke and run down the street there, running back towards ya. I started to the car, and other people kept going down toward the middle, right back towards Main Street back down the other street toward Craghead back thatta way. And I start to the car and the other officer standing in the street, that's the one that wouldn't let me get in the car. He said "You go on down the street." I said, "well that's my car right there. I want to get in my car. I'm not in the demonstration, I'm just looking like everybody else up there is looking at." He said "get on down the street," so he pushed me with his stick and made me go down the street a little further where he popped me one with that stick. And that's where I fell.

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