

TESTIMONY AGAINST THE KLAN AND RACIST VIOLENCE. GIVEN MAY 15, 1981 TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF CONGRESS, MEMBERS OF THE PRESS, AND CONCERNED CITIZENS BY MRS. EVELYN G. LOWERY. MAY 26, 1979 MARCH IN DECATUR, ALABAMA SPONSORED BY THE SCLC.

From a child, I had heard of the KLU KLUX KLAN as a terrorist group who intimidated and tortured Blacks - in the cloak of darkness - in white sheets.

Never did I believe that I would be a living witness that the KKK is not only a terrorist group - and does not only operate in the cloak of darkness... but operates in broad open daylight - without fear of reprisal -- openly yielding weapons and shooting at individuals.

It is painful to recall this experience... but on May 26, 1979, SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference) in a continuation of demonstrations in Decatur, Alabama (on behalf of Tommy Lee Hines, a retarded young man, accused of several accounts of raping white women - mental age of a five (5) year old), entered the city of Decatur for the March. We passed the KKK waving billy clubs and yelling accusations at us. Reporters advised us that they heard on C B's, "Get Lowery... Nettles..." Cottonreeder. We called the state patrol to report these activities but received no protection.

As we rounded the corner to the main street of the city of Decatur, we could see the KKK blocking the street. Somehow, they were pushed back by a small contingency of local police so that the march could continue.

My husband had asked me to drive the car this time instead of marching beside him... I was in the second car... behind the marchers and in the motorcade. As the marchers started past, the Klan-- opened fire erupted-- in rapid succession... I couldn't believe it!

They fired first at my husband (Dr. Joseph Lowery, President of the S.C.L.C.) and others in the front line, however, they were whisked away by our marshalls, unharmed. Four young marchers were shot... most in the head. They were rushed to the hospital. The Klan immediately rushed back to the right side of my car and fired... apparently directly at me. The first bullet pierced the top front windshield post of my car... I instinctively fell to the seat... EXHIBIT #1.

The next bullet pierced the front windshield over the steering wheel... EXHIBIT #2, glass falling over me... and bullets still being fired... I just knew my end had come. I stayed down for a least ten minutes... my foot was on the brake... the motor still running.

It was a torment unbelievable... I could hear them saying... "kill them all". Someone was attempting to persuade them not to kill us. I was so confused, yet I knew I had to do something. I decided... do or die, I must attempt to leave. I realized someone could have been in front of me, so, I looked up and seeing clearance, sped away.

I immediately went to the church where the marchers had gone, some of whom had returned to look for me, including my husband.

Members of our march were committed to nonviolence before the March began and no weapons were allowed. It is said that a bystander, after intimidated by the Klan, shot a Klansman in the leg and was thus arrested. He has been convicted. No Klansman, to my knowledge, has been arrested for the shooting of any of the wounded or the firing on the intended victims, although they are known by local and federal authorities.

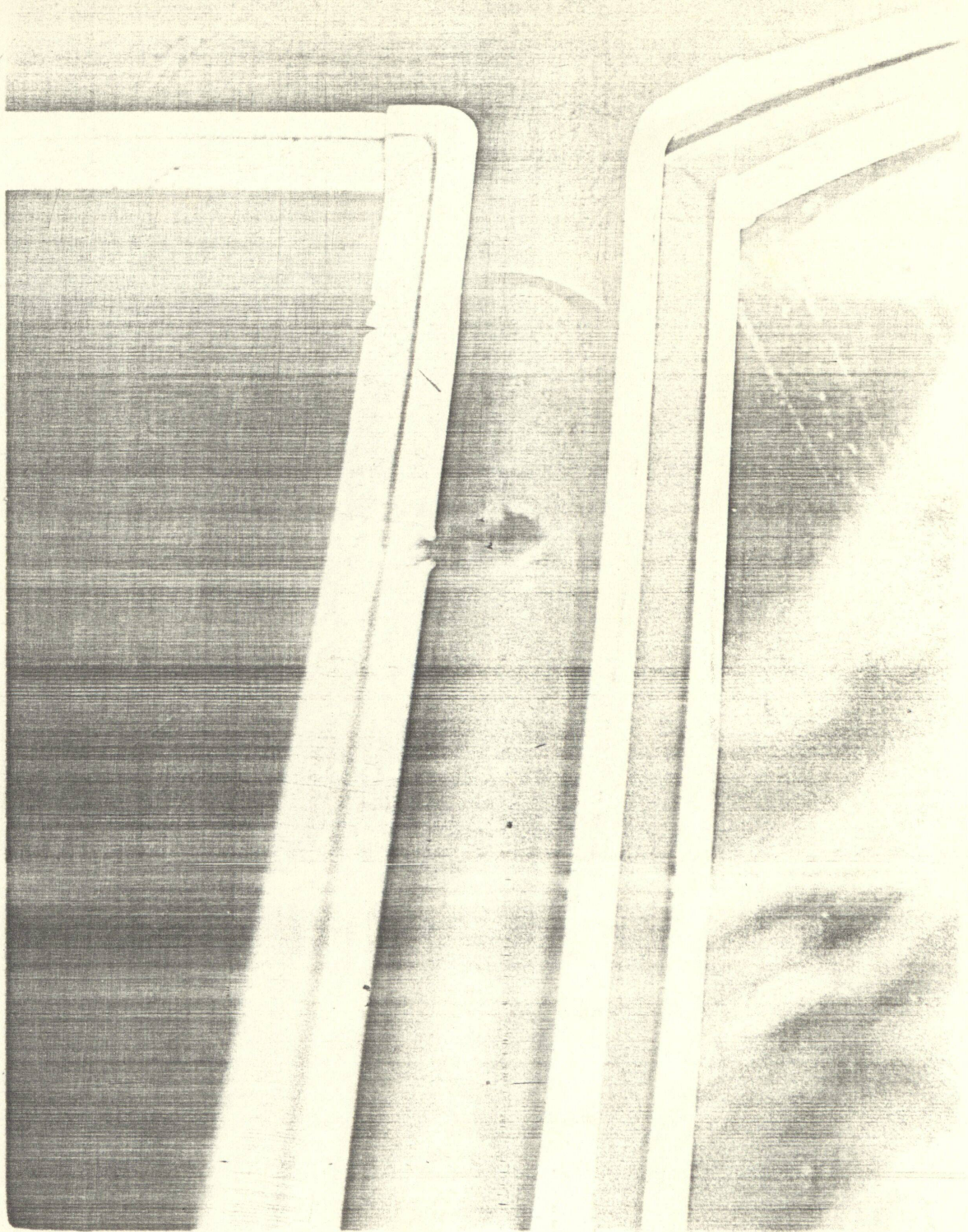
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After returning to Atlanta, a representative from the F.B.I. came to my home to talk with me and to see the automobile that had been fired on. The FBI officer agreed that the shots had come from the right side where the KKK was congregated. To my knowledge, nothing, absolutely nothing has been said or done about this incident since.



