

MABEL WRIGHT, testifying, September 8, 1954.

BY MR. BICKETT:

- Q You are now, I believe, an inmate of the Woman's Prison?
- A Yes, sir.
- Q What are you serving your time for at this time?
- A Vagrancy.
- Q Where did you come from?
- A From Fayetteville, North Carolina.
- Q How long have you been in Women's Prison this last time?
- A A month and a half.
- Q You had just come in previous to the appearance, you knew Eleanor Rush?
- A Yes, sir.
- Q And, I believe, you were in isolation at the same time she was?
- A Yes, sir.
- Q You were in the cell, I'll lead here a little bit, you were in the cell exactly opposite to Eleanor?
- A Yes, sir,
- Q She was on the east and you were on the west side. She was on the side away from ten and you were on the side towards it?
- A Yes, sir.

Q How long have you been in on their isolation?

A 130 days.

Q Why were you on the isolation?

A I escaped.

Q How did you escape, just climbed the fence?

A Yes, sir.

Q Where did they catch you?

A In Dunn.

Q How long after you had been in isolation was it before Eleanor was put in isolation?

A I was put in isolation that Monday and Eleanor that following Friday.

Q You talked to each other across your cell?

A That is right.

Q About this fight in question when, I believe, they put the restraining on you and gagged you?

A Yes, sir.

Q Tell the Jury how they put the belt on you and how they gagged you, explain as best you can?

A Eleanor and I was in our room, ~~when~~ we were hungry because they didn't give us enough food, so she, as I was crying for food and calling Mr. Hinton, so he came to the door and looked through the glass and asked me what was the matter. I said, "Mr. Hinton, I am hungry." He said, "You think you are going to

- 3 -

get any food?" I told Mr. Hinton, "You told me if I be good you would feed me, I been over here 13 days, you haven't let me go off to get some food." He said, "If you act nice, I'll let you off as soon as I can." He went back down the hall, I started crying again, he came back second time and told him the same thing. I told him first of the thirst, he came back, Eleanor and I was talking. I heard Mr. Hinton, I told Eleanor to hush, she said "No, need being quiet, they are already here with handcuffs. Went in Eleanor's room and gagged Eleanor and put the hand cuffs on her. Came back out of her room and came in mine and Mr. Hinton and the guard, Mr. Horn, Mr. Horn opened my mouth and put the towel through my mouth while the other guard, Mr. Horneday, I don't know the other guard by name, held me on both by names ~~two~~ with two little things, I don't know the name he had had on, twisted on my arms to keep me from moving.

Q Did they put your arms in a restraining belt?

A Yes, sir.

Q What kind?

A Leather belt.

Q Same thing, this kind of belt they put on you?

A Yes, sir.

Q Put your arms through the cuffs?

A Yes, sir.

- 4 -

Q And belt around your waist?

A Yes, sir.

Q Did they put your arms in front of you or behind?

A They put them on front and I could move those things back and forth.

Q That is slip on there?

A Yes, sir.

Q Now, was there any paper put over the peep hole into your room?

A Not at that time it wasn't.

Q Was it later put on there?

A Yes, sir.

Q That was on the last occasion that the gag?

A Yes.

Q What did you see or hear, go ahead in your own words and tell exactly what occurred that you saw yourself and know about it?

A I looked through my window and I saw Mr. Holmes and another guard, I do not know him by name, had Eleanor by her arms behind her, I saw Mr. Hinton putting Eleanor on handcuffs and Mr. Hinton and Mr. Horn had the gag on Eleanor, they pushed the towel down her mouth and I saw the other guard hold Eleanor's nose and tie one through her mouth and one over the nose. Mr. Hinton told the guard to lay her down and put her on the mattress and when they put her down there, they

- 5 -

tied her feet, tied her across the mattress, closed the door. And when they told the guard to lay her down and that is when they put paper over my door. I could lay down on my stomach and look and see in Eleanor's room.

Q Under the crack on the door?

A About that far from the floor.

Q What did you see through the crack?

A I saw Eleanor on the floor kicking, she was moaning. I knew something was wrong. I had my gag on too. Mr. Hinton came in said, "I am going to take your gag off, I am surprised at you, I am not surprised at Eleanor." I was looking at Eleanor all the while, I knew something was ~~were~~ going wrong and some, about 5 minutes after that happened, Mr. Hinton came in Eleanor's room and squatted by Eleanor's head and I heard noise sounded like that there coming out of Eleanor's room after that happened Mr. Hinton and the guard went down the hall, stayed a good while; after a while the back door opened and here walked in four white men came out of a car, I don't know whether car or hearse, but one of the men opened my door and said, "Mabel, why did you and Eleanor cut up like this." I said, "I was hungry which I still is", so he said no need to cut up, Eleanor's dead. But I knew all the time something happened.

I said was that the undertaker just carried her out and he opened the door and put the light on. There was a wet spot on Eleanor's mattress and on her pillow a little blood.

Q Did you see her when they carried her out?

A Yes, sir.

Q Was the gag on her still when they carried her out?

A Yes, sir.

Q Still on her at that time?

A Yes, sir.

Q Did she still have the belt on her?

A No, sir.

Q Had the gag still?

A Gag still on.

Q After the doctors been there and carried her to the undertakers?

A Yes, sir, after they carried her away.

Q Blood on the gag when she went out wasn't it?

A I didn't see no blood on the gag.

Q Where did you see the blood?

A On the pillow and on the mattress.

Q Was there a pillow on there?

A Yes, sir, pillow.

Q Sheet on the bed?

A Yes, sir.

Q And that was on there all the time?

A Yes, sir.

- Q Did they have the sheet over her when they carried her out?
- A No, sir.
- Q Carried her right on out?
- A Yes, sir.
- Q You say they put the handcuffs on her and laid her down and you saw Mr. Hinton come back and, I believe, you say and kneel down beside her and do what?
- A Heard a little noise sounding like something, this here down by Eleanor's head.
- Q Could you see what he was doing?
- A No, he was in front of her head.
- Q Where was her head at that time?
- A Her head was up like this way.
- Q What do you mean by that?
- A He was in the cell, it was back pointed towards the City Limits of Raleigh that way.
- Q Did you see her when they gagged her the first time?
- A No, sir, I didn't see her the first time.
- Q They gagged you at the same time?
- A Yes, sir.
- Q Why didn't you see the first time that they gagged her?
- A I couldn't see because nurse was standing in the door and the guard was in the door, four guards and Mr. Hinton and the nurse.