EXHIBIT 1





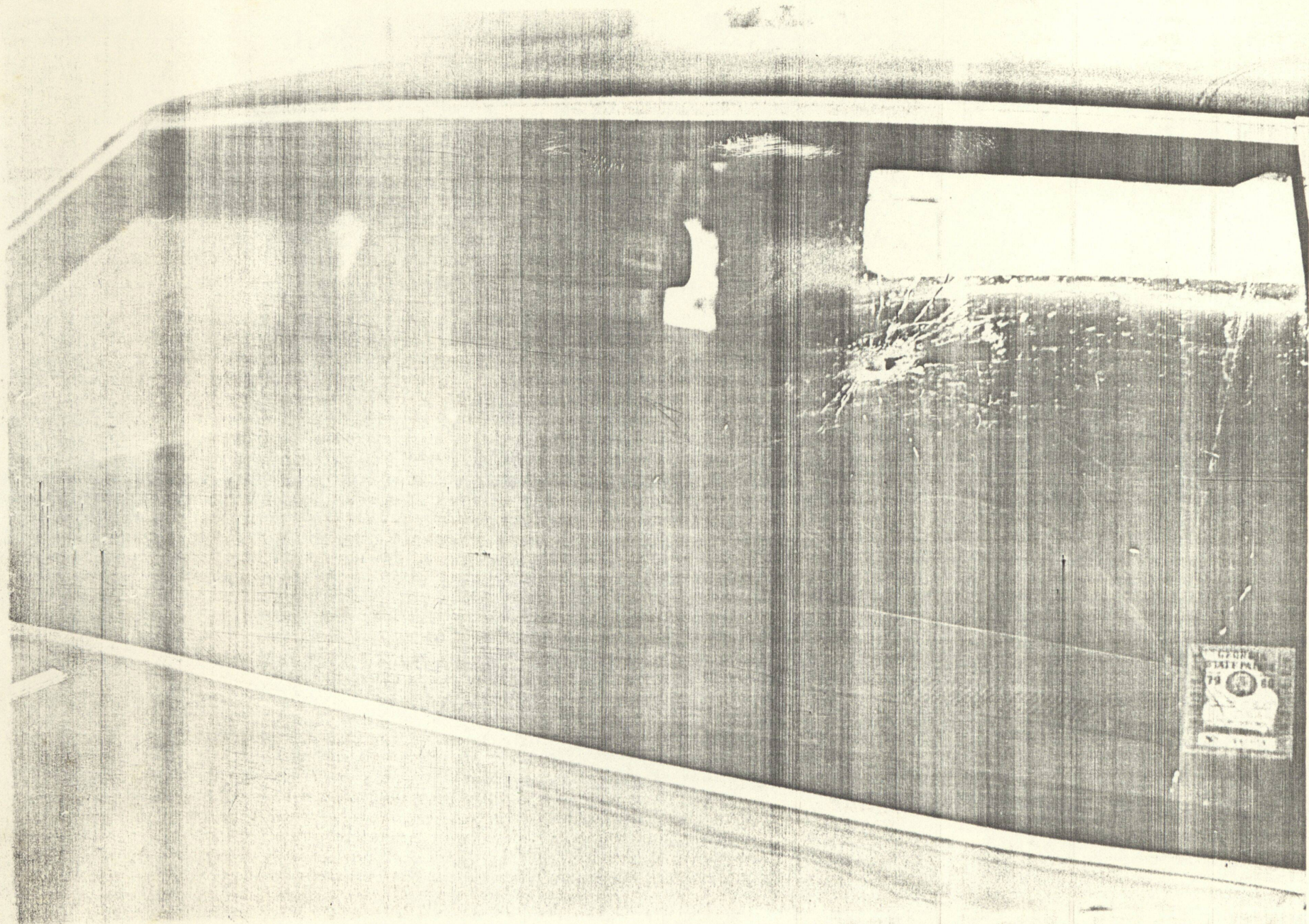


EXHIBIT 